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Decline in an era of Social Progress: Why African Americans are not engaged with America's Pastime

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
African American Studies Grades 9-12

Keywords: Access, Resources, African Americans in Baseball

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This Curriculum Unit Aims to inform students about the historical origins of African Americans in baseball, while also exploring the more recent phenomenon in baseball about the lack of African American players in the league today. The Unit will begin with a broad overview of the influence of African Americans on the modern happenings of the game, studies of important players and teams from the Negro Leagues, while also focusing on systemic inequities within the game, which are limiting African American access to the sport at its highest levels. The Unit will conclude with students connecting struggles with redlining, urban renewal, and social injustices to reasons why African Americans had structural barriers to entry at the highest levels of baseball. The hope is that students will then chart a path forward to take informed action and take a stand against these injustices to impact change as it relates to African American involvement in baseball.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 30 students in African American Studies

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Decline in an era of Social Progress: Why African Americans are not engaged with America's Pastime

Andrew Bartkowiak

Introduction

Why are African Americans an increasingly minority group in baseball? In this era of social, political, and economic progress we are currently in, and with the push towards equity for all, why have African Americans become a greater minority in "America's pastime." Does the reasoning follow along with the failure of our nation to live up to its creed of "liberty and justice for all?" Certainly one can start there; however, the story does not come close to ending there. Numerous other factors play into the reasons why this decline has continued. One can go back to the foundation of the Negro Leagues, and the fact that blacks in America had a completely separate league to see that baseball was not inclusive of blacks from the beginning. Institutional issues also played a factor in the declining interest among blacks in baseball. A prime example that can be pointed to is the 2009 Howard Baseball team that managed to play only two games during that particular season,¹ and the subsequent folding of several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) occurring around the same time. This decline coincided with the adoption of Title IX in 1972, which led to an increase in adoption of, and funding directed to, women's sports teams. One can also point to Federal Government policies, such as racial covenants and redlining, for the destruction of the African American community, which has proven to be vital for growing African American player interest in the game. These same policies led to multifamily dwellings, and less greenspace, thus limiting access to baseball diamonds among African Americans. Basketball courts were a more common occurrence instead in these areas. All of the above contribute to the self-fulfilling prophecy of a decreasing influence of African American players in higher levels of baseball. A recent study has shown that black players made up just 6.2 percent of Major League Baseball (MLB) opening day rosters, an all-time low, down from 18 percent in the 1990s

However, despite the number of black American players hovering near all-time lows, not all hope is lost when it comes to getting African American players back to the major leagues. For example, MLB recently decided they would sponsor an event titled the HBCU swingman classic, in partnership with the MLB Players Association Youth Development program, headlined by Ken Griffey Jr., to showcase 50 HBCU players in a tournament played in May in Montgomery, Alabama. Furthermore, CC Sabathia's organization, PitchIn, aimed at promoting education and athletics in inner cities, had 4 players drafted in the top 5 picks in the most recent MLB draft.

Reasoning and Rationale

¹ <https://blackcollegenines.com/category/hbcu-baseball-history/hbcu-baseballs-past/>

There are many reasons as to why I would like students to have exposure to the material in this Unit. My primary hope is that students will be inspired to explore the sport, or other sports, and really seek to understand why their demographics are not represented in said sport, and hopefully get outside of their comfort zone. Additionally, I would like students to be exposed to the rich history of African Americans in baseball. Furthermore, I would like for students to make the connection between injustices on the national level in inner cities, such as redlining and urban renewal, and to see the implications that it has at the local level as it relates to baseball. My hope is that this will further influence students that their vote and their voice, matters.

Student Demographics

East Mecklenburg High School is a large urban school district with an incredibly diverse population. The school population is 20% white, 38% black, 33% Hispanic, 7% Asian, and 2% that are of multiple races. This makeup allows East Meck to be one of the most diverse schools within Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. The school is very intentional in making sure that all cultures are celebrated and valued within the school community as illustrated through our Ujamaa festival last school year.

This demographic information is important to point out because it shows how my students will be able to relate to the inequities which have led to the decline of black Americans access to baseball. The diversity of my student body also provides opportunities to capitalize on how students across racial, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, and linguistic lines can play a role in recognizing the historic value that African Americans present when it comes to examining African Americans in baseball.

Unit Goals

The goals I hope to achieve through this unit are many, and my hope is that they will have a wide ranging impact on those who experience it. My first goal is that by engaging with this work, doing the research into it, and having the conversations that come along with it, I will gain a greater appreciation of the tremendous impact that African Americans have had on the game of baseball. My second goal is that this work will have the same impact on my students and that they will learn to recognize and confront structural and social issues that fail to be equitable towards minority groups, no matter the race or ethnicity. The third goal of the unit is that my students will gain knowledge, empathy, and understanding for those that do not have the same opportunities for success as others, not just as it relates to baseball, but in society in general. And ultimately, my fourth goal is that this unit will have a wider impact than at just the local, school based level. I would like to have students engage in their community to actively address injustices being committed today against minority groups to bring about positive change, which will ultimately help our country to come closer to living up to the ideals our founding fathers espoused.

Content Research

Implicit Bias in Baseball

When exploring the reasons why African Americans are not engaged with baseball, there are several factors that push African Americans away from the game. Among the first is simply the implicit bias that exists in baseball amongst managers and scouts, among others involved with the game. One such example is a process called stacking, whereby spatial location on the field determines the worth of the playing positions. For example, a catcher is seen as more valuable than an outfielder due to his proximity to game action. Because of stereotypes related to athleticism, black athletes were commonly thought of as outfielders, while whites and latino players more commonly played the infield. This is a limiting factor for African American entry into baseball because it limits African Americans to “marginal” positions within the game, which would naturally decrease player interest in pursuing the game.

Further evidence of this implicit bias can be seen in the form of exit discrimination, which serves to end African American careers before those of their white counterparts. In Jibou's 1988 study titled *Racial Inequity in a Public Arena: The Case of Professional Baseball*, Jibou found that race does play a role in career lengths, with white players having longer careers than black players.

This implicit bias can further be seen when analyzing wins above replacement (WAR) metrics for black players. From 1974 to 1999, black players had a higher WAR than white players. In other words, their value to their team is greater on the whole. However, at the same time they are deemed as more expendable than their white counterparts, are subject to a higher standard to stay in the league and are more likely to be placed in positions of less responsibility once they get to MLB.

Lastly, discipline structures within the minor leagues also have proven to be disadvantageous towards black players. One scout referred to such structures as “inbred racism.”

The majority of the people who should have been afforded the opportunity are the main people that get let go. The discipline structures in which some of the coaches [in minor league baseball] use are way beyond the ability of the athlete ... Well what I mean is that you get some coaches who's more interested in the discipline of the athlete than the performance of the athlete. If you are able to play at a high level, they still want you to be able to sort of like a drill sergeant in the Marines. They want you to abide by some of the toughest codes of conduct that's far beyond the ability to play.²

Certainly, with all of these factors working against them, blacks would be far less likely to consider a career in MLB.

² Spearman, 215

Internal Issues

Additional issues have further led to a decline of black access to baseball. One such issue has to do with black leadership doing their part to ensure students are able to meet graduation requirements to even qualify to play the game at the collegiate level. One such scout went on record to discuss his frustrations with the issue in the Atlanta area:

You are talking about Black counselors in high school. Black coaches in high school and predominantly Black high schools in the Atlanta area, especially Dekalb county, and they couldn't even help these kids with grades and good SAT ACT scores to get into school ... And the same thing happens with kids that have talent in band, they're not helping those kids that have grades and have band talents to get into school.³

Ringleader's frustration was with significant people in the Black community who could not assist these young athletes in getting admitted to college.⁴

Academics, and the cost of exposure to scouts, have further limited players' access to higher levels of the game, namely the minor and major leagues. Expensive travel leagues have proven to be a limiting factor. Per the scout Ringleader, such minor league and college teams are pre-determined simply based on exposure in these travel leagues, and scouts' investment in the athletes that attend these leagues.

All those teams are picked because of kids that they have seen in the past. That are ranked on Perfect Game's list, on Baseball America (national publications of amateur rankings) and scouts are just afraid that Joe Smith is the number 15 best player in America, they don't have the guts to say that he's not that good. They're going to include him on there just to cover their butt.⁵

Lack of Resources

A lack of access to resources is yet another barrier that is holding black athletes back from participation in the major leagues. A lack of training facilities, one on one coaching, and access to a college education, and their baseball teams, have limited upward mobility within baseball. The monetary aspect of baseball further exacerbates these inequities. Some inner-city families cannot afford even the most basic necessities to even play the game.

³ Spearman, 215

⁴ Spearman, 216

⁵ Spearman, 216

When combined with federal policies such as redlining and urban renewal, designed to scatter black communities, it's clear to see that the lack of resources in the game and in the inner cities led to the lack of interest in the game. Two instrumental institutions for black Americans in baseball were little league organizations and college baseball at HBCUs. As late as the early 2000s, HBCUs began to eliminate their baseball programs, and with the breaking apart of inner city communities, Little League organizing, transportation, and a building of baseball fundamentals became increasingly challenging in the inner cities. This perfect storm impacted black player development, and visibility with scouts, which could provide them with an avenue for success. Black Americans were essentially told that they didn't have a place in baseball, and to look to other sports, without explicitly being told this.

Furthermore, the shift in baseball towards Latin American players serves to take more resources away from African Americans aspiring for greatness. Latin Americans not only have incredible talent, they also are advantageous for MLB from an economic standpoint. Players from Latin America, specifically the Dominican Republic, cannot hold out for money like those in the amateur draft, thus making them cheaper and more attractive to the League, in addition to the fact that Latin American players can be under contract starting at the age of 15. An unfortunate byproduct in this shift is that African Americans are increasingly lacking when it comes to visibility amongst MLB scouts.

Options breed mistrust

One cannot underestimate the fact that black athletes have options in sports. Elite athletes who pursue multiple sports throughout high school begin a domino effect which increases black marginalization in MLB. In a majority of cases, scouts and organizations have gone on record to say that they themselves do not always go about things in the correct manner when it comes to consideration of talent. For example, multi-sport athletes are oftentimes not considered when it comes to drafting future professionals due to their supposed lack of commitment and dedication to the game. There is really only one circumstance where the multi-sport athlete is tolerated in MLB, and that is when that player is still profitable to the team that drafts them. A great example of this scenario playing out is the case of Russell Wilson. Wilson was drafted three times, however, since he was not actively engaged with baseball, the Texas Rangers were still able to make a profit when they held his draft rights.⁶ This is not the case for those from the Dominican and Cuba, who continue to be paid by their drafted clubs as they are continuously engaged with the sport.

Lack of Relatability

⁶ Spearman, 221

Yet another challenge facing baseball when it comes to recruitment of African American players has to do with relatability. The fact of the matter is that many African Americans simply cannot see themselves when looking at MLB. Marketability also plays a role in limiting black athletes from being able to identify a future for themselves in the game. As one scout laments:

We should do a better job marketing. But again it is hard to tell Nike who they should market and who they shouldn't market, especially if they give Kobe or Lebron \$120 million.... Listen, African American kids are going to go out and they are going to buy the newest Kobe's, or the newest Lebron 's. Well you can't hardly sell those guys on buying the newest Matt Kemp's, you know a pair of spikes. McCutchen spikes.⁷

Naturally such associations will lead African American players to basketball and football, although social pressures are certainly a contributing factor as well.

Cultural differences could also contribute to a declining interest among African Americans in baseball. Some see the game as being too slow paced. One scout even went as far as referring to baseball as a “country club sport.” Especially now in the 21st century, everyone wants everything right away, right now, and for many, baseball is not able to give them that immediate gratification. Structural issues within the professional ranks also steer toward delayed gratification. MLB currently has a rule in place that a player must stay in college three years prior to entering the draft. Once drafted, the millions of dollars other sports can offer instantly may not come for baseball players. Players are paid based on where they were drafted, and a great majority of players have to work their way through the minor leagues before they have the opportunity to potentially receive a big money, guaranteed contract. This delayed gratification makes it hard for baseball to compete with sports like basketball and football, where people can turn pro after a few years, and get millions instantly.

Charting a path forward

While there cannot be any doubt that challenges exist when it comes to getting African Americans engaged with baseball, there have been recent developments and associations that have been shown to draw more African Americans to the game. One cannot underestimate the influence that African American players have had on players who continue to matriculate to MLB. Such was the case with Torii Hunter, who credits Andre Dawson with being the inspiration for him to learn the game from his grandfather. The same can be said for Ken Griffey Jr, who had his father as a role model to look up to and follow around to learn the ins and outs of the game.

Also, MLB has recently decided to reinvest in bringing about an increased interest in baseball in inner cities. Corporate sponsors such as Nike have also invested in such initiatives. One of the

⁷ Spearman 216

major programs is the Reviving Baseball in inner cities (RBI) program, which is focused on not just improving a youth's athletic ability, but also improving their academic performance to move them towards a more successful future. In addition to the focus on the individual, the RBI program makes great efforts to level the playing field for African Americans to increase their interest in baseball. Examples of initiatives taken up by RBI include no cost affiliation with the national organization, equipment donations, cash grants to improve infrastructure, coaches training seminars, training for coaches, scholarships up to \$20000 for participants in the program, and paid accommodations for the RBI Institute for leaders of the program. The organization also holds yearly tournaments to get their players exposure to professional scouts.

Despite the progress, there is still a way to go for baseball in its recruitment of African American players. MLB still funds Latino players at three times the rate that they fund African American players⁸. Many would also argue that the RBI and Little League programs haven't expanded their influence far enough into Rural America to truly affect change in African American participation in the game. Marginalizations, microaggressions, lack of community support, and a lack of relatability, have driven African Americans away from baseball. Baseball is trying to reconcile with these African American professionals. There is a lot of work to be done to make sure black Americans have equitable conditions in baseball. Baseball programs in inner cities are a good place to start, but there is much more that needs resolving. The long path to the major leagues is incompatible with the wants and needs of today's youth. The system needs reform to increase its membership and satisfy the modern American ballplayer. Too often African Americans do not fit the mold of what a baseball player is supposed to look like; emotionless, non-controversial, non-activist. Thus, they cannot feel welcome in their own skin. Internal and economic challenges make it difficult enough for African Americans to get to the show. Systemic issues within the game are currently making it almost impossible for them to stay.

Teaching Strategies

Background Lecture and Research

The start of this unit has to begin with the rich history that is Negro League Baseball. A mini lecture about the formation of the Negro Leagues, its origins, and its accomplishments moving forward. The purpose of this would be for students to see that there is a rich history when it comes to African Americans in baseball. Students will then research teams of the Negro Leagues, including information on where the team played, when the team played in the Negro Leagues, team accomplishments and accolades, as well as two key figures from each team, and their importance in the game.

⁸ <https://MLB.com/rbi>

The second day of the Unit will focus on the systemic inequities facing African Americans in baseball. A mini lecture explaining the inequities faced, while also asking students for their personal experience. Students will have reading comprehension questions too for the assignment, “Why Baseball is Losing Black America” ([Appendix IX](#))

Case Studies

On the culminating days of the unit, students will examine reasons why certain athletes did not pursue baseball by looking at case studies of specific athletes. Additionally students will learn about the initiatives in place to bring baseball back to the inner cities. Students will also identify a Negro Leagues player who should make the Hall of Fame, and make a poster, speech, poem, video montage and so on to justify to the class why their individual belongs in the Hall of Fame, while also pointing out which current athlete their player compares to, and why this is an accurate comparison.

Instructional Implementation

Day 1 and 2: For the first days of the Unit, students will be led through a brief presentation about the origins of the Negro Leagues, and will then conduct research about the teams playing in the Negro Leagues, including the following information: Where did the team play previously?

1. When did this team play in the Negro Leagues? What league or division did they play in?
2. What were some of the team's accomplishments/noteworthy achievements? Identify and describe 2
3. Identify two key players from the team and explain their achievements. Make the case as to why your team deserves to be respected. Students will then begin to watch *Shadow Ball*, a documentary detailing the history of baseball, and its challenges for minority players ([Appendix II](#))

Day 3: The lesson will begin with students defining Baseball Vocabulary ([Appendix IV](#)), so students have an understanding of the statistical analysis and its meaning before they immerse themselves in the statistics they will research on Negro League Players, and their current MLB equivalent ([Appendix V](#)). Students will then be asked to speak with 3 other students, and fill out the graphic organizer about players they have not previously researched ([Appendix VI](#)). Students will then partner up with one another, analyze the statistics, and rank their top 3 pitchers, and their top 3 hitters, based on the information they have gathered. As a class we will develop a consensus as to who was the greatest pitcher and hitter studied from the class.

Day 4: Students will watch a video on Henry Aaron with guided questions. The class will then take notes on inequities in baseball ([Appendix VII](#)), highlighting specifically how these inequities impact people of color. Students will then read and answer comprehension questions

on why baseball is losing blacks in America. Students will then look at what is being done today to help remedy this situation by looking at initiatives such as the MLB's Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities RBI program, CC Sabathia's PitCCh in program by answering the following questions: What is the purpose of the organization, how are they engaged with youth, what are they doing to bring African American access to baseball back, and to what extent do you feel the organization is effective in achieving its goal to end inequities in baseball? ([Appendix VIII](#))

Day 5 and 6: The unit will culminate with students engaging in a Socratic Seminar focused around the following question: How could one argue that economic and social injustices throughout the 20th century have impacted African American access to baseball? Students will have several assessment options including essays, Newspapers, Videos and journalistic representations to demonstrate their preparation for the seminar.

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Appendix I - Implementing Teaching Standards

NCES.AAS.H.2.1 - Analyze how key turning points in history have affected the lives of African Americans.

NCES.AAS.H.2.2 - Explain how key historical figures have shaped the lives of African Americans.

NCES.AAS.H.2.3 - Explain how various forms of resistance by individuals and groups have influenced change in the lives of African Americans.

NCES.AAS.E.1.2 - Explain how economic policies have impacted the socio-economic status of African Americans.

NCES.AAS.C&G.1.2 - Analyze the relationship between African-Americans and other groups in terms of conflict and cooperation in the pursuit of individual freedoms and civil rights.

NCES.AAS.C&G.1.5 - Analyze civic participation of African Americans in terms of leadership and strategic planning at various levels.

NCES.AAS.C.1.1 - Analyze the impact of assimilation, stereotypes, and oppression on the lives of African Americans.

Appendix II- Negro League Teams research and How Baseball is losing Black America
[The Negro Leagues | MLB.com](https://www.mlb.com/history/negro-leagues)

Using the Website above, choose 1 team from the Negro Leagues to research, and present on, by creating a Google Slides Presentation:

Include the following in your presentation:

Where did the team play previously?

When did this team play in the Negro Leagues? What league or division did they play in?

What were some of the team's accomplishments/noteworthy achievements? Identify and describe 2

Identify two key players from the team and explain their achievements.

How Baseball is losing Black America Reading and Questions

Directions: Use the [website](#) to answer the questions below

1. What were some injustices faced by Preston Wilson during his time in MLB? Provide 2 examples

2. Why does Wilson say that MLB's response to the George Floyd murder wasn't enough?

3. What percent of African Americans played in MLB during the 1980s? What's the percentage today?

4. Why is it easier to develop and improve in basketball than it is in baseball?

5. How can scholarship awards dissuade people from playing baseball?

6. Provide 3 examples of factors that limit African American access to MLB

7. "If you're pulling all your talent from Ivy League schools, and Ivy League schools have racism baked in, your process has racism baked in," Wilson says. Explain how this quote impacts African American ballplayers

8. Provide 2-3 examples of what MLB can do to increase black access to baseball

Appendix III-Shadow Ball Video Guide

Shadow Ball

Student Handout

Introduction:

1. How does baseball build community?

Baseball:

2. What was happening historically in the U.S. and around the world at this time?

The Fifth Inning:

3. Define: Shadowball

Like We Invented the Game:

4. What was the social climate at this time?

National Tonic:

5. Why couldn't John McGraw sign the Black players he wanted to in his lifetime? What support do you find for why he couldn't sign the Black players he wanted to? Midnight Rider:

6. Why were Negro Leagues statistics estimated?

7. Why were there virtually no records of Negro Leagues accomplishments in baseball?

You Lucky Bum:

8. How did baseball compare with other jobs available during the Great Depression?

Carrying the News:

9. Negro Leagues players sometimes played four baseball games in one day. In what other ways were the playing conditions of Negro Leagues and Major Leagues players different? a.

_____ b. _____ c. _____
d. _____ e. _____ f. _____

Plain Prejudice:

14. How did society treat Negro Leagues players differently than Major Leagues players?

15. What innovations/promotional things did baseball teams do to survive during these lean times?

16. What was the “old gentlemen’s agreement”? How did this affect baseball and society’s attitudes?

17. Define: Fascism and give an example. Heroes:

18. How were the Kansas City Monarchs and the Yankees alike?

19. Why did the Negro Leagues use portable lighting systems several years before the major leagues?

I Ain’t Sorry:

20. Why did Negro Leagues players travel to other countries during the off-season?

21. Define: Anti-Semitism and give an example.

22. How was the treatment of Jewish people/baseball players similar to the treatment of Black and Negro Leagues players? How was the treatment different?

The Best:

23. The Baseball Hall of Fame opened in 1939, were any Negro Leagues players inducted as this time? Why or why not?

24. If 4/5 of people surveyed in 1938 had no objections to playing with Black players, then why weren’t Black players allowed into the Major Leagues at this time?

Appendix IV - Baseball Vocabulary

Baseball Vocabulary: For each term listed below, describe what the term means, and provide a sentence that shows how the term relates to baseball. 1 is done for you as an example

1. Batting Average: A measure of how many times a batter gets on base for each at bat they take. Tony Gwynn has a .343 batting average.

- 2.RBI's (Runs Batted In)
- 3.Fielding Percentage
- 4.Home Runs
- 5.WAR (Wins above Replacement)
- 6.OBP (On base percentage)
- 7.ERA (Earned Run Average)
- 8.Strikeouts per 9 innings (K/9)
- 9.Walks
- 10.WHIP (Walks and Hits per innings pitched)

Appendix V- Comparing Negro League and MLB players

https://www.espn.com/blog/sweetspot/post/_id/55331/ten-greatest-negro-leaguers-of-all-time - Site to compare players

<https://www.baseball-reference.com/> - Good Site for Player Stats

Directions: Using the two websites above, conduct statistical analysis on 3 Negro League players and their MLB Equivalents:

Include the following stats in your research(Might not be able to find everything for Negro League Players, as its hard to find records of some of this information):

If researching position players:

Batting Average

RBI's (Runs Batted In)

Fielding Percentage

Home Runs

WAR (Wins above Replacement)

OBP (On base percentage)

Accolades: All Star Teams, Gold Gloves, Silver Slugger, MVP etc

If Researching Pitchers:

Wins and Losses

ERA (Earned Run Average)

Strikeouts/Walks Ratio

WHIP (Walks and Hits per innings pitched)

Innings Pitched - Look at this by individual season

Accolades: Cy Young Awards, No hitters, World Series Titles, MVPs

When done with your research, write a paragraph response to the following question: Who are the top 2-3 players you researched? What makes them stand out as the top players. You will need to give 2 examples per player

Appendix VI- Negro League and MLB graphic organizer

Position Players Graphic Organizer

Player	Batting Avg	RBI	Fielding %	HR	WAR	OBP	Accolades

Pitchers Graphic Organizer

Player	Win/Loss Record	ERA	Strikeouts/ Walks Ratio	WHIP	Innings Pitched	Accolades

Appendix VII- Henry Aaron Video questions

Henry Aaron [Video](#) Questions

1. Where did Aaron grow up, and what challenges did he face? Provide 2 examples.
2. Who did Aaron originally play for?
3. How much did the Braves pay to acquire Aaron?
4. How did Aaron justify the racial injustice he faced?
5. How did Aaron get his chance to play? What did he do with this chance?
6. What was special about Aaron's season in 1957?
7. What were some of his accomplishments? List at least 5
8. Aaron's career began in the Negro Leagues in 1950, where he hit 5 home runs in the 3 months he was there. MLB is only including stats until 1948 in their records. Should his records from the Negro Leagues count? What could the implications be for other players if they don't count?

Appendix VIII- Increasing African Americans involvement in baseball

Directions: Use the websites linked below to answer the questions

<https://www.mlb.com/rbi>

<https://www.pitcch.org>

1. What is the purpose of the organization?
2. How are they engaged with youth?
3. What are they doing to bring African American access to baseball back?
4. To what extent do you feel the organization is effective in achieving its goal to end inequities in baseball?

Appendix IX - Pedagogical Teacher Resources

[Origins of the Negro Leagues](#)

[Systemic Inequities in Baseball](#) The above presentations will serve as background notes for students on Days 1 and 2 of the Unit. The Rubric Below will serve as how students will be graded on the culminating activity.

Socratic Seminar Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Discussion Skills	<p>Speaks loudly and clearly.</p> <p>Talks directly to other students (rather than the teacher).</p> <p>Stays focused on the discussion and contributes to new lines of thinking amongst peers.</p> <p>Invites other people into the discussion.</p> <p>Shares “air time” with others.</p> <p>References the remarks of others.</p>	<p>Speaks at an appropriate level.</p> <p>May occasionally direct comments to the teacher.</p> <p>Makes an effort to stay focused on the discussion.</p> <p>Is aware of sharing “air time” with others and may invite them into the conversation.</p> <p>May reference the remarks of others.</p>	<p>Unsuccessfully attempts to speak at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Directs comments to the teacher often.</p> <p>May become distracted during the discussion.</p> <p>Mostly shares “air time” with other students, but does not invite them into the conversation.</p> <p>Inaccurately or indistinctly references the remarks of others.</p>	<p>Student cannot be heard.</p> <p>Only directs comments to the teacher.</p> <p>Makes no effort to focus on the discussion.</p> <p>Dominates the conversation, and does not invite others into the discussion.</p> <p>Makes no attempt to reference the remarks of others.</p>
Civility and Respect	<p>Listens quietly, does not interrupt, and stays in assigned seat without fidgeting.</p> <p>Makes eye contact with the speaker and waits for his/her turn to speak.</p> <p>Addresses others in a civil manner, using appropriate language and a collegial tone.</p> <p>Always demonstrates a concern for the feelings of others.</p>	<p>Listens to others quietly and stays in assigned seat.</p> <p>Waits his/her turn to speak and tries to make eye contact with the speaker.</p> <p>Uses appropriate language and may use a collegial tone.</p> <p>Regularly demonstrates a concern for the feelings of others.</p>	<p>Interrupts once or twice, but comments are relevant.</p> <p>Mostly stays in assigned seat without fidgeting.</p> <p>Listens to others, but does not try to make eye contact with the speaker.</p> <p>Struggles to wait for his/her turn to speak.</p> <p>Mostly uses appropriate language.</p> <p>Sometimes demonstrates a concern for the feelings of others.</p>	<p>Interrupts often by whispering, making comments or noises.</p> <p>Moves around and distracts others.</p> <p>Does not listen to others and does not wait his/her turn to speak.</p> <p>Uses inappropriate language and/or an unfriendly tone.</p> <p>Does not demonstrate a concern for the feelings of others.</p>

Participation	Shows active listening. Offers clarification or follow-up that extends the conversation. Volunteers at least three times in the discussion, and willingly tries to answer questions she/he is asked.	Shows active listening. Tries to extend the discussion occasionally. Volunteers once or twice and willingly tries to answer all questions she/he is asked.	Listens to the conversation. Does not volunteer to extend the discussion or offer clarification, but willingly tries to answer questions she/he is asked. Volunteers to speak at least once.	Appears not to be listening or following the discussion. Does not willingly participate in the conversation.
Text Analysis	Demonstrates a deep knowledge of the text and the question. Clearly references specific parts of the text to support reasoning. Provides relevant and insightful comments. Student's own thinking becomes more complex and thorough with added perspectives and reflection.	Demonstrates a general knowledge of the text and the question. Occasionally references text to support reasoning. Provides relevant comments. Thinking is mostly clear and organized.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the text and the question. Rarely references the text, or may reference text incorrectly. Relies upon his/her opinion, and less on the text to drive his/her comments. Student is somewhat confused, but attempts to find clarification.	Demonstrates a scarce knowledge of the text and the question. Does not reference text. Comments are off-topic, inaccurate or irrelevant. Student's thinking is disorganized, and he/she does not make an attempt to clarify information.
Preparation	Comes to the seminar prepared, with notes and a marked or annotated text and/or seminar prep sheet	Comes to the seminar mostly prepared, with some notes and may bring a marked or annotated text	Student is less prepared, with few notes and no marked/annotated text.	Comes to the seminar ill-prepared with no notes and little understanding of the text.

Appendix X Student Resources

Florio, John, and Shapiro, Ouisie. *One Nation Under Baseball: How the 1960s Collided with the National Pastime*. United States, Nebraska, 2017.

This short and easy read serves as a great introduction for students to the history of the negro leagues, as well as how politicized baseball became during the civil rights movement