

National and Local Reactions to *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas 1954*

Liz Rotramel
Tina Gersdorf
Summer 2006

ABSTRACT:

By using a variety of primary sources, at both the national and local level, students will evaluate differing reactions to the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. In groups, students will analyze national political cartoons to judge regional reactions and predict local reactions. Students will also analyze editorials to create political cartoons that depict local reactions.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- To what extent do changes in law promote changes in society?
- How does the ongoing extension of civil rights to various groups affect a democratic society?
- How do political cartoons express the opinion of the author in order to persuade the audience?
- How did Champaign/Urbana's reaction to *Brown v. Board of Education* compare to those of other locations across the nation?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- "The Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in changes and conflicts in political, economic, and social systems within the United States. The movement attempted to address the failures of Reconstruction and the institutionalized racism and inequality of the post-Reconstruction period"
- "Civil rights are provided by government to bring all citizens into equal treatment under the laws."

<http://www.champaignschools.org/index2.php?header=./socscience/&file=HScurriculum/>

RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT:

Using newspaper editorials, students will create a political cartoon that successfully portrays a local reaction to *Brown v. Board of Education*.

PROCEDURE:

Day 1

- Engage students in ABC Brainstorm about segregation.
- Hand out summary of the case and read it aloud to students.
- Have brief discussion about case to assess student understanding.
- Hand out full New York Times publication of majority opinion and Written Document Analysis worksheet to students. Allow 5 – 10 minutes for students to quickly familiarize themselves with the document and to complete worksheet.
- Review analysis worksheet as a class.

- Present New York Times publication excerpt on overhead and discuss the results of the court case in detail.
- Ask students to predict what reactions people had around the country and why.

Day 2

- Review yesterday's discussions about *Brown v. Board of Education* and student predictions of reactions.
- Place first political cartoon on overhead and ask students what they see.
- Hand out Political Cartoon Analysis Worksheet and go through, modeling for students how to analyze a political cartoon and fill out the worksheet.
- Split class into six groups assigning each group one of the remaining cartoons to analyze. (Each cartoon will be analyzed by two groups using the Political Cartoon Analysis worksheet)
- When students finish, have representatives from each group describe their analysis to the class, having the cartoon on the overhead.
- Connect reactions shown through the cartoons to the students' predictions.
- Compare reactions to geographical locations:
 - Tape political cartoon to its corresponding state on a US wall map.
 - Discuss why students think each region had the reaction they did.
- Predict local reaction.

Day 3 – 4

- Review student predictions of local reactions.
- Put students into the same groups as day before.
- Hand out one article from Local Reactions Articles to each group along with the Written Document Analysis worksheet and the Pre-Cartoon Brainstorm worksheet.
- After teacher has checked both worksheets, hand out "Create Your Own Political Cartoon" worksheet.
- Allow groups time to create their political cartoon. (Encourage all initial work to be done in pencil, without color).
- When students have finished their cartoon, they will fill out the Political Cartoon Analysis worksheet for their own cartoon.
- Students must have two groups, who read a different article, fill out the analysis worksheet about their cartoon (leaving them with two outside analyses of their cartoon).
- If students feel they did not successfully portray their message in the cartoon, they will need to revise their cartoon.
- Once students receive two analyses that show they have delivered the intended message, they should color and complete their cartoon.
- When all groups are finished, have each group present to the class the article they read and why they created their political cartoon the way they did.