

Balancing the Success of the Civil Rights Movement

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Subject / Lesson: Balancing the Success of the Civil Rights Movement

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Overview/Description:

Our lesson plan for the Supreme Court Institute, Summer 2017, focuses on notable mid-19th century civil rights events in South Carolina. *“Balancing the Success of the Civil Rights Movement”* is the hook which leads our students into the discussion of whether events in our state have served as a catalyst or hindrance into the acquisition of civil rights for all South Carolina residents. The standard for review outlines specific events mandated for discussion; we are adding to the listing as a matter of issue in order for students to be well-grounded in their understanding of how past events dramatically may affect their present day. Students will mentally coalesce our South Carolina Social Studies Standards through primary, visual sources to this point in history. Using a close read as a blueprint, the students are equipped to summarize and appraise SC civil rights events through questions and discussion. “Balancing the Scales” exercise will let them critically rank specific events and their importance to the civil rights movement. These qualities are essential in becoming an informed citizen in today’s world. Essential Question for lesson: “What landmark court cases affected the civil rights movement in South Carolina and what were the lasting effects?”

Duration: 55 minutes

Standard 8-7.2:

Analyze the movement for civil rights in South Carolina, including the impact of the landmark court cases *Elmore v. Rice* and *Briggs v. Elliot*; civil rights leaders Septima Poinsette Clark, Modjeska Monteith Simkins, and Matthew J. Perry; the South Carolina school equalization effort and other resistance to school integration; peaceful efforts to integrate beginning with colleges and demonstrations in South Carolina such as the Friendship Nine and the Orangeburg Massacre.

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify and analyze the impact of landmark cases, people, and events to discern “. . . *the Success of the Civil Rights Movement*” throughout different geographical regions of South Carolina.

Materials and Resources:

- www.landmarkcases.org
- www.civilrights.org
- www.oyez.org

- www.blackpast.org
- www.skyway.net
- [*The State: Orangeburg Massacre Article*](#)
- [*NBC News: Friendship Nine*](#)

Instruction/Demonstration/Procedures:

This lesson will address the following people and events through research and analysis:

- Brown v. Board of Education
- Septime Clark
- Plessy v. Ferguson
- Modjeska Monteith Simkins
- Braggs v. Elliot
- Matthew Perry
- Friendship 9
- Orangeburg Massacre
- Rosa Parks
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Activities:

- Close Reading and Research
- “Balancing the Scales” Exercise

Assessments/Evaluation:

- Close Read and Research
- “Balance the Scales” exercise completed with due diligence
- Participation in classroom discussion is always expected and assessed.

Additional Resources:

- Suggestion for Review or Closure: *documents attached*
- Students will further their acquisition of knowledge through participation in a sharing of their research with fellow students.

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Indicator: 8-7.2: Analyze the movement for civil rights in South Carolina, including the impact of the landmark court cases *Elmore v. Rice* and *Briggs v. Elliot*; civil rights leaders Septima Poinsette Clark, Modjeska Monteith Simkins, and Matthew J. Perry; the South Carolina school equalization effort and other resistance to school integration; peaceful efforts to integrate beginning with colleges and demonstrations in South Carolina such as the Friendship Nine and the Orangeburg Massacre.

Essential Question:

What landmark court cases affected the civil rights movement in South Carolina and what were the lasting effects?

Jim Crow laws, restrictions on voting through poll taxes and literacy tests, and discrimination in the workplace, continued to limit the social, political, and economic opportunities of African Americans in the twentieth century. Throughout the twentieth century, organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association of Colored Women, and the National Urban League actively sought the recognition of African American rights and the fulfillment of the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments.

The Civil Rights Movement intensified after World War II. The movement for civil rights accelerated as a result of the “victory abroad, victory at home” (Double V) campaign of African Americans, the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the influence of mass media, and the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.

The NAACP took the legal approach and brought cases to the courts that challenged the prevailing practices of discrimination and laid the groundwork for change. The NAACP challenged the exclusion of African American voters from participation in the South Carolina Democratic Party’s selection of candidates (called a primary). The Democratic Party had dominated politics in South Carolina and the South since Reconstruction so the white primary effectively excluded blacks from having any say in selecting the state’s elected officials. The United States Supreme Court ruled in *Elmore v. Rice* (1947) that the white primary was unconstitutional. African Americans, still had to overcome intimidation but they now had the opportunity to impact the selection of candidates.

The landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) started with a simple request. The parents of African American students in Clarendon County, South Carolina requested a bus to take their children to their all-black school. Some children had to walk eighteen miles to and from school each day. The county’s 2375 white children had 30 school buses for their use and its 6531 black students had none. African American

parents at Scott's Branch School felt that the "separate-but-equal" doctrine established by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* required the school district to pay for the gas and repairs on the used bus that the families bought to take their children to school. Parents did not originally seek integration but equality. The original case was dismissed due to a technicality.

With the assistance of local leaders including Modjeska Monteith Simkins and the NAACP, parents sued the school district in a new case, *Briggs v. Elliot*, for equal treatment under the law as required by the fourteenth amendment. In federal district court, the attorneys for the state of South Carolina admitted that separate schools for African Americans were unequal but claimed that the state had begun a building program that would bring the African American schools up to the same level as white schools. The court, therefore, ruled in favor of the school district. The NAACP then appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court. *Briggs v. Elliot* was one of five cases that became part of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. In *Brown* the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* and ruled that separate was inherently unequal. The court further ruled that African American students should be integrated into classrooms with white children with "all deliberate speed."

South Carolina officials resisted efforts to integrate schools in a variety of ways. While the *Briggs* case was still pending in the federal courts, South Carolina launched a statewide effort to improve education by making separate African American schools equal to schools for whites. The state's leaders hoped that the schools would be able to remain segregated under the *Plessy* "separate but equal" doctrine. This massive building program is known as the equalization effort. Modern schools for African American students were built throughout the state.

The equalization effort, however, was not successful in persuading the courts that "separate but equal" should be upheld. The *Brown* ruling was met with widespread and sometimes violent opposition and delay. The Governor of South Carolina, James F. Byrnes, encouraged this resistance. White Citizens Councils were established to coordinate efforts to intimidate African Americans who petitioned for equal treatment and to label whites who supported the court's ruling as traitors to their race. South Carolina's Senator Strom Thurmond authored the Southern Manifesto, signed by all but three of the Congressmen from the Deep South [101 in total]. This document condemned the *Brown* decision for upsetting the relationship of whites and African Americans in the South and encouraged resistance to desegregation. Resistance included the establishment of numerous 'white flight' private academies, school choice, and plans for the voluntary closing of public schools. For almost two decades, South Carolina sought to avoid the integration of public schools. Similar actions were taken in other southern states. It would be the early 1970s before full-scale integration occurred in most South Carolina schools.

The *Brown* decision prompted other civil rights actions throughout the South and South Carolina was affected. In response to the actions of Rosa Parks and the

Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Supreme Court ruled that city buses could not be segregated. South Carolina's bus companies ignored the ruling.

When students staged a sit-in at a North Carolina lunch counter, South Carolina students followed their example throughout the state and initiated a new tactic. Grassroots protests and demonstrations throughout South Carolina echoed the national movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. The response of the white leadership of South Carolina was tempered (subdued) by their desire to attract economic investment (new businesses) to the state.

Pictures of protests and violence in other southern states broadcast on nationwide television and newspapers did not encourage such investment. Consequently in 1963, South Carolina began to slowly and deliberately integrate public facilities. Beginning with Clemson College and followed by the University of South Carolina, state colleges were integrated without the violence which engulfed campuses in other southern states. This relatively peaceful integration of public facilities in South Carolina was marred by the violence of the Orangeburg Massacre. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were enforced in South Carolina and public schools were finally desegregated as a result of another court ruling fifteen years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

Although many South Carolinians played a significant role in the civil rights movement, notable among them are Septima Clark, Modjeska Simkins and Matthew Perry.

Septima Poinsette Clark was a public school teacher. In a case brought by the NAACP, she sought equal pay for African American and white teachers. A member of the NAACP, Clark left South Carolina when the state legislature passed a bill saying that public employees could not belong to any civil rights organization. Clark later taught at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee where many civil rights leaders learned the strategy of nonviolent direct action. Clark served in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led by Dr. King. Clark founded citizenship schools to improve literacy among the African American community and increase voter registration.

Modjeska Monteith Simkins was a teacher and public health worker. An active member of the NAACP, she also participated in the efforts to equalize teachers' salaries and to open the all-white primary to African American voters (*Elmore v Rice*). Simkins also helped write the petition for the lawsuit that asked for the equalization of Clarendon County schools (*Briggs v Elliot*).

Matthew J. Perry was the first graduate of the new law school at South Carolina State to pass the bar exam. As a civil rights lawyer, Perry was instrumental in bringing cases in South Carolina to challenge segregation. African American efforts to push for integration of schools to conform to the *Brown* ruling were first pursued at the college and university level because these would be least resisted by white parents. Perry defended the right of an African American student to attend Clemson University. Perry also fought for the adoption of single-member districts in South Carolina's House of

Representatives, making it possible for more black lawmakers to get elected. Perry later served as South Carolina's first African American federal judge.

South Carolina college students also played a role in the Civil Rights Movement. The Friendship Nine were students at Friendship College who introduced a new tactic to the movement in the early 1960s. While planning a sit-in at a Rock Hill lunch counter, the students decided that if arrested, they would not accept bail but would serve out their sentences. By so doing, they brought greater public attention to their protest against segregation. Other protesters across the country adopted the "jail no bail" tactic, and served out their jail sentences, thus straining the local prison system and drawing the attention of the national press.

In 1968, students at South Carolina State College protested the segregation of a bowling alley in Orangeburg. Several days later police who had been called in to keep the peace, opened fire on students, injuring dozens and killing three. The officers were acquitted (found not guilty) but a wounded student was convicted of "riot" because of his activity at the bowling alley several nights before the shooting. It was called the Orangeburg Massacre. By 1968, the national press paid little attention to the event and it was overshadowed by the riots that followed the assassination of Dr. King in April.

5 Unfamiliar Terms and Definitions:

key

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

E.Q. Response (6-8 sentence paragraph that answer the essential question):

Place one event/person in each square. Identify the event/person. Explain the significance of each event/person on the Civil Rights Movement. Rank the event/person on a scale of 1 to 10 (1= least impact 10= greatest impact). Create an original image related to the event/person. You will cut each square along the solid black lines. Use the squares to complete the Civil Rights Movement Scale.

<p>Event/Person: _____</p> <p>Significance: _____ _____</p> <p>Ranking/Impact on Civil Rights Movement: _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Image related to event/person:</p>	<p>Event/Person: _____</p> <p>Significance: _____ _____</p> <p>Ranking/Impact on Civil Rights Movement: _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Image related to event/person:</p>
<p>Event/Person: _____</p> <p>Significance: _____ _____</p> <p>Ranking/Impact on Civil Rights Movement: _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Image related to event/person:</p>	<p>Event/Person: _____</p> <p>Significance: _____ _____</p> <p>Ranking/Impact on Civil Rights Movement: _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Image related to event/person:</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	
<p>Notes:</p>	



LEAST IMPACT

GREATEST IMPACT