

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY USING PRIMARY SOURCES

Tenet 3 in an Elementary Classroom

LESSON PLAN

Topic

School Segregation: Where are we now?

Essential Question

How do you know when something needs to be changed?

Objectives

I can:

- Analyze a primary source using See-Think-Wonder analysis strategy.
- Put primary sources in chronological order and defend my reasoning.
- Explain how schools desegregated over time and what still needs to change today.
- Decide how change should be made in my own world.

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Grade Level

3

Time Needed

2-3 class periods (about 45 minutes each)

Materials

- [Primary source set](#)
- [“School Segregation” response booklet](#)
- [Slides](#)
- [Completed Timeline](#) and [Incomplete Timeline](#)
- Photos of classrooms around your school, community, or state, or sources analyzing the integration status of classrooms around the US

Background

Students do not need to have previously investigated the history of segregation before this lesson. Students should have experience analyzing primary sources. Using a modification of the Library of Congress Observe-Reflect-Question strategy, teach students how to make observations, ask questions, and draw conclusions about primary sources using the following sentence stems:

- I see...
- I think...
- I wonder...

Make sure students have previous experience with vocabulary like:

- observation
- conclusion
- primary source
- segregation
- integration
- desegregation

Set-Up

The focus of this lesson is to examine seven photos and complete a timeline of events related to school desegregation. If possible, create a large timeline and post it in the classroom. You could start by including the following pictures and descriptions on the classroom before starting the lesson: 1896-*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1941-Georgia, 1954-*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1960-Ruby Bridges.

Procedure

Day 1

1. Use the [slide deck](#) to introduce contextual information about segregation in the United States.
 - Introduce the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court case. The decision allowed the separation of blacks and whites based on the premise that they were separate but equal. Use the photo on slide 2 of a sign pointing to “Colored Waiting Room” to discuss the concept of **separate but equal**.
 - Introduce or review vocabulary of **segregation** and **integration**.
 - Ask students to make observations on the maps about the Segregation in 1950. Allow students to draw connections about what they observe.
 - Why do you think people believed it was bad for people of different skin colors to be in the same space?
 - Describe the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 (slide 4). Point out the length of time that passed since the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case.
 - Review the difference between **integration** and **desegregation**.
2. Have students turn to a partner and discuss how they imagine school integration worked.
 - What were some of the challenges? Why did these challenges exist?
 - How much time would it take to integrate schools?
 - Where would this be most difficult?
3. After students have discussed, invite them to share their responses with the large group.
4. Show the map of segregated states in 1958 (slide 6).
 - Ask students to discuss whether their predictions are consistent with what the map shows.
 - Ask students “What do you think the rest of the country looked like in 1958?”
 - Allow students time to process and use inquiry questioning to lead them to an understanding that school integration did not happen immediately after the Supreme Court ordered it. It took many years and in some places, still exists.
5. Divide the class into 7 groups and give each group one of the photos to observe. Make enough copies so each student has their own copy. Letter each photo as shown on slide 8.
 - Have students record their *observations*, what they *think* is happening in the photo, and what they *wonder* about the photo. Students can record answers in their “School Segregation” [booklet](#) or on different colored post-it notes.
 - Each group of students will share their analysis and interpretation of their photo with the class. Collect the booklets. Review the questions students came up with. Select 1-2 questions for each of the photos to share with the class the next day.

Day 2

1. Show all seven photos analyzed by student groups the previous day (slide 8). Have students share some of the questions you selected from the photo analysis.
2. Distribute a set of all seven photos to each group of students. Give them a few minutes to examine all of the photos.
 - o Introduce or review the vocabulary word “chronological.”
 - o Ask student groups to put these photos in chronological order and record the answers in their [booklets](#) using the letters on the back of each photo. It is not necessary for all group members to come to a consensus on the order. It is most important that students are sharing their thinking about how they decided the order. Students should record their responses in their own booklet. NOTE: Due to the tight time frame of the photos, this is quite challenging.
3. Distribute copies of the [incomplete timeline](#). There are open spots for each of the seven photos. Each date has a description that fits with a specific photo. Students work in their group to find where their photo fits on the timeline, and then try to place the remaining photos. After they are finished, have students answer the following questions in their booklets:
 - o What information helps you figure out when the photo was taken?
 - o What information do you need in order to be sure?
4. Now is the time to reveal where each picture fits on the timeline (slides 10 and 11). Add all the photos and descriptions to the class timeline as well, if applicable.
5. Distribute copies of the [completed timeline](#) to students. Look at the events on the timeline and lead a discussion using the questions below. Consider using a strategy that students are familiar with, like Socratic Seminar, to structure the discussion.
 - o What is the same about these events? What is different?
 - o What changes have happened because of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision?
 - o How does each photo show support and/or resistance to school integration?
 - o 15 years after the *Brown v. Board* decision, did people accept school integration? What do you see in the photos that helps you know?
6. Focus the discussion in on change and how it happens in this historical example. Write students’ ideas to the second question on the board or on poster paper.
 - o How does change happen?
 - o What did people *do* to make the change to integrate schools?
7. Show students sources from classrooms today and emphasize that 40 years have passed since the last photo on the timeline. You can choose to show photos of classrooms around your school, community, state, or look at [sources](#) analyzing national classrooms. Slide 13 features one such source. Have students discuss:
 - o When do you think segregation ended?
 - o Does segregation still exist? How do you know?
8. Transition to a discussion examining the status quo using the following questions:
 - o Are we better off today? How do you know?
 - o Have we changed enough? How do we know?
 - o How do we know when change is necessary?
9. Have students reflect in the final thoughts section of their booklets, answering the questions below. Collect their responses and use them to inform your next lesson.
 - o How do unfair things in our world get changed?
 - o Are we better off today? How do you know?
 - o What are some things you want to change in our world today?

Lesson Extension

Read *Ruby Bridges Goes to School* by Robert Coles or a similar title to dive deeper into the process of school integration and the personal stories of those who experienced it following the *Brown v. Board* decision.

Compare [two classrooms](#) from segregated Georgia in 1941 to critique the “separate but equal” doctrine set up in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Map the location shown in each of the photos on the timeline.

Have students identify a contemporary issue that they think needs to be changed. Guide them through an action planning process and support them to advocate for the change they wish to see.

Connection to Academic Standards

Minnesota Social Studies Standards

- 3.1.1.1.1 Identify ways people make a difference in the civic life of their communities, state, nation or world by working as individuals or groups to address a specific problem or need.
- 3.4.1.1.1 Create timelines of important events in three different time scales—decades, centuries and millennia.
- 3.4.1.2.1 Examine historical records, maps and artifacts to answer basic questions about times and events in history, both ancient and more recent.

Minnesota ELA Standards

- 3.2.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- 3.2.7.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- 3.8.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Additional Resources

- Visit the Inquiry in the Upper Midwest (IUM) project website: mnhs.org/ium
 - Check out the other videos and supporting materials on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Using Primary Sources: education.mnhs.org/ium/teaching-materials
 - Watch a five-minute webinar on analyzing images education.mnhs.org/ium/professional-development
 - Sign up for an upcoming IUM project workshop: education.mnhs.org/ium/professional-development
- Explore images online at the Minnesota Historical Society: collections.mnhs.org
- Explore primary sources online at the Wisconsin Historical Society: wisconsinhistory.org
- Explore images online at the Library of Congress: loc.gov/photos
- Sign up to receive the Minnesota Historical Society’s monthly Education eNewsletter: mnhs.org/enews