



Freedom Summer Lesson Plan: Civil Rights

Materials

****Primary documents noted in this Lesson Plan is available online in the Freedom Summer Digital Collection**

<http://digital.lib.muohio.edu/fs/>

and the

Western College Memorial Archives Collection

<http://westernarchives.lib.muohio.edu/index.php>

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This activity is intended as an educational exercise for a group of adults who desire to provide an inclusive, safe, learning environment for all students in a public school setting. Specifically, it is an interactive investigation of the civil rights movement as it happened during the summer of 1964 in Oxford, Ohio. What were the effects of the actions of the student volunteers on racism in America at that time, and what is their effect today? What can we do as educators to insure their efforts were worthwhile?

The text, [Courageous Conversations about Race: a Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools](#) by Glenn Singleton may be used as a resource for this lesson

The setting for this activity is the Western Campus of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio - during the summers of 1964 and 2009.

1. The participants should think about the Civil Right Movement and their knowledge of it before they begin to study the events that occurred at Western College in 1964. In this lesson they will also explore the racial conditions in the State of Mississippi in the early 1960's.

In the early 1960s, Mississippi was the poorest state in the nation. 86% of all non-white families lived below the national poverty line. In addition, the state had a terrible record of black voting rights violations. In the 1950s, Mississippi was 45% black, but only 5% of voting age blacks were registered to vote. Some counties did not have a single registered black voter. Whites insisted that blacks did not want to vote, but this was not true. Many blacks wanted to vote, but they worried, and rightfully so, that they might lose their job. In 1962, over 260 blacks in Madison County overcame this fear and waited in line to register. 50 more came the next day. Only seven got in to take the test over the two days, walking past a sticker on the registrar's office door that bore a Confederate battle flag next to the message "Support Your Citizens' Council. Once they got in, they had to take a test designed to prevent them from becoming registered. In 1954, in response to increasing literacy among blacks, the test, which originally asked applicants to "read or interpret" a section of the state constitution, was changed to ask applicants to "read and interpret" that document. This allowed white registrars to decide whether or not a person passed the test. Most blacks, even those with doctoral degrees, "failed." In contrast, most whites passed, no matter what their education level. In George County, one white applicant's interpretation of the section "There shall be no imprisonment for debt" was "I thank that a Negro should have 2 years in collage before voting because he don't under stand." He passed. <http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/mississippi.html>

2. Share with the group a number of black and white pictures taken by local photographer, George Hoxie one evening in June of 1964. Ask the group to respond to the pictures....
3. What does Western College have to do with the situation in Mississippi in the 1960's? After sharing our group's common knowledge about Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964, view the video; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_81kkJDvrUQ
4. What might have felt like to be a college student training to go to Mississippi in the summer of 1964?

Discussion questions to be considered during the investigation of the archives:

Why did the training happen at Western College?

What were the reactions of Western Alumni and the local community about the Freedom Summer orientations?

How would you describe the student volunteers?

What were the risks to the student volunteers?

When you were in your early 20's would you have joined this effort?

What was accomplished, what remains to be accomplished?

Materials

Box 1, Folder 16, Item 1 - Journal Entries from Miami graduate student in Political Science, Ellen Barnes, June 14 – June 20, 1964

Box 2, Folder 2, Item 3 - Thoughts on Civil Rights Orientation by Phyllis Hoyt, Dean of Students at Western College, June 26, 1964

Box 2, Folder 13 - Personal letters from Western Alumni to President Young in June and July of 1964.

Box 3, Folder 4, Item 4 - “Why I went to Mississippi” by Sandra Adickes

Box 3, Folder 6, Item 4 - “A Long Hot Summer in Mississippi”, by Teri Shaw

Box 4, Folder 2, Item 20 - Charred Hulk of Car Spurs Intense Search, New Haven Register, June 24, 1964.

Box 4, Folder 2, 57 – Mississippi Project, Oxford Still Talks of Training Meetings, article by Paul Delaney for the Dayton Daily News, Sunday, July 12, 1964.

Box 3, Folder 1, Item 2 - Citizens' Council of Dallas County, Inc – Flyer, “The Worst Horror on Earth”

U.S. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Application for citizenship in the Invisible Empire, National Office P.O. Box 121325, Hamilton, Ohio

In addition to the primary documents above, the group may access to the following websites:

<http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/mississippi.html>

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/09_summer.html

At the conclusion of our day, share some current newspaper articles regarding racial incidents in America. Where are we in the struggle for Equality and Freedom for all in America at this time in our Country's history?

The group will take the articles with them, along with the assignment to find other articles in media that demonstrate the need for renewed effort in civil rights for all in America for reading and reflection.
