



Nothing Without Us: Bringing Justice to Public Policy

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Introduction

When I heard the horrific news of what happened to George Floyd, I was outraged as so many others, thinking why and how does this continue to happen? Some said the protests and looting that followed was reminiscent of what was seen during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Again, it was a culmination of so many injustices that African-Americans were experiencing. It wasn't just police brutality and killings. It was also inequitable education, access to adequate medical care, job opportunities and housing. Even years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we are still fighting for these rights to be equitable.

Where do we go from here? How do we help our children? I think about some of my students and my own child and worry about what freedoms they really have and what opportunities will exist for them because of it. First, I believe, we have to teach our children the history of what has happened as an example of what they can or shouldn't do. We have to teach them what the government's role is in protecting them and their role in enforcing that. This unit seeks to lay this foundation of understanding public policy and to teach students their role in this process.

Rationale

African-Americans have been fighting for civil rights for years. Even though some legislation was supposed to protect African-Americans, many times this legislation had loopholes that dismantled the rights the legislation was supposed to give. For instance, the 13th amendment was supposed to free African-Americans from being enslaved but this amendment also had rhetoric which said criminals were not free. This led to many African-Americans becoming criminalized and being enslaved for the sole purpose of continuing to be forced to give labor for free. Another example we should consider is *Brown v. Board of Education* that states segregation in schools isn't legal. This did not occur and many schools were still segregated.

When we think about the government's sole purpose is to protect its constituents, and the history it has in not doing that for African-Americans, students need to understand what this means for their lives today and what

this has meant for African-Americans historically. This very history and awareness are often lacking in school curriculum, presenting a need for this unit to be taught. These thought processes help children explore their own connection to the past, empower them to imagine possible futures, and encourage them to be critical readers of historical narratives.

Additionally, my school is 96% African-American which makes the Civil Rights Movement especially relevant to their lives.

This unit provides a foundation to understanding the role policy plays in systemic racism and how people fight to change these policies. Living in a disenfranchised community, it is crucial for the students in my school to understand this history, along with the role they play in the public policy process. Many times, communities who have experienced multigenerational poverty have lost hope in the public policy process to address their everyday needs. Sometimes, people do not understand this process or the role they play in it. Becoming aware of this process and the history of how everyday people have fought for policies to better their lives, will hopefully lead students to feel empowered to fight for justice as well.

This unit will be taught to 2nd graders in a Chicago Public School. It will be taught over the course of 6 weeks for 30 minutes daily. Students will learn the history of African-Americans since slavery in order to guide them to put in context the systemic racism still prevalent today. Oppressed people can often feel as if they are failing by society's standards. When history is used to put this into perspective, oppressed people can understand that civil rights were denied to them and that is the true failure, not themselves. In this unit, students will not only learn about the events that were catalysts to the civil rights movement, they will also learn about the actions African-Americans took to push back from government policies that denied their civil rights.

Content Objectives

Government

Three Branches of Government

The government is organized into three different branches, the legislative, judicial and executive branches. The legislative branch is responsible for making laws and is also called the U.S. Congress which is divided into 2 chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate. In order for a law, legislation, to be passed, both houses have to vote by a majority rule. Then the legislation goes to the President who can either approve the legislation or veto it. The responsibility of the executive branch is to enforce legislation. Members of the executive branch are the President, Vice President, the Cabinet and multiple executive departments. Lastly, the judicial branch has the responsibility to apply and interpret laws through the court. ¹

Public Policy Process How a law/bill is passed

The public policy process has 5 steps. First, a problem or an issue needs to be identified. This can be done by a U.S. Representative or a civilian. The next step is policy formulation where possible solutions are considered and written into a bill. Next, the policy, or bill, has to be adopted. This includes garnering support from the community and from other U.S. Representatives. Once it is voted on and approved, it goes to the House for

approval. The House votes on it and once approved, the bill goes to the President for approval. After the policy, bill, has been adopted or approved by the President, it becomes a law and has to be assessed to ensure it's serving its' purpose and is enforced by the government. ²

African-American History

Africans were forced to leave from Africa and brought to America by slave traders and were then enslaved. Slavery started around 1619 and did not end until after the Civil War in 1865. The Civil War began, 1861, as a result of long-standing controversy over the enslavement of Black people. The war was fought between Northern U.S. states who were loyal to the union and Southern U.S. states that seceded from the union to form the Confederate States of America. The Civil War caused the Reconstruction Era 1863-1877 in which Blacks gained many rights. During this time, in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which changed the legal status of some slaves to free slaves. ³

At the end of the Civil War, 1865, slavery was abolished with the 13th amendment. The ending of the civil war also led to the 14th and 15th amendments being passed and ratified. The 14th amendment, 1868, gave freed slaves legal rights and the 15th amendment, 1870, gave freed slaves the right to vote. It is important to note that although the 13th amendment abolished slavery, all states did not honor this. It wasn't until June 19, 1965 that the last state with slaves, Texas, abolished slavery. Additionally, many Whites did not like Blacks with this new freedom and so Jim Crow Laws and black codes were enacted which mandated racial segregation, 1865. After Some laws were overturned such as Black men's right to vote. New restrictions were added to eliminate this right such as the literacy test and ancestry rule (if your ancestor was a slave before 1867, you did not have the right to vote). ⁴

When slavery was abolished after the Civil War, many states did not honor this and continued to enslave Africans. Additionally, the 13th amendment had a loop-hole which led to criminalizing African-Americans. The 13th amendment abolishes slavery except as punishment for a crime. Essentially, slaves were free but if you were a criminal, you were not free. Many African-Americans/Africans were charged with crimes that were in realty minor infractions or nothing at all. In addition, they were given strict penalties. For these very infractions, white people were not charged or the charges were not as strict. This was an avenue to keep African-Americans/Africans enslaved. This practice of charging African-Americans with crimes at higher rates than Caucasians and giving stiffer penalties to African-Americans in comparison to Caucasians is still prevalent today.

Blacks continued to face discrimination as white supremacy continued to be enforced through legislation. One such incident occurred in 1892 in which Homer Plessy, an African-American, refused to sit in a train car for Blacks only. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the "separate but equal" doctrine with Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896. This enabled states to ensure segregation between Blacks and Whites such as in education, restaurants, hospitals, churches, drinking fountains and swimming pools. These facilities were separate but never equal as Blacks were given subpar facilities and resources. Even after Blacks served in World War I and World War II, they returned home to segregation and discrimination. ⁵

After the Civil War and during the Reconstruction Era, Jim Crow laws were enacted. This further denied African-Americans/Africans civil rights. Many southern states still wanted to benefit from free labor to continue profiting from their agriculture economy. They also did not want African-Americans/Africans to be able to fight back and they were violently punished if they did. This is also why Jim Crow Laws were enacted.

This heinous treatment continued for almost another century. During this time, African-Americans served in both World War I and World War II. After serving time, they were still discriminated against and violently punished, many times this meant lynching, if they fought back or “disobeyed”. Civil rights were still denied to them. Over time, African-Americans got tired of segregation and being discriminated against. This led to people wanting to fight back, even if it meant violent repercussions.

Coalitions were formed in attempt to combat segregation and discrimination against Blacks by putting pressure on the government to change legislation that made this possible. They wanted equal rights and full citizenship for all Blacks. One such organization was formed in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). One of their first victories was won with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that made it illegal for public school facilities to be segregated and said “separate but equal” is inherently not equal. This ramped up the fight for African-Americans equal rights because this legislation was not enforced. Many public school facilities were still not equal and they still were not desegregated. Mainly in part because the courts did not specify how schools should desegregate and the ruling only applied to public schools. ⁶

After this time, violence against Blacks increased. Many whites wanted Blacks to remain inferior and act accordingly. This was demonstrated in the brutal killing of 14-year-old Emmett Till in August 1955. He was from Chicago visiting family in Mississippi and was accused of “whistling” at a white woman. He was kidnapped, beaten, shot and thrown in a river tied to a cotton gin fan that was wrapped around his neck. He was found in the river and only identified by an initialed ring given to him by his late father who served in World War II.⁷ His funeral was in Chicago and an open casket because his mother wanted the world to see what was done to her son. This made national news. His murderers were found not guilty by an all-White court. This resulted in increased action for civil rights. Mass demonstrations including sit-ins, marches, boycotts, nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience and rallies garnered national attention which eventually led to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Civil Rights Movement-Fighting for Equal Rights

Montgomery Bus Boycott

In Southern states, Blacks were not allowed to sit where they wanted on the bus. In addition, they had to enter the front to pay but had to immediately exit and enter through the back in order to sit down at the back of the bus. If a White person wanted their seat or if all seats were taken and a White person needed a seat, Black people had to stand up and give their seat to the White person. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, activists were successful at passing a petition that did not reserve seats for White people but this ordinance was ignored. In response to this, activists planned a one-day boycott to have this ordinance enforced but the courts refused. Another boycott was planned which lasted a week and resulted in city officials compromising on the ordinance and only reserving two seats for Whites in the front and a row of seats for Blacks in the back. ⁸

This was an example of organized action that actually led to a triumph and the lessons learned through this were used to help organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Residents argued that Blacks made up for more than 75% of the passengers, yet were consistently forced to give up their seats to White passengers. One occurrence happened to Jo Ann Robinson, a professor at an Alabama college who was from Cleveland, OH. She sat at the front of the bus and although it was nearly empty, she was forced to give up her seat. She was so humiliated, she just got off the bus. This prompted her to work with the NAACP to demand justice not only for how Blacks were treated as passengers but also because Blacks were not hired by the bus company and there

were less bus stops in Black neighborhoods compared to White neighborhoods. The result of this was only that bus drivers would stop on every corner in Black neighborhoods as they do in White neighborhoods. ⁹

Other boycotts had been planned in other cities as well but change still was not evident. The Women's Council, a Black women professional organization in Montgomery, AL planned a bus boycott but needed the right person and timing to get the national attention and enough people to actually execute the boycott. Claudette Colvin was almost this person. She was 15 years old, African-American, and was arrested when she refused to surrender her seat in the middle of the bus. Rosa Parks heard of this and was interested in helping as she was a NAACP Youth Council advisor and had been thrown off a bus, eleven years earlier, for refusing to enter through the back door. Jo Ann Robinson, Parks and E. D. Nixon (former head of the local NAACP) wanted to use this opportunity to take Colvin's case to federal court. When they found out she was pregnant, they believed she wasted the "right person" because she probably would have been pegged as a "bad girl" and consequently the true issue at hand, equality and civil rights, would not have been heard. ¹⁰

Rosa Parks continued working with the NAACP and on Thursday, December 1, 1955 she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on the middle section of a bus. Nixon heard of this and began mobilizing people to help get Rosa out of jail and to fight to change the segregation law. Jo Ann Robinson also worked with the Women's Council and began disseminating information so that Monday, the day of Rosa Parks' court date, they could boycott the buses. Very few black people rode buses, instead they walked and got rides, some from Black owned taxi companies who agreed to let them ride for the same price as the bus fare. Rosa Parks was found guilty. Many Black leaders and preachers had a community meeting and decided they needed an organization and a leader to continue in their fight. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr was nominated as the leader and they named their organization, Montgomery Improvement Association. The activists were worried if continuing the boycott would be possible. Many whites responded violently but Dr. King believed they should practice nonviolent resistance. The boycott lasted a year, ending on December 21, 1956 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregation on buses was unconstitutional in November 1956. ¹¹

Public School Integration

Adults were not the only people who made sacrifices to fight for civil rights. An example of this is the case of the "Little Rock Nine." These teenagers were courageous and brave as they helped pave the way for school integration in the south. Although *Brown v. Board of Education* said schools were supposed to be integrated; this did not happen. For example, in 1957, Little Rock's schools were still not integrated. Central High School was still all White and didn't want to accept Black students but the president of the U.S. at the time, Dwight D. Eisenhower, forced the school to accept nine African-American students. One of these students, Elizabeth Eckford, was met with rifles when she tried to enter the school by herself. White students were able to pass right by but she was treated horribly. Her clothes were ripped off, her skin clawed at and was told she would be lynched. This treatment did not stop until two White people stepped up and walked with her. ¹²

Ruby Bridges endured similar cruelty. Ruby, like many other African-American students, had to walk long distances to go to school, instead of attending the school closest to them. In 1960, two White schools had to integrate but Black students had to pass a test to attend the school. Ruby passed the test and was chosen to attend an all-White school close to her home. Federal marshals were assigned to protect Ruby because so many Whites did not support integration, including Louisiana's governor at the time, Jimmie H. Davis. Parents wouldn't let their children attend school with Ruby and the White children that did attend were kept away from Ruby. All except one of the teachers, didn't want to teach her. The other school in New Orleans that was being integrated, had three black girls attend. Riots ensued across New Orleans in response to the

integration. ¹³

Sit-ins

Another example of youth advocating for civil rights were the Greensboro Sit-ins that were organized by four college students in Greensboro, NC in 1960. These four students were a part of the NAACP and planned this demonstration to challenge the segregation law because they were tired of not being treated with humanity and served at restaurants. Sit-ins are a form of protest where you enter a facility and demand to be served, peacefully. In this case, they planned to stay at the lunch counter even though they would be denied service. They expected to be met with violence and hostility so they prepared by participating in nonviolence training. After a few days, the Greensboro city officials desegregated lunch counters and other public facilities. ¹⁴

Freedom Riders

Next, activists wanted to desegregate interstate transportation. Whites and Blacks could not sit together on buses or trains. In addition, the bus and train stations had segregated waiting areas, bathrooms and lunch counters. Although CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) had been fighting to integrate interstate travel since 1947, in 1961 it was still not integrated. CORE joined SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee which was formed from a meeting headed by Ella Baker) to participate in Freedom Rides to fight for this integration. Fannie Lou Hamer was a member of SNCC and helped organize the Freedom Rides. White and Black youth decided to ride together on buses on a route that would take a total of two weeks, riding from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans, Louisiana. Just as activists prepared for sit-ins with nonviolence training, the freedom riders did as well. They also planned to go to jail if arrested, rather than posting bail. ¹⁵

Some of the Freedom riders encountered horrific violence in Alabama. Their bus was surrounded by a mob of White protesters who attacked the bus with baseball bats and threw a bomb onto the bus. When the freedom riders got off the bus, they were beaten. Another bus was also attacked as protesters got onto the bus and started attacking the freedom riders. In both cases, the police officers stood idle and did not protect the freedom riders. This first set of freedom rides were ended due to safety concerns but another set of rides started a few days later. They were also met with harassment and violent attacks. Injured freedom riders were replaced and more and more college students wanted to join in this effort to end interstate travel segregation. The freedom rides continued for the entire summer of 1961. Although they never reached New Orleans, interstate bus travel segregation was outlawed in September of 1961. ¹⁶

Children's Crusade

Birmingham, AL was one of the most segregated cities in the country and in 1963, Dr. King and SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Council) wanted to focus desegregation efforts there. Instead of the government orders to integrate being honored, public facilities such as parks and swimming pools were closed instead. Blacks still had to use separate water fountains, restaurants were still segregated and Blacks were not hired at department stores where they were encouraged to shop.

This time the demonstration activists decided to participate in were marches. They were of course met with violence. Many protesters were arrested and police used attack dogs and fire hoses to deter protesters. Some people were bitten by dogs. Dr. King was one of the arrested and this is when he wrote his famous *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. After these first protests were unsuccessful in desegregation in Birmingham, children began marching but police still responded brutally. Some children were arrested and some were hurt. Police

even used the attack dogs and water hoses on the children. Some people feared this would happen and didn't want the children marching. Others thought it was important for them to march. They were given training and attended workshops to learn about other children across the country who were participating in demonstrations. They also learned about nonviolent resistance. After three days of the children marching, amid police violence, homes being bombed, some protesters responding with violence, and a multiple of civil rights protests in other cities, a plan to desegregate was announced on May 10, 1963. To ensure this plan was enacted by Congress, the March on Washington was organized. ¹⁷

March on Washington

The March on Washington occurred on August 28, 1963. The sole purpose was to get the Civil Rights Act passed to ensure equal rights for all citizens. A. Phillip Randolph has organized multiple youth marches in the past. He wanted to organize a march for jobs and freedom using similar strategies and models he had used in organizing past marches. Baynard Rustin joined him in this effort. The march was a success with over 250 thousand people in attendance, including students of all ages from elementary to college. Participants were peaceful and from a variety of states, young, old, White and Black. Dr. King gave his famous *I Have a Dream Speech*. Even though this was a huge, peaceful demonstration, violence continued. On September 15, 1963, four innocent African-American girls, one was 11 years old and three were 14 years old, were killed in a church bombing in Birmingham. Protesters responded by marching but police responded with violence, killing at least two innocent children. ¹⁸

Civil Rights Act

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed by president Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. This law made it illegal to discriminate against anyone because of their race, gender or religion. If government programs discriminated against Blacks, their funding would be stopped. It also gave African-American's voting rights and granted fairness in employment and the use of public facilities. This was not honored in all states and violence and hatred against African-Americans continued. Dr. King organized more protests in hopes of voting rights for African-Americans everywhere.

Voting Rights Act

Freedom Summer

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 stopped discrimination against African-Americans and gave them the right to vote. Many African-Americans were afraid to vote because they were threatened with violence, losing their jobs and randomly given literacy tests or required to pay a poll tax in efforts to prevent them from voting. Whites were not subjected to any of this, including the literacy tests or poll tax. When African-Americans stood up to exercise their right to vote, some were beaten and others killed. In response to this, a SNCC activist, Robert Mose recruited people for what he called the "Mississippi Freedom Summer." Prior to this, he organized the Freedom Vote where volunteers knocked on doors to ask African-Americans to participate in a mock election to prepare them for voting in a real election. Many of them had never voted. With Freedom Summer, Robert wanted to establish "freedom schools" and get people registered to vote. African-Americans who attended the freedom schools engaged in Reading, Math and African-American History lessons. ¹⁹

Selma March

Protesters organized a march for voting rights on February 18, 1965 in Selma, AL but street lights were turned

off as soon as they started to march. Then police and angry Whites attacked the demonstrators. One of them was an older man who was beaten badly and his grandson, Jimmy Lee Jackson, tried to help. Police hit him in the face and shot him. He died a week later. Protesters decided to try again and about 600 marchers were confronted by police. Tear gas, horses, sticks and whips were used in an attempt to stop the demonstrators. The public was outraged at what was happening which put pressure on Congress to help. This help became the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which granted African-Americans more protections to vote. ²⁰

Civil Rights Today

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s made significant and monumental gains in the fight for equality and civil rights, yet some of the issues they fought for are still prevalent today. In the 1950s and 1960s, activists fought for laws to be changed or enacted. Today, systemic racism exists which makes it harder for activists to fight. Black Lives Matter is a coalition that was founded as a result of the acquittal of the murderer of Trayvon Martin. Some of the goals of this movement is to fight against systemic oppression, racism and the murder of African-American people in the U.S. ²¹

Building Blocks of Distributive Politics

Using the building blocks of distributive politics, we can determine steps to take going forward to ensure sustainable policies are enacted to protect African-American's civil rights. These building blocks include coalitions, moral narrative, pursuing proximate goals, entrenching proximate goals, resources and leadership. Having these in place would help policies advance and be sustainable. ²²

Coalitions were a huge factor in enacting the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some of the coalitions in support of the movement were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which became the largest civil rights groups with several grassroots branches, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which was formed after the nonviolent civil rights sit-ins and focused more on grassroots organizing. Another coalition in support of the civil rights movement was Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which was comprised of African-American ministers who promoted nonviolent protest and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) which was founded after World War II and sent racially mixed groups of passengers on Freedom Rides to desegregate interstate buses. ²³ Other coalitions were in support including women groups, such as the Women's Political Council, and White people joined some of these groups in support as well. Some coalitions tried to block these efforts such as the Citizen's Council who wanted to postpone racial integration. Citizen's council comprised southerners and many White community leaders. ²⁴

Teaching Strategies

Grand Conversations

Grand conversations are student led discussions that support students in developing deeper comprehension of text, both literary and informational. The conversation begins with reactions from a reading with a student asking "who wants to start" or "what are you thinking?" Students will respond to the student who answers the question. This will continue until another idea is presented. Then the focus shifts to analyze the author's craft,

how and why the text is structured the way it is. Students ask questions about their peer's ideas, make connections to the text and clarify their comprehension of the text. Students share their opinions, using evidence from the text to support their thinking. After the conversation, students reflect and write about the ideas discussed. Teachers serve as more of a participant than a leader, by asking questions to help students focus on big ideas and noticing what needs further clarification.

These conversations are beneficial for a variety of reasons. One, reading and writing are reciprocal processes so analyzing an author's craft serves as a model for students when they craft their own writing. Another reason, students tend to focus on surface details and need to be taught to dig deeper for higher level comprehension. Also, when students discuss their thinking, it deepens their comprehension as they are able to clarify their thinking. This strategy also helps students take ownership of their learning as they are leading the conversation and discussing their own questions and thoughts rather than the teachers. This format also establishes a sense of community. Students will need to be expectations so that all students feel safe when participating. The strategy is also easily paired with multiple other strategies and activities.

Visual Thinking Routines

In the 21st century, students are required to not only analyze the texts they read, but the images they see as well. Learners today must “demonstrate the ability to interpret, recognize, appreciate and understand information presented through visible actions, objects and symbols...” Students need to be taught competencies to evaluate images and videos they see, advertisements and more. Using images to teach about the past is also helpful for primary age students and English Language Learners because it helps make learning accessible and age-appropriate. Using these visual routines will also help students analyze primary and secondary sources. This also supports students in analyzing bias in sources as well. “In the 21st century, students need to respectfully question the author's authority, articulate what is represented and how, and infer what had been excluded and why.”

We also want to teach our students to read and write appropriately for each discipline. For Social Science, students should read and write like historians. Helping students analyze visual sources from the past, as some historians do, will help them understand how we can interpret and study the past through images as some historians do. Engaging with sources helps students connect to the past and understand history as a series of human events, it helps students question the validity of sources and construct new knowledge as they analyze and investigate sources.

Visual thinking strategies require students to observe images, then ask and answer questions to interpret and evaluate the images. Students will ask and answer questions related to the people/objects, the setting, the action and the source. Students will also sketch, write and discuss their thinking. the following questions to interpret images: what do you notice? What do you see that makes you think that? And What more can we find? Students have to think inferentially to decipher multiple meanings and make connections from the images. Students need to be taught visual grammar to discover how images communicate.

Inquiry Based Learning

Students should focus on content and the process of inquiry in the Social Sciences. Through this process, students will be able to apply disciplinary concepts about a topic they are familiar with, in order to construct and answer questions, determine helpful sources to conduct investigations and take informed action. This process supports students in using their concept knowledge at increasingly complex levels and serves as a way to integrate content. Inquiry also supports students in collaboration skills, critical thinking, decision-

making and interpersonal skills.

There are five stages in the inquiry process. In the first stage, engage and ask, students are expected to generate questions about the topic they are learning. This can be done by allowing students to brainstorm independently, in pairs, in a small group or as a class. Their thinking can be written on a chart. It is helpful to display either an image, a video or audio clip or a text excerpt to prompt their thinking. The next stage, think critically, focuses on students exploring and analyzing sources. During this process, allowing students to discuss their thoughts, providing sentence frames, sketching their thoughts and using post-its as they read are some scaffolds that may support students during this stage. Drawing conclusions is the next stage and the focus is on students synthesizing the information they've gathered in their investigation. Next students draw conclusions and then communicate their findings. The last stage allows students to reflect on their learning throughout the inquiry process.

Classroom Activities

Interactive Read Aloud

Throughout this unit, students will read and listen to literary and informational text about the Civil Rights Movement. Read-alouds give students exposure to text they may not be able to read on their own and a model of fluent, oral reading. It also gives an opportunity for the teacher to model comprehension strategies. Students will learn to ask and answer questions in order to determine the importance of details in the texts and determine the central idea of the texts. Before reading the text, we will do a picture walk or text feature walk depending on the genre. Students will make predictions about what they think will happen in the text based on the title, pictures and text features. During the read aloud, I will stop at certain points in the text so that students can ask and answer questions to myself and their peers. I will also pose questions to students and model how to use details from the text to support my thinking. After reading, students will engage in grand conversations and writing to express their thinking about the text. Below are some prompts that will guide students in finding the central idea of texts read.

Literary Prompts

When students read fictional texts, they will answer such questions as: What is the problem in the story, how does the problem get worse, how do the characters try to solve the problem, and what is the solution to the problem. When students give too much detail, you can ask them: what was one important thing that happened in the beginning, middle and end? You can also ask students to tell you their thoughts in a shorter way (using less details).

Informational Prompts

For reading informational texts, students will answer questions such as: which words are repeated, what do you notice in the pictures being repeated, what is the book mostly about and what details support your thinking.

Analyzing Primary Sources

Students will analyze pictures from different Civil Rights events through answering a series of questions, discussing their thoughts with peers and using a graphic organizer to record their thinking. This activity supports students' visual literacy skills and allows them to learn the content in an age appropriate and engaging way. It also develops historical thinking skills as students study the past through the images. Below are the prompts students will use to analyze and interpret pictures.

Image Analysis Prompts

During the first phase of analyzing pictures, students will engage in a "literal observation phase" where they focus on initial reactions to the image and describing what they see. Some questions they will answer are: What do you notice? Who do you notice? What are the people wearing? Where are they? What time of year is pictured? Time of day? Do you recognize the place or any of the signs? What is happening in the picture? And Who took this picture?. Students will discuss these questions with a peer and record their thinking on a graphic organizer.

Interpretation Phase

The next phase for image analysis will be the "interpretation phase" where students look at the images to think about what their initial reactions mean in the context of the content they are learning. Some students will be asked are: What title would you give this photograph? Why do you think the photographer took this picture? Who did they want to view it? What do you think it would be like to live during this moment (if you were the person in the picture)? What message does the picture tell us?

Evaluation Phase

In this final phase of image analysis, students will discuss their opinion of the image. Some questions they will think about are: Do you think people should view this picture? Why? What do you think we should remember about this picture? Do you think anything about the picture should be different?

Extension

Students will watch a video, read a poem or an excerpt from a text that gives more background knowledge about the picture.



US Marshals with Young Ruby Bridges on School Steps,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Marshals_with_Young_Ruby_Bridges_on_School_Steps.jpg



Civil Rights March on Washington, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003654393/>



Participants, some carrying American Flags, marching in the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003675345/resource/>

All About Civil Rights Book

Students will create a book to show what they have learned about the civil rights movement. First, students will brainstorm to decide what they want to write about it. It can be one event from the civil rights movement or an overview of all events we learned about. Students will write this information on a graphic organizer. Then students will decide what will go on each page of their book. The graphic organizer will have five boxes for students to fill which will correspond to the information that will go on each of the five pages of their book. Then students will use the graphic organizer to begin writing to give more information from their graphic organizer. They will also draw a picture to go with their writing. Once all five pages are completed, students will reread their book, making revisions. Using an editing checklist, students will participate in conferencing with myself and their peers to edit their books. Finally, students will publish their finished books by reading it to the class.

Mock Campaign

Students will use consensus building within the classroom to determine an issue they all feel needs to be addressed. Then they will work through the building blocks of distributive politics to determine how they will find a solution to their collective issue. Before they start, we will

examine the civil rights movement through the building blocks of distributive politics to determine the coalitions, moral narrative, proximate goals, entrenching of proximate goals, resources and leadership that was in place during that time. I will scaffold students through this thinking using knowledge learned from the texts we will have read. Then students will brainstorm to answer these questions as it applies to their collective issue. Students will also decide what demonstrations they would like to organize (i.e. protest, march, sit-in,)

Building Blocks Questions Students Will Consider

Who will help us? (coalitions) Who will try to stop us? How can we make sure they don't? - (blocking coalitions), What are our long term and short-term goals (proximate goals)? What goal will help us keep our first goal (entrenching goal)?, What will make other people be on our side? How can we work with other people who may want something similar to (moral narrative)?, Who will provide money (resources)? And Who will lead us? (leadership).

Resources

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Student Reading List

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Appendix - Implementing District Standards

Common Core State Standards

In second grade, students are expected to read and comprehend increasingly complex, grade level text. As students write and discuss their thinking with peers, they learn to organize their thoughts, confirm their understandings, clarify their thinking and use content related vocabulary. These activities also help students to remember and retain the content they are learning. The below standards will support them as they learn these skills. They will also challenge students to think critically and creatively as they compare and connect events within a time period and analyze current events through that history.

RL/RI.2.1 – Ask and answer questions such as who, what, where, when, why and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. Students will read literary and informational text to ask and answer questions in order to comprehend and remember the content in text.

RL.2.2 Recount stories and determine their central message. Students will learn to organize details in text and identify the central message in order to connect the content to their own lives.

RI.2.2 – Identify the main topic of multi-paragraph text. This will help students comprehend informational text and remember the content they are learning.

RL.2.3 – Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

RI.2.3 – Describe the connection between a series of historical events in a text.

SL.2.1 – Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Illinois Social Science Standards

Students in second grade are expected to engage in inquiry as they learn and research history. These standards will guide students as they learn about civilian and government roles in creating and sustaining legislation from the past and using this knowledge to analyze the present and plan for the future.

SS.H.2.2: Compare individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

SS.H.3.2: Explain how different kinds of historical sources (such as written documents, objects, artistic works, and oral accounts) can be used to study the past.

SS.IS.6.K-2. Use listening, consensus building and voting procedures to decide on and take action in their classroom.

SS.CV.1.2: Explain what governments are and some of their functions (e.g. making and enforcing laws, protecting citizens and collecting taxes).

SS.CV.2.2: Describe how communities work to accomplish common tasks, establish responsibilities and fulfill roles of authority.

Endnotes

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