

Are We There Yet?

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Abstract:

This lesson will explore school desegregation in Champaign, IL through the lens of the voluntary 2002 Unit 4 School District Consent Decree which focused on “the statistical disparities between majority and minority students in the areas of gifted, upper-level courses, within-school integration, discipline, and special education” as noted in the History-Closing the Achievement Gap section of the Unit 4 Progress Summary cited on page 2.

Essential Questions:

Do our preconceptions about historical events match historical fact?

Is it possible to eliminate all inequities in a school or school system?

Are new laws an effective way to change common practices?

Assessment:

Students will be assessed using classroom discussion as well as with a KWL graphic organizer, a written document analysis worksheet, and a written response to the question, “Are We There Yet?”

Setting the Purpose:

Students will investigate their views on integration in the post Brown v Board of Education era and will explore a few web sources to determine if their preconceptions match historical facts. They will also consider what inequities still exist and ways that they might be addressed.

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Procedure:

- This lesson is designed to spark discussion between students who are already aware of the major personalities, court cases, and Civil Rights Era injustices on the national level. As students enter the classroom they will note the following memory joggers prominently displayed: a glass of water, a comb and clippers, a little piece next to a new stick of chalk, a sheet of brown construction paper, the number 14, a toy bus, and a sign that reads “Whites Only.” They will then be divided into small groups and asked to individually complete then collectively discuss all but the last section of the KWL form. During the discussion the teacher will refer to the items on display to be sure that key connections have been made especially to the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v the Board of Education. If needed, the teacher can share the summary provided of the Brown decision as well as read the 14th amendment to the class.

<http://brownvboard.org/summary/>

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html

- Next, each group will be provided with copies of the Dec. 30, 1969 Courier article, “60s saw blacks push for racial justice in C-U,” as well as a NARA document analysis worksheet. After reading the article, students will complete and turn in the worksheet. Discussion of the article will be permitted in the groups during this process. Whole class discussion will then focus on sections of the article dealing with school integration. http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf

- The Timeline of Equity Challenges from the Champaign County Archives will be used during class discussion to help define the agreement Champaign Unit 4 entered into with the Office of Civil Rights. With this background, groups will be assigned different articles/sites to investigate then report on to their classmates. They will be encouraged to use the NARA document analysis worksheet to guide their research.
 - <http://www.champaignschools.org/index2.php?header=.&file=consentdecree> This is a Champaign Unit 4 progress summary regarding the Consent Decree. Special attention will be given to the section headed History - Closing the Achievement Gap.
 - <http://www.will.uiuc.edu/franklinsite05/about.html> Two groups will investigate this site. One will focus on the documentary section while the other group will investigate the desegregation documents.
 - <http://www.ucimc.org/content/black-activist-terry-townsend-presents-demands-champaign%E2%80%99s-unit-4-school-board> This article includes the list of demands presented in June 2010 to the Champaign School Board by black activist, Terry Townsend.
 - <http://www.dailyillini.com/news/champaign-urbana/2010/04/12/champaign-unit-4-adopts-desegregation-plan-in-hopes-of-winning-msap> Champaign Unit 4’s adoption of a desegregation plan in hopes of winning a grant from the U.S. government for the upcoming school year is the focus of this April 12, 2010 posting.

- Each group will share key understandings they gained during their research. Following each presentation will be a question/answer period during which the teacher will refer to the essential questions and encourage discussion.

- Students will complete then submit the final section of the KWL form. Those students who were reluctant to share their views on the essential questions

during class discussions will be invited to write their comments on the back of the KWL form before turning it in for credit.

- Students will draw upon their own experiences with integration/desegregation as well as insights they have gained from class materials and discussions to provide a written response to the question, “Are We There Yet?”

Analysis of local primary sources:

Students must use the NARA document analysis sheets for the Courier article and are encouraged to use it during the group exploration of different sources.

Ties to national primary source or sources:

Both the 14th amendment to the United States Constitution and Brown v Board of Education will be discussed.