

Report of a subgroup of the Leadership Development and Current Issues Committee at the Mississippi Summer Project Curriculum Conference. March 21-22

The group reporting dealt with political, economic, and social issues.

Approach: Problem-Solving through a series of case studies.

To develop in the future leaders of Mississippi an ability to deal with the problems of their state. Problem solving, as the committee views it, will be developed through a series of case studies dealing with the relevant political, economic, and social issues.

- Advantages of approach:
1. Each problem or "case" will be related to the experiences and life situation of the students in Mississippi. It was felt that the academic disciplines of economics, politics, etc. could be best presented in the form that they present themselves in one's life. For example, economics can be presented not as a graph but rather in the form of a loan not made or a job lost to a machine.
 2. We will be able to enact new educational values by practicing more creative methods which will stimulate latent talents and interests that have been submerged too long. It is felt that one of the things which can be accomplished in such a short period of time is a "whetting of appetites" for further reading and educational experiences.
 3. This approach allows for acquainting the participants with an awareness of the forces at work in our society and at the same time drawing on the experiences of the students and teachers involved. It demands very active participation from those who are to be introduced to new concepts. Most important, it seeks to draw on new kinds of creative abilities which are unfortunately not valued and remain untapped by the standard and presently accepted methods of teaching. These methods rely heavily upon tests and other methods of evaluation which are geared to particular cultural background.
 4. The case study approach compensates for the obvious lack of training and standard cultural values of many of the teachers by focusing on those being taught and the method of teaching rather than the teacher himself.
 5. We feel that such a curriculum will result in a creative experience for both the students and the teachers. It is hoped that both will come away with a new awareness of themselves and the movement. Perhaps, the children will be able to develop a new way of thinking and be awakened to their powers of analytic reasoning. In short we feel that the Freedom Schools can accomplish the vital task of causing high school youth in Mississippi to QUESTION.
 6. The approach is not geared to a particular educational level but can be used successfully with any group since what happens in the classroom situation will be determined by the classes participation.

- Preliminary working plan:**
1. Fourteen "case-studies" or problems will be farmed out to various interested individuals to be researched.
 2. Such research will require more imagination than diligence since we are not so interested in quantity of facts but concerned mainly with connections and associations which will be able to cross-out the political, economic, and social elements of a given problem. We hope that the creativity of the class sessions will be mirrored by the creativity of the research as the students associate and pull incidents from their own experiences which are called to mind by the discussions which in turn, are centered around the case studies.
 3. Perhaps the most imaginative part of the researchers work will be required as he devises audio and visual techniques for illustrating otherwise meaningless and unrelated facts. He will try to remember photographs and pictures, tapes and records, newspaper articles, movies, plays, songs and many more pertinent materials which are not usually thought of as educational tools.

Topics: The following will be a description of the cases with some suggestions as to the directions of the topics. These directions are only initial suggestions for it will be the task of the researcher to thoroughly work out all the implications of a given problem.

1. Issue: Jamie Whitten and the Tractors

Descriptions: This involves a decision by Congressman Jamie Whitten of Mississippi, to introduce a tractor training program into an area of the state. The program would have relied upon Negro laborers but since the political stakes were very high, the situation has become extremely involved.

Ramifications: Automation-- Mrs. Hamer's campaign (She is a Negro citizen of Miss. who is running against Mr. Whitten in the forthcoming congressional elections in the state) -- political power and interest groups -- intrastate politics -- federal programs, their use and misuse.

Researcher: Robert Moses

2. Issue: Mrs. Hamer's Campaign

Ramifications: National politics -- Political parties and the National Conventions -- The Miss. Delegations -- Voter registration and Freedom Registration -- COFO;-- its development and value; its relationship to power in politics -- Mrs. Hamer's platform.

Researchers: Work-study group, Dona Richards Moses, Mandy Samstein, Jesse Morris

3. School Boycotts in Mississippi (Hattiesburg, Canton)

Ramifications: School boycotts in Northern cities-- Techniques of the movement in the north ie rent strike -- Chicago's relationship to Miss. -- Slum ghetto areas in the north ie how do the ghettos of Chicago compare with Miss. -- evaluation of Miss. Schools and other segregated schools

Materials: Textbooks covering the same topic can be compared (northern-southern); tapes are available from from Haryou and Peggy and Noel Day in Boston.

Researcher: Rochelle Horowitz

4. Hattiesburg Demonstrations with respect to Communications and Public Relations

Ramifications: Press Releases: how to write them, where to send them - comparison of northern and southern account of the same incident - freedom of the press north and south: what are its powers and how does it operate - what is the need for ministers and students from the north. - what are the effects of these northerners upon demonstrations and police action.

Researcher: Sandy Leigh

5. How the Power Structure Works

Ramifications: Interlocking power - how the establishment gets established - sovereignty commission - corporate structure northern businesses and corporation in the south - the effect of northern sympathy demonstrations ie Wall St. Picket

Researcher: Jack Mennis (he has been doing research already in the area of corporate structure in the south, and should be able to choose an appropriate case study)

6. John Hardy's Case

Ramifications: Appeals and the Court - legal precedents - Intervention and the power of the federal government

Researcher: Tim Jenkins

7. Civil Rights Bill

Ramifications: Where do they originate, how do they get passed Forces which produced the present bill - The effect of the bill for Mississippians if it is passed - comparison of speeches for the bill with speeches against the bill - What is the significance of the filibuster, a lobby, and cloture - What are the implications of Sen. Russell's Relocation Speech - What are the nonracial implications of the bill.

Researcher: Bill Higgs, Oscar Chase

8. Evaluation of the Freedom Rides and Sit-ins

Ramifications: Why were the Freedom Rides a failure in Mississippi: federal intervention and the ICC ruling. - Were the freedom rides successful anywhere? - Legal Defense Fund's project - the sit-in - philosophy of the sit-in - could they work in Miss Early history of techniques and objectives of SNCC - The significance of economic pressure

Researcher: Jane Stenbridge

Materials: Records, songs, pictures, personal accounts.

9. New Laws in Mississippi

Ramifications: Evaluation - Origins - Comparison with laws of South Africa - description and comparison of conditions in South Africa - practicality of nonviolence in South Africa - Sharpeville incident - emergent nations: an evaluation.

Researcher: Bayard Rustin, Al Lowenstein

10. Hazard, Kentucky

Ramifications: The existence of poor whites - economic problems to all lower class people - Fayette County (Forman's participation) Miners interested in coming to the Delta - organized labor - the labor movement to be compared with the civil rights movement: the meaning of Freedom Songs and Union songs - Students Negro Youth Conference (see Freedomways) - Birmingham labor organization -

10. Hazard, Kentucky

Researcher: Micheal Harrington, Miles Horton, Hamie Sinclair

11. New coverage of a racial incident such as Medgar Evers death or the Monroe "kissing case"

Ramifications: International implication of racial discrimination in this country by comparison of coverage of American and Foreign newspapers of the same incident - Adlai Stevenson's speech and others who appeal to an end to racial discrimination on the grounds of concern for our image abroad - US failure to sign UN Genocide pact (NY Times article)

Materials: Foreign and domestic newspapers, actual speeches, visiting foreigners

Researcher: Bobbi Yancy

11. Cassius Clay's Attitude Towards the Movement

Ramifications: Nationalist movements: Garvey - Black Muslims - Implications of Brother Malcom's new move - criticism of philosophy of black nationalism - pragmatic value of black nationalism - conditions of black nationalism.

Researcher;

12. Canton - Economic Boycott

Ramifications: Implicit economics - economics and power - dependency on whites - Mississippi financial situation - Delta Economy

Researchers: Jack Mennis and Jesse Morris