

PART II: CITIZENSHIP CURRICULUM

Introduction

One of the purposes of the Freedom Schools is to train people to be active agents in bringing about social change. We have attempted to design a developmental curriculum that begins on the level of the students' everyday lives and those things in their environment that they have either already experienced or can readily perceive, and builds up to a more realistic perception of American society, themselves, the conditions of their oppression, and alternatives offered by the Freedom Movement.

It is not our purpose to impose a particular set of conclusions. Our purpose is to encourage the asking of questions, and the hope that society can be improved.

The curriculum is divided into seven units:

1. Comparison of student's reality with others (the way the students live and the way others live)
2. North to Freedom? (the Negro in the North)
3. Examining the apparent reality (the "better lives" that whites live)
4. Introducing the Power Structure
5. The poor Negro and the poor white
6. Material things versus soul things
7. The movement

Each unit develops concepts that are needed for those that follow.

Physically, the content (suggested questions and concepts) is on the right side of each page with suggested case studies and visual aid material listed opposite. The suggested questions and concepts in the content portion of each page constitute the teaching guide. It should be emphasized that these are only suggestions, and that individual teachers may interpret the concepts in different ways or substitute other methods. There is probably more in each unit than it will be possible to use, but it was included so that each teacher would have a range of material to choose from, and extra material if necessary.

There are two additional sets of questions that are to be reintroduced periodically, both to permit an on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum, and to provide students with recurring opportunities for perceiving their own growth in sophistication.

The BASIC SET OF QUESTIONS is:

1. Why are we (teachers and students) in Freedom Schools?
2. What is the Freedom Movement?
3. What alternatives does the Freedom Movement offer us?

The SECONDARY SET OF QUESTIONS is:

1. What does the majority culture have that we want?
2. What does the majority culture have that we don't want?
3. What do we have that we want to keep?

Unit 1: Comparison of Students' Reality
with Others

Purpose: To create an awareness that there are alternatives.

Materials: Statistical data on education, housing, etc.
"The South as an Underdeveloped Country"

Student,
teacher
each tell
about
them-
selves

Introduction: We are not here to teach you. We are here to help you learn and to learn together. We are going to talk about a lot of things: about Negro people and white people, about rich people and poor people, about the South and about the North, about you and what you think and feel and want, and about me.

And we're going to try to be honest with each other: and say what we believe.

We'll also ask some questions and try to find some answers. The first thing is to look around, right here, and see how we live in Mississippi.

Schools--Conditions in Negro Schools

1. What kind of a school is it? Sample questions: How many grades does it have? how many class rooms? what is it made of, wood or brick? Do you have textbooks, new or old? Do you have a library, movies, maps, charts, electric lights, a gymnasium? How many teachers, white or Negro? laboratory space and equipment, desks, blackboards, etc.? Do you have history, geography, science, etc.?

2. What do you learn there? Sample questions: How many go to college? are there trade or vocational schools? What kinds of jobs are you prepared for? What about current events--who do you learn is good, who do you learn is bad, what do you learn about the South, about the North, about Negroes, about whites, about Kennedy, Johnson, Eastland, Castro, etc. What do you learn about voting and citizenship?

3. Where do you learn about these things? Radio, newspapers, TV, etc.

4. Is this bad or good? Can you think of anything that you would like to see changed? How could your school be made better?

Schools--Conditions in the white schools

Where do the white children go to school? What are their schools like? Compare Negro schools to white schools.

Visual
Aids (pic-
tures of
schools,
labora-
tories,
school
libraries,
school
rooms,
gymnasium

Here are some pictures of other schools in other states besides Mississippi (or some in Mississippi, too).

Sample questions: Do you like these schools in the pictures? Are they like your schools? How are they different? Why would you like to have better schools?

What do you see in the pictures that is different from you and your school? Why do these differences exist?

Housing--Conditions for Negroes

Sample questions: Where do you live? How many rooms are there? How many people live with you? How many beds do you have? Is your house made of wood or stone or bricks? What color is it? Is it painted, is there water, electricity, bathroom indoors, what kind of stove--wood, gas, kerosene, electric? Do you have heat in the winter? What kind? Furniture, what kind, how much?

Can you think of any kind of changes you'd like to see, any other kinds of houses you'd like to live in?

Questions: Where do white children live in this town? What kinds of houses--are their houses different? How? Better? How? Where does the Police Chief live? The banker? The store owner? etc.

Visual
Aids (pic-
tures of
both rural
and subur-
ban middle-
class
houses,
modern
bedrooms,
bathrooms,
kitchens,
living
rooms, etc.

Do you like these pictures? These houses? Are they like your house? How are they different? Would you like this kind of house? Why?

Note: discuss relationships between housing and schools (i.e., privacy, a place to study, quiet and books in the home, as related to studying) and housing and health (i.e., overcrowding, unheated housing as related to ease of sharing communicable diseases such as colds, TB, and infant mortality rates; bring in statistics on Negro-white life expectancy and mortality rates in Mississippi).

Question: Why do these differences exist?

Employment for Negroes

Adult Employment (men and women)

Sample questions: Who works in your family? What kind of work does your father do? your mother? Do they work for white people or for Negroes? Who works most (mother or father)? Do they get paid a lot or a little? What do they do with the money they make? pay rent, buy food, buy clothes, buy things for you? Do you think they could use more money? Why? Why don't they get more money?

Children's employment

Sample questions: Do you ever work? What kind of work? after school? or do you have to stay home from school to work sometimes? What happens when you stay home? Do you miss learning? if so, why do you have to do it?

Employment for whites

In this town, what kind of jobs do white people do? Are there any Negro police or firemen, or store owners? Do Negroes work as clerks and cashiers in the store or the bank? Are there any Negroes who have tenant farmers, any Negro lawyers, doctors, Negroes who work at the textile mills?

What kind of jobs do people do? List responses and suggest areas through questions if necessary, i.e., who fixes cars, who makes our clothes, who sells them, who makes cars, airplanes, rockets, who builds houses, who invents machines (shoe last, air brake, telephone, etc.), who writes books, who fixes radios, plumbing, electricity, who drives tractors and mechanical cotton-pickers.

Break up into small groups and see which group can make up the largest list of jobs that people have, and what the duties these jobs have.

Question: Can Negroes do these jobs? Are they smart enough? Do some Negroes do these jobs? If not, why not?

Material on Negroes in various fields, pictures, stories, etc. Poetry reading and discussion. Photos or drawings of Negroes and Negro history figures should be posted.

Questions: Can anyone name:

- 1) a Negro inventor (George Washington Carver, Jan Matzeliger)
- 2) a Negro scientist (Dr. Charles Drews, Benjamin Banneker)
- 3) a Negro writer (Richard Wright, Phyllis Wheatley, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Alexander Dumas, W. E. B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, M. L. King, Septima Clark, etc.)

Negro employment and white--salary comparison, etc. Review what has been discussed.

Medical facilities

Is there any hospital here? Where do you (your parents) go if they are sick, have a baby, a car accident, etc.? Where is the nearest hospital? Is it for Negroes, whites, both?

If there are different hospitals for Negroes and whites, compare facilities (how close are they? how many beds, doctors, operating rooms, etc.?).

Review Unit I (include schools, housing, employment, health)

Suggested approach: We've talked about jobs and health, in Mississippi and in other states, and we have seen that Negroes have to live one way and whites the other. Remember, we found out that your schools were (list) and we found that other schools were/had (list), etc.

Question: What can we do about this?

Re-introduce four basic questions:

1. Why are we (teachers and students) here in Freedom School?
2. What is the Freedom Movement?
3. What does the Freedom Movement have to offer you?

Unit II: North to Freedom? (The Negro in the North)

Purpose: To help the students see clearly the condition of the Negro in the North, and see that migration to the North is not a basic solution.

Summary: Starting with a new clarity of their condition in the South to raise the question of whether the Negro can escape oppression by going North.

Materials: Chester, Pennsylvania

New York City Schools

Map of U.S. with the South shaded. Point out each city.

Suggested Introduction: For years Negroes in Mississippi and other Southern states have seen how hard Jim Crow makes them live, just as we have talked about the last few days. In fact, since 1950 Negroes have left Mississippi (use census figures). Where have they gone? Most of them have moved North to Chicago, Detroit, New York, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington, Baltimore, Boston, etc. They have gone North looking better jobs, more money, better schools, good hospitals, better housing. Now there are more than one million Negroes in New York City alone. Do you think they've found what they were looking for? How do you know?

Magazine pictures of city skyscrapers, bright lights, wide avenues, etc.

Here is what some of those cities look like.

But how is it for the Negro?

They have had school boycotts to protest against segregation in Chicago, New York, Boston. Why?

Case studies:
NYC Schools
and Chester, Pa.

Cover the same topics as in Unit I.

Pictures or
other material
on the ghetto.

Questions: Do you have relatives there? What do they say about the North? Do you have to say "yessir" to white men there? Do you have better housing in the slums or only crowded bad housing? Do you get better jobs in the North? (The median income of Negro families, nationally, in 1960 was half that of white families.) Does it cost more to live? How about schools? Better buildings, but still segregated, still overcrowded, still old textbooks, still few college graduates.

How about housing? More integrated housing in the South. In the North, housing very segregated and more expensive for bad housing. Negroes still can't work at some jobs and they are paid less money. The overcrowding means there is more TB in Negro ghettos and a higher infant mortality rate (30% higher among Negroes than whites).

Conclude: Itemize similarities in areas covered in Unit I (housing, jobs, schools, health).

Question: Are things better in the North--is the Negro really free, really equal? Why not?

Conclude: The Negro is a second-class citizen all over the U.S., you can't escape by leaving the South.

Introduce Questions:

1. What does the dominant culture have that we want?
 2. What does the dominant culture have that we don't want?
 3. What do we have that we want to keep?
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Unit III: Examining the Apparent Reality (the "better life" that whites have)

Purpose: To find out what the whites' "better life" (better schools, jobs, housing, health facilities, etc.) is really like, and what it costs them.

Materials: Guide to Negro History, parts 1-3

Introduction, Suggestion: We have seen that Negroes live differently than whites in Mississippi and in the rest of the U.S.--and it seemed

and/or himself, and use his experiences to help deepen the insights of the students.

Suggested supplements to students' lists:

1. That all Negroes were slaves.
2. That Negroes are inferior--mentally, morally, physically.
3. That Negroes were happy and satisfied as slaves (well-fed and singing and dancing on the plantation).
4. That Negroes are happy and satisfied now.
5. That Negroes are incapable of participating in government.
6. That Negroes don't want to participate in government.
7. That Negroes are lazy.
8. That Negroes can only do menial work and nothing more.

Examine each of these myths.

Questions: How do you know these myths aren't true? Can you give examples?

Suggestion: Let us explore history and see how true these myths are (take them one at a time).

Case study:
Guide to Negro
History, part 2

Myth: That Negroes were happy and satisfied as slaves.

(Present in storytelling style first, then have students dramatize extemporaneously using their own words.)

Note: the dramatization of a slave revolt can serve an important function by permitting the students to vent repressed hostility and aggression against whites and their condition.

Raise myth again. Question: What do you think now? Were Negroes happy as slaves?

Case study:
Guide to Negro
History, part 3

Myth: That Negroes don't want to participate in government and are incapable of participating.

Raise myth again. Question: If Negroes can and want to participate in politics, why don't they?

Case study:
Guide to Negro
History, part 1

Myth: Negroes are inferior, mentally, morally, and physically, and can do only menial work.

Cassius Clay and Joe Louis; list other accomplishments of outstanding Negroes.

Raise myth again. Question: Why is this kind of myth started?

Concept: The effect on a person's self-image, motivation, and achievement when presented with low expectations (as exemplified by these myths).

Questions: How do you feel in school when a

Reintroduce
pictures of
schools.

that whites go to better schools, get better jobs, and live in better houses than Negroes.

Let us see if it's as good as it looks. The nice, new buildings, the laboratories, the school libraries, and gyms, and new textbooks and so on.

Concept: What education is.

Suggested questions: What do people learn in school besides reading, writing, and arithmetic? Do they learn things about other people? What? About jobs? What? About their country? What? About their city or town? About their government? About what they believe? About other countries? What?

1. Repeat pledge of allegiance. Analyze it: does it mean everything it says? When you say it, what does it teach you about your country and what it believes?
2. Recite the "Bill of Rights". Analyze it: Does it teach us about our country's beliefs? What? What does Freedom of Assembly mean? Does it mean you have the right to come together and demonstrate? If so, why do demonstrators go to jail? What does Freedom of Worship mean? Does it mean you can go into any church? If so, why do people get arrested in kneel-ins? What does Freedom of Speech mean? Do you have a right to say what you wish about voting and freedom and other things at rallies and meetings and at Freedom Schools? Do you have a right to say what you wish on leaflets and are you free to distribute them? If not, why not?

Question: Are these things the truth? Are they just ideals that we talk about or do Americans really believe them and practice them? Why could this be?

Concept: That truth, freedom, liberty, equality, and other ideals are often distorted and used as excuses and justifications for contradictory actions.

Questions: Are there any other things that the schools teach us that are untrue--myths? Can you point out any of the myths that are taught in the schools? What do the schools teach about Negroes?

Note: There is a real opportunity here for the teacher (white or middle-class Negro), if he can be honest and searching enough, to share the misinformation or myths he learned about Negroes

teacher calls you "stupid" or "dumb"? Do you try harder or do you give up? Are you angry? (Set up other examples within the students' experience.)

Question: What does this kind of myth do to you? Does it make you try? Does it make you proud to be a Negro?

Discussion: Reintroduce three basic questions.

1. Why are we (students and teacher) here in Freedom School?
2. What is the Freedom Movement?
3. What alternatives does the Freedom Movement have to offer?

We've talked about some of the myths that the schools teach; let us see what some of the others are.

Note: At this point schools might use the discussion method to try to help the students discover other myths from their own experience or what they have seen or heard on TV or the movies, etc. They might even be asked to recite the plots of war movies or cowboy and Indian movies, and then follow up with questions, etc. (i.e., why are the Indians always bad and savage? Why are Negroes always domestic savages?)

Question: What do these movies teach us?

Review entire Unit III. What is taught in the schools and through other media. The myths of our society (enumerate) and what the effect of these myths is on the Negro (and other Americans) and what purposes these serve.

Re-introduce three secondary questions:

1. What does the American majority society have that we want?
2. What does it have that we don't want?
3. What do we have that we want to keep? And share?

Unit IV: Introducing the Power Structure

- Purpose:
1. To create an awareness that some people profit by the pain of others or by misleading them.
 2. To create an awareness that some people make decisions that profoundly affect others (i.e. bare power).
 3. To develop the concept of "political power".

Summary: Starting with the material learned in preceding units on Negro-white differentials in education, housing, etc. and the use of myths to distort and misinform, to develop a concept of who constructs the myths, who profits from them, and how they profit both in local (town and state of Mississippi) terms and in larger terms. And to name these people as "decision-makers" and "the power structure".

Review--Suggested approach: Let's see what we have learned so far. We have learned that Negroes and whites live differently in both the South and the North and that Negroes are not given equal treatment in housing, education, etc. We have learned that although it seems that white people have better schools, for instance, that they pay for it by learning lies, and by learning to "hate" and be afraid. We have learned that we are misled by these lies too--that the myths have taught us to believe that we are inferior and dumb and that we have made no contributions to our society.

Now we want to find out why the schools tell these lies and find out who is helped by these lies.

Concept: That the myths serve a purpose by:

1. Keeping Negroes servile and teaching whites to feel superior.
2. Providing a justification for race relations in this country.

Question: Why do the schools tell these lies? Why hears and believes them? What do they believe? How does it make them feel to believe these things? Do the lies give them excuses? What kinds of excuses do the lies provide:

- If a white man kills a Negro
- If a policeman beats a Negro for demonstrating?
- If a policeman beats a white demonstrator?
- If a Negro is refused the vote?
- If a Negro tries to integrate a school?
- If Negroes are paid less money for the same work?
- If white workers want to start a union?

Now who profits by these lies? Let's start here in this town.

Case study:
Miss. Power
Structure,
Part I.

Concept: That some people profit by the propagation of myths (make money, gain power, bolster up their egos, etc.).

Question: Who makes money when Negroes are paid less than white people?

Ask students
about planta-
tions near
where they
live;
about fac-
tories near
where they
live.

Example: A cotton farmer's profit is the price he gets for his cotton minus what he pays for labor. Does the farmer make more money if the workers he hires are Negro? Why? Is it profitable for the farmer to keep Negro labor cheap? How does he do it? Do the myths help him do it? How?

Example: Why does northern industry come to Mississippi? They come from the North because Mississippi has cheaper labor and they can make more money. Why does Mississippi have cheaper labor? Because there are no unions? Because the

are white workers in Mississippi who are told that unions believe in integration. Where there are no unions, the workers are paid less and the businessman makes more money. Do the myths help to keep the salaries low for whites too? (Caution: many unions maintain segregationist practices.)

Question: Why don't white people want the Negro to vote?

Example: The same farmer is able to pay Negroes less money than white people are paid because the state laws of Mississippi support segregation and inequality. Who makes these laws? How do they get their jobs? Who elects them? What would happen to these men and these laws if Negroes voted? Would you vote for a man who made laws that paid you less? Does the farmer vote for them? Does the business man? Do white workers? Why?

Concept: That poor whites suffer from the myths, too.

Questions: If there was a union, the white workers would make more money too. Why, then, do they vote for politicians who are against unions? Are they more afraid of something else? Why are they so afraid of integration? What have the myths and lies that they have learned done to them? Who profits by this? The rich farmer? The rich businessman? How?

Concept: That the police work for the power structure and enforce the status quo.

Example: The following is an excerpt from one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's press conferences in 1938, when he unsuccessfully attempted to purge Southern reactionaries from the Democratic Party. Roosevelt described the experience of union organizers in a Southern town in a way that makes one think of COFO today:

They got in town about ten o'clock in the morning. They had a list of eight or ten of the operators. They were going to see them at the noon hour.

So they went to the factory and they asked, "Where is so and so? Where can I find so and so?"

They were engaged in asking questions, when one of the mill police tapped him on the shoulder and showed his badge and said, "Come with me."

He said, "We have not done anything; we are outside and on the street and just asking to see some fellows."

"Oh, we know; come with me."

They were taken to the police station and locked up in a cell on the charge of vagrancy

Both of them had, oh, fifteen or twenty dollars apiece in their clothes.

They said, "We are not vagrants; we came down here from such and such a city."

"But you are organizers."

"Of course we are organizers."

"Well, you are in a bad place."

They were kept in jail until five o'clock, just before dark, and the judge came in and said, "What are you doing here?"

"We are down here to try to start an organization of the textile workers of this mill."

"That is what you think," he said. "Ten dollars fine and out of town before six o'clock, and do not come back."

They did not know what they were fined for, but they paid the fine, and as they went out of the courtroom, one of the marshals, or policemen, went up to them and said, "Which way are you boys going?" They said, "We have got to get out of town and we thought we would go to such and such a town, ten miles away."

They rode with him and he said, "This is where I turn off." They went about a quarter of a mile and out of a clump of bushes came some men with blackjacks and they got the worst beating up that any two people could get without getting killed.

Question: Who helps to keep the Negro from voting and the union from starting? Who helps the farmer and businessman make money by enforcing the segregation laws? Who pays the police? Who gives them their orders? Why? What would happen to a policeman who didn't obey orders? Why do the police follow orders? Important to bring out:

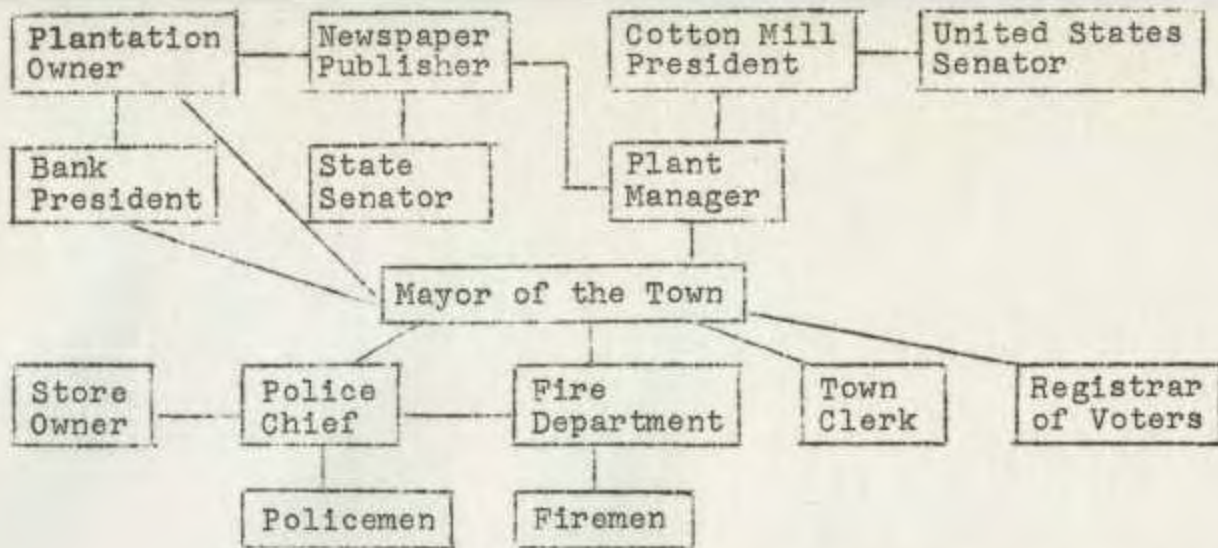
1. for pay
2. for illicit gains in graft, etc.
3. because they have learned the myths too, and "hate" and "fear".

Case Study: Miss. Power Structure, Part II

What is a power structure? That is the name we give to groups of men who make the myths, who profit from them like the farmer and the businessman, who pay the police and give them their orders, who make the laws and decide what laws they want, who make decisions about who gets paid and how much they get, about who votes and who doesn't vote, about what is taught in the schools, and what gets printed in the newspapers, etc.

Can you name some of these men in your town? (Suggestion: look for the mayor, big plantation owners, businessmen, plant managers, mill owners, etc.)

Suggestion: With the information you get from either students, parents or COFO staff research, construct an organizational chart of the power structure on the blackboard or large paper.



Show how a decision made on the upper level gets passed down through the chain of command and finally implemented

Dramatize if possible.

Example: A Negro tries to register. The registrar of voters fails him, and calls the Mayor. The next day the plantation owner fires him and orders him off the land, and his name is published in the newspaper. The bank forecloses on his car, and the store refuses him any more credit and the county welfare department says he must get three references from white people before he is eligible for relief. His wife is fired from her job as a cook for a white family. When they move in with relatives, the house is shot up one night and the Negro man arrested on "suspicion."

Concept: That the Power Structure is a connecting and interlocking series of cliques that goes from local towns and cities up to the highest levels of the national government.

Case study: The Power of the Dixie-crats

We have seen that there is what we call a power structure in this town--a small group of men that make the decisions in this town--they run it, they decide when schools are built and what is taught. They decide, as much as they can, who votes and who doesn't, they decide who gets a loan from the bank, they make the laws. In every other town and county of this state, there are other men who do the same things--who make the plans and decide what will happen for all the rest of us. They decide who will run for the Mississippi Legislature, and who will run for the United States Congress; they pay for the campaigns, they decide what laws will be made, and they help to make the myths that we all learn.

Southern representatives in Congress, acting on behalf of the Southern power structure, obstruct progress not only in the South but in the whole nation. Because of the one-party system in the South these representatives serve in the House and Senate over and over again. Their seniority enables them to become chairmen of key committees. Example: Senator Eastland of Mississippi

is the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, influences the appointment of judges to the Federal courts in which civil rights demonstrators are tried.

Discussion: Review entire Unit IV. Raise and answer the three basic questions. Raise and answer the three secondary questions.