

History Through a Child's Eyes: What is Separate but Equal?

By Lyndsay Burns

Objectives:

What did “separate but equal” mean? This is a hard concept for children to understand. They live in a world that separates them into the “haves and have nots”. When I first started writing this unit, I had a lot of difficulty thinking of what a “northerner” could teach about southern history without coming across as “biased”. I am a northern transplant. I was born and raised in Upstate New York. This was a predominantly white area. I lived in an all white neighborhood, my friends were all white, and in my elementary, middle, and high school, I went to a predominantly all white school. African Americans clearly were the minority, and in school they all hung out together, helping whites stereotype them as a “gang”. Sure we talked in school about the South. The stereotype was that all southerners were lazy, all lived on a plantation, and all owned slaves. Many people believed that slavery was still a legal institution in the South. We also talked about the Civil War. It was always portrayed that the north was superior to the south, that “we” were “more intellectual”, “stronger” than the south, thus causing the belief that we “won” the Civil War for these reasons. Flash forward to after the Civil War, to segregation, racism, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Underground Railroad. I learned the “northern” perception of all these historical events. The seminar of “The Rise of the New South,” sparked an interest in me for these reasons. It’s important for students to learn about their culture, and the history behind why things are the way they are. I didn’t think it was fair for me to teach these topics without having background of both the northern and the southern history.

I teach the fourth grade at a large urban school in North Carolina. The population of the school changes from year to year. We have 58% African American, 16% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, and 55% on free and reduced lunch. In my classroom I have 10 students performing below grade level, 3 students performing at grade level, and 11 students performing at grade level. This unit is designed to meet the needs of all the various learning levels in my classroom.

David Cox Road Elementary follows the philosophy of a Basic School. The purpose of a Basic School is to empower teachers to use different teaching styles to adapt to the students various learning styles. The goal is to keep students engaged in their learning by allowing students to learn differently.

Background Information

From 1619-1865, slavery was a way of life. This American institution was a major labor system in the South from the 1680s through the Civil War. After slavery, there was an unsettling and uncomfortable feeling about black people being “free”. White southerners sought to devise new ways to control black people and created the system of Jim Crow. Slavery and Jim Crow have impacted American race relations up to the present.

Africans were kidnapped, transported to the Americas, and forced into slavery, and their descendents were born into slavery. Before the American Revolution, slavery was legal in many states, but by 1860, the “peculiar institution” existed in the South only. As a movement to stop slavery, abolitionism began after the American Revolution but became an important force during the antebellum era, 1800-1860. Southerners regarded all black people, slave or free, as inferior. “Boy” in 1848 [but used well into the 1960s] was a derogatory term to address an African American man, but it is inappropriate today. The Underground Railroad wasn’t an actual railroad but a system of safe houses and guides who helped slaves escape, mostly on foot, to the North and then to Canada. Most slaves were deeply religious and thankful when good things happened in their lives.

During the period before the Civil War known as the antebellum era, slavery became the most important and divisive political topic in the United States. Politicians from the northern “free states” and from the slave South competed for power. When the nation added new territories from the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican War, Congress enacted the Missouri Compromise (1820) and the Compromise of 1850 to balance free state and slave state interests. The Fugitive Slave Act, which was part of the 1850 deal, infuriated abolitionists and many others by mandating that northerners had to return escaped slaves. During the 1850s, these compromises fell apart due to “Bleeding Kansas,” the Dred Scott case, John Brown’s raid, and other incidents.

These events eventually led to the Civil War. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves in the states that seceded from the Union, but allowed slavery in the “loyal” border states. But the Proclamation showed that the federal government was now against slavery. Southern slaves began to free themselves, flocking to nearby Union armies. The North also began to accept black men into the Army and Navy, thus creating a strengthening in the Union. In 1865, the 13th Amendment formally abolished slavery, and the next two Amendments made all blacks U.S. citizens, vowed to protect their rights, and gave black men the vote. By 1870, it seemed that the nation was ready to live up the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, “all men are created equal.”

By the 1890s, the federal government had reneged on its promise to “reconstruct” southern society and protect black civil rights. White Democrats gained absolute control of southern states by “playing the race card,” frightening common whites with stories about how blacks were “dangerous” so that they would vote Democratic. Jim Crow etiquette and laws made blacks second class citizens. Christian ministers preached that whites were the “chosen ones” and that

God supported racial segregation because blacks were intellectually and culturally inferior. They also preached that blacks should be servants, and they would destroy America. Leaders rationalized lynching and other acts of violence against blacks (if necessary) to keep blacks at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Jim Crow etiquette was also a way of life; here are some examples:

- A black male could not offer his hand (to shake hands) with a white male because it would imply they were socially equal.
- Blacks and whites could not eat together, if they did, whites would eat first and a partition would be placed between them.
- Blacks were not allowed to show affection to one another in public.
- A black male could not offer to light a cigarette of a white women because this implied intimacy.
- Blacks were called by their first name; they did not have a proper title such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc.
- White motorists always had the right of way.

Jim Crow laws were tested in the Plessy v. Ferguson case. In 1891, Homer Plessy sat in a whites only railroad train in Louisiana. Plessy was 1/8 black and 7/8 white, so he was black by the “one-drop rule” (which said that any person in the United States with any sub-Saharan ancestry no matter what percent could not be considered white), but he could “pass” as a white man. He was left undisturbed until he told the conductor that he was black, and he went on to argue that the state of Louisiana has no right to decide the race of each citizen. His goal was to have Jim Crow laws declared unconstitutional in court. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Plessy and declared that “separate but equal” was the law of the land. With the Supreme Court’s blessing, Jim Crow laws—encompassing all aspects of life, not just on trains—ran throughout the South (and North). White leaders separated blacks, but conditions were far from equal.

Along with separate facilities came disfranchisement. Whites enacted poll taxes and literacy tests as ways to eliminate the blacks being allowed to vote. This caused the Republican Party (that used to support blacks) to disappear in the South, and the conservative Democratic Party dominated southern politics by uniting all whites under the banner of white supremacy. If a black person tried to violate the Jim Crow laws, he or she could have lost their homes, jobs, and even lives. Public lynchings, although distasteful, because the ultimate control mechanism for “unruly” blacks, and white lynchers rarely faced prosecution because whites considered all blacks prone to violent crimes. There were many “riots” throughout the 1890s and early 1900s in which whites attacked blacks they considered threats to society. Most of these white riots had the same common themes of when and how they occurred. Most started in the summer with rumors of blacks engaging in criminal activity. Police sided with attackers by participating in the activity or ignoring the riot as long as whites were in control. These riots occurred in dozens of cities,

including Wilmington, North Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, Chicago, Knoxville, Nashville, Charleston, Omaha and even Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln's hometown. 1919's riots gained the nickname of "The Red Summer". Whites started these attacks because of rumors heard that blacks perpetrated criminal acts. The police sided with the whites, by either actively participating in these riots, or "turning a blind eye"

In the 1950s, a court case as important as Dred Scott and Plessy made its way to the Supreme Court- Brown VS Board of Education. In Topeka, Kansas, a third grade student by the name of Linda Brown was enrolled into an all white school by her father. Her enrollment was refused by the principal. Her father and other black parents then went to the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) for legal help. Topeka's Board of Education said that "because segregation was a way of life, segregated schools prepared black children for the segregation they would face in adulthood"). The NAACP joined the Brown's case with four others and argued against the Plessy case in public education. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor eliminating the "separate but equal" doctrine. Unfortunately, the decision failed to designate a specific date for school desegregation, nor did it directly desegregate other public facilities. Historians credit this case in helping to begin the modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It was the beginning of the end for Jim Crow.

In 1960, a little African American girl in New Orleans made national headlines. Ruby Bridges was selected to take a test as a Kindergartener to see if she would be accepted into a newly integrated school. She passed the test and was accepted to attend William Frantz public school. Six students were picked to be placed into integrated schools, but Ruby Bridges was the only one who went to William Frantz. On her first day of school, she was picked up at her house by Federal Marshalls who were bringing her to school each day to protect her from possible violence. When she got to school, she was walked to and from her car with four Marshalls, two in the front and two in the back protecting her from the uproar that began when she arrived. She met Mrs. Henry, who would be her first white teacher in the first grade. Many riots and family issues arose because Ruby went to this school. Her father was fired from his job, her family wasn't allowed to shop at the local grocery store, and her grandparents in Missouri were forced to move off their land. This did not stop Ruby from going to school. Every day it was just her and her teacher in the classroom together because white parents removed their children from the classroom because Ruby was black. She never saw the white kids at school. Other Americans supported Ruby, and soon her family received letters and donations for her bravery. Eventually her dad was hired to be a painter, and neighbors began to baby sit and watch their house. Ruby loved school and her teacher, and she never missed a day of school that year. By the end of the year, the crowds of protestors thinned, and white anger waned. Beginning in her second grade year, Ruby attended the same school, but there were no Federal Marshalls to bring her to and from school, and other black children were in her class. Ruby Bridges became a civil rights hero. She graduated from an integrated high school and, eventually, business school.

Strategies:

I believe that students can learn a lot through literature, so my curriculum unit will revolve around literacy. I think it's important for students to make connections to what they read. Students can make connections three different ways. One way is text to self connection in which student create a link from the literature they have read and/or are reading to events that happen in their lives. A second connection students make is text to text connections in which students in which students link the literature they have read and/ or reading to other literature. The last connection students make is text to world connections in which students link the literature they have read and/ are reading to events that are happening in the world. In this curriculum unit, the students will be using all three connections with an emphasis on text to world.

To enhance students' literacy skills, I have the students work in same leveled centers. At the beginning of the year, the students take a reading assessment that is used as one way of determining what grade level and skill level they are on. Based on this, I assign students with like abilities to the same group. This allows me to be able to work in small groups with each student at their level. I am able to differentiate the center activities for each of these groups. There are pros and cons of having homogeneous grouping in literacy. A pro to students work with other classmates that are on the same skill level, thus are able to stay at the same pace and work together. It allows me to create activities that are fit for each level group, as well as allows me to challenge "high flyers" in my classroom. A con to working with homogenous groups is (older) students can sometimes make the realization that they are in the "slow" group, or the "smart group" which can hinder their self confidence. The students do not get the opportunity to work with other level students which could bring out their strengths.

I am planning to teach this curriculum unit in the month of February to embrace Black History Month. Every evening for homework, the students will have a short passage about a famous African American they must read and write a short report on. I think these historic figures are very important for students to have an awareness of.

To begin my unit, it's important to start from the basics before diving into such ideas as Jim Crow laws. Lesson one will introduce the idea of slavery. I will read the book *Under the Quilt of the Night* by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by James E. Ransome. This is about a young girl and her family during their escape along the Underground Railroad. Students will then brainstorm what they already know about the Underground Railroad. Students will then read *Barefoot: Escape Along the Underground Railroad* by Pamela Duncan Edwards, illustrated by Henry Cole. We will have a class discussion answering the question: How would you feel if you had to walk along the Underground Railroad?

In lesson two we will continue our discussion about slaves and the Underground Railroad. Using Open Court Imagine It! series, we will read an excerpt from the book *Two Tickets to Freedom:*

The True Story of Ellen and William Craft, Fugitive Slaves by Florence B. Freedman, illustrated by Doris Ettliger. To activate prior knowledge of students answer the questions found in the Imagine It book Unit 1 on page 42S. They are as follows:

- How did slave owners prevent slaves from escaping?
- What are some ways to escape slavery?
- Did all Americans agree on the issue of slavery?
- Where could escaped slaves be safe?
- Would everyone been allowed to ride on the train?

Review with students the discussion from the previous lesson: what do you already know about this topic? Students will complete the vocabulary lesson worksheet found on page 17 in Imagine It's! Skills Practice 1 book. All together, students read the story. After the reading of the story, students write: what is important enough to you to make a dangerous risk? (Found on page 63 in Unit 1).

Lesson number three focuses on characterization in stories. Read the book *Old Henry* by Joan W. Blos, illustrated by Stephan Gammel. Students describe the kind of person Henry is. Together fill out the Character motives Chart about Henry. The chart is divided into three columns. Column one has the students fill out the character action (what the character did). Column two is character motivation (why/ reason the character did the action). And column three character result (what happened as a result of the action and motivation?). Guide students through the questions: What decisions does Henry make? How did these decisions affect his actions? What motivated Henry to leave? What happened when he left? Did Henry change throughout the story? How? Did the neighbors change throughout the story? This lesson is the introduction to a future lesson that will create the same chart for *Two Tickets to Freedom*.

Lesson four will be four different literacy centers that involve the story *Two Tickets to Freedom*. Center number one will focus on sequencing events in a story. The students write down five important events that happened in the story. On index cards, the students draw a picture of the event. They will then put the pictures in order of what happened first, second, third, fourth, and fifth. They will glue the pictures onto a sentence strip and write a caption about the event underneath. Center two focuses on characterization. With a partner, the students will re-read *Two Tickets to Freedom*. They will complete the Character Motives Chart about William and Ellen like they did the previous lesson for *Old Henry*. Center number three focuses on conflict resolution. The students will complete a worksheet entitled "Light Bulb Lab". On a light bulb, the students will write three problems, three solutions, and three shining events about the story. The last center focuses on context clues. The students will receive a copy of the story with missing words. The students must decipher which word fits in the blank of the story based on whether or not it makes sense in the sentence.

Lesson number five, review with students how to write a paragraph using the “hamburger paragraph method.” Teach students to write a summary using the “hamburger paragraph.” Bun= Paragraph#1: Topic / introduction, Burger= Paragraph #2: Ways the families are similar, Burger #2= Paragraph #3: Ways the families are different, Bun= Paragraph #4: Concluding sentence. The read *Journey To Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad* by Courtni C. Wright, illustrated by Gershom Griffith aloud to the students. Compare and contrast William and Ellen in *Two Tickets to Freedom* and the family in *Journey... Escape along the Underground Railroad*. The students write a summary of this comparison using the skills from the mini lesson. The students will complete three literacy centers. The first center, the students will complete an activity in which they need to decipher what is a fact and opinion based on the story *Two Tickets to Freedom*. The second center the students will complete is about making inferences. The students will make inferences about paragraphs found in the story Two Tickets to Freedom. The last center the students will work on is a vocabulary worksheet using the words from *Two Tickets to Freedom*.

The next lesson in the sequence of this unit is an introduction to what separate but equal laws were in the south. The students need a bit of background knowledge to Jim Crow laws. Since fourth grade students are still a bit young to understand the root of Jim Crow laws, it is important for them to have an understanding of what they are. To make the connection between slavery and Jim Crow laws, explain to the students that after the Civil War, slavery was outlawed, but many people still did not believe that African Americans should be allowed to have the same rights as whites. So many states in the South, North Carolina included, made up a system of laws that legally segregated (separated) white people from black people. Some examples of this are: there were separate bathrooms for white and black people, separate drinking fountains, different sections of the bus you could sit in (blacks in the back, whites in the front), if you wanted to go out to eat with your family, you either had to go to a restaurant that only served white people, or only served black people (depending on your race) or if they allowed both races in the restaurant, you would have to eat in separate sections of the restaurant. Ask students- how would you feel if you wanted to go out to eat with your friends, but you couldn't all eat together because of the color of your skin? Continue the lecture telling the students that even though the law said things had to be separate but equal, facilities and treatment was not equal for black people. Often times, white people got the better end of the deal. They got better bathrooms, newer drinking fountains, etc. People were often still rude to black people, and mistreated them. Another thing that Jim Crow laws prohibited was black and white students going to school together. Blacks had to go to older schools and whites were able to go to schools in newer and nicer buildings. Without telling students that they will be doing an activity about Jim Crow (this would give away the purpose of the simulation you are going to do) begin passing out colored cards to each student. There should be an unequal number of colors and one color card should be in the minority. Tell students they are to remember their color for the remainder of the day. Throughout the day, you will treat the majority color favorably. Some ideas are- during recess only the majority will be able to watch a video on the SMARTboard

while the minority sits in the hall and completes a worksheet; the majority has access to endless supply of pencils, while the other group only gets one and if it breaks “too bad, so sad”. The minority group will eat lunch in the loud cafeteria, while the other group gets to eat lunch in the classroom with the TV. Spend the day treating the majority “superior” to the minority (make sure to be careful of the extent you go to with this. The point is not to upset the students, or put them down, but to simply show separate but equal). At the end of the day, bring the class together to discuss: How would you feel if you had to spend the rest of the year like this? How did you feel? Was everything really separate but equal? Important lesson to learn: although we are all different, we are all equal and deserve to have the same privileges. After a lengthy discussion of the students’ feelings, the next day, the students will get a real life example of a class who went through the time period of the Jim Crow laws. You will show the class a PBS Video entitled “A Class Divided” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/>. Teacher background information: This is a true story of a third grade teacher in a small all white town in Iowa by the name of Jane Elliot. Martin Luther King Jr. had just been assassinated, and an outraged Ms. Elliot was determined to teach her students the unfairness of segregation. She set up a very radical (for the time period) classroom simulation about discrimination. Jane Elliot divided her class up into two groups-those students who had brown eyes, and those students who had blue eyes. On the first day, she treated those with blue eyes as the superiority. She called the brown eyed students “dumb,” “liars”, etc. At recess the blue eyed and brown eyed students were not allowed to play together. In the classroom she made the brown eyed students’ second guess themselves and made them think they really were dumb. This is how the whole day was spent. The next day, she reversed the roles, the students who had brown eyes were now superior and those students with blue eyes were inferior. Over the period of two days, she observed friendships fall apart, and her classroom community in complete disarray. Two boys who were the best of friends got into a fist fight on the playground because one boy wanted to play with the other. At the end of these two days, she held a lengthy discussion about the effects discrimination has on a community. The students give incredible reflections on the emotions they felt, and the frustrations they felt when things were unfair. This is my favorite part of the video, because it really had an impact on the students and their understanding of the unfairness of segregation and discrimination. The video (which you can choose or not choose to show students) develops further and brings back the students in Ms. Elliot’s third grade class 14 years later, and she shows them the video to these now grown students and has the same discussion about how they felt then and now. It’s very interesting. Jane Elliot has also done this same simulation with adults. There is a segment about this as well, but may not be suitable for children. Another disclaimer about this video, is there is inappropriate wording so it’s important to know where these are, and dub it so the students don’t hear. My thoughts are to use that as a reflection break. After you show the video, it’s important for our students to have a reflection about what they saw. Students would then answer- how would you feel if this was you? Do you think the teacher was being mean? How does this video apply to today’s society?

The next lesson in this curriculum unit begins by reading *The Other Side* By Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis. This is a story about a young white girl and a young black girl who live next door to each other, but because of racial tensions, they are not allowed to be friends. So every day the girls watch each other through a fence and in the end they end up sitting together on the fence, thus creating the message that they don't care about skin color. Throughout the story ask students: Why do you think the white girl seems so sad? How do you think the black girl feels about that girl? Look at the picture of the girls seeing each other in town. Notice how the girls are dressed so much alike. The mothers are dressed alike, too. Do you think it is confusing to the girls why they should be kept apart? They are neighbors, the same age, and have the same interests. Doesn't it seem that, of course, they should be friends? Why do you think the girls are looking at each other but the mothers aren't? Why do you think the adults don't try to change "the way things have always been?" Is it up to children to make changes in the world because adults won't? What changes would you like to make to today's world? (Questions come from: http://learningtogive.org/teachers/literature_guides/TheOtherSide.asp). Divide students up with another student in the class that they don't usually play with or pair up with. Together the students create a Venn diagram of the ways they are similar and different. The point being that they may find out they are more alike than they think. They will then share with the class one way they are similar and one way they are different. Discuss with students: Are differences between you and your classmates okay? Do our differences make someone better than another? What does the word equality mean to you?

At the beginning of the next lesson, begin by reviewing with students that in 1960 the treatment of African Americans was not equal to whites. It was illegal to treat African Americans different than other but in the south they didn't follow these laws. These laws were Separate but Equal Laws. African Americans and Whites had to go to separate schools, drink from separate water fountains, use different bathrooms, shop at different stores, etc) Do you think everything was really separate but EQUAL? Review with students the activity they participated in the previous day about their similarities and differences in each other. Introduce briefly Ruby Bridges- she was a young girl who was chosen to attend an all white school. This was an extremely brave act because black students were still not fully accepted into all white schools. Read aloud *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles. Discuss: What made Ruby Bridges so different from everyone else? How would you feel if you were Ruby Bridges? What would you do if you were Ruby in this situation? Create a character map for Ruby Bridges that the students write about what Ruby Bridges thinks, feels, does, says, and what others say about her. Students vote on four words that describe Ruby Bridges. Students decide which word they agree with most and stand in that corner. Make sure that the children know what each of the words mean before you expect them to successfully accomplish this activity. As a group, students should discuss their reasons behind choosing their word and then explain it to the rest of the class.

The next day, continue the Ruby Bridges' discussion: What is one thing you would change in Ruby Bridges life? Why? If you could choose one of Ruby Bridges qualities what

would it be and why? If there was a child who was different from everyone else and wasn't allowed in our school because of that difference would you do anything to help that child? Why or why not? If you were Ruby Bridges, would you have continued to go to school, or stay home where it was safe? Students will compare and contrast their life to Ruby Bridges' life. Students will use the "hamburger paragraph" taught in a previous lesson to write an essay about their findings in the similarities and differences in their lives and Ruby Bridges' life.

Using what they have learned about Ruby Bridges, discrimination, segregation, and Jim Crow laws, students will write friendly letters to Ruby Bridges. Students write a letter telling Ruby Bridges why they think what she did was important. You can find the address to the Ruby Bridges Foundation on www.rubybridges.com.

To begin concluding this curriculum unit, the students will research and participate in a Jim Crow debate. Divide the class into two separate groups: those that are okay with separate but equal laws, and those that are not okay with separate but equal laws. As a group they will brainstorm their argument for their debate. They will present it to the opposing group as to why their side is the correct side. Students will then write a persuasive essay as to whether or not they are the correct side.

The culminating activity in this unit is a research project. Students will research a notable African American (some examples are Jackie Robinson, Arthur Ashe, Bill Cosby, Michael Jackson, Maya Angelou, Oprah, to name a few). They will create a biography of their lives. On glogster.com the students will create an informational poster about their famous African American. Students will then draw a portrait of their famous African American on white paper. Students will then create an autobiography of themselves. They will create their own self portraits on black paper. They will then complete a writing response: If you could choose one of (enter notable African American) qualities what would it be and why?

Classroom Activities

Grade Level/Subject: 4th Grade Social Studies

Topic: Jim Crow Laws

NCSCOS Standard and Objective

Social Studies 3.01 Assess changes in ways of living over time and determine whether the changes are primarily political, economic, or social.

Social Studies 4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.

Instructional Objective

Students will be able to understand Jim Crow Laws.

Students will be able to explain the feelings involved with the unjust feelings associated with Jim Crow Laws.

Teacher Background Knowledge

This is a true story of a third grade teacher in a small all white town in Iowa by the name of Jane Elliot. Martin Luther King Jr. had just been assassinated; outraged Ms. Elliot was determined to

teach her students the unfairness of segregation. She set up a very radical (for the time period) classroom simulation about discrimination. Jane Elliot divided her class up into two groups-those students who had brown eyes, and those students who had blue eyes. On the first day, she treated those with blue eyes as the superiority. She called the brown eyed students “dumb”, “liars”, etc. At recess the blue eyed and brown eyed students were not allowed to play together. In the classroom she made the brown eyed students second guess themselves and made themselves think they really were dumb. This is how the whole day was spent. The next day, she reversed the roles, the students who had brown eyes were now superior and those students with blue eyes were inferior. Over period of two days, she observed friendships fall apart, and her classroom community in complete disarray. Two boys who were the best of friends got into a fist fight on the playground because one boy wanted to play with the other. At the end of these two days, she held a lengthy discussion about the effects discrimination has on a community. The students give incredible reflections on the emotions they felt, and the frustrations they felt when things were unfair.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Slavery ended after the Civil War. There were still apprehensive feelings about African Americans having freedom, so Jim Crow Laws were legally put into place. Jim Crow Laws were “separate but equal”. Life for African Americans weren’t exactly separate but equal. They were still mistreated, and facilities for African Americans were not as up to par as those for whites.

Key Terms and Vocabulary

Jim Crow Laws, Segregation, Discrimination

Materials

SMARTboard

Website <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/>

Content and Strategies

Engage

I will introduce students to enter the year 1968. They will be entering a third grade classroom in a small all white town in Iowa. The previous day, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

Explore

The students will watch “A Class Divided”.

Explain

During and after the video I will ask for student reflection. Some examples of questions I will ask are:

- How would you feel if this was you?
- Do you think the teacher was being mean?
- How does this video apply to today’s society?

Elaborate/Extend

Begin passing out colored cards to each student. There should be an unequal number of colors and one color cards should be in the minority. Tell students they are to remember their color for the remainder of the day. Throughout the day, you will treat the majority color favorably. Some

ideas are- during recess only the majority will be able to watch a video on the SMARTboard while the minority sits in the hall and completes a worksheet; the majority has access to endless supply of pencils, while the other group only gets one and if it breaks “too bad, so sad”. The minority group will eat lunch in the loud cafeteria, while the other group gets to eat lunch in the classroom with the TV. Spend the day treating the majority “superior” to the minority (make sure to be careful of the extent you go to with this. The point is not to upset the students, or put them down, but to simply show separate but equal). At the end of the day, bring the class together to discuss: How would you feel if you had to spend the rest of the year like this? How did you feel? Was everything really separate but equal? Important lesson to learn: although we are all different, we are all equal and deserve to have the same privileges.

Evaluate

This will be monitored by through their reflections.

Grade Level/Subject: 4th grade Social Studies

Topic: Segregation

NCSCOS Standard and Objective

Social Studies 4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.

English Language Arts 2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by:

- setting a purpose using prior knowledge and text information.
- making predictions.
- formulating questions.
- locating relevant information.
- making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.

Instructional Objective

Students will use prior knowledge of segregation to make a connection to their reading.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Slavery ended after the Civil War. There were still apprehensive feelings about African Americans having freedom, so Jim Crow Laws were legally put into place. Jim Crow Laws were “separate but equal”. Life for African Americans weren’t exactly separate but equal. They were still mistreated, and facilities for African Americans were not as up to par as those for whites.

Key Terms and Vocabulary

Segregation, discrimination

Materials

The Other Side By Jacqueline Woodson, Illustrated by E.B. Lewis.

Venn Diagram Worksheet

Content and Strategies

Engage

Teacher will engage students by reading The Other Side and asking during and after reading:

- Why do you think the white girl seems so sad?
- How do you think the black girl feels about that girl?
- Look at the picture of the girls seeing each other in town. Notice how the girls are dressed so much alike. The mothers are dressed alike, too. Do you think it is confusing to the girls why they should be kept apart? They are neighbors, the same age, and have the same interests. Doesn’t it seem that, of course, they should be friends?
 - Why do you think the girls are looking at each other but the mothers aren’t?
 - Why do you think the adults don’t try to change “the way things have always been?”
 - Is it up to children to make changes in the world because adults won’t?
 - What changes would you like to make to today’s world?

Explore

Divide students up with another student in the class that they don’t usually play with or pair up with. Together the students create a Venn diagram of the ways they are similar and different. The

point being that they may find out they are more alike than they think. They will then share with the class one way they are similar and one way they are different.

Elaborate/Extend

Discuss with students: Are differences between you and your classmates okay? Do our differences make someone better than another? What does the word equality mean to you?

Evaluate

I will look at and assess student work.

Grade Level/Subject: 4th Grade Social Studies **Topic:** Segregation

NCSCOS Standard and Objective

Social Studies 3.01 Assess changes in ways of living over time and determine whether the changes are primarily political, economic, or social.

Social Studies 4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.

English Language Arts 2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by:

- setting a purpose using prior knowledge and text information.
- making predictions.
- formulating questions.
- locating relevant information.
- making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

At the beginning of the next lesson, begin by review with students that in 1960 the treatment of African Americans was not equal to whites. It was illegal to treat African Americans different than other but in the south they didn't follow these laws. These laws were Separate but Equal Laws. African Americans and Whites had to go to separate schools, drink from separate water fountains, use different bathrooms, shop at different stores, etc.

Key Terms and Vocabulary

Segregation

Materials

The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles

Venn Diagram (drawn on lined paper by students)

Chart Paper

Content and Strategies

Engage

Do you think everything was really separate but EQUAL? Review with students the activity they participated in the previous day about their similarities and differences in each other. Introduce briefly Ruby Bridges- she was a young girl who was chosen to attend an all white school. This was an extremely brave act because black students were still not fully accepted into all white schools

Explore

Read aloud The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles. Discuss: What made Ruby Bridges so different from everyone else? How would you feel if you were Ruby Bridges? What would you do if you were Ruby in this situation? Create a character map for Ruby Bridges that the students write about what Ruby Bridges thinks, feels, does, says, and what others say about her. Students vote on four words that describe Ruby Bridges. Students decide which word they agree with most and stand in that corner. Make sure that the children know what each of the words mean before you expect them to successfully accomplish this activity. As a group, students should

discuss their reasons behind choosing their word and then explain it to the rest of the class. What is one thing you would change in Ruby Bridges life? Why? If you could choose one of Ruby Bridges qualities what would it be and why? If there was a child who was different from everyone else and wasn't allowed in our school because of that difference would you do anything to help that child? Why or why not? If you were Ruby Bridges, would you have continued to go to school, or stay home where it was safe? Students will compare and contrast their life to Ruby Bridges life. Students will use the "hamburger paragraph" taught in a previous lesson to write an essay about their findings in the similarities and differences in their lives and Ruby Bridges' life.

Elaborate/Extend

Using what they have learned about Ruby Bridges, discrimination, segregation, and Jim Crow laws, students will write friendly letters to Ruby Bridges. Students write a letter telling Ruby Bridges why they think what she did was important. You can find the address to the Ruby Bridges Foundation on www.rubybridges.com.

Evaluate

I will look at and assess student work.

Resources

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Chicago formatting by BibMe.org.

Appendix: Implementing District Standards

English Language Arts

2.01 Use metacognitive strategies to comprehend text and to clarify meaning of vocabulary (e.g., reread the text, consult other sources, ask for help, paraphrase, question).

2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by:

- setting a purpose using prior knowledge and text information.
- making predictions.
- formulating questions.
- locating relevant information.
- making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.

2.03 Read a variety of texts, including:

- fiction (legends, novels, folklore, science fiction).

- nonfiction (autobiographies, informational books, diaries, journals).
- poetry (concrete, haiku).
- drama (skits, plays).

2.05 Make inferences, draw conclusions, make generalizations, and support by referencing the text.

2.06 Summarize major points from fiction and nonfiction text(s) to clarify and retain information and ideas.

2.07 Determine usefulness of information and ideas consistent with purpose.

2.08 Verify the meaning or accuracy of the author's statement(s) by referencing the text or other resources.

2.09 Listen actively by:

- asking questions.
- paraphrasing what was said.
- interpreting speaker's verbal and non-verbal messages.
- interpreting speaker's purposes and/or intent.

Social Studies

2.03 Describe the similarities and differences among people of North Carolina, past and present.

3.01 Assess changes in ways of living over time and determine whether the changes are primarily political, economic, or social.

3.02 Identify people, symbols, events, and documents associated with North Carolina's history.

3.05 Describe the political and social history of colonial North Carolina and analyze its influence on the state today.

4.01 Assess and evaluate the importance of regional diversity on the development of economic, social, and political institutions in North Carolina.

4.02 Identify religious groups that have influenced life in North Carolina and assess the impact of their beliefs.

4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.

4.05 Identify and assess the role of prominent persons in North Carolina, past and present.

Synopsis

This unit is intended to provide students with a foundation for understanding the time period before the Civil War through the end of Jim Crow Laws. Students learn and understand the hardships during the times of slavery. Students then move into what are Jim Crow Laws. Through various learning experiences students “feel” what it was like to live in a time of laws being separate but equal. The unit starts to conclude with a brief study of an actual person (Ruby Bridges) who went through being the first African American in a desegregated school. The unit concludes with the students doing their own research about famous/ notable African Americans.

This unit coincides with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Social Studies in Fourth Grade.

End Notes