DEDICATED TO CHANGE:
CRITICAL LITERACY AND CRITICAL MULTICULTURALISM
IN A SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

by

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A thesis submitted to
Sonoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

with a concentration in Multicultural Education

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Date

2/9/11
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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study:

Social studies has the potential to assist students in becoming active participants in our country's democracy. However, many students may not gain the skills from social studies courses that they should for a variety of reasons. After observing many high school students in schools throughout Northern California, I noticed a pattern of apathy towards the study of history. It became essential for me to discover the causes of this apathetic behavior and to create ways to motivate students to learn history. The purpose of this study was to attempt to explore the theories of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism as a means to raise engagement and interest in an eleventh grade United States history course. I implemented a curriculum grounded in critical literacy and critical multiculturalism with adolescents in an Upward Bound program in Northern California. The students are low-income and attempting to be the first in their family to go to a four-year university. The ultimate goal was to provide students the opportunity to learn about themselves and their positions in society by engaging in critical literacy and critical multiculturalism with US history materials.

Procedure:

After conducting research based upon critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, I prepared lessons and curriculum about the Civil Rights Movement based on California Social Science Standard 11.10. These activities were conducted during Upward Bound's five-week summer school United States history class, which had ten students enrolled in it. I developed lessons to introduce the idea of critical literacy and to provide opportunities for students to engage in critical literacy together using their US history textbook. I also provided students the freedom to learn about
themselves and their ancestors. Once the students gained knowledge of how to use critical literacy, they applied the principles on their own by analyzing various texts they used to create a paper about a person from the Civil Rights Movement that was not included in their textbook.

Findings:

In both individual work and in whole class discussions, students enrolled in the US history course succeeded in critically analyzing texts. The students asked pertinent questions of the text and wanted to know why certain information was legitimized and why other information had been ignored. Students' interest in regards to learning history increased, especially when it was made relevant to their lives. According to the students, they enjoyed learning about critical literacy and critical multiculturalism and planned on using these theories in the future on their own. For their final project, the students researched and wrote about people who are not necessarily recognized in high school textbooks. They also realized their own potential to make a difference in their communities after learning about those that have changed society in a positive way.

Conclusions:

In observing the lack of interest in history before the students enrolled in this class and the connections that they made with the subject when using critical literacy, I have evidence that critical literacy could raise the dedication that students have towards learning about the past. When students are able to ask questions, learn about themselves, critically analyze texts, and are allowed some freedom in assignments, they become engaged in learning history. Using the tools that critical literacy and critical multiculturalism offer, students can become active and informed members of society and enjoy learning about history.
Acknowledgements

Three individuals that have believed in me throughout this process are Karen Grady, Susan Campbell, and Nancy Case-Rico. They have allowed me to grow while in their classrooms as a student and now as a scholar. These women also believe that social studies needs to be critically examined and transformed. Karen Grady especially has held my hand throughout this journey and I am forever indebted to her assistance and faith in me.

I will always be thankful for the students at Upward Bound for allowing me to use them as my guinea pigs. Without this amazing program I would not be the educator that I am today. The students and the staff of Upward Bound are some of the most amazing people out there and I have grown as a person and as a teacher through my work with them. They are my second family and always will be.

I have to thank my mother Rebecca for always asking where I am on my work and believing in me. I hope I’ve made her proud. I am also grateful for my father and two sisters who have had to deal with me for the past 27 years.

It is my hope that educators will look at my work and use the information and tools that I will provide and see the value that it has in the classroom. We cannot continue to allow students to be apathetic towards history. We must make it engaging and personal. It is time for change.
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Chapter One
Introduction

What is the purpose of learning history? If you went to high school, you were undoubtedly enrolled in social science courses for at least three of the four years you spent there in order to receive a diploma. As someone who endured history courses for four years in high school (Humanities, World History, United States History, and Government/Economics), it was never clear why I was learning what I had to learn, and more importantly, why I had to memorize the names of people who I had never known and events which had nothing to do with me. I also never questioned the routine. The state of California has proposed that the purpose of social studies is to "require students not only to acquire core knowledge in history and social science, but also to develop the critical thinking skills that historians and social scientists employ to study the past and its relationship to the present" (California Social Studies Framework, vi).

This was not my experience in studying social studies in high school nor do I believe it is the experience for most students currently enrolled in social studies courses in California. I finally understood that I was not learning real history (for example, that people of color were just as much a part of US history as Europeans and European Americans) as I embarked on a civil rights trip my junior year of high school called "Sojourn to the Past," which took us eleventh and twelfth grade students on a journey through the South. We visited locations
that were influential to the movement such as the Selma Bridge (the spot where Bloody Sunday occurred), the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama (where four little girls were killed in a bombing), Central High School in Arkansas (one of the first high schools to be desegregated) and the Lorraine Motel in Memphis where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. We met and spoke to inspirational leaders of the movement such as Congressman John Lewis, Martin Luther King III, Elizabeth Eckford, and Chris McNair, to name a few. It was after my reflection on the trip that I realized my past experiences with history were all filled with bookwork and worksheets rather than a subject intended to mold me into someone who could think critically about the past and its connections to the present.

Instead of critically analyzing the information being presented in textbooks, we focused on the names and dates from more than eight hundred pages of text and filled in the blanks on photocopied worksheets. But after attending Sojourn to the Past, history quickly became a subject that I wanted to learn about. I wanted to know why events happened and who these events affected. I was not receiving answers to my questions in school, so I became my own investigator and am still dedicated to learning history, a topic that will never cease to bore me since there is always something new to learn. It was an important realization to see that even though we do not know historical figures
personally and were not involved directly with certain historical events, they have led us to where we are today. No teacher or social studies textbook ever taught me that. I had to learn a lot of information independently and this resilience helped me become an excellent student of history. This experience is fundamental to what I bring as a teacher to history in the classroom.

After receiving a bachelor’s degree in history, I decided to go on and become a social studies teacher because of this passion to learn about the past. While I was student teaching in 2007 and using a textbook called *The Americans* (Danzer, Alva, Woloch, & Wilson, 2007), I noticed something interesting in the layout of the textbook; it was organized by the California Social Science Standards. This textbook has the standard for the information presented in the corner of each page. By connecting the standards to the textbook, it ensures that students will have access to information that the state wants them to know. Oftentimes these are the only two resources educators use in their social studies curriculum which leaves out many individuals and events.

The standards and the textbooks used in United States history courses are only two resources to assist educators. As teachers, we must look for alternatives in the standards and textbooks. It is essential that both students and teachers critically investigate their resources and question the authors of the textbooks. When a book says “we,” who are they referring to? Surely, this needs to be
explored. When standard 11.1 states that “students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation,” does this mean that we should ignore the Native Americans that were previously living in America and only review the lives and achievements of the “founding fathers”? This is called critical literacy and will be one of the areas of focus in this thesis. When using critical literacy, the teacher and students can ask these four fundamental questions when reading text: “Whose voice is not being heard? Who benefits from this reading? How is the author positioning me? What were the authors’ motives in creating this text?” These questions, created by Luke and Freebody (1997) are basic tenements of critical literacy and should always be used when reading any text.

Curriculum should be created for the benefit of the student. Social science is a subject whose goal is to create civically responsible students who will participate in a democracy. There is an abundance of students in California who do not connect with the information in United States history textbooks. Textbook information is geared towards those who are the “winners” of history, more men than women, who are often European American and part of a higher socioeconomic background. For the most part, young people do not align themselves with the information presented in the textbook since they do not belong to these groups (Wolk, 2003). Ogle and McBride (2007) believe that “it is crucial for the future health of American democracy that all young people,
including those from groups who are usually marginalized, be knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and in politics and committed to the public good” (p. 72). If students are engaged in critical literacy practices and feel empowered through the work that they complete in social studies courses, they might also want to make a difference in their communities. “When teachers bring a critical literacy perspective to the social studies classroom, they can teach students about the past to work for common good in the future” (Soares & Wood, 2010, p. 486).

Another learning opportunity that could be used in the classroom is critical multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is to learn about and understand the diversity of this country. Teachers can use multiculturalism in the classroom to “teach tolerance.” Multiculturalism looks at various races and ethnicities that exist and emphasizes how these groups of people are important to society. Critical multiculturalism’s purpose is to take a leap forward and investigate how economic and political status affects individuals and groups. Ask yourself, do we usually see the poor in the curriculum? What about those who live in underdeveloped areas who have been ignored politically and economically, like my students who live in predominantly impoverished areas that need to be uplifted physically and politically? It is important to take note of what has placed people in their economic and political positions. “Critical multiculturalism asks
students to study the ways power in the classroom and society shapes their consciousness” (Monchinski, 2008, p. 158). To not include these individuals and their stories is to ignore their importance in society and everyone knows that society is not merely made up of those that belong to upper-class European Caucasian groups. Everyone should receive a voice.

Years ago I decided to learn history on my own and some other students in California are having to learn this hidden history away from the classroom as well. A group of students I had the opportunity to work with attend the federally funded program Upward Bound every summer. Upward Bound assists low-income and under-served high school students to become the first in their family to attend college. Ninety five percent of the students enrolled are Latino, three percent are African American and two percent are Indian. There are approximately forty students in this program and every summer I am both their English and history teacher. One of my goals is to provide information designed to encourage the students to learn their own histories and to empower them to engage in lifelong learning. Social studies is indeed a subject that all students should be exposed to. It is a subject that can assist students in making decisions, in thinking critically, in learning about themselves and about others, and in understanding why events happen and the nature of their effects.
As one of their first homework assignments, new students in Upward Bound are asked what it is that they know about their histories (which includes their ethnicities and cultural backgrounds) as one of their first homework assignments. Many Latino students identify as being of Aztec descent but have no idea what that means. They also have heard the name "Cesar Chavez" but do not know what he accomplished. When I have inquired why students do not know who Chavez was, most have stated that they have never been exposed to him in class. I have spoken to history teachers at various schools, including the schools in which the Upward Bound students attend, and they have told me that they focus on the main ideas of United States history, which often means teaching what will be on the standardized tests.

The history courses that these students have been enrolled in, just like the courses I was enrolled in throughout high school, are filled with material that has little to do with their everyday lives and the lives of the groups to which they belong: people of color, women in general, people from lower socioeconomic class. Because of the irrelevant information and monotonous activities that students complete, they may turn their backs on history, which, to me, is unacceptable. These students need to understand that the groups that they belong to also had a major effect on our nation's history. It is an intolerable act not to include who students are in the curriculum of a social studies classroom.
As I became a social studies educator, I understood why students did not connect to United States history. California is incredibly diverse with people from various backgrounds, histories, ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and genders. One of the first tasks I completed in the social science credential education course at Sonoma State was to critically investigate the textbooks that were used in the classes we were to teach. Textbooks in history courses are used during eighty percent of instructional time (Loewen, 2005). Many teachers rely solely on the textbook for instruction without adding supplemental materials such as primary sources, documentaries, or guest speakers, which further isolates the students who are not found in the curriculum (Loewen, 2005).

If we begin to teach students in the way that they deserve to be taught, by using critical literacy and critical multiculturalism in the classroom, students may learn that they can transform society. Students in the Upward Bound program know that there are issues in our nation and our world that need to be solved. They are not immune to the negativity they and their peers face which might have to do with their backgrounds. Social studies does not have to be about teaching to a test, but instead it can be a subject that students are genuinely interested in and classes that students look forward to attending. Social studies classes could be places where students critically think about important issues.
Social studies has the power to change individuals, communities, and the world through education and activism.

This thesis project presents theoretically-grounded ideas on how to teach US history that meets the goals stated above. Critical literacy (the act of investigating text and acquiring various forms of texts to adequately educate students) will be discussed and steps on how to critically examine text will be provided. I will describe the reasons why critical multiculturalism and social justice are important to teach in high school classes and how they can be foundations to a curriculum that still addresses standards.

It has been almost ten years since I was a high school student, sitting at my desk with my textbook out waiting for a worksheet to be handed to me. Now I am an educator and I do not wish for the students that walk through the classroom door to be bored and unaffected by history. It is my goal to teach students how to critically analyze information that is relevant to them and for the students to be able to learn about themselves and others. It is equally my goal to help them understand their own positions in history and how they have been positioned by the way history is often taught. It is time for change.
Chapter Two 
Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the two key theoretical ideas that informed this thesis: critical literacy and critical multiculturalism. The two theories will be defined and a historical background will be provided for each. There is a strong need for critical literacy and critical multiculturalism in the social studies classroom which will be shown through the research based upon these theories.

Critical Literacy

There are a number of definitions for the word “critical.” I am going to draw from the field of critical literacy in my use of the term “critical.” However, even among critical literacy theorists, the definition of critical literacy is ambiguous. “Critical literacy offers a powerful means for students to become more aware of how multiple texts are constructed and how they influence our thinking” (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. Xiii). A basic tenant of critical multiculturalism is the necessity to break down and to reveal the inequities that underlie education which have led to the oppression of various groups. Critical literacy and critical multiculturalism both look to address the inequities in education by examining and finding ways to change the status quo.

There is no absolute definition of this theory since scholars believe that critical literacy should be unique for each environment that it encounters. The
theory lacks an applied set of instructional strategies, which would mark it as a curricular approach. Instead, the theory is put into action in a variety of ways within the classroom (Behrman, 2005). There are, however, basic tenants of the theory which are universal. “Critical literacy essentially asks one first to understand how it is that texts perpetuate systems of oppression and suppression and then moves on to identify ways of disrupting the status quo” (Luke, 2000, p. 377). Stevens & Bean (2007) have stated that educators should resist providing a set and easy definition for the theory considering the diversity of classrooms across the nation.

What makes texts contribute to the oppression of readers? To begin, texts can be anything that a person reads, views, or hears. Examples would be books, films, songs, poems, advertisements, and other representations of human thought and experience. It is the belief of critical theorists that these texts are never neutral and that they have underlying agendas that need to be examined (Stevens & Bean, 2007). It is essential to the mission of creating a more just world that these motives be addressed. Texts are socially constructed by authors with various backgrounds and it is necessary to have a critical eye towards the historical, social, and political elements that penetrate each text (Stevens & Bean, 2007).
Many educators view the literacy that students encounter in school as neutral and not in need of investigation (Janks, 2009). However, “critical theorists view literacy as a political act that can maintain or challenge the status quo. Texts are viewed as communicating both explicit and implicit messages that promote specific ideologies” (Hall & Piazza, 2008, p. 33). The information that a student receives anywhere should be critically examined, especially in a social studies classroom. Jewett (2007) stated “the heart of social studies is embodied in inquiry” (p. 165). The history classroom is one where students come into contact with the stories of other people’s lives and is an environment where students should be encountering various resources and not merely relying on one single source to investigate the past. It is also an environment where students should be taught to examine the way in which various resources act upon students as readers to present a particular view of the world.

If no text is neutral, then all texts are representations of what the author(s) intends to convey to readers. There can be social, economic, historical, and political implications that affect each reader differently according to her or his own background. It is the view of Stevens & Bean (2007) that “all texts are representations and that the practice of literacy is potentially a tool for empowerment or disempowerment. In helping students to become literate subjects of the state, we view the ability to critique texts as equally as the ability
to decode them” (p. 5). In order to be able to critique texts, learners need to first be aware of their own backgrounds and how texts might have a positive or negative effect on them. For example, a young African American girl may not appreciate that there aren’t many positive images of African Americans in her United States history textbook and that most of the information is focused on slavery being the most significant aspect that African Americans have played in U.S. history. This information does not empower her and might stifle her interest in learning more about United States history. It also erases, or at best, reduces African American history to a single narrative. The implications for this one-sided curriculum are boundless (such as the creation of silenced students with a poor attitude towards learning history) and information needs to be dissected in order to provide information that will encourage students and assist them in their desire to learn. According to Ogle, Klemp, and McBride (2007), “recent brain research has shown that a student’s emotional attitude has a profound effect on engagement, learning, and retention” (p. 5). Therefore, when students deconstruct text, it is a positive and empowering activity.

A learner needs the skills of not only critical reading but also critical thinking in order to decode text. “To be ‘critical’ basically means to be more discerning in recognizing faulty arguments, hasty generalizations, assertions lacking evidence, truth claims based on unreliable authority, ambiguous or
obscure concepts and so forth" (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 46). To be a critical thinker, one must analyze the discourses that they come into contact with and recognize a faulty argument from a sound statement. It should be known to students that all texts are biased and it is the job of the teacher and the student to discover the political purposes of texts.

If students are to deconstruct text in the classroom, they will need a "wider array of learning opportunities to manipulate artifacts and primary documents, to engage in concrete activities, to approach topics from varied perspectives, and then to think about and synthesize their understandings in personal ways" (Ogle, Klemp, & McBride, 2007, p. 18). It is not worthwhile for a student to merely use a textbook adopted by the state to obtain information, especially when it serves to maintain the status quo. Wolk (2003) infers that "official curricula, such as a textbook or a standardized test, which are highly politicized and sanctioned official knowledge, are seen as the correct answers and right knowledge that children need to have" (p. 102). The goal of a critical literacy teacher is to assist his or her students in questioning this "official knowledge" and discover whose story this curriculum is silencing and whose story is being told.

Readers need to recognize that texts are selections that can be transformed to represent various interests (Janks, 2009). Hilary Janks (2009) is a strong
proponent of Critical Language Awareness, which draws attention to the fact that all texts are constructed and that anything which has been constructed can be deconstructed. Through this approach, the unmaking and deconstruction of a text increases the awareness to readers of the choices that the writer has made. Readers can then ask: “Why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language itself?” (Janks, 2009, p. 24). These would be the beginning steps in becoming critically literate.

These would be the initial questions asked of a text in a course based on critical literacy. When students engage in this work, they become aware of their own views and interpretations of the world. No longer is it sufficient for students to merely read, but they must be able to deconstruct information inside and outside of the classroom (Stevens & Bean, 2007). This is done through asking questions which Janks has supplied to teachers and students. Students should be able to find themselves in text, and if they don’t, then there is a need to evaluate the curriculum of the social studies classroom since no one should be ignored.

Historical Background

Critical literacy has become more prevalent in the last few decades. However, concepts behind the theory have prevailed longer than the last twenty years. One of the first educational reformers to hold ideas that relate to the theory
was John Dewey. Dewey believed it was the duty of schools to “provide multiple opportunities for students to learn what a democratic way of life means and how it might be led” (Soares & Wood, 2010, p. 487). California’s Board of Education has stated “students will learn to distinguish the important from the unimportant, to recognize vital connections between the present and the past, and to appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas” (1998, p. vi). It appears that the two sources mentioned here have similar goals, but the way the curriculum has been created for California social studies classrooms has been devoid of multiple perspectives. Historically, “the nature of schools is such that they feel haunted by traditional approaches and traditional curriculum, the latter leaving only enough space for monologic, canonical literacy teaching” (Glazier, 2007, p. 375). The textbook and the standards have become the norm and in many classrooms there is no room for opportunities to learn about multiple perspectives which should be presented to students. In California schools, “students have been so spoon-fed about what to think that they are no longer able to think for themselves and simply wait to be ‘taught to’ think” (Kornfeld & Goodman, 1998, p. 101).

“At the start of the twenty-first century, heterogeneity is the norm in multilingual, multicultural urban classrooms. Students are themselves located across social categories such as gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion,
ability, which are inflected by their histories” (Janks, 2009, p. 99). This country is becoming more and more diverse as each day passes and it is necessary for the social studies teacher to provide various texts to reflect the diversity of perspectives that exist today and have always existed in U.S. society. Curriculum privileges “superficial, factual-level comprehension while leaving questions of power and representation unexplored” (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. 17). When teachers assist their students in engaging in deconstructing the power relations and the norms of representation in textbooks, teaching and learning become emancipatory activities, following in the footsteps of Paulo Freire.

To Freire, “literacy training should not only provide reading, writing, and numeracy, but it should be considered ‘a set of practices that functions to either empower or disempower people’” (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. 5). Freire, a Brazilian philosopher, activist, and educator, began his work with adult literacy campaigns. He worked with adults in Brazil to oppose forces that kept these people intellectually and politically disempowered. He believed that “literacy should at all times be analyzed according to whether it serves to reproduce existing social formations or serve as a set of cultural practices that promotes democratic and emancipatory change” (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. 5). Paramount to Freire and other critical educators are the beliefs that questions of power, privilege, and oppression need to be identified, along with hidden agendas in
text. When readers become equipped with the tools to analyze text, they develop critical consciousness and can begin to search for justice.

Freire believed that reading the world could not be separated from reading the world. "He used literacy as a means of breaking the 'culture of silence' of the poor and dispossessed" (Janks, 2009, p. 13). Whether a learner is poor or rich, they can all benefit from following Freire's ideals. Society accepts dominant forms as natural and right, whereas different forms are viewed as faulty. These beliefs should be broken and it can happen through the practice of critical literacy tactics. Freire believed in liberation through praxis: "the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it" (Janks, 2009, p. 13).

The word (texts) and the world (society) cannot be separated from one another and it is crucial that individuals actively produce ways to dissect discourses which may be oppressive to not only themselves, but to others as well. Once discourse is analyzed, then it is time to transform the world for the benefit of those who have been disadvantaged. This is praxis: taking what you learn, reflecting upon the new information, and discovering how to create a socially just world.

The Need for Critical Literacy in Social Studies

"Many students have a poor attitude about the subject of history. They feel that studying about 'old events and dead people' has little relevance in their
lives” (Ogle & McBride, 2007, p. 5). History has become a subject in which many teachers expect their students to regurgitate information on so-called important dates and key events. With their large amounts of information, the social studies textbooks are becoming too much for students and teachers to handle. “A typical middle or high school textbook includes 800 to 1,200 pages of facts, anecdotes, statistics, questions, activities, and graphic images. Students have difficulty discerning which concepts to focus on and which are the most important to retain” (Ogle & McBride, 2007, p. 5). Because of the vast amount of information that a history teacher needs to cover, they may create lessons quickly and superficially, which prevents student engagement and comprehension (Ogle & McBride, 2007).

There is an absolute need for critical literacy in the social studies classroom. Without diving deep into information and breaking down what the texts are saying, students are disadvantaged when it comes to critical thinking and literacy in the classroom. As a result, teachers are creating artificial lessons because they feel pressured to cover information that the state has sanctioned through their curricular standards.

The heart of social studies is inquiry. Critical literacy is investigating and critiquing text to discover hidden meanings that are below the surface of various discourses. Oftentimes, students and teachers will read text to gain facts (such as
names, dates, and events) and they will not analyze the text or reflect on its meaning. Text is viewed as unbiased and neutral when it merely covers the state standards and textbook information. Both the teacher and student need to understand that the social studies classroom is the perfect place to bring issues of race, gender, culture and power to the forefront and to think, question, and discuss various materials in order to gain a rich perspective of history (Soares & Wood, 2010).

Most students do not see themselves in the curriculum which was created by individuals who do not know these diverse young people. Since the students from marginalized groups do not see themselves, but rather see those who are more powerful in society, they may feel insignificant. "Narrowly defined views of reading also deny the pervasive role that text, both print and visual, plays in shaping our identities, resources and opportunities" (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. 6) in the social science classroom and in society. Both teachers and students often do not see the hidden messages that curriculum creates. Critical literacy exposes these inequalities and begins to empower students to create their own histories. If "we deny students access, we perpetuate their marginalization in a society that continues to recognize the value and importance of these forms" (Janks, 2009, p. 24).
One duty of a teacher is to "encourage students to be sensitive and alert to the silent and missing voices and perspectives in their classrooms" (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 218). Critical literacy is a call to action. Silence has plagued social studies. Teachers have an obligation to expose these missing stories and to envision what the subject would be like with the inclusion of all people (Jewett, 2007). The textbooks which the students in California use are "sanitized and devoid of multiple perspectives" (Behrman, 2005, p. 492). It is crucial that students learn the tools to be able to think for themselves, feel confident to voice their opinions, and evaluate how topics connect to their lives (Wolk, 2003). These are the goals of critical literacy. If social studies curriculum continues to ignore poor and marginalized students, society will continue to perpetuate the oppression of many groups.

Once students and teachers recognize that critical literacy is necessary in curriculum, they can begin to research ways that would be most beneficial for using critical literacy in their classroom. There is not one right or wrong way to conduct critical literacy; it constantly changes to fit the need of the classroom it serves. Once students expose the inequities in the curriculum that they receive, they can take this knowledge, feel empowered, and go out into their communities to share what they have learned. Critical literacy does not stop in the classroom. It is designed to encourage students to go out into their
communities and to inform those around them of the bigotry in curriculum. Students have the potential to make a positive influence in their own lives and the lives of those around them after becoming aware of the benefits of critical literacy (Behram, 2005).

Critical Multiculturalism

Many in America believe that the educational system will be the greatest equalizer of society. However, many theorists conclude that “schools function to reproduce, rather than to reduce inequalities, and some even suggest that what we need is a revolution or a fundamental change in the system” (McLaren, 2006, p. 134). Like critical literacy, one goal of critical multiculturalism (which is a branch of critical pedagogy) is to ask how and why knowledge is constructed the way it is and why some constructions are legitimated and others are not (McLaren, 2006). When dealing with social studies, the information in textbooks is clearly “legitimated” by being recommended by state departments of education, adoption boards, and then used in classrooms to educate thousands of students in spite of many groups and histories of people in the U.S. who are not well represented by the textbooks. Critical multiculturalism attempts to unmask the claims that education provides equal opportunity and access for all, while questioning the economic, social, and political motives behind the information which students encounter.
It is the schools which "reproduce class relations by reinforcing rather than reducing class-based differential access to social and cultural capital" (Aronowitz, 2004, p. 111). According to Freire, "the teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable" (2000, p. 52). Many educators and students alike do not view curriculum as reproducing inequality in society. American schools, and especially the social studies classroom, are viewed as places in which young people learn to live in a democratic society. Contrary to this belief, schools teach conformity to the social, cultural, and occupational hierarchy and do not encourage independent action (Aronowitz, 2004). If a critical educator were to research the information presented in most of the textbooks in California social studies classrooms, he or she would see that those from lower socioeconomic levels are not presented in positive ways, and are often ignored. As stated by McLaren (2003) "The curriculum favors certain forms of knowledge over others and affirms the dreams, desires, and values of select groups of students over other groups on the basis of race, class, and gender" (p. 75).

Critical multiculturalists are most concerned with the class differences that dwell in curriculum. "Class refers to the economic, social, and political relationships that govern life in a given social order" (McLaren, 2003, p. 65). A person's income level, place of habitation, occupation, status and social rank can
all reflect how an individual is treated in society according to their class. Students who reside in lower socioeconomic areas are prone to receiving less than adequate educations which perpetuate the societal order that continues to lead to oppression and not empowerment (Noguera, 2008). Critical educators need to ask: “How do schools help transmit the status and class positions of the wider society” (McLaren, 2003, p. 78)? One answer is through hegemony.

“Hegemony refers to the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family” (McLaren, 2003, p. 67). An example in United States history courses of hegemony would be the story of Thanksgiving, which students learn at a young age. Students accept that the European settlers ate peacefully with the Native Americans and there is a notion inferred that the Europeans were socially superior to the Natives. This idea goes so far as to say that the Europeans lived better than the Native Americans and had a right to take America for themselves in order to make it into the nation that it is today. If a student who is Native American learned this in elementary school, they might believe that they are inferior to their Caucasian classmates because of their social status. This student unknowingly participates in their own
oppression by not advocating for himself or herself which perpetuates the
hegemony of their community.

This has happened in numerous situations throughout curriculum; the
dominant group being the “winners,” in this case, the takers of the land. If
several sides of events were shown to students, there may not be a dominant
story memorized, but a multitude of often competing perspectives understood.
Critical multiculturalism does not believe in two sides to a given topic, but aims
to reveal every outlook there may be. What educators can do in order to
comprehend how hegemony functions is to understand “not only how the seeds
of domination are produced, but also how they can be challenged and overcome
through resistance, critique, and social action” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres,
2008, p. 12). In order to be confident in resisting the norms of society, students
must feel empowered to do so.

Empowerment is a word invoked by many multiculturalist theorists. The
empowerment which students need to exercise with critical multiculturalism is
“fundamentally concerned with understanding the relationship between power
and knowledge” (McLaren, 2003, p. 72). Students need to feel brave enough to
want to change the social order which surrounds them. Learners can do this
through the assistance of their teachers who must “recognize that power
relations correspond to forms of school knowledge that distort understanding
and produce what is commonly accepted as 'truth'" (McLaren, 2003, p. 74). The information that students learn should be analyzed on the basis of whether or not it is oppressive and exploitative as well as if it is true. In order to empower students, it is clear that critical literacy also needs to be practiced and this is a prime example of where the two theories intersect. Once students practice questioning text and learn various perspectives they can begin to become intellectually powerful and able to make a difference in their education.

Critical multiculturalism calls on culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students to be empowered in order to transform their classroom practices that maintain an undemocratic life (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008). The empowerment of students can come from knowledge of "one's own history, language, and cultural traditions" (McLaren, 2003, p. 77). When students understand the oppression that their predecessors have faced and worked to overcome, students might also see possibilities for themselves. A culture of participation and social action is necessary to emancipate students of the societal constraints they may face. This participation needs to be more than students learning and discussing the topic of racism in the classroom, which seems to be the safest inequality to discuss (hooks, 1994).

The one topic that is partially covered in The Americans, the state-adopted textbook for United States history for many California schools districts, is racism.
"To ignore class exploitation when you are talking about racism and sexism is a serious mistake" (McLaren, 2003, p. 88). Oppression by class is just as important as discussing any other "ism" when covering social studies topics. To ignore classism is to perpetuate the hidden agenda of capitalism in America. According to Giroux (1997) "critical pedagogy marked the transition from a language of critique to a language of possibility" (p. 125). No longer should certain stories be ignored. Instead, society needs to create a structure that allows individuals in any category of society to change and to grow. These people should receive historical information that reflects their histories and not that of people in which they cannot connect with, such as dead white men. There is an obligation in the public school system to incorporate information and lessons that will be useful to empower students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Our society is obsessed with the myth of individual achievement, which mostly upper-middle class people gain. Unfortunately, "subordinated groups who fail at school or who don't make it into the world of the 'rich and famous' will view such failure in terms of personal inadequacy or 'the luck of the draw'" (McLaren, 2003, p. 67). This population blames themselves for something that is attributed to the structure of society and the division of labor in America. In the words of Paulo Freire (2000), "to alienate men from their own decision-making is to change them into objects" (p. 59). For decades, and even centuries,
students have not been a part of the decisions in school, let alone in society. They have become objects, denied of a voice in the decisions that impact eighteen years of their lives. If society has made these inequalities, they can be unmade. The oppressor, along with the oppressed, need to join together in order to create a more equal society.

**Historical Background**

Critical multiculturalism is closely linked to its predecessor, critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is the umbrella that ties all critical theory together, including critical literacy. The history of critical multiculturalism relates to the "yearning to give some shape and coherence to the theoretical landscape of radical principles, beliefs and practices that contributed to an emancipatory ideal of democratic schooling in the United States during the twentieth century" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008, p. 2). In the early twentieth century, the schooling system in America revolved around the premise that teachers were preparing masses of students for the socialization of factory life and wage labor. During this time many teachers seldom resisted against educational bureaucracies that connected to the expanding capitalist society in America (Greene, 2008). The school was in essence creating workers for the world, which in turn created social structure in society. Those individuals living in more prosperous areas would become the leaders of the white collar world, while
those living in lower socioeconomic areas would have to struggle with oppressive occupations. The cycle continues, since the “great equalizer,” public education, promotes inequity within its curriculum, resources, unprepared teachers, and lack of preparation for continued education towards high school students.

One of the first educational theorists to advocate a critical perspective of how school procreated inequality in America was John Dewey. “His beliefs centered on a variety of basic principles, including the notion that education must engage with an enlarged experience; that thinking and reflection are central to the act of teaching” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008, p. 3). In the first half of the 20th century, during Dewey’s prime time as a theorist, school curriculum was dry and devoid of giving all students a voice. Most students of color did not attend school. If they did, the schools were often completely segregated, further separating those that had the ability and resources to succeed in America and those that could not.

The students that often could not participate in schooling were African American. W.E.B. DuBois, the first African American to graduate from Harvard University, believed that African Americans needed to regain access to their own history in order to actively engage in society. As president of the N.A.A.C.P., DuBois often campaigned for the integration between Whites and Blacks in every
field of society since he believed this would assist African Americans in their quest for equality. Unfortunately, the oppression that Blacks faced decades ago still plague many communities today. Right now there are a number of diverse individuals who are oppressed and critical multiculturalism looks to identify why this happens and how to change the treatment of these individuals.

Through his work in education, Jonathan Kozol has done an incredible amount to help bring to surface the discrimination which many young students face through his work in education. Working towards social justice, mostly in inner city schools, he “has sought to address the material conditions and expose the social consequences of poverty and racism to those children and their families who have been relegated to an existence at the margins of American life” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008, p. 4). These children who are at the margins live in cities like St. Louis, New York, and Boston, just to name a few places. He understands what society has done to these marginalized families, which began during the creation of the educational system in America. These people have been subject to the arrangement that has constructed an imbalanced social structure which has created tremendous amounts of poverty and ignorance.

Although the aforementioned mentioned theorists have had an impact on critical multiculturalism, the leading practitioner of critical pedagogy, along with
critical literacy, is Paulo Freire. He, too, focused on emancipating the student through investigating how society has maintained inequality through the indoctrination of students in schools and how to undo what has already been done. The oppressor cannot lead the struggle for humanization. The oppressed and the oppressor must work together in society to create equality.

"The prevailing image of America that the schools have promulgated is a benevolent one in which the interests of the dominant class supposedly represent the interests of all groups. It is an image in which the values and beliefs of the dominant class appear so correct that to reject them would be unnatural, a violation of common sense" (McLaren, 2008, p. 68). This statement has been historically true throughout the decades and includes the beliefs and actions which take place in the schools. To only observe the dominant class, which can be seen as those that the students see most often in their social studies courses, the European and European American men that have been deemed the makers of history, gives students the idea that it is right and natural to only learn about these men. Our capitalist society is "premised on the exploitation of human labor" (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006, p. 79) and not on the belief that all students, no matter what their socioeconomic background is, have the right to succeed. Instead, students are trained to play a role in society that will keep the
haves where they are and the have-nots out of sight. This is what has occurred historically and what continues to happen today.

**The Need for Critical Multiculturalism**

A prominent advocate of critical education, bell hooks (1994), has stated, "class is rarely talked about in the United States; nowhere is there a more intense silence about the reality of class differences than in educational settings. Significantly, class differences are particularly ignored in classrooms" (p. 118). As previously stated, it is apparent that some social studies classrooms will discuss matters of racism and sexism, but rarely is classism and oppression examined. hooks (1994) also believes that “Students who enter the academy unwilling to accept without question the assumptions and values held by privileged classes tend to be silenced, deemed troublemakers” (p. 136). These students exist, whether they be from low or high socioeconomic backgrounds.

In California, the 2010 census revealed that 57% of the population is made up of students of color and 72% of those under the age of fifteen are people of color (LA Times, 2010). Since the number of European Americans is declining, many students are going to feel the need to see themselves in the curriculum. “Students sometimes ask, 'Why do we have to study dead white men's books? They have nothing to do with me.' Students’ suspicion of the dominance of white men in critical pedagogy theories, in tandem with their anger and resistance, is
well justified” (Cho, 2006, p. 131). This is an excellent question that educators need to begin to answer, especially with the changing demographics. “From the standpoint of the political economy, public schools serve to position select groups within asymmetrical power relations that replicate the existing cultural values and privileges of the dominant class” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008, p. 10). Despite the numbers, the dominant class has been European Americans and people of color are still fighting for equality in all realms of society. This is why critical multiculturalism is needed in all schools.

Critical multiculturalism will not be used in many schools because of fear and anxiety. Students that do engage in dialogue often respond to their fears with either silence, defensiveness, or detachment (hooks, 1994). To expose our society for its inequalities will leave some students with a feeling of guilt, some with anger, and others with apathy. The important part of critical multiculturalism is that the injustices are exposed. There is an absence of equality in this society which has been divided by race and class and it is time that individuals learn about the truth instead of repeating the status quo (McLaren, 2003). Right now, most students have teachers who work on storing information which creates deposits of knowledge in their brains. The students turn into receptacles instead of being viewed as transformers and those who accept the curriculum and the world as it is, are doomed to repeat this cycle of oppression (Freire, 2000). This is
what is occurring in California social studies courses and other subjects as well and what needs to change in academia.

How can public schools promote civic engagement and prepare students for participating in a democracy when “the curriculum favors certain forms of knowledge over others and affirms the dreams, desires, and values of select groups of students over other groups, often discriminatory on the basis of race, class, and gender” (McLaren, 2003, p. 75)? Critical multiculturalists are concerned with “how descriptions, discussions, and representations in textbooks, curriculum materials, course content, and social relations embodied in the classroom practices benefit dominant groups and exclude subordinate ones” (McLaren, 2003, p. 75). It is important to note that “blacks and dark-skinned minorities lag well behind whites in virtually every area of social life; they are about three times more likely to be poor than whites, earn about forty percent less than whites, and have about one-tenth of the net worth of whites. They also receive an inferior education compared to whites” (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006, p. 21).

One of the original goals of American schools was to produce workers for society (Greene, 2008). The system today does not provide equal opportunity for students based on their class. Some actually believe that “despite class, race, or gender hierarchies in the economic and political system, public education
provides every individual with the tools to overcome conditions of birth. In reality only about a quarter of people of working-class origin attain professional, technical, and managerial careers” (Aronowitz, 2004, p. 109). Only one-quarter of those born into their socioeconomic situations are able to escape them. Even those students who are part of lower socioeconomic situations in America will obtain some college credits but do not graduate and end up in service jobs that do not pay a decent working-class wage (Aronowitz, 2004). This is all rooted in the education that students receive which starts at a very young age.

Educators need to be aware of the circumstances in which their students live and want to empower these young people to succeed in order to crush the cycle of oppression. It is imperative that teachers look at their own pedagogical practices and examine which lessons serve to empower students and which serve to subordinate. It is important to note that it is not just minorities who live in lower socioeconomic conditions, it can also be Caucasians. Minorities are often higher in percentage to living in these circumstances and are the ones that do not see themselves in the curriculum at all (McLaren, 2006). All pieces of the classroom need to be investigated and, most importantly, the student needs to become an active player in the classroom. “No emancipatory pedagogy will ever be built out of the theories of behavior which view students as lazy, defiant, lacking in ambition, or genetically inferior” (McLaren, 2006, p. 80). We need to be
rid of our prejudices and gain a belief that all students are equal. We absolutely must empower each one of them.

According to Freire (1970) “the problem-posing educator constantly reforms his reflection of the students. The students - no longer docile listeners - are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (p. 57). The teacher would no longer be the authoritarian figure in a class that focuses on uncovering inequalities which effect them. Instead, the classroom will become a place where dialogue between teacher and students occur. Students should be learning about themselves and each other. Curriculum needs to be created by the students and for the students. Its duty is to uncover the elements that constantly position students according to class, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion. Schools have an obligation to assist young adults in becoming empowered and active citizens (Freire, 1970).

The community needs to envision what it would be like if inequality didn’t exist. That can be the starting point for changing societies current situation. Maxine Greene (2008) wrote “passion has been called the power of possibility” (p. 84) and if there is enough passion coming from students, teachers, administrators, and the community at large, the injustices of society can be examined and together the oppressed and the oppressor can make a difference. It all starts with education. The school’s goals should not be to create workers for
the world, but rather to produce individual critical thinkers who have the drive and the passion to change society for the better (Greene, 2008). Educators and students alike should not be afraid to uncover what is truly happening in society inside their classrooms. Socioeconomic oppression (or any oppression for that matter) is not going to disappear on its own. It is imperative that teachers and students create an equal society in which all young people can succeed instead of separating the haves from the have-nots.

Conclusion

Critical literacy and critical multiculturalism are two theories which "invoke the term 'critical' as a valued educational goal; urging teachers to help students become more skeptical toward commonly accepted truisms. Both of these concepts essentially states, 'Do not let yourself be deceived'" (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 45). The premise behind both of these theories is really to think deeper about the text and the presented curriculum. If this society did not have inequalities, practicing these two theories would not be as crucial as it is. The fact remains that in America, specifically in California, we need to transform the inequitable social relations in this so-called democratic society. Using the tools of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism will be a stepping stone in that right direction.
“In the language of critical pedagogy, the critical person is one who is empowered to seek justice, to seek emancipation” (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 50). Students become empowered once they begin to ask questions pertaining to curriculum and when they examine why certain individuals are prevalent in textbooks and others are not. Teachers can guide their students by asking these questions, go beyond racism, and expose the class disparities that continue the cycle of oppression in this nation. All of these “isms” have been socially constructed, and what has been man-made can be changed.

Overcoming oppression really takes both reflection and action: praxis. Teachers and students must be committed to changing the status quo and be willing to uncover the truths which plague our society. If this commitment is strong, then the next step would be to fight for social justice and change. After the inquiry comes the action. Critical literacy and critical multiculturalism do not end at analyzing text. The struggle does not end until society has been transformed into a more equitable and democratic place to live for everyone.
Chapter Three
Methodology

It should be stated that bringing critical literacy and critical multiculturalism into any classroom is no easy task. To do so takes a dedicated educator and committed students. Participating in lessons which incorporate the two theories will undoubtedly be new for most students and the teacher should be prepared for some “deer in the headlight moments.” I chose to integrate critical literacy and multiculturalism with the Upward Bound students whom I taught during the summer of 2010 in northern California. In this chapter, I will describe the processes I engaged in to apply the theories to the texts I was going to use. Immediately following, I will then describe how I helped the students engage in critical discussions of the materials using the same tools I used.

Participants

As previously stated in Chapter One, the forty students enrolled in Upward Bound come from low-income backgrounds and will be the first in their families to go to college. The program is comprised of 95% Latino students, 3% African American students, and 2% Indian students (descending from India, not Native American). The class I taught had seven Latino boys and girls, two African Americans girls, and one Indian girl. These are students who I know have been ignored in the United States history textbook that they will use in the school year (The Americans) and ones that need to be empowered because they
are members of historically disadvantaged groups (economically, socially, and politically). Here is a list of the students who were enrolled in the United States history course in the summer of 2010 (all names are pseudonyms):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bianca</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristina</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlene</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeannette</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have worked for this Upward Bound program for the past four years in a number of capacities. I have observed through conversations with students as well as examining their academic work that their school year teachers are not making history relevant to their lives. Most students from Upward Bound do indeed find social studies to be irrelevant and often boring. These are the young adults that need to see themselves and their histories in the texts that they read. These are the ones that deserve to learn about how their ancestors lived because
for their entire educational careers they have been learning information from a
Eurocentric point of view. All students have the right to learn about their
ancestors and understand why their lives are the way they are today. The
students need to understand what oppression is and how it affects them. They
need to learn the tools to break the cycle.

Each summer I have the opportunity to create my own curriculum for
three different history classes with the program and I felt it necessary to have a
course that the students could connect to as well as learn from. In gaining
knowledge about critical literacy and critical multiculturalism through research, I
had the chance to put theory into practice with the chosen eleventh grade
students. My goal was to give students the tools to analyze texts, learn how to
question texts, find themselves in history, and want to make a change in their
lives as well as the lives of those around them.

The group of students that would be attending 11th grade in the fall
semester was my target audience for the work on critical literacy. Because I had
already taught this group of students two previous summers, I knew that they
would be interested in and had already done some preliminary work on the Civil
Rights Movement from the 1950s to the 1970s (the preliminary work was
conducted in the previous summer classes I taught). The social studies teachers I
have worked with generally do not cover this subject during the school year
since it is near the end of the textbook and they are focused on preparing students for standardized tests. The Civil Rights Movement can be incredibly empowering if taught using various points of view for all students. This chapter will discuss the way that I analyzed the text (The Americans) before bringing the book to use in the classroom, how I determined what other sources to bring into the curriculum, and why these various sources were used.

Critically Reading The Americans

Before starting to build lesson plans, I first examined the textbook The Americans. It has been used at the high school that the Upward Bound students attend for the past four years that I have worked with students and I happen to use it at the high school where I currently teach during the academic school year. It is imperative that this book be carefully and critically examined since “two-thirds of all social studies teachers rely on and use a textbook as the dominant resource in their classrooms” (Marker, 2006, p. 87).

My goal was to enlighten students to the bias that their textbooks have and to prepare them to ask questions about the information presented during their academic school year. The students need to know why certain types of people are more often represented and why others are not. They need to understand why the book has been written the way it has and what students can do to inform themselves of the history that is not covered in the textbook. It is my
duty to have the Upward Bound students gain the tools to be critical in both their classrooms and in their lives.

This was my first time analyzing a textbook with the goal of making critical and multicultural perspectives a more visible focus in my teaching. I had read about authors such as James Loewen (2005) analyzing multiple textbooks for their validity and perspectives but had not systematically engaged in the process myself. The first step I took in conducting this activity was to look up textbook analyses that others have used. I found three different tools that have been used to analyze history textbooks from a critical and multicultural perspective. After synthesizing these three resources, I used the final product to make decisions about the important elements for examining and interpreting the text, *The Americans* (see Appendix C).

I have divided the analysis into six main topics that should be addressed in order to develop an analysis based on critical literacy and multiculturalism: Content, Visuals, Evidence, Bias, Controversy, and Equity. Instead of looking at the entire textbook, I focused on one unit of study. The following are the questions I asked myself while reading through Chapter 26 of *The Americans*:

1. What is the content of this unit?
   a. What content should be included?
   b. What content is excluded?
   c. What places, people, issues, ideas, and events are given prominence?
   d. How are women, children, the aged, the challenged, the rich, the poor, minorities, etc expressed?
e. Does the information follow a logical sequence of events?
f. Does the information allow students to investigate important concepts?
g. Is the information presented authentic?
h. Are the concepts explained thoroughly?
i. Does the information presented connect to student’s lives?

2. What visuals are included?
   a. Who is depicted in the visuals?
   b. What are the individuals doing?
   c. What do the visuals say about the status of the individuals?
   d. What do the visuals say about the emotions of the individuals?
   e. Is there any evidence of stereotyping or bias from the visuals?
   f. How many visuals have men? Who are they? What are they doing?
   g. How many visuals have women? Who are they? What are they doing?
   h. How many are adults? How many are children? Who are they? What are they doing?
   i. Of all of the pictures, how many of the visuals depict a person of color? Who are they? What are they doing?
   j. Are there any visuals of people with physical challenges?
   k. What visuals of people would you consider to be important to include?

3. Is there evidence presented for the claims made in the unit under study?
   a. Is the information presented with evidence?
   b. How many primary sources are used in this unit?
   c. How would you determine the believability of the information presented?
   d. Whose views are being presented?
   e. Whose views are being ignored?

4. Can you locate examples of biased information?
   a. Can you find information that is one-sided?
   b. What is the information trying to persuade you of?
   c. What side is being ignored from the text?
   d. How would you evaluate the information that you believe is one-sided?
   e. Why do you believe the author wrote information that is one-sided?

5. Is there any content that you would consider being controversial?
   a. If there is information which you consider controversial? Are opposing viewpoints identified?
   b. If not, which points of view are given attention?
c. Does the author take a position on the controversy? If so, what is their position?
d. Are there questions posed to the student regarding the controversy?
e. If there is no controversy in the unit, should there be? If so, what issues should be brought to the student’s attention?

6. Does the information covered support student equity?
   a. Is the information provided in a way for all students to actively engage in learning?
   b. Is more than one point of view presented?
   c. Does the information reflect a balance between ethnic background, economic status, gender, age, handicaps, and careers in both visuals and text?
   d. Does the information provided promote critical thinking and problem-solving for all students?

These questions are included in the analysis of the textbook to show students and teachers that they must understand that information is never neutral. Texts need to continually be dissected for their hidden meanings. In the same light that texts are never neutral, teaching is also a political act. If I intend for students to answer these analysis questions, I am trying to unmask those hidden meanings which may relate to the continual oppression of students. If teachers continue to ignore critical literacy, then they are also acting politically, except theirs is an act of continually marginalizing students.

If practitioners of critical literacy wanted to narrow down all of these important questions, Luke and Freebody (1997) created four questions which get to the heart of critical inquiry: "Whose voice is not being heard? Who benefits from this reading? How is the author positioning me? What were the authors’
motives in creating this text?” Both teachers and students need to ask themselves these four questions when reading any sort of text. The text may be the textbook itself, or it may be supplemental materials that the teacher or students provide. These can include both primary and secondary sources ranging from letters, memoirs, photographs, newspaper articles, songs, poems, videos, interviews, transcripts, legislation, radio recordings, maps, posters, biographies, autobiographies, and other narratives, to name just a few possibilities. Students can use Luke and Freebody’s questions to understand how the text might be positioning the students themselves. I suggest using the four questions that Luke and Freebody created if there is not enough time in classroom instruction to use the analysis that I created. Both are helpful resources I used successfully in the classroom over the summer.

The Standards and Multiple Perspectives

As I will discuss in Chapter 4, my analysis of chapter 26 of The Americans revealed that few perspectives were represented. Therefore, it is crucial to use supplementary texts in a history class so students have access to the multiple views that truly correspond and represent any historical event. The students that I have worked with in Upward Bound have been confined to learning information from only the textbook to prepare them for state exams. From past conversations with students, I have been informed that most teachers use the
textbook to cover information that will be on standardized tests and their
classwork has consisted of filling in the blanks from the handouts created by the
textbook companies.

Even during my academic year teaching, I choose to incorporate
information regarding as many races, ethnicities, cultures, economic
backgrounds, and sexual orientations that I possibly can in any given topic.
During the summer of 2010, students learned about the Civil Rights Movement
by questioning the textbook, learning about different struggles that people
overcame, and writing on a topic not covered in the textbook. The California
Social Science Content Standard that this topic falls under is 11.10, which states:
“Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting
rights” (1998, p. 52-53). The following are the sub-standards that fall under 11.10:

1. Explain how demands of African Americans helped produce a
   stimulus for civil rights, including President Roosevelt’s ban on racial
discrimination in defense industries in 1941, and how African
   Americans’ service in World War II produced a stimulus for President
   Truman’s decision to end segregation in the armed forces in 1948.

2. Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the
evolution of civil rights, including Dred Scott v. Sandford, Plessy v.

3. Describe the collaboration on legal strategy between African American and white civil rights lawyers to end racial segregation in higher education.

4. Examine the roles of civil rights advocates (e.g., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Rosa Parks), including the significance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream" speech.

5. Discuss the diffusion of the civil rights movement of African Americans from the churches of the rural South and the urban North, including the resistance to racial desegregation in Little Rock and Birmingham, and how the advances influenced the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of the quests of American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans for civil rights and equal opportunities.

6. Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965) and the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, with an emphasis on equality of access to education and to the political process.
7. Analyze the women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of women.

I chose to use a content standard because teachers are required to use the California Social Studies Framework in their implementation of curriculum in the classroom. However, content standards do not force educators to teach certain information and leave other pieces out. They also do not explain how to teach the information. This is left for the educator to decide. Standard 11.10 chronicled specific pieces of information to relay to students but it also leaves out a vast amount of prominent issues regarding the Civil Rights Movement. If one were to analyze this standard alone, it clearly leaves out many marginalized groups and sincerely needs to be questioned. Some of the groups ignored in this standard are homosexuals who fought for equal rights and, even though some groups are mentioned, such as Asian and Native Americans as well as Latinos, there needs to be more attention given to these groups. If the goal is to teach for democracy through social studies, the state is implying that only these people and events written in the standard are relevant to the topic of the Movement, which is completely untrue.
I began my research of how to “uncover” or expand upon this standard. I thought about my own students. Who should they learn about? Who would make an impact on them? Who should be presented to show students that they too can achieve social, economic, and political equality? What activities and assignments can the students complete independently to show that they have learned how to use critical literacy? I looked at the list of names that 11.10 covers; President Roosevelt, President Truman, Dred Scott, Ferguson, A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcom X (the state doesn’t even spell his name right), Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Rosa Parks, Elizabeth Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony. I questioned why these people are included and why others are not.

I returned to Luke and Freebody’s questions and pondered what exactly it is that the state wants me to teach these students. Do the authors of standards realize that the Civil Rights Movement involved more than just the fight for African American equal rights and women’s struggle for equality? Do the people who have created the standards realize that Latinos and different Asian groups have made this state diverse for hundreds of years and they deserve to be learned about? Do standards’ writers have in mind the poor Latino, African American, and Indian students facing me and that if we design curriculum focused on empowerment that collectively we might break the cycle of
oppression that they face? After I asked myself numerous questions regarding what the state wants students to learn and what is missing from both the standards and the textbook, I asked myself, "What should students about that will help them engage in the curriculum as well as make them want to create a difference in their lives?"

There were a number of people in this country who were receiving unequal treatment that fought at the height of the Civil Rights Movement (between the 1950s and 1970s). The standard may mention Asians, Native Americans, and "Hispanics" fight for equality, but the textbook itself barely covers these people (the reason I place quotations around "Hispanic" is because it is a word created by the government to encompass both Spaniards and those from Latin America and, in reality, many of these people do not want to be placed in the same category). All of these groups deserve to be investigated and the personal stories of those faced with discrimination need to be learned.

In my textbook analysis of The Americans I found that the textbook does a decent job at explaining the events that 11.10 requires. What was lacking from the textbook are the personal voices for students to hear. Of course, like any other textbook, it only covers those that were in the public light and forgets to mention the foot soldiers of the Movement. The teacher's resources do not offer additional materials to show students that this happened to real people and instead only
has handouts for students to fill in regarding people, dates, and events. How would history seem real to any student taught in this way? It is superficial and lacks empathy for the struggles that individuals had to endure.

In order to hear history from a primary source I decided to go to Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. Zinn's work is informational as well as thought provoking. It includes his retelling of history from the average American's point of view and includes primary sources to back up his statements. This book is a good source to learn about various people from different socioeconomic backgrounds that lived history. However, it should not be the only book that a history teacher uses. The second book that I brought into the curriculum is Ronald Takaki's "A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America" since it discusses the lives of Native Americans, African Americans, Mexicans, Asians, Irish, and Jewish people without sugarcoating anything that these people went through. He wrote about the old, the young, the rich, the poor, and included primary sources as well. It is important for students to know that a variety of books exist that tell other truths and offer personal insights into history.

After I reviewed the chapters related to the Civil Rights Movement, I then searched online for primary and secondary sources to supplement lessons. I often went to the local library to find books that related to the various groups
that fought during the Civil Rights Movement. In order to include students in the creation of lessons, I asked them to bring in documents that they found through research. They chose which group they wanted to do their own individual research on and I provided them with information on how to properly conduct research as well as how to analyze a source for validity.

Designing the Curriculum

After I used the textbook analysis and kept Luke and Freebody's questions in mind, it was time to create lessons for the Upward Bound summer program. The students were enrolled in the course that I taught for five weeks and within that time it was my goal to open their eyes and minds to the inequality of the education that they have received. The students needed to know how the education system has shaped their knowledge; knowledge not focused on empowering them. Instead, it has done the complete opposite. I wanted to start the process of opening up the students' eyes to what they have endured and also be an ally in their quest to learning other perspectives in US history. The curriculum consisted of daily analysis of the textbook and standard, discussion on topics pertinent to that day, dissection of a Howard Zinn chapter, and a final research project (see Appendix D).

Data Collection on Implementation
The data that I collected which assisted in the implementation of the curriculum consisted of informal interviews with the ten students that participated in the summer school course. Field notes were taken during my observations of the students in the classroom on a daily basis regarding what worked and what didn’t and also on what the students were struggling with as well as what they excelled in. Student work based on their textbook and Zinn analysis was also collected to assess how well the students were grasping the analysis. In the next section, I describe the data I collected in order to examine what happened when I implemented the curriculum focused on critical literacy and critical multiculturalism.

Introducing Critical Literacy

On the first day of class, I asked the students to create a list of famous individuals from US history. I gave them ten minutes to think of people they remembered and when they were finished I asked each student to give me one person until all of the names were read. As they gave me the names, I placed them under lists on the board with no titles. Secretly, I had been placing the names of the people together based on race and gender. The names that the students gave were expected; most being names of former presidents, Martin Luther King Jr., and Cesar Chavez. When asked what Cesar Chavez did and what he is famous for, none of the students could answer. This is a person that
not only the Latino students could look up to, but all of the students since their family backgrounds are from working-class, blue-collar homes, and yet they did not know what this man had done. I knew that it was time to open these students' eyes and give them the education they deserve, even if it was for a mere five weeks.

When I asked the students if they had observed the categories that I had placed people under, they immediately knew. They recognized that all of the white men were under a list, Martin Luther King Jr. had his own list and so did Cesar Chavez. I asked who was missing from this list and Bianca mentioned women were missing, Miguel stated that young people weren't present, and Jessica said homosexuals. I knew that this was a great way to introduce critical literacy to the students and they were beginning to observe the inequalities in the history that they have learned. I also understood that I needed to be careful in my explanation and treatment of critical literacy to the students because of their unfamiliarity with this concept.
Chapter Four
Results and Discussion

The following chapter is based on an analysis of what occurred during a five week course on the Civil Rights Movement which I taught during the summer of 2010 to a group of ten students entering the eleventh grade that participated in an Upward Bound program in Northern California. While creating the curriculum for this course, it was my goal to implement notions of both critical literacy and critical multiculturalism.

To teach high school students about theories that are brand new to them can be a difficult task. These students had never been asked to search for bias in a textbook. They were forced to read sections out of said textbooks and answer questions which are located at the end of chapters. The work that these students complete in their academic school year history classes is based on rote memorization. The academic skill set learned from writing notes and regurgitating information is very minimal and to become civically minded, the students need more practice in critically analyzing information. One of the premises that I follow is "If today's youth are going to be educated and civic minded, they need to understand why things happen, and they need to be given all sides of a story so that they may form their own decisions and develop deeper understandings" (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 220).
Part of students comprehending history is for them to learn how to critically analyze it. I knew that when I introduced this topic that I had to repeatedly focus on their understanding. This is something that every teacher should do when introducing any topic, but I felt a special need to fully cover critical literacy with these students.

A positive aspect of critical literacy is that students can become aware of who the “winners” and “losers” of history are and can become active in recreating history. According to Stevens & Bean (2007) “Helping students to assume critical stances toward texts means supporting them in questioning the voices behind texts, who is represented and who is not, and what positions texts are assuming.” A fundamental aspect of critical literacy is for students to read text and be able to question it. Students should be able to ask important questions of what they read and hear. Some of these queries should ask why is this group mentioned and another group ignored? What are the hidden meanings behind giving one group more attention than another? What do the people that are given the attention have in common? Why are groups of individuals given no recognition and what does this say about them? Are the ignored groups not as important? Students that ask these questions become more aware of marginalized individuals and understand the inequity of written history. If young people learn that there are groups missing from textbooks,
which might include groups that they belong to, they will understand that it is critical to enclose all groups that created America. If part of a social studies course is to create democratic citizens to live in a democratic world, then educators must include information on marginalized groups a K-12 education might be the only arena where young people learn about others.

After conducting the small but powerful activity described in chapter 3 (naming and grouping famous individuals from US history), the students were awakened. We had a brief conversation where the students shared their thoughts and feelings regarding the activity. Ashley had mentioned that people from India had never been mentioned in any of her classes and that she has felt stereotyped by her classmates because they don’t know anything about her or where she comes from. Francisco said he felt bad that he had learned mostly about men and I told him he should not feel remorse since he could incorporate others into his education and ask his future teachers to discuss others. When I asked them if they normally speak about people who come from various backgrounds, including different ethnicities, cultures, religions, ages, abilities, and sexual orientations, all of them replied no. I didn’t say anything for about thirty seconds, while the students were silent. Then, I asked if this was fair and the students realized that it was not and some of them had a tint of sadness on their faces.
I began explaining what critical literacy is through a handout created by Heather Coffey (2004). With every sentence that we read as a class I would further illustrate what critical literacy is with examples and ask students questions. For example, Coffey writes "Instruction that encourages critical literacy development comes as a response to the marginalization of a growing number of American students who are not members of the culturally dominant group of white, middle-class youths." The students in Upward Bound come from marginalized groups and I asked them if they believed they are ignored in the curriculum. I received the overwhelming response of "Yes." After going over Coffey's handout, I then gave the students the textbook analysis handout I created, which also had Luke and Freebody's (1997) four main questions for critical inquiry.

We went over the questions we would be using during our analysis of the chapter on the Civil Rights Movement and I asked the students what the goal of the analysis would be. Jeannette replied that the class would begin learning about other people that they hadn't really learned about before. I explained that I had a couple of goals for them during our five weeks together. One goal, which is an incredible task, was for the students to learn how to analyze text. The other goal was to present a fair version of history which includes those that are marginalized and who do not make it into our state mandated textbooks. Ogle,
Klemp, and McBride (2007) have stated that “students who come from minority populations may feel disengaged from a country’s history and politics. Within some texts, minority students may see their cultures described only in negative ways.” These students needed to see the positive aspects of their backgrounds and receive a more well-rounded history education. I wanted the students to take these academic skills and use them not only in the history classroom, but in their lives. It is important for them to view the hidden messages that surround many aspects of our society which continue to marginalize people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In response, the students explained that they wanted to learn how to “find the truth” and also learn about themselves and other groups.

Student Response to Textbook Analysis

The students immediately began to evaluate the textbook with my assistance. First, I asked them to go through the images located in Chapter 21 in *The Americans* textbook and to come up with words describing the images. Jessica and Marlene observed that everyone depicted was African American and that most of the expressions on the people’s faces were upset or sad. I had the students read the first paragraph of the chapter and we went over all of the questions from my textbook analysis guide so the students would be aware of the type of examination we would be conducting. I had already completed the
answers to the analysis and wanted to hear the students input. The answers
would not come all at once, but over time. The students would have to read the
entire chapter in order to truly reply to the questions from the textbook analysis.
As a class we went over each question and I noticed that a few of students
seemed to understand how to critically analyze text. One student asked whose
view was being presented. Another wondered if there were more people
involved in the Civil Rights Movement other than African Americans and why
most of the women shown appeared to be victims and the men were the victors.
After our short conversation, it was clear that the students were understanding
how to analyze text and were well on their way to gaining more skills.

The students had already heard about the Civil Rights Movement but only
in terms of the African American struggle. Many scholars would state that the
Movement was focused on African Americans but there were other groups
fighting for equality in America during the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and to ignore those
people would be an injustice to them. When discussing the question related to
content and what should be included, I asked students what groups have
struggled for equality in America and one stated, “What group hasn’t?” Then,
one after another, they started to list all of the groups on the whiteboard: blacks,
Mexicans, women, homosexuals, Asians, poor families and young people.
One of the girls who had been particularly keen on this topic, Jeannette, observed that “the Civil Rights Movement was just about African Americans but I know that there were other movements during that time.” This is what I wanted them to know. I asked the group if they had heard of the Women’s Movement, the Latino Movement, the Asian American Movement, or the Gay and Lesbian Movement and to my dismay, they hadn’t. I explained that all of these movements had occurred during the same decades as the African American Civil Rights Movement and I suggested that all of these movements were equally important.

Bianca mentioned that she belonged to three different groups that had fought for their rights during this time. She comes from a Latino background and is a woman who identifies as being a lesbian. It is Bianca’s belief that even though these groups started fighting years ago for equality, they are still discriminated against and she has been hurt because of her background. All of my students identified as being oppressed. Not only do they come from homes that identify as low-income and will be the first to attend college, but they have faced injustices from being a woman, a Latino, an Asian, and a lesbian, and they were quick to open up to one another. Bianca shared times that she had been harassed in the hallways because of her sexual orientation and continuously hears the word “gay” being used to replace the word stupid. Francisco said that
sometimes when he is in public that many people follow him around stores and sometimes people assume that he doesn’t know English. It was clear that these students and those that attend their schools need critical literacy in order to educate them on people’s differences to escape ignorance and to celebrate diversity.

Throughout the next couple of weeks, the students would analyze Chapter 21 in class and for homework. We began working on the textbook analysis together during class, which was an hour and a half long, and met twice a week. I would choose four pages for us to complete on a daily basis and the students were to complete four more pages on their own. In total, Chapter 21 is twenty-four pages long. The work we did in class was done individually at first, which students would answer questions from the textbook analysis, and then we would discuss the information that they analyzed together. My goal was to have the students complete the chapter analysis in three weeks. During our group discussions, we would continually go over the textbook analysis and point out issues of power that the students felt necessary to question. Joey asked “How am I supposed to believe this information when I don’t even know who the author is?” We then discovered through internet searches (luckily, we had a classroom full of computers) who the authors were and none of them appeared to have experience teaching high school history. Most of the authors were on prominent
websites complete with full biographies. After taking a break from our analysis of the textbook and figuring out who the authors were, the students understood that you don’t need experience teaching high school history: you just need a degree.

Another student, Danielle, addressed the fact that this information could be bias because it lacked primary sources. They knew that more women needed to be covered from the Civil Rights Movement since most of the people they were reading about were men. We had conversations in which I would question whether or not an average, ordinary person could make a difference. Many of the students explained that anyone could challenge society and the students observed that most people written in the textbook were already famous and definitely not average. The students discussed how the director of Upward Bound has made a difference in their lives and that people, in any capacity, can make large or small differences. They also explained that, at their schools, their student government is very involved in making changes on campus. The students have seen how they have individually made a difference in the lives of others by doing volunteer work they conduct, such as providing gifts for children during the holidays. These students know the poverty that surrounds them, and have made an effort to alleviate the negativity in their communities for the good of others, not just themselves.
These ten students really caught on to the analysis of the textbook by the second week of class. They became detectives and would point out examples that I hadn't even considered when I did my own analysis of the textbook. Kristina asked, "Why was this chapter even made? I mean, why do we have to learn about one group and not another?" This was my chance to explain the Social Science Standards to the students and inform them that the California Department of Education believes these people and events are important to learn about. The same student replied, "Oh okay. So we should learn about African Americans but not Mexicans? How is that fair?" I agreed with Kristina and Miguel asked, "So the government is deciding what we should learn?" These students were extremely interested in figuring out why particular adults far removed from their own lives and who they did not know were choosing what they should learn and also pondered why the curriculum had nothing to do with them. It should be noted that many historians believe that the Civil Rights Movement was a defining moment in history for the African American struggle. However, I explained to students what civil rights were and they understood that the minority groups in America did not receive equal rights. In my opinion, the Civil Rights Movement has gained enormous attention on the African American front, but it is important to look at the other groups which fought for equality during this time as well.
Each person in the class, from my observations, wanted to learn more. After I mentioned that other groups should be involved in history many of the students agreed that not everyone is included in the written history that they have analyzed. Ashley appeared to be the most disturbed about not seeing any information on Indians in America and I observed this student, who is always very cheerful, to have a serious look on her face. Continuing with the textbook analysis, they all appeared to be enthused when we went over the questions and they continually questioned why certain information was written and why other information was not. Most importantly, they wanted to know why they could not see themselves in the textbook and appeared upset that the book had been written the way that it had.

“Official curricula, such as a textbook or a standardized test, which are highly politicized and sanctioned official knowledge, are seen as the correct answers and right knowledge that children need to have. Teachers who strive for critical literacy question those assumptions and help their students to question them” (Wolk, 2003, p. 102). What once was an enthusiastic and happy class, now had students with solemn looks on their faces and serious tones. When they began to wonder why they were ignored in the curriculum, they took it personally. I asked if the students felt connected to the textbook in any way and they answered that they didn’t, and never had.
The content of the text did not cover all that it should, in the opinion of the students, and it needed more, in every aspect. It needed to show the truth about various groups that struggled and how they overcame injustice. It was my opportunity to provide curricular experiences that would allow them to dive deeper into the Civil Rights Movement and also give them the opportunity to learn about other people who were not included in their textbook. I decided that the best way to show them the type of writing which portrays the average, everyday person with primary sources, would be to have students read a chapter out of *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn (2005). “Providing students with an array of materials, both primary and secondary, helps them pursue their own questions about the topics or themes being studied (Ogle, Klemp, & McBride, 2007, p. 20).

**Student Responses to Zinn**

Since we were conducting most of our textbook analysis in class, I felt it opportune to give the students an entire chapter out of Zinn’s classic for students to read on their own. The chapter that I gave students to read is entitled “Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation Without Freedom” which is 39 pages long and gives students a varied perspective on learning history from a different form of text. The only information that I gave the students regarding this chapter of Zinn’s work was that it gave a background to the inequality that African
Americans faced during slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. I explained all of these events in American history even though the chapter discusses what they were as well. My goal was for students to see different texts and I told students that they were to conduct a textbook analysis on this chapter and that we would be comparing Zinn's work to *The Americans* chapter. Now the students would use their written analysis of the textbook and begin to write out their analysis of a book.

Before the week had ended I had a couple of students approach me and give me both positive and negative feedback regarding the Zinn reading. Some had said that this was their first time reading anything like this and that it was taking them some time to get through it. They complained that it was hard to understand. I understood what they meant. Zinn's writing can be difficult to follow if you are a beginner, so I explained to them that they should take it sentence by sentence. "The information that you are reading is mostly for college students and the fact that you are able to get through it says a lot about your ability," I explained. I hoped that this gave them initiative to continue reading. Many of them took my advice and went through the chapter slower than they usually do.

When the due date had arrived a couple of the students complained of being tired since they had stayed up late finishing their reading. I responded to
them by stating that they would have numerous nights like this in college and to get used to doing work of this caliber. We began going over the textbook analysis questions. The students had answered the questions from the analysis handout and also wrote down notes on the chapter itself. We first went over their notes and discussed what the chapter was about. The students had information regarding the reasons behind slavery, the plantation system, slave revolts and resistance, runaway slaves, treatment of slaves, migration to the north, African American response to slavery, abolitionism, Abraham Lincoln and his beliefs on slavery and emancipation, the Civil War, life after the Civil War for ex-slaves, racism, the Ku Klux Klan, the demographics of the north and south post-Civil War, and a number of trials, laws, and Acts passed in reference to slavery and freed African Americans.

This was a lot of information for the students to take in. It took us two class periods to discuss everything that they read in Zinn. I broke the chapter that the students read in half and we discussed the first section of the chapter on the first day and the second section on the second day. The students were to analyze the chapter using their textbook analysis and it was important to hear all that the students had to say regarding the information in Zinn through a concrete formula they completed together. We embarked on each question as a class and the students were able to give a response to everything that was asked. One of
the students explained that she believed this chapter “had way more information than our textbook covers.” She also stated that it was helpful that Zinn gave reasons for slavery to exist and once she slowed down her reading it was easier to grasp. Almost all of the students described having difficulty reading the chapter, but they did understand its content once they took their time.

Going back to the students believing that the chapter had more information than the textbook, I asked the students what they meant by this. Overall, the students believed that having more primary sources was a positive aspect to Zinn’s reading and said that the textbook didn’t offer these voices. Francisco said “You don’t really hear the stories from random people in the textbook like I did in what we just read.” I explained to the students that it is important to receive a well-rounded view of history, and not just from the people who “made” history, but all of those people involved in its creation. Chapter 21 from *The Americans* focuses only on African Americans, and Zinn’s chapter speaks from a variety of different perspectives, including the Caucasian point of view which was for and against slavery and racism. Many students only receive one side of a historical story and Zinn begins to show the students that there are a number of perspectives on one event.

Not having any background on slavery, the students felt that the information covered in Zinn was thorough. We discussed the positive and
negative aspects of the reading using the analysis. Here are lists of what the class discussed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>• Information on a number of topics</td>
<td>• Some of the events could have been explained more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wrote about what was going on in the north and the south, but mostly the south</td>
<td>• Would have liked to have seen the point of view of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women were presented</td>
<td>• Might have been too many topics discussed in one chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All of the information flowed from one topic to the next</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It went from the reason behind slavery to the reason why African Americans didn't gain all of their freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good starting point to learn about these events</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Showed how Caucasians both hurt African Americans and helped this group during this time period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The information caught our attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals</td>
<td></td>
<td>• No visuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>• Almost every piece of information was followed with a primary source</td>
<td>• Would have liked to have heard more from blacks in the north and what they were going through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Zinn presented statistics to go along with his information</td>
<td>• Also want to know what teens were going through and more on certain topics and less on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saw the point of view from the black and the white side</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The information was from ordinary people, politicians, women, African Americans, and Caucasians</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The primary sources were in different forms (letters, speeches, songs, poems, conversations, laws)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives</td>
<td>Negatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias</td>
<td>Want to ask Zinn why he chose to write this way instead of covering information like the textbook does</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The information presented appears to be the facts with sources that back it up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The authors goal is to show the reason behind events and to show how everyday people were affected</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Showed how some African Americans chose to stay in the south and others went to the north</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Zinn never expresses his opinion and writes the facts</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversy</td>
<td>There weren’t really any questions posed to students since this is a regular book and not a textbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are a number of events, such as slave rebellions and lynchings, that are controversial but Zinn writes the facts and not what he thought about the events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For each controversy, Zinn writes about both sides facing the event and presents evidence for both sides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is information in this chapter that we never knew and it might be controversial to say (referring to Lincoln and the Civil War)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Not all students can learn from this information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If you take your time and are at the right level, you can understand the information written in this chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The things that we learned are a starting point for learning about this time period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information was about well-educated African Americans and others that didn’t have any education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It was also about African Americans and Caucasians that were rich and had power and others who were poor and were ordinary</td>
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</table>
After the students finished their discussions, I asked them if they felt that they received adequate information from the chapter that they read and if they would want to read more from this book. Marlene stated the following: “It seems like the textbook doesn’t show us all of the information. I feel like I got a lot more from reading this one chapter from Zinn than I would have from the textbook. Why don’t we read things like this in school?” Miguel explained that the book would have been better if there were visuals so he could see what Zinn was referring to in his writing. The students appreciated that there were multiple viewpoints covered and didn’t merely discuss how African Americans were victims. They were glad to learn that Caucasians weren’t just the “bad guys” and that some actually assisted in the lives of slaves. The girls thought it was “cool” that they could read about strong females and even got to read actual pieces that these women said or wrote.

After I showed the students how large A People’s History is, they were a bit intimidated but explained that if the sections were broken up how we did in class that they would want to read more of the book. Joey actually called A People’s History “a brick,” and I replied by asking the students if they would want to learn about US history through this “brick” or not. The consensus was that the students would prefer to use this book to learn about history since it covers a vast amount of information by using primary sources and voices that are not
heard in the textbook. They felt that it is important to learn history from various perspectives. In accordance with critical literacy and multiculturalism, Banks and Banks (1977) have written that “Global and multicultural education requires teachers and students to engage in various dialogic activities. These include (1) reading contexts that promote critical literacy, (2) participating in conversations that are dialogic and socially constructed, and (3) sharing multiple perspectives” (p. 218). This is exactly what we engaged in during our class sessions. My goal of implementing a new strategy for students to learn more about themselves and others is grounded in these theories. It was a great feeling to know that I was doing the students a great service by providing them the tools to participate in discussion and analyze historical information.

Some of the students actually wanted to see what the section on the Civil Rights Movement looked like and they were allowed to look through the book to see what other information Zinn covered. I also showed students the Young People's History of the United States that is written for teens and some of them enjoyed that version of the book since it had less information and pictures. We read the chapter on slavery together and the pictures were displayed. The students recognized the writing from Zinn’s chapter to this Young People’s version. In the end, some still preferred “the brick” despite complaints that it was
long and difficult to read. They enjoyed the amount of information that they received and liked the challenge of reading this type of writing.

**Student Research**

The students continued to analyze the textbook chapter and wondered if the Civil Rights Movement just involved the African American struggle for equality. This was the time to explain that the Movement was much more than this. During this time in American history, numerous groups were enlightened to their mistreatment in society and decided it was their time to stand up for their rights as human beings. I explained to the students that they were going to be researching someone that was involved in one of the struggles during this time. The students were allowed to choose whatever individual they wanted to cover for their paper. They would write on this person’s life, struggles, and accomplishments. I could have had the students conduct personal interviews and focus on someone in their family or community first, but many of them face discrimination that they are not comfortable sharing with those close to them. For example, one of my students, Bianca, identifies as being a lesbian and she has not told her family this. She understands the struggles that those who are not straight might face because she has experienced it. I wanted the students to choose someone that is not in the textbook but who still made an impact in the fight for equality. The individuals they ended up choosing were ones that may be
considered famous, but they weren't famous enough to be chosen to be a hero in *The Americans*.

We brainstormed what groups might have been fighting for their rights during this time and students chose to do their projects on people involved in the Women's Movement, the Gay and Lesbian Movement, the Latino Movement, and those involved in the African American Civil Rights Movement who have not received attention. These were the foot soldiers of the movements. It was understood that America was incredibly diverse during this time and the students actually wanted to learn about the struggles and triumphs of these individuals that they chose. Groups in America were aware that they were not treated equally and this was the time they joined together to fight.

The librarian at the community college where Upward Bound is located actually met with the students and showed them various research tools to use during their process. After he completed his discussion with the students he had each one of them go out onto the library floor and find books they could use for their research. Everyone found a book to use and articles on the schools database. After the librarian spoke, the students were reminded that they should find information with authors from legitimate sources and not from message boards and the like. Wikipedia was only used as a starting point and the students could use the sources located in the references section of the Wikipedia article.
The students had one week to create their paper and it had to be at least three pages long and in MLA format. Thankfully, they had received assistance from the librarian and from myself on how to properly research and were enjoying discovering information regarding someone that they chose on their own. The librarian and I provided the students with handouts on how to properly research and create research papers that I obtained from the public high school that I teach at during the academic school year. The completion of this paper will help them practice for papers that they will write during their school year since the librarian and I are preparing the students on how to properly create a paper independently.

The students began with what they originally needed to search for which was to find information on a person from the Civil Rights Movement who wasn’t mentioned in their textbook. The second step was how to evaluate, select, and organize their information. They then analyzed the information that they have received, just as they had during their textbook evaluation. The handouts included a rubric for the evaluation of the information sources and also explained how to organize a paper. The typical information regarding the MLA format was finally discussed along with an example MLA formatted paper. The students then continued to research the individuals that they chose who related to their struggles.
Some of the students told me they have had obstacles in their lives that are still present. In the classroom I had students that had been placed in special education for not being born in the United States, others who feel that they have been attacked because of the color of their skin, some who are gay or bisexual and have been made fun of for who they are, and a couple who just feel misunderstood. Francisco has told us that he has been followed by security when he goes shopping in the mall and he is pretty sure it’s because of his color. Ashley shared with the class that some people have called her a terrorist because they think she is Middle Eastern and not Indian. Miguel has received threatening messages on Facebook from people that don’t agree with him being homosexual. This is real pain that these students feel and information that they sometimes don’t feel comfortable sharing with their parents but feel safe in the classroom sharing with each other. They all have their stories. Behram (2005) has stated that “everyday events occurring in the lives of students are legitimate objects of academic study. The curriculum becomes negotiable when students are permitted to conduct research on personal topics, and the students gain more control over their own learning” (p. 495). This is what the students participated in during our course. Even though they had to find an individual and conduct a research paper, the students still had the choice to choose any individual and include information that they believed to be important.
It was interesting to see who the students chose for their research papers. The girl who struggles with her sexuality chose Harvey Milk; the boy who wanted to learn more about what Cesar Chavez is famous for chose him; the African American girl who is interested in politics chose John Lewis who was a prominent leader for many events during the Movement who does not get credit for participating in them. All of these students connected with the individuals that they chose to learn about. They enjoyed reading and writing information regarding what these noteworthy activists had done and what some of them are continuously involved with or the legacy that they have left behind. Some would consider these individuals to be famous, and they are. But they are not discussed in the textbook thoroughly and therefore not every teenager that takes United States history would be introduced to them. If you ask a teenager who Cesar Chavez is they would most likely not know what he created and how he assisted individuals. Harvey Milk is nowhere in the textbook and neither is John Lewis, but these people were important to the students and that is what mattered, in taking the steps as a teacher toward enabling students to feel some control, choice, and power in terms of their own learning.

**Student Research Paper Presentations**

On the final day of school the students presented their papers and their findings. The students were able to share the hard work they conducted with one
another. Each person read their paper to the class and after each reading we
shared compliments with the author. Critiques would be left for me to write on
their individual papers since I view critiques as a way to grow and become a
better writer. After each person shared their paper and compliments were
contributed, I asked the students why they chose the individuals that they wrote
about and numerous answers were given. One person said that they didn't see
any Latinos in the textbook chapter that I gave them and they wanted to learn
more about their ancestors. Another student said that after she did a Google
search for civil rights figures, the name Betty Friedan kept showing up and she
wanted to investigate the Women’s Movement. The student that chose Harvey
Milk thought it was cool to do a paper on someone who made an impact on the
Gay and Lesbian community and lived so close to where she lives.

No matter what their answers were, the students enjoyed choosing who
they wanted to learn about. This was not a normal assignment for the students to
complete. On the contrary, there is hardly any freedom with assignments and
inquiry in schools. This was clear through the information that the students gave
me regarding their own history classes at their public high school along with
what I have observed of their academic school year work. Critical literacy is
supposed to provide students with the necessary tools so they can “think for
themselves, to voice their opinions and ideas, and to assess how topics and questions being studied connect to their lives” (Wolk, 2003, p. 103).

Critical multiculturalism asks “how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not” (McLaren, 2003, p. 63). Students realized that the history they discovered was not “legitimized” and they believed this to be a disservice to the individuals that they researched. Francisco stated that he was “sick and tired of only hearing about white people in the books,” and I told him that he needs to make a conscious effort to always ask about those who are not in the textbook, whether the book be missing the perspective of a woman, a Latino, a poor worker, a teenager, etc. Every story has more than one side. McLaren (2003) wrote “The critical educator doesn’t believe that there are two sides to every question, with both sides needing equal attention. For the critical educator, there are many sides to a problem, and often these sides are linked to certain class, race, and gender interests” (p. 62). These students now have the power to go out and either ask their educators to teach about the “others” in history, or conduct their own research which will empower them in their learning process since it is individual work.
The students appreciated that the only guidelines for this assignment was to research and create a paper on a person's life, struggles, and accomplishments from the Movement. Of course they despised having to write their paper in MLA format, but this is something that will assist them in their future writing assignments. After the presentations of their papers, I asked the students to write adjectives on the board describing the characteristics of the people that they researched. Students stated that these people were: heroic, brave, fearless, unselfish, intelligent, determined, and giving. Each person that was listening to the stories of the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement was influenced by these people's accomplishments. This was a good first large and independent assignment for the students to conduct using critical literacy and multiculturalism. They were able to choose who they wanted to learn about and write about that individual.

Finally, the students addressed problems that surrounded them in their communities with my guidance. After discussing the Civil Rights Movement, it was important to bring to surface that American society still has a long way to go in order to obtain equality for all. Another one of my goals for the students was for them to become empowered to transform their community. "Empowerment means not only helping students to understand and engage with the world around them, but also enabling them to exercise the kind of courage needed to
change the social order when necessary” (McLaren, 2003, p. 74). Merely opening up with the classroom took an extreme amount of courage for some of these students and when I asked them if they were prepared to take their knowledge and make a change, just as the foot soldiers did, they wanted to. The knowledge that the students gained from their experiences was transforming them into intelligent and courageous teenagers. I had the students create a list of issues that were going on in their communities, their state, their country, and finally, the world. These are the lists they created:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Problem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>• Living Conditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cleaner and safer streets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fight against stereotypes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Violence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Immigrant assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Young voices are not heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>• Debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health care</td>
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<td>• Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Equal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Standards for education set too low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schools need to get students ready for college</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All people need to be seen in the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>• War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hidden information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Environment</td>
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<td>• Media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Animal rights</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discrimination</td>
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<td>• Sexism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hate Crimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>• War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of peace</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3rd world country assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Tolerance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Corruption</td>
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<td>• Slavery</td>
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<td>• Clean water</td>
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<td>• Female rights</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Medical care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Better leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Education for all</td>
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<td>• Globalization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Global warming</td>
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<td>• Equal rights</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hate crimes</td>
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<td>• Genocide</td>
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The only way I assisted students during this discussion was by writing the items that they said on the board. They were the ones that came up with the lists. This shows that the students were very aware of what was going on in the world
and many of them said they would like to start making a difference, just as the individuals they learned about did. I explained change doesn’t happen over night, but they should do whatever it takes to begin making positive changes in their community and to start local. The students were told that they are already making a substantial change just by coming to Upward Bound considering that most in their community choose not to complete their education.

The community in which the students live in has a number of people who are immigrants and have come to this country for a better opportunity and they are trying to survive on a daily basis. Unfortunately, many of them do not receive proper educations and they are not able to pull themselves out of poverty. Other people surrounding the students have joined gangs and do not have an education because they have chosen that lifestyle. These people are the students’ neighbors and even family members. The students have seen this and instead of following down the same road, they have chosen to empower themselves through gaining an education. The public school system “habituates working-class students, through mechanisms of discipline and punishment, to the bottom rungs of the work world or the academic world by subordinating or expelling them.” (Aronowitz, 2004, p. 111) The students are aware of what the school system has failed to provide them with and have made an effort to get additional assistance through Upward Bound. Because these students have made a
concerted effort to better their lives, I will work alongside them to ensure their success in society.

**Student Response to the Entire Class**

The students had been in the US history class for five weeks and their absolute and final question was “What are you taking away from this class?” We spoke and the responses were similar. All of the students enrolled were glad that they had taken this course since it allowed them to dive more in depth into a specific time in US history which effects them today. They told me that they wanted to take the handouts on critical literacy and use them in the future. It was moving for them to see how history, something that happened in the past, really does have something to do with their lives in the present.

The students felt they should begin questioning everything, which includes text and the media. It was noted that during the school year they want to learn more about their ancestors in their US history class and most felt they were comfortable asking the teacher to include the stories of their ancestors in the curriculum. Many believed they could even make a difference, even if it is small, in their schools and in their communities. It was empowering for them to learn about others who changed their own situations and the students believe that their families, friends, and communities are disadvantaged and they desire to make changes. All this from a class that was based upon investigating the
underlying history which had been hidden from these students. The hidden curriculum of subjects can be detrimental information to ignore and students need to know that their textbook is not the definitive and final answer to what history includes. There is not one answer to any question and there are numerous perspectives to one event. The students enrolled in this class were able to dig into the multiple perspectives of history. My hope is that they will continue to do so.
Chapter Five
Conclusions

The purpose of the activities that I created for the lesson plans this summer was to implement critical literacy along with critical multiculturalism. The critical literacy aspects can be plainly seen throughout the moments in which the students were analyzing the textbook, *A People's History*, and books for their research paper. Critical multiculturalism is also seen in the curriculum. As stated in Chapter Two, critical multiculturalism has been developed to ask how and why knowledge has been constructed the way that is has been made and why society legitimates some knowledge and excludes other pieces. The theory also attempts to unmask the claim that education is the equalizer of society and to demonstrate that there are divisions within communities which revolve around social, political, and economic inequality. Throughout the summer, I attempted to provide opportunities in which the students of Upward Bound would discover these disparities in both the education system and in their lives.

The students who participate in Upward Bound are those who are discriminated against. Being a person committed to working toward a just and equal society, it was my goal to provide students with various perspectives of history, instead of merely learning about the winners who are portrayed in the textbook. Even though some of the students may have been interested in learning about those who receive adequate attention in their textbooks, they were still
given the option of discovering information regarding the people and events that they wished to learn about. Part of this investigation was for the students to inquire about their own histories, which is a predominant tenant of critical literacy and multiculturalism. The histories of the every day lives of their ancestors, their contributions to US history, and their struggles for equality do not receive attention in mandated curriculum. If one were to dissect the California Social Science Content Standards, they would observe that information regarding minorities is minimized and most of the standards relate to European Americans. This fact needs to be revisited as the population of the state continues to shift towards increasing numbers of minorities.

What Happened to the Students

I wanted to open the students eyes to their own history and for them to acknowledge that yes, their families have been judged based upon their economic level and nationality, but the reality is that these students have the right to learn about themselves and to empower each other. McLaren (2006) describes US society as divided by both race and class which can be plainly observed in the community where the students live. Through analyzing the textbook information, researching who the authors of the textbook are, and learning about the content standards, the students in the US history course understood that their education has been decided for them and they felt ignored
and unimportant. Unfortunately, I had also discovered that the students felt
oppressed in their daily lives through the experiences that they have been
through. The students needed to see the stories of people’s lives who have been
discriminated against or went through trials and overcame them. The students
needed to see the significant roles that these individuals have played in history.

The students were introduced to these theories by me, but really
discovered the meaning of them through their own questions and observations.
Through discussions, the students discovered that they were not being treated
equally and that they deserved more than they were receiving by the school
system and society. Hidden messages were unmasked (such as why the textbook
mostly covers white men and ignores everyday people) and the participants of
the US history class were honest and shared examples of how they had been
discriminated against and how they wish they had been given more
opportunities. “By providing an environment that promotes inquiry, students are
able to explore important and meaningful questions about their
world” (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 218). Since the students had known each other
for a number of years and we had created a trusting community through
activities in the past (such as icebreakers, interviews, group work, and field trips)
the students were able to be more open with each other. Upward Bound is a
unique program that students are able to grow personally and academically with
other likeminded individuals. Together they learned ways to critically analyze information that surrounds them every day, to discuss the realities in which they live and to consider what they could do to change their situations.

This was no ordinary class. The engagement that the students showed was paramount. I had never seen students be invested in learning the way that these ten students were. Every class the students showed up early and were prepared to begin the class session. All of the students participated and I could literally see their interest and excitement in their facial expressions and body language. They were always alert and active. No one was afraid of asking questions or being honest from my perspective. All of their work was completed on time and it appeared that the students were genuinely invested in their studies.

The students gained a number of academic skills from their work that summer. They learned to analyze information from a number of different sources. They also took risks by reading out of books that they had never been assigned before. *A People's History* by Howard Zinn is a difficult book for many individuals to comprehend. These students took their time and were willing to struggle through a lengthy chapter from this book. The students were able to engage in conversation about their analysis and were honest with one another. They individually conducted research on a historical figure and wrote informational papers. Finally, the students were able to think critically, outside of
their current situations to discuss what their next steps could be if they wanted to make a change in their communities.

These are the students who are going to make up the leadership of tomorrow. These are the ones who have struggled and there is no change without struggle. The students have been introduced to these important theories that affect their lives, they have the tools to question society and people who continuously keep them down. No longer do they have to be the victims. Instead, they can make a conscious effort to expose the various ways they have been mistreated and decide to make a difference in their lives. I have given them the tools to inquire about the information that surrounds them in history classes but they can also analyze experiences that they face outside of the classroom, injustices that they might see, and any other representations that they wish to understand using critical literacy tools.

What Critical Literacy and Critical Multiculturalism Can Do For Teachers

“Experts in the field are concerned that U.S. educators are failing to prepare students to become active citizens in their neighborhoods, cities, states, nation, and world” (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 218). It is not a profound statement that history continues to repeat itself. Today, “teachers may feel pressured to cover material quickly and superficially, which hinders student engagement, comprehension, and retention” (Ogle, Klemp, & McBride, 2007, p.
5). History is not merely a subject to be learned: it is one that is supposed to be acted upon. Educators are partly responsible for creating a desire in students to want to make a difference in society but it is incredibly difficult to do so while they are faced with content standards that they must cover and the pressure to prepare students for state mandated tests.

It is easy to say that “issues of race, gender, culture, and power need to be brought to the forefront of our classroom societies to accommodate the range of student diversity in today’s schools” and it is also very true (Soares & Wood, 2010, p. 486). In a perfect world, teachers would learn how to implement critical literacy and critical multiculturalism because they are incredibly important practices for both teachers and students to learn. Our schools in California are not composed of solely those people who are in the textbooks. Our population is becoming more diverse on a daily basis, and yet the educational board of this state has not accommodated the students in regards to this information. The state standards are to be updated this year and hopefully the California Board of Education can cater to the continuously changing landscape of this states population.

If the individuals on the Board of Education decide not to make many changes to the standards, then it is up to the teacher to include supplemental curriculum based on the lives of minorities. Teachers need to get to know their
students and cater to their needs. If curriculum does not contain information on
those not included in the textbook, then this would continue the oppression of
various groups in this country. If you were a minority and had been completely
ignored from your K-12 education, how would you feel? Would you have a
strong sense of pride? Would you know much about your ancestors and even
those that belong to your ethnic, culturally, political, or social group today?
Teachers need to incorporate the stories of the foot soldiers that my students in
Upward Bound researched. To choose not to supplement curriculum with the
stories of those that assisted in the creation of this nation would be unfair and
undemocratic.

I was able to practice these theories at Upward Bound because I am not
controlled by state content standards in this particular iteration of the program.
Upward Bound allows me to create my own curriculum as long as it relates to
history. The program is for disenfranchised students so I always attempt to create
curriculum that is meaningful for the population. These students give up their
vacation time to attend Upward Bound’s summer program so it is essential to
keep them intrigued by the information that they learn and the activities they
engage in. All teachers should treat their curriculum this way. Even though we
have standards to teach, the state does not tell us how to teach this information.
It is possible to engage students in curriculum during the school year even
though many teachers complain that there are too many constraints. It takes extensive planning and substantial reading on critical literacy and critical multiculturalism to implement the two theories. The teacher needs to be dedicated to teaching students the multiple facets of history and not rely on one source, the textbook, in teaching the subject. Teaching social studies from a critical literacy and multiculturalism perspective is completely doable, as seen in the work completed with Upward Bound, and teachers should attempt to use these practices to better their students.

An action that teachers need to engage in is to reflect upon their own teaching practices. It is not only textbooks which ignore the diversity of our society, but teachers too become accustomed to their practices which might not include multiculturalism and critical literacy practices. It is a disservice to only offer one side of history for students, and educators can ensure that they are being given multiple facades of any given event. “If today’s youth are going to be educated and civic minded, they need to understand why things happen, and they need to be given all sides of a story so that they may form their own decisions and develop deeper understandings” (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 220). All students should be given the opportunity to take information and deconstruct it. Teachers should be providing opportunities for students to receive
all sides of a story and teachers need to engage in additional research and preparation to assist students in their quest for meanings.

It is understandable that teachers may read these recommendations and feel that they are a list of items that they should do, just as they should follow the state and national content standards. However, they should want to use the two theories which I have found to be instrumental in engaging learners who will inquire, think deeply, and who are enthusiastic when it comes to learning history. Using critical literacy and multiculturalism are two amazing theories that many educators use in their classrooms. The theories have shown positive outcomes with students who have a deepened desire to search for knowledge. If students are to learn how to be citizens in this democratic nation, it is imperative that they learn how to critically analyze information and to be willing to learn about others, which are two important aspects to critical literacy and multiculturalism.

There should be no more excuses as to why teachers cannot use these theories. It is an absolute shame to hear students complain about their history courses. Too often do I hear that history is boring and irrelevant. It seems this way because the curriculum and the teacher are not engaging the students. Why is it that teachers consistently choose to teach straight from the textbook and utilize only the supplements from the textbook package? Why don't teachers put themselves in the shoes of their students and think to themselves, “How can I
teach this topic in a relevant and interactive way?" If teachers have become lazy, it may be time to choose a new career. The people who are educators need to be dedicated to their profession, which means being dedicated to the learning of their students. It is important that teachers always investigate new ways of instruction and be aware of who they are teaching. Critical literacy and critical multiculturalism are relatively new and it takes an innovative teacher to go out and discover ways to implement the two theories. If teachers are not willing to introduce new ways of teaching that have a proven positive effect on students, then their employment sincerely needs to be questioned.

"Empowerment means not only helping students to understand and engage the world around them, but also enabling them to exercise the kind of courage needed to change the social order when necessary" (McLaren, 2003, p. 65). If educators prepare students with the tools that they need to engage with information then it is possible for the students to want to be a part of the change that they wish to see. All students should be exposed to what has happened in history, along with the causes and effects of events. Using various analytical tools, students can begin to look at their own lives and their own communities to observe what problems they see, what has caused them, and what they can do to make a difference. This can be done in the classroom. It must be done if students are to see a change in their world during their lifetime. This is empowerment.
What This Process Has Meant to Me

I recently participated in a teaching conference on Social Justice in San Francisco, California, and the keynote speaker, Darrick Smith, Co-Director of the June Jordan School for Equity, stated, “You can’t save students. They have to save themselves.” I may not be able to “save” students, but I will do everything in my power to inform each one that crosses my path and to provide them with the tools that they need in order to fight oppression in both its internal and external form. If we don’t help them, then who will?

As someone who is new to the teaching profession, I have seen how schools have failed to prepare students for their individual futures. Many teachers merely teach to the textbook and to the standards and this is unacceptable today. Being a part of Upward Bound for the past few years as well as teaching in a public high school has shown me that some public school educators simply don’t know or don’t care to educate young people about the importance of history. This could be from the pressure that many face from preparing students for mandated tests or it could be from laziness, who knows. Whatever the reason is, not giving students essential tools that will assist them in learning to change society and to change their lives is unacceptable. It is time to break away from telling only one story to sharing the stories of many and making young people feel empowered.
The students that enter our classrooms are going to be the leaders of tomorrow and looking at the status of the education system today, there is no wonder why some people are worried. It appears that students are being given an education that restricts them from using their creativity and critical thinking skills. I have heard many teachers say that students are only being prepared to fill in the bubbles on state mandated tests and have no idea how to critically think. Even though “it is critical that teachers prepare students to be more thoughtful and reflective so that they learn to make informed decisions for the common good” (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 218) many educators are not engaging in these activities and the outcome is a society that does not change. How are we supposed to expect these students to become informed decision makers when we don’t create opportunities for them to do so in school?

No longer should people be silenced in history. I truly believe that it is dependent upon today’s educators to desire to make a change in the current state of social studies which is focused on the winners and oftentimes the wealthy, male European Caucasians that have influenced history. Teachers have to strive to make this change and we have to do this together. Classroom curriculum should not be monotonous and one-sided, but should instead revolve around dissecting history from multiple perspectives. Implementing critical literacy and critical multiculturalism into the classrooms along with the state and national
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content standards is possible. The skills that students obtain using these theories are priceless and will assist them into their adulthood where they are to become involved citizens in society.

"Because of the silences and exclusions that have plagued social studies across its disciplines, teachers have a special obligation to investigate with students how power and positionality have shaped the stories of people's lives and to envision more inclusive and complex stories" (Jewett, 2007, p. 169). It is a funny thing, reading quotes regarding these critical theories. I think back to my own high school experience, filled with bookwork and handouts, and realize that the education I received was not complete. It did not include the histories of those that have struggled and endured in this country. The textbook was our only resource and the classes were full of memorization and fill in the blanks. Unfortunately, this is still going on today. It is a unique experience to be in the position of teacher instead of a student and to realize that I cannot allow students that cross my path to be bored and unattached to history. Taking all that I have learned about critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, I hope to continue to implement the two theories into the curriculum that I will continue to create as a devoted teacher, dedicated to change.
Lesson Plans for the Summer of 2010

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28th, 2010</td>
<td>Introduction of Critical Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5th, 2010</td>
<td>Practicing Critical Literacy with <em>The Americans</em> Chapter 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 12th, 2010</td>
<td>Practicing Critical Literacy with <em>The Americans</em> Chapter 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 19th, 2010</td>
<td>Using Critical Literacy with <em>A People’s History</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26th, 2010</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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There are two classes each week which last for an hour and thirty minutes.

Week of June 28th, 2010: Introduction of Critical Literacy

Beginning of class (30 minutes):
• Have students brainstorm a list of individuals from US history for 10 minutes
• Have a discussion based on the people that the students wrote down
  • What categories do these people fall under?
  • Who is missing from the list?
  • Do the people on their lists have anything in common?
  • Do the people that are missing from their lists have anything in common?
    • On the board, write the people’s names under various categories so the students can visualize who they know and who is missing (ethnicity, age, race, etc)
• Have a discussion based on the following questions:
  • How does it feel to learn about certain people and not learn about others?
  • Are there hidden meanings behind giving one group more attention and another group less or no attention?
  • In school do you discuss people from various backgrounds, including different ethnicities, cultures, religions, ages, abilities, and sexual orientations?

Middle of class (30 minutes):
• Explain the goal of learning critical literacy and what the goals are:
The goal of the summer is for students to learn how to analyze text and to receive a fair version of history that includes those from marginalized groups and this can be done using critical literacy.

Pass out the Heather Coffey handout entitled "Critical Literacy"

Discuss the handout and any questions that the students may have

Give the students the Textbook Analysis and Luke and Freebody's four main questions

"Whose voice is not being heard? Who benefits from this reading? How is the author positioning me? What were the authors' motives in creating this text?" Luke and Freebody

End of class (30 minutes):

Explain to students that an important part of American history was the Civil Rights Movement and that they will be attempting to learn as much as they can about the time period.

Together, the students will be analyzing the textbook that they will use during the school year and try to see who is covered in their textbook and who is missing.

A good dive into critical literacy is to view pictures represented in text to see how a group is portrayed.

Hand out Chapter 21 packets and have the students begin to describe the pictures that they see.

They should take note that all of the pictures show African Americans either sad, upset, mad, or something along those lines and that most of the information is about African Americans.

Begin to read the information from Chapter 21 and analyze the text together using the students Textbook Analysis handout and Luke and Freebody's questions.

Show students how to write down their analysis (see Appendix p.)

After analyzing some of the text, ask students what other groups have had to fight for equality in the country and tell them that they will be analyzing their textbook both inside and outside of class for the next couple of weeks.

Weeks 2-3 (July 5th-July 12th): Practicing Critical Literacy with The Americans Chapter 21

Complete chapter analysis using the Textbook Analysis handout and Luke and Freebody's questions. Discuss the student's findings and answer all questions that they may have.
Week of July 19th, 2010: Using Critical Literacy with A People’s History

Beginning of class (30 minutes):
• By now the students should have completed their textbook analysis of Chapter 21 in The Americans
• Give students the “Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation Without Freedom” chapter from Zinn which is 39 pages long (p. 171-210)
• The students will use their textbook analysis sheet to dissect the information
• Gives background regarding the inequity that African Americans faced during slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction

Middle and End of Class (60 minutes):
• Begin analyzing the information from the Zinn chapter
  • Students will have a week to complete the reading

For the next class:
• Use two class periods to discuss what they read
• Discuss the positives and negatives of the Zinn reading
• Compare the Zinn reading to information that they read in their textbook
• Share a Young People’s History to the students so they can see that there is another version of Zinn’s writing that isn’t so “heavy”
• At the end of class inform students that they will be writing a research paper on someone from the Civil Rights Movement of their choosing

Week of July 26th: Research Paper

• Students would conduct research based on a person who struggled for equal rights during the Civil Rights Movement
  • This person should not be in the textbook and if possible the individual being studied should relate to the student’s interests
• The paper should be a minimum of three pages long, double-spaced, using MLA format
  • The paper needed to include information regarding the person’s life, their struggles and their accomplishments
• The librarian at the college will come in to share with the students some techniques on researching and how to find resources for their information
  • The students need to evaluate the text that they choose
• They will be given a rubric for evaluation and a handout which explains how to organize a paper
• An example MLA paper will be shown
• Have the students find three sources to show me while they’re in the library
• Most of the writing will need to take place outside of class and will be due on 
  the final day of class

Final Day of Class
• On the final day of class the students will present their papers
  • This will involve reading their paper out loud as well as explaining why
    the students chose the Civil Rights Movement participant
• Each student will give one another compliments regarding their hard work
• After each student presents we will discuss the issues that the individuals
  fought for in the past
  • We will then discuss issues that are going on today and ways that these
    issues can be resolved
  • It is important to start local and then expand to global issues
• Finally the students will be asked what they are taking away from this class.
  They need to write a reflective piece that will be as long as they need.
Textbook Analysis

1. What is the content of this unit?
   a. What content should be included?
   b. What content is excluded?
   c. What places, people, issues, ideas, and events are given prominence?
   d. How are women, children, the aged, the challenged, the rich, the poor, minorities, etc expressed?
   e. Does the information follow a logical sequence of events?
   f. Does the information allow students to investigate important concepts?
   g. Is the information presented authentic?
   h. Are the concepts explained thoroughly?
   i. Does the information presented connect to student's lives?

2. What visuals are included?
   a. Who is depicted in the visuals?
   b. What are the individuals doing?
   c. What do the visuals say about the status of the individuals?
   d. What do the visuals say about the emotions of the individuals?
   e. Is there any evidence of stereotyping or bias from the visuals?
   f. How many visuals have men? Who are they? What are they doing?
   g. How many visuals have women? Who are they? What are they doing?
   h. How many are adults? How many are children? Who are they? What are they doing?
   i. Of all of the pictures, how many of the visuals depict a person of color? Who are they? What are they doing?
   j. Are there any visuals of people with physical challenges?
   k. What visuals of people would you consider to be important to include?

3. Is there evidence presented for the claims made in the unit under study?
   a. Is the information presented with evidence?
   b. How many primary sources are used in this unit?
   c. How would you determine the believability of the information presented?
   d. Whose views are being presented?
   e. Whose views are being ignored?

4. Can you locate examples of biased information?
   a. Can you find information that is one-sided?
   b. What is the information trying to persuade you of?
   c. What side is being ignored from the text?
d. How would you evaluate the information that you believe is one-sided?
e. Why do you believe the author wrote information that is one-sided?

5. Is there any content that you would consider being controversial?
   a. If there is information which you consider controversial? Are opposing viewpoints identified?
   b. If not, which points of view are given attention?
   c. Does the author take a position on the controversy? If so, what is their position?
   d. Are there questions posed to the student regarding the controversy?
   e. If there is no controversy in the unit, should there be? If so, what issues should be brought to the students attention?

6. Does the information covered support student equity?
   a. Is the information provided in a way for all students to actively engage in learning?
   b. Is more than one point of view presented?
   c. Does the information reflect a balance between ethnic background, economic status, gender, age, handicaps, and careers in both visuals and text?
   d. Does the information provided promote critical thinking and problem-solving for all students?

And DO NOT forget to ask yourself these essential questions from Luke and Freebody:

1. Whose voice is not being heard?
2. Who benefits from this reading?
3. How is the author positioning me?
4. What were the authors' motives in creating this text?
## Textbook Analysis

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Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. This article outlines the history and theory of critical literacy and details its application in the classroom.

By Heather Coffey

Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. For the purposes of critical literacy, text is defined as a "vehicle through which individuals communicate with one another using the codes and conventions of society".1 Accordingly, songs, novels, conversations, pictures, movies, etc. are all considered texts.

The development of critical literacy skills enables people to interpret messages in the modern world through a critical lens and challenge the power relations within those messages. Teachers who facilitate the development of critical literacy encourage students to interrogate societal issues and institutions like family, poverty, education, equity, and equality in order to critique the structures that serve as norms as well as to demonstrate how these norms are not experienced by all members of society.

In this article:

1. History and theory of critical literacy
2. Critical literacy in practice
3. Critical literacy and social action
4. Critical literacy in the classroom

History and theory of critical literacy

The term "critical literacy" was developed by social critical theorists concerned with dismantling social injustice and inequalities. These critical theorists contend that unequal power relationships are prevalent, and those in power are the ones who generally choose what truths are to be privileged. Through institutions like schooling and government, these ideologies are supported, thereby perpetuating the status quo. Within schools, only particular knowledge is legitimized, thus excluding groups who are unable to contribute to the process of the authentication of that knowledge. According to Ann Beck, "Critical educational theory or critical pedagogy applies the tenets of critical social theory to the educational arena and takes on the task of examining how schools reproduce inequality and justice."2.

Critical social theorists are concerned with oppressive and unjust relationships produced by traditional forms of schooling and critique the traditional models of education, which typically place the teacher at the front of the classroom
possessing and transmitting the knowledge to students who sit idly “learning” or receiving the information.3

In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire provides an example of how critical literacy is developed in an educational context. Freire proposes a system in which students become more socially aware through critique of multiple forms of injustice. This awareness cannot be achieved if students are not given the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge. Freire describes a traditional type of education as the “banking concept of education.” This model of education is characterized by instruction that “turns [students] into ‘containers,’ into ‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’ by the teacher.” In these classrooms, “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing,” and the teachers separate themselves as being the possessors of knowledge.4 In this role, the teacher does not necessarily challenge the students to think authentically or value students' own “funds of knowledge.”

In opposition to the banking model, teachers who recognize the possible value of developing critical literacy do not view their students as vessels to be filled, and instead create experiences that offer students opportunities to actively construct knowledge. In this model, schools become spaces where students interrogate social conditions through dialogue about issues significant to their lives. Teachers engaged in critical literacy serve less as instructors and more as facilitators of conversations that question traditional power relations. “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other”.5 Using critical pedagogical methods, teachers create spaces where they can be learners and students can be teachers, thus providing a context for everyone to construct and interrogate theories of knowledge.

**Critical literacy in practice**

The development of critical literacy encourages students to question issues of power — explicitly disparities within social contexts like socio-economic status, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.6 Becoming critically literate means that students have mastered the ability to read and critique messages in texts in order to better understand whose knowledge is being privileged. Essentially, teachers using critical pedagogy demonstrate how to evaluate the function language plays in the social construction of the self. Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear suggest that when students become critically literate, they can examine ongoing development, the parts they play in the world, and how they make sense of experiences.7

Facilitating the development of critical literacy promotes the examination and reform of social situations and exposes students to the biases and hidden agendas within texts.8 Thus, in order to become critically literate, one must learn to “read” in a reflective manner; “read” in this connotation means to give meaning to messages of all kinds, instead of just looking at the words on a page and comprehending the meaning of those words. Instruction that encourages critical literacy development comes as a response to the marginalization of a growing
number of American students who are not members of the culturally dominant group of white, middle-class youths. Furthermore, according to Adrian Blackledge, critical literacy emphasizes the potential of written language “to be a tool for people to analyze the division of power and resources in their society and transform discriminatory structures.”

**Critical literacy and social action**

There is often an activist component to critical literacy education, where the teacher serves as the facilitator of social change. Joseph Kretovics suggests that in addition to teaching students functional skills, the teacher must also provide “conceptual tools necessary to critique and engage society along with its inequalities and injustices.” Furthermore, with the activist potential in critical literacy education, students will learn how to envision a world in which all people have access and opportunity. When students learn to use the tools of critical literacy, they can expose, discuss, and attempt to solve social injustices within their own lives.

When engaging in the development of critical literacy skills, students learn to acknowledge the unfair privileging of certain dominant discourses in which society engages. Students participate in conversations about the injustices of privileging one group or ideal over another because of skin color or socio-economic status, and teachers can help to empower students by providing opportunities for them to find their voices. Teachers engaged in methods that support critical literacy can, as Lisa Delpit suggests, “let our students know they can resist a system that seeks to limit them to the bottom rung of the social and economic ladder.”

By developing lessons based on dialogue with students about their needs and interests, educators can invite students to take part in a larger community discourse that attempts to solve problems and create alternatives to oppressive situations. Linda Christensen suggests connecting the curriculum to the outside world in a tangible way. By participating in social action projects or creating a public discourse, students may see the relation between curriculum and the world beyond the walls of the school. Essentially, students learn to restructure their knowledge base and challenge accepted societal norms in order to transform all institutions that oppress.

**Critical literacy in the classroom**

Because critical literacy theory focuses on the relationships between language, power, social practice, and access to social goods and services, there are numerous methods of engaging students in becoming critical members of their society. Within the frame of critical literacy, it is important to look at texts, like novels, magazine articles, short stories, films, etc., through a lens that challenges societal norms. Students can evaluate whose knowledge is being privileged in texts and de-construct the message of those meanings. As readers, students must also evaluate the social construction of a text and question the factors that may have influenced the author to create the text in a specific manner. Moreover, using critical literacy, teachers encourage students to look at texts from other
perspectives and re-create them from the standpoint of marginalized groups in order to analyze the power relations and social inequities promoted by the texts.

Edward Behrman explains that the development of critical literacy encourages social justice and exploration of language and literature in many forms. Behrman suggests that the specific types of lessons examine power relationships that are found in language and literature and that these practices show students that language is never neutral. Because critical literacy looks different in every classroom, based on the subject matter and the population of students, there is no formula for how teachers engage students in mastery of critical literacy; however, there are some practices that appear in lessons more commonly. Behrman maintains that developing a pedagogy that includes critical literacy is an organic process that continually needs to be revisited and refined.

Behrman reviewed articles, published between 1999 and 2003 in The Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy that focused on lessons and units emphasizing critical literacy pedagogy in middle and high school grades. Behrman’s methodology included searching electronic databases for the keyword ‘critical literacy.’ After refining his search to include articles that contained classroom applications only, Behrman found 36 articles that presented “lessons or units intended to support critical literacy at the upper primary or secondary levels (grades 4-12).”

Behrman’s search revealed that the most commonly used practices that support critical literacy included: reading supplementary texts; reading multiple texts; reading from a resistant perspective; producing counter-texts; having students conduct research about topics of personal interest; and challenging students to take social action.

**Reading supplementary texts**

Reading supplementary texts representative of today’s changing media and technology allows students to make connections with the literature or content being studied. Supplementary texts also provide the context for students to confront social issues that are often avoided by canonical works and/or are not covered in dated textbooks. Students have the opportunity to critique themes and issues similar to those found in traditional texts, but they can also look at other mediums. Furthermore, teachers who use supplementary texts can encourage conversations about social issues that may not be covered in the typical sterile required reading curriculum of schools. According to Morrell, by offering students the opportunity to review appropriate Internet resources, songs, television programming, and advertisements, as well as many other visual mediums, students have exposure to popular texts they can analyze outside of school as well.

**Classroom application**

Practitioners can use lyrics from popular music as supplementary texts in order to engage students in discussion about race, gender, religion, politics, etc. In an article published in Reading Online, Carol Lloyd suggests using popular songs to
show students how to make connections between the popular media and political issues. For example, Lloyd recommends using the lyrics of “Buffalo Soldier,” written by Bob Marley, as a supplementary text that mentions the freed slaves who fought as soldiers in America during the 19th century; their stories rarely appear in a traditional textbook. An examination of the lyrics can lead to a discussion about the exclusion of this group of Americans from the history books. Similarly, Lloyd shows how teachers can use the lyrics of popular songs to initiate discussion about economic and political issues faced by Americans. This type of engagement with texts appeals to students’ interests, exposes them to new forms of text and also challenges the dominant ideology of the textbook — all of which are essential components of critical literacy.

**Reading multiple texts**

Incorporating multiple texts based on similar literary themes offers students the opportunity to critique the values or voices that are being promoted. Furthermore, this practice challenges the idea that meaning is fixed and encourages students to use evidence to support their interpretation. Students can evaluate the social, cultural, and historical frameworks of texts by analyzing differing perspectives of a single event.

**Classroom application**

An example of this practice would be offering students the choice of reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, an American novel written by a white, southern female; *Wolf Whistle*, a novel with a similar theme of racial discrimination written by Lewis Nordan, a white, southern man; *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines, a southern African-American man; or the play *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, an African-American woman from the Midwest. All of these authors wrote about similar topics and themes during the same time period and were born in the pre-Civil Rights Era. By reading the diverse perspectives of analogous themes and evaluating the voices of these authors, students can assess the perspective of the authors in order to better understand their value systems and why characters were portrayed in a certain manner. A comparative study of these four authors and novels would offer students the opportunity to explore how race, gender, and socio-economic status are portrayed by authors with dissimilar backgrounds.

**Reading from a resistant perspective**

Behrman suggests that the practice of reading from the perspective of resistance involves students in the interpretation of a text from the viewpoint of the world and not just the common Euro-centric ideology often found in standard texts. By considering how people from different backgrounds (i.e., racial, cultural, gender, religious, socio-economic status, sexual orientation) would read the same text, students can gain a better understanding of how the representative group would be affected by a reading of a text. This type of reading would be particularly effective and beneficial in social studies classes because it would offer students multiple perspectives of the same event. By providing the stories of
people whose voices typically aren't heard, teachers offer students the opportunity to participate in dialogue about why certain perspectives are normally privileged while others are silenced.

**Classroom application**

Behrman's search revealed that some teachers used the resistant-perspective approach and students learned to read a text using a functional grammar (dialectical) or by critiquing the word choice of an author in a song or news report. In learning to read from a resistant perspective, students can confront certain stereotypes promoted by a text and deconstruct the meaning or value being privileged.

**Producing counter-texts**

Another common practice found in classrooms that promote a critical literacy involves having students produce counter-texts. Essentially, this involves having students generate narratives or other texts, including multi-media creations, from a non-mainstream perspective. "Producing counter-texts can serve to validate the thoughts, observations, and feelings of students and other underrepresented groups." This approach to curriculum offers students occasions to speak from the point of view of those voices that are often silenced or marginalized, thereby empowering them.

**Classroom application**

Practitioners recommended that counter-texts may be produced in reading logs, journals, weblogs, personal narratives, and student-created videos. When students produce counter-texts and evaluate the process they used in order to construct the text, they validate their own perspectives.

**Providing opportunities for student choice**

Student choice in any type of research has long been touted by constructivists and critical pedagogues like John Dewey and Howard Gardner as an effective way to involve, encourage, and empower students to actively participate in the construction of knowledge. Similarly, proponents of critical literacy theory in classrooms suggest that by allowing student choice, teachers legitimize interests and knowledge of their students. Choosing a topic for research, however, is not considered critical unless students evaluate the problems involved in society and how the conditions of society created this problem.

**Classroom application**

An example of providing student choice in assignments is participation in literature circles or book clubs. Students select books based on interest and then conduct research based on a theme or the context of the novel. While reading chosen novels and discussing the historical or political context of the novel, students can evaluate why the author chose to write in a particular manner and
hypothesize why the author may have privileged certain themes. Literature circles not only provide students with choices about reading material, but this practice also involves students in discussion about the novel, thus opening dialogue for diverse perspectives.

**Taking social action**

Moving students to social action is also a practice characteristic of critical literacy; students engaging in social action projects can improve the conditions of their communities. By taking research outside of the classroom, students can actually participate in society based on the information they discover. Once students research and better understand aspects of their school or community, they may engage in projects to improve an area that is lacking.

Behrman contends that by following this framework, teachers can help students learn how literacy can be used as a “vehicle for social change.”
The Information Search

The first thing you must do in beginning a successful search is deciding what you must do and how you can most successfully and efficiently complete it. To do this you need to ask yourself:

- **What am I supposed to do for this assignment?**
- **What information do I need in order to do this?**
- **What possible information sources can I use to find this information?**

Once you have decided where to begin your search you need to make a list of possible sources and the locations of these sources.

- **What sources have I found? Where did I find them?**

List books, encyclopedias articles, magazine articles, persons to be interviewed, etc. Be sure to include call numbers for all library books. With this task complete you next must ask yourself the following:

- **How will I record the information that I find?**
- **Will I take notes; draw pictures, maps, charts, etc.; make a tape recording?**
- **How will I give credit to my sources in my notes?**

In order to complete your assigned task you must ask yourself:

- **What product or presentation will I do to finish my assignment?**
- **How can I make this assignment truly mine, not simply a copy of my sources?**
- **How can I best include my own thoughts in the final product, in order to reflect my accomplishments?**

Once your task is completed be sure to complete a self-evaluation to ensure you have done your best work by asking:

- **What did I do to finish the assignment, is this what I was asked to do?**
- **Does the information I used in my search match the information I needed to complete it?**
- **Did I give credit to my sources? Did I use the required number of sources, or at least three if a number was not specified?**
- **Is my work neat and complete; does it reflect my true abilities?**
## Rubric for Final Essay

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<td><strong>Proofreading</strong></td>
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<td>some errors</td>
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Write your sources here:
Civil Rights activists lead the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.
The year is 1960, and segregation divides the nation's people. African Americans are denied access to jobs and housing and are refused service at restaurants and stores. But the voices of the oppressed rise up in the churches and in the streets, demanding civil rights for all Americans.

**What rights are worth fighting for.**

**Examine the Issues**
- Are all Americans entitled to the same civil rights?
- What are the risks of demanding rights?
- Why might some people fight against equal rights?

Visit the Chapter 21 links for more information about Civil Rights.
Taking on Segregation

**Main Idea**
Activism and a series of Supreme Court decisions advanced equal rights for African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Why It Matters Now**
Landmark Supreme Court decisions beginning in 1954 have guaranteed civil rights for Americans today.

**Terms & Names**
- Thurgood Marshall
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
- Rosa Parks
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
- Sit-in

**One American's Story**

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson drew back in self-defense as the white bus driver raised his hand as if to strike her. “Get up from there!” he shouted. Robinson, laden with Christmas packages, had forgotten the rules and sat down in the front of the bus, which was reserved for whites.

Humiliating incidents were not new to the African Americans who rode the segregated buses of Montgomery, Alabama, in the mid-1950s. The bus company required them to pay at the front and then exit and reboard at the rear. “I felt like a dog,” Robinson later said. A professor at the all-black Alabama State College, Robinson was also president of the Women’s Political Council, a group of professional African-American women determined to increase black political power.

**A Personal Voice  Jo Ann Gibson Robinson**

“We had members in every elementary, junior high, and senior high school, and in federal, state, and local jobs. Wherever there were more than ten blacks employed, we had a member there. We were prepared to the point that we knew that in a matter of hours, we could corral the whole city.”

—quoted in Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement

On December 1, 1955, police arrested an African-American woman for refusing to give up her seat on a bus. Robinson promptly sent out a call for all African Americans to boycott Montgomery buses.

**The Segregation System**

Segregated buses might never have rolled through the streets of Montgomery if the Civil Rights Act of 1875 had remained in force. This act outlawed segregation in public facilities by decreeing that “all persons . . . shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations . . . of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement.” In 1883, however, the all-white Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional.
PLESSY V. FERGUSON During the 1890s, a number of other court decisions and state laws severely limited African-American rights. In 1890, Louisiana passed a law requiring railroads to provide “equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races.” In the Plessy v. Ferguson case of 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that this “separate but equal” law did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees all Americans equal treatment under the law.

Armed with the Plessy decision, states throughout the nation, but especially in the South, passed what were known as Jim Crow laws, aimed at separating the races. These laws forbade marriage between blacks and whites and established many other restrictions on social and religious contact between the races. There were separate schools as well as separate streetcars, waiting rooms, railroad coaches, elevators, witness stands, and public restrooms. The facilities provided for blacks were always inferior to those for whites. Nearly every day, African Americans faced humiliating signs that read: “Colored Water”; “No Blacks Allowed”; “Whites Only!”

SEGREGATION CONTINUES INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

After the Civil War, some African Americans tried to escape Southern racism by moving north. This migration of Southern African Americans speeded up greatly during World War I, as many African-American sharecroppers abandoned farms for the promise of industrial jobs in Northern cities. However, they discovered racial prejudice and segregation there, too. Most could find housing only in all-black neighborhoods. Many white workers also resented the competition for jobs. This sometimes led to violence.

These photos of the public schools for white children (top) and for black children (above) in a Southern town in the 1930s show that separate facilities were often unequal in the segregation era.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER
Region In which regions were schools segregated by law? In which were segregation expressly prohibited?
A DEVELOPING CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT In many ways, the events of World War II set the stage for the civil rights movement. First, the demand for soldiers in the early 1940s created a shortage of white male laborers. That labor shortage opened up new job opportunities for African Americans, Latinos, and white women.

Second, nearly one million African Americans served in the armed forces, which needed so many fighting men that they had to end their discriminatory policies. Such policies had previously kept African Americans from serving in fighting units. Many African-American soldiers returned from the war determined to fight for their own freedom now that they had helped defeat fascist regimes overseas.

Third, during the war, civil rights organizations actively campaigned for African-American voting rights and challenged Jim Crow laws. In response to protests, President Roosevelt issued a presidential directive prohibiting racial discrimination by federal agencies and all companies that were engaged in war work. The groundwork was laid for more organized campaigns to end segregation throughout the United States.

Challenging Segregation in Court

The desegregation campaign was led largely by the NAACP, which had fought since 1909 to end segregation. One influential figure in this campaign was Charles Hamilton Houston, a brilliant Howard University law professor who also served as chief legal counsel for the NAACP from 1934 to 1938.

THE NAACP LEGAL STRATEGY In deciding the NAACP's legal strategy, Houston focused on the inequality between the separate schools that many states provided. At that time, the nation spent ten times as much money educating a white child as an African-American child. Thus, Houston focused the organization's limited resources on challenging the most glaring inequalities of segregated public education.

In 1938, he placed a team of his best law students under the direction of Thurgood Marshall. Over the next 23 years, Marshall and his NAACP lawyers would win 29 out of 32 cases argued before the Supreme Court. Several of the cases became legal milestones, each chipping away at the segregation platform of Plessy v. Ferguson. In the 1946 case Morgan v. Virginia, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional those state laws mandating segregated seating on interstate buses. In 1950, the high court ruled in Sweatt v. Painter that state law schools must admit black applicants, even if separate black schools exist.

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION Marshall's most stunning victory came on May 17, 1954, in the case known as Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. (See page 708). In this case, the father of eight-year-old Linda Brown had charged the board of education of Topeka, Kansas, with violating Linda's rights by denying her admission to an all-white elementary school four blocks from her house. The nearest all-black elementary school was 21 blocks away.

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court unanimously struck down segregation in schooling as an unconstitutional violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection...
Clause. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote that, "[I]n the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal has no place." The Brown decision was relevant for some 12 million schoolchildren in 21 states.

**Reaction to the Brown Decision**

Official reaction to the ruling was mixed. In Kansas and Oklahoma, state officials said they expected segregation to end with little trouble. In Texas, the governor warned that plans might "take years" to work out. He actively prevented desegregation by calling in the Texas Rangers. In Mississippi and Georgia, officials vowed total resistance. Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia said "The people of Georgia will not comply with the decision of the court. . . . We’re going to do whatever is necessary in Georgia to keep white children in white schools and colored children in colored schools."

**RESISTANCE TO SCHOOL DESEGREGATION** Within a year, more than 500 school districts had desegregated their classrooms. In Baltimore, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C., black and white students sat side by side for the first time in history. However, in many areas where African Americans were a majority, whites resisted desegregation. In some places, the Ku Klux Klan reappeared and White Citizens Councils boycotted businesses that supported desegregation.

To speed things up, in 1955 the Supreme Court handed down a second ruling, known as Brown II, that ordered school desegregation implemented "with all deliberate speed." Initially President Eisenhower refused to enforce compliance. "The fellow who tries to tell me that you can do these things by force is just plain nuts," he said. Events in Little Rock, Arkansas, would soon force Eisenhower to go against his personal beliefs.

**CRISIS IN LITTLE ROCK** In 1948, Arkansas had become the first Southern state to admit African Americans to state universities without being required by a court order. By the 1950s, some scout troops and labor unions in Arkansas had quietly ended their Jim Crow practices. Little Rock citizens had elected two men to the school board who publicly backed desegregation—and the school superintendent, Virgil Blossom, began planning for desegregation soon after Brown.

However, Governor Orval Faubus publicly showed support for segregation. In September 1957, he ordered the National Guard to turn away the "Little Rock Nine"—nine African-American students who had volunteered to integrate Little Rock's Central High School as the first step in Blossom's plan. A federal judge ordered Faubus to let the students into school.

NAACP members called eight of the students and arranged to drive them to school. They could not reach the ninth student, Elizabeth Eckford, who did not have a phone, and she set out alone. Outside Central High, Eckford faced an abusive crowd. Terrified, the 15-year-old made it to a bus stop where two friendly whites stayed with her.
The crisis in Little Rock forced Eisenhower to act. He placed the Arkansas National Guard under federal control and ordered a thousand paratroopers into Little Rock. The nation watched the televised coverage of the event. Under the watch of soldiers, the nine African-American teenagers attended class.

But even these soldiers could not protect the students from troublemakers who confronted them in stairways, in the halls, and in the cafeteria. Throughout the year African-American students were regularly harassed by other students. At the end of the year, Faubus shut down Central High rather than let integration continue.

On September 9, 1957, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first civil rights law since Reconstruction. Shepherded by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the law gave the attorney general greater power over school desegregation. It also gave the federal government jurisdiction—or authority—over violations of African-American voting rights.

**The Montgomery Bus Boycott**

The face-to-face confrontation at Central High School was not the only showdown over segregation in the mid-1950s. Impatient with the slow pace of change in the courts, African-American activists had begun taking direct action to win the rights promised to them by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Among those on the forefront of change was Jo Ann Robinson.

**BOYCOTTING SEGREGATION** Four days after the Brown decision in May 1954, Robinson wrote a letter to the mayor of Montgomery, Alabama, asking that bus drivers no longer be allowed to force riders in the "colored" section to yield their seats to whites. The mayor refused. Little did he know that in about 18 months another African-American woman from Alabama would be at the center of this controversy, and that her name and her words would far outlast segregation.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress and an NAACP officer, took a seat in the front row of the "colored" section of a Montgomery bus. As the bus filled up, the driver ordered Parks and three other African-American passengers to empty the row they were occupying so that a white man could sit down without having to sit next to any African Americans. "It was time for someone to stand up—or in my case, sit down," recalled Parks. "I refused to move."

As Parks stared out the window, the bus driver said, "If you don't stand up, I'm going to call the police and have you arrested." The soft-spoken Parks replied, "You may do that."

News of Parks's arrest spread rapidly. Jo Ann Robinson and NAACP leader E. D. Nixon, who had helped to plan Parks's action, suggested a bus boycott. The leaders of the African-American community, including many ministers, formed the Montgomery Improvement Association to organize the boycott. They elected the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 26-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr., to lead the group. An ordained minister since 1948, King had just earned a Ph.D. degree in theology from Boston University. "Well, I'm not sure I'm the best person for the position," King confided to Nixon, "but if no one else is going to serve, I'd be glad to try."
WALKING FOR JUSTICE  On the night of December 5, 1955, Dr. King made the following declaration to an estimated crowd of between 5,000 and 15,000 people.

A PERSONAL VOICE  MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"There comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. . . . I want it to be known—that we’re going to work with grim and bold determination—to gain justice on buses in this city. And we are not wrong. . . . If we are wrong—the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong—God Almighty is wrong. . . . If we are wrong—justice is a lie."

—quoted in Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63

King’s passionate and eloquent speech brought people to their feet and filled the audience with a sense of mission. African Americans filed a lawsuit and for 381 days refused to ride the buses in Montgomery. In most cases they had to find other means of transportation by organizing car pools or walking long distances. Support came from within the black community—workers donated one-fifth of their weekly salaries—as well as from outside groups like the NAACP, the United Auto Workers, Montgomery’s Jewish community, and sympathetic white southerners. The boycotters remained nonviolent even after a bomb ripped apart King’s home (no one was injured). Finally, in 1956, the Supreme Court outlawed bus segregation.

Martin Luther King and the SCLC

The Montgomery bus boycott proved to the world that the African-American community could unite and organize a successful protest movement. It also proved the power of nonviolent resistance, the peaceful refusal to obey unjust laws. Despite threats to his life and family, King urged his followers, “Don’t ever let anyone pull you so low as to hate them.”

CHANGING THE WORLD WITH SOUL FORCE  King called his brand of nonviolent resistance “soul force.” He based his ideas on the teachings of several people. From Jesus, he learned to love one’s enemies. From writer Henry David Thoreau he took the concept of civil disobedience—the refusal to obey an unjust law. From labor organizer A. Philip Randolph he learned to organize massive demonstrations. From Mohandas Gandhi, the leader who helped India throw off British rule, he learned to resist oppression without violence.

“We will not hate you,” King said to white racists, “but we cannot . . . obey your unjust laws. . . . We will soon wear you down by our capacity to suffer. And in winning our freedom, we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we
King held steadfast to his philosophy, even when a wave of racial violence swept through the South after the *Brown* decision. The violence included the 1955 murder of Emmett Till—a 14-year-old African-American boy who had allegedly flirted with a white woman. There were also shootings and beatings, some fatal, of civil rights workers.

**FROM THE GRASSROOTS UP** After the bus boycott ended, King joined with ministers and civil rights leaders in 1957 to found the *Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (SCLC). Its purpose was “to carry on nonviolent crusades against the evils of second-class citizenship.” Using African-American churches as a base, the SCLC planned to stage protests and demonstrations throughout the South. The leaders hoped to build a movement from the grassroots up and to win the support of ordinary African Americans of all ages. King, president of the SCLC, used the power of his voice and ideas to fuel the movement’s momentum.

The nuts and bolts of organizing the SCLC was handled by its first director, Ella Baker, the granddaughter of slaves. While with the NAACP, Baker had served as national field secretary, traveling over 16,000 miles throughout the South. From 1957 to 1960, Baker used her contacts to set up branches of the SCLC in Southern cities. In April 1960, Baker helped students at Shaw University, an African-American university in Raleigh, North Carolina, to organize a national protest group, the *Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee*, or SNCC, pronounced “snick” for short.

It had been six years since the *Brown* decision, and many college students viewed the pace of change as too slow. Although these students risked a great deal—losing college scholarships, being expelled from college, being physically harmed—they were determined to challenge the system. SNCC hoped to harness the energy of these student protesters; it would soon create one of the most important student activist movements in the nation’s history.

**The Movement Spreads**

Although SNCC adopted King’s ideas in part, its members had ideas of their own. Many people called for a more confrontational strategy and set out to reshape the civil rights movement.

**DEMONSTRATING FOR FREEDOM** The founders of SNCC had models to build on. In 1942 in Chicago, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had staged the first sit-ins, in which African-American protesters sat down at segregated lunch counters and refused to leave until they were served. In February 1960, African-American students from North Carolina’s Agricultural and Technical College staged a sit-in at a whites-only lunch counter at a Woolworth’s store in Greensboro. This time, television crews brought coverage of the protest into homes throughout the United States. There was no denying the ugly face of racism. Day after day, news reporters captured the scenes of whites beating, jeering at, and pouring food over students who refused to strike back. The coverage sparked many other sit-ins across the South. Store managers called
in the police, raised the price of food, and removed counter seats. But the movement continued and spread to the North. There, students formed picket lines around national chain stores that maintained segregated lunch counters in the South.

By late 1960, students had descended on and desegregated lunch counters in some 48 cities in 11 states. They endured arrests, beatings, suspension from college, and tear gas and fire hoses, but the army of nonviolent students refused to back down. "My mother has always told me that I'm equal to other people," said Ezell Blair, Jr., one of the students who led the first SNCC sit-in in 1960. For the rest of the 1960s, many Americans worked to convince the rest of the country that blacks and whites deserved equal treatment.

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.
   - Thurgood Marshall
   - Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
   - Rosa Parks
   - Martin Luther King, Jr.
   - Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
   - Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
   - Sit-in

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES
   Fill in a spider diagram like the one below with examples of tactics, organizations, leaders, and Supreme Court decisions of the civil rights movement up to 1960.

3. EVALUATING
   Do you think the nonviolence used by civil rights activists was a good tactic? Explain. Think About:
   - the Montgomery bus boycott
   - television coverage of events
   - sit-ins

4. CONTRASTING
   How did the tactics of the student protesters from SNCC differ from those of the boycotters in Montgomery?

5. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
   After the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka ruling, what do you think was the most significant event of the civil rights movement prior to 1960? Why? Think About:
   - the role of civil rights leaders
   - the results of confrontations and boycotts
   - the role of grassroots organizations
SLAVERY WITHOUT SUBMISSION,
EMANCIPATION WITHOUT FREEDOM

The United States government’s support of slavery was based on an overpowering practicality. In 1790, a thousand tons of cotton were being produced every year in the South. By 1860, it was a million tons. In the same period, 500,000 slaves grew to 4 million. A system harried by slave rebellions and conspiracies (Gabriel Prosser, 1800; Denmark Vesey, 1822; Nat Turner, 1831) developed a network of controls in the southern states, backed by the laws, courts, armed forces, and race prejudice of the nation’s political leaders.

It would take either a full-scale slave rebellion or a full-scale war to end such a deeply entrenched system. If a rebellion, it might get out of hand, and turn its ferocity beyond slavery to the most successful system of capitalist enrichment in the world. If a war, those who made the war would organize its consequences. Hence, it was Abraham Lincoln who freed the slaves, not John Brown. In 1859, John Brown was hanged, with federal complicity, for attempting to do by small-scale violence what Lincoln would do by large-scale violence several years later—end slavery.

With slavery abolished by order of the government—true, a government pushed hard to do so, by blacks, free and slave, and by white abolitionists—its end could be orchestrated so as to set limits to emancipation. Liberation from the top would go only so far as the interests of the
dominant groups permitted. If carried further by the momentum of war, the rhetoric of a crusade, it could be pulled back to a safer position. Thus, while the ending of slavery led to a reconstruction of national politics and economics, it was not a radical reconstruction, but a safe one—in fact, a profitable one.

The plantation system, based on tobacco growing in Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky, and rice in South Carolina, expanded into lush new cotton lands in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi—and needed more slaves. But slave importation became illegal in 1808. Therefore, "from the beginning, the law went unenforced," says John Hope Franklin (From Slavery to Freedom). "The long, unprotected coast, the certain markets, and the prospects of huge profits were too much for the American merchants and they yielded to the temptation...." He estimates that perhaps 250,000 slaves were imported illegally before the Civil War.

How can slavery be described? Perhaps not at all by those who have not experienced it. The 1932 edition of a best-selling textbook by two northern liberal historians saw slavery as perhaps the Negro's "necessary transition to civilization." Economists or cliometricians (statistical historians) have tried to assess slavery by estimating how much money was spent on slaves for food and medical care. But can this describe the reality of slavery as it was to a human being who lived inside it? Are the conditions of slavery as important as the existence of slavery?

John Little, a former slave, wrote:

They say slaves are happy, because they laugh, and are merry. I myself and three or four others, have received two hundred lashes in the day, and had our feet in fetters; yet, at night, we would sing and dance, and make others laugh at the rattling of our chains. Happy men we must have been! We did it to keep down trouble, and to keep our hearts from being completely broken: that is as true as the gospel! Just look at it,—must not we have been very happy? Yet I have done it myself—I have cut capers in chains.

A record of deaths kept in a plantation journal (now in the University of North Carolina Archives) lists the ages and cause of death of all those who died on the plantation between 1850 and 1855. Of the thirty-two who died in that period, only four reached the age of sixty, four reached the age of fifty, seven died in their forties, seven died in their twenties or thirties, and nine died before they were five years old.

But can statistics record what it meant for families to be torn apart, when a master, for profit, sold a husband or a wife, a son or a daughter? In 1858, a slave named Abream Scriven was sold by his master, and wrote to his wife: "Give my love to my father and mother and tell them good Bye for me, and if we Shall not meet in this world I hope to meet in heaven."

One recent book on slavery (Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross) looks at whippings in 1840-1842 on the Barrow plantation in Louisiana with two hundred slaves. "The records show that over the course of two years a total of 160 whippings were administered, an average of 0.7 whippings per hand per year. About half the hands were not whipped at all during the period." One could also say: "Half of all slaves were whipped." That has a different ring. That figure (0.7 per hand per year) shows whipping was infrequent for any individual. But looked at another way, once every four or five days, some slave was whipped.

Barrow as a plantation owner, according to his biographer, was no worse than the average. He spent money on clothing for his slaves, gave them holiday celebrations, built a dance hall for them. He also built a jail and "was constantly devising ingenious punishments, for he realized that uncertainty was an important aid in keeping his gangs well in hand."

The whippings, the punishments, were work disciplines. Still, Herbert Gutman (Slavery and the Numbers Game) finds, dissecting Fogel and Engerman's statistics, "Over all, four in five cotton pickers engaged in one or more disorderly acts in 1840-41. . . . As a group, a slightly higher percentage of women than men committed seven or more disorderly acts." Thus, Gutman disputes the argument of Fogel and Engerman that the Barrow plantation slaves became "devoted, hardworking responsible slaves who identified their fortunes with the fortunes of their masters."

Slave revolts in the United States were not as frequent or as large-scale as those in the Caribbean islands or in South America. Probably the largest slave revolt in the United States took place near New Orleans in 1811. Four to five hundred slaves gathered after a rising at the plantation of a Major Andry. Armed with cane knives, axes, and clubs, they wounded Andry, killed his son, and began marching from plantation to plantation, their numbers growing. They were attacked by U.S. army and militia forces; sixty-six were killed on the spot, and sixteen were tried and shot by a firing squad.

The conspiracy of Denmark Vesey, himself a free Negro, was thwarted before it could be carried out in 1822. The plan was to burn Charleston, South Carolina, then the sixth-largest city in the nation, and to initiate a general revolt of slaves in the area. Several witnesses said thousands of blacks were implicated in one way or another. Blacks had made about 250 pike heads and bayonets and over three hundred
dagger, according to Herbert Aptheker's account. But the plan was betrayed, and thirty-five blacks, including Vesey, were hanged. The trial record itself, published in Charleston, was ordered destroyed soon after publication, as too dangerous for slaves to see.

Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, in the summer of 1831, threw the slaveholding South into a panic, and then into a determined effort to bolster the security of the slave system. Turner, claiming religious visions, gathered about seventy slaves, who went on a rampage from plantation to plantation, murdering at least fifty-five men, women, and children. They gathered supporters, but were captured as their ammunition ran out. Turner and perhaps eighteen others were hanged.

Did such rebellions set back the cause of emancipation, as some moderate abolitionists claimed at the time? An answer was given in 1845 by James Hammond, a supporter of slavery:

But if your course was wholly different—if you distilled nectar from your lips and discoursed sweetest music—do you imagine you could prevail on us to give up a thousand millions of dollars in the value of our slaves, and a thousand millions of dollars more in the depreciation of our lands...

The slaveowner understood this, and prepared. Henry Tragle (The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831), says:

In 1831, Virginia was an armed and garrisoned state. With a total population of 1,211,405, the State of Virginia was able to field a militia force of 101,488 men, including cavalry, artillery, grenadiers, riflemen, and light infantry! It is true that this was a “paper army” in some ways, in that the county regiments were not fully armed and equipped, but it is still an astonishing commentary on the state of the public mind of the time. During a period when neither the State nor the nation faced any sort of exterior threat, we find that Virginia felt the need to maintain a security force roughly ten percent of the total number of its inhabitants: black and white, male and female, slave and free!

Rebellion, though rare, was a constant fear among slaveowners. Ulrich Phillips, a southerner whose American Negro Slavery is a classic study, wrote:

A great number of southerners at all times held the firm belief that the negro population was so docile, so little cohesive, and in the main so

Eugene Genovese, in his comprehensive study of slavery, Roll, Jordan, Roll, sees a record of “simultaneous accommodation and resistance to slavery.” The resistance included stealing property, sabotage and slowness, killing overseers and masters, burning down plantation buildings, running away. Even the accommodation “breathed a critical spirit and disguised subversive actions.” Most of this resistance, Genovese stresses, fell short of organized insurrection, but its significance for masters and slaves was enormous.

Running away was much more realistic than armed insurrection. During the 1850s about a thousand slaves a year escaped into the North, Canada, and Mexico. Thousands ran away for short periods. And this despite the terror facing the runaway. The dogs used in tracking fugitives “bit, tore, mutilated, and if not pulled off in time, killed their prey,” Genovese says.

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, her head injured by an overseer when she was fifteen, made her way to freedom alone as a young woman, then became the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. She made nineteen dangerous trips back and forth, often disguised, escorting more than three hundred slaves to freedom, always carrying a pistol, telling the fugitives, “You’ll be free or die.” She expressed her philosophy: “There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive...

One overseer told a visitor to his plantation that “some negroes are determined never to let a white man whip them and will resist you, when you attempt it; of course you must kill them in that case.”

One form of resistance was not to work so hard. W. E. B. Du Bois wrote, in The Gift of Black Folk:

As a tropical product with a sensuous receptivity to the beauty of the world, he was not as easily reduced to be the mechanical draft-horse which the northern European laborer became. He... tended to work as the results pleased him and refused to work or sought to refuse when he did not find the spiritual returns adequate; thus he was easily accused of laziness and driven as a slave when in truth he brought to modern manual labor a renewed valuation of life.
Ulrich Phillips described “truancy,” “absconding,” “vacations without leave,” and “resolute efforts to escape from bondage altogether.” He also described collective actions:

Occasionally, however, a squad would strike in a body as a protest against severities. An episode of this sort was recounted in a letter of a Georgia overseer to his absent employer: “Sir, I write you a few lines in order to let you know that six of your hands has left the plantation—every man but Jack. They displeased me with their work and I give some of them a few lashes, Tom with the rest. On Wednesday morning, they were missing.”

The instances where poor whites helped slaves were not frequent, but sufficient to show the need for setting one group against the other. Genovese says:

The slaveholders . . . suspected that non-slaveholders would encourage slave disobedience and even rebellion, not so much out of sympathy for the blacks as out of hatred for the rich planters and resentment of their own poverty. White men sometimes were linked to slave insurrectionary plots, and each such incident rekindled fears.

This helps explain the stern police measures against whites who fraternized with blacks.

Herbert Aptheker quotes a report to the governor of Virginia on a slave conspiracy in 1802: “I have just received information that three white persons are concerned in the plot; and they have arms and ammunition concealed under their houses, and were to give aid when the negroes should begin.” One of the conspiring slaves said that it was “the common run of poor white people” who were involved.

In return, blacks helped whites in need. One black runaway told of a slave woman who had received fifty lashes of the whip for giving food to a white neighbor who was poor and sick.

When the Brunswick canal was built in Georgia, the black slaves and white Irish workers were segregated, the excuse being that they would do violence against one another. That may well have been true, but Fanny Kemble, the famous actress and wife of a planter, wrote in her journal:

But the Irish are not only quarrelers, and rioters, and fighters, and drinkers, and despisers of niggers—they are a passionate, impulsive, warm-hearted, generous people, much given to powerful indignations, which break out suddenly when not compelled to smoulder sullenly—pestilent sympathizers too, and with a sufficient dose of American atmospheric air in their lungs, properly mixed with a right proportion of ardent spirits, there is no saying but what they might actually take to sympathy with the slaves, and I leave you to judge of the possible consequences. You perceive, I am sure, that they can by no means be allowed to work together on the Brunswick Canal.

The need for slave control led to an ingenious device, paying poor whites—themselves so troublesome for two hundred years of southern history—to be overseers of black labor and therefore buffers for black hatred.

Religion was used for control. A book consulted by many planters was the *Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book*, which gave these instructions to overseers: “You will find that an hour devoted every Sabbath morning to their moral and religious instruction would prove a great aid to you in bringing about a better state of things amongst the Negroes.”

As for black preachers, as Genovese puts it, “they had to speak a language defiant enough to hold the high-spirited among their flock but neither so inflammatory as to rouse them to battles they could not win nor so ominous as to arouse the ire of ruling powers.” Practicality decided: “The slave communities, embedded as they were among numerically preponderant and militarily powerful whites, counseled a strategy of patience, of acceptance of what could not be helped, of a dogged effort to keep the black community alive and healthy—a strategy of survival that, like its African prototype, above all said yes to life in this world.”

It was once thought that slavery had destroyed the black family. And so the black condition was blamed on family frailty, rather than on poverty and prejudice. Blacks without families, helpless, lacking kinship and identity, would have no will to resist. But interviews with ex-slaves, done in the 1930s by the Federal Writers Project of the New Deal for the Library of Congress, showed a different story, which George Rawick summarizes (*From Sundown to Sunup*):

The slave community acted like a generalized extended kinship system in which all adults looked after all children and there was little division between “my children for whom I’m responsible” and “your children for whom you’re responsible.” . . . A kind of family relationship in which older children have great responsibility for caring for younger siblings is obviously more functionally integrative and useful for slaves than the pattern of
sibling rivalry and often dislike that frequently comes out of contemporary middle-class nuclear families composed of highly individuated persons. Indeed, the activity of the slaves in creating patterns of family life that were functionally integrative did more than merely prevent the destruction of personality. It was part and parcel, as we shall see, of the social process out of which came black pride, black identity, black culture, the black community, and black rebellion in America.

Old letters and records dug out by historian Herbert Gutman (The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom) show the stubborn resistance of the slave family to pressures of disintegration. A woman wrote to her son from whom she had been separated for twenty years: “I long to see you in my old age. Now my dear son I pray you to come and see your dear old Mother. I love you Cato you love your Mother—You are my only son.”

And a man wrote to his wife, sold away from him with their children: “Send me some of the children’s hair in a separate paper with their names on the paper. I had rather anything to had happened to me most than ever to have been parted from you and the children. Laura I do love you the same.”

Going through records of slave marriages, Gutman found how high was the incidence of marriage among slave men and women, and how stable these marriages were. He studied the remarkably complete records kept on one South Carolina plantation. He found a birth register of two hundred slaves extending from the eighteenth century to just before the Civil War; it showed stable kin networks, steadfast marriages, unusual fidelity, and resistance to forced marriages.

Slaves hung on determinedly to their selves, to their love of family, their wholeness. A shoemaker on the South Carolina Sea Islands expressed this in his own way: “Ise lost an arm but it hasn’t gone out of my brains.”

This family solidarity carried into the twentieth century. The remarkable southern black farmer Nate Shaw recalled that when his sister died, leaving three children, his father proposed sharing their care, and he responded:

That suits me, Papa. Let’s handle em like this: don’t get the two little boys, the youngest ones, off at your house and the oldest one be at my house and we hold these little boys apart and won’t bring em to see one another. I’ll bring the little boy that I keep, the oldest one, around to your home amongst the other two. And you forward the others to my house and let em

grow up known that they are brothers. Don’t keep em separated in a way that they’ll forget about one another. Don’t do that, Papa.

Also insisting on the strength of blacks even under slavery, Lawrence Levine (Black Culture and Black Consciousness) gives a picture of a rich culture among slaves, a complex mixture of adaptation and rebellion, through the creativity of stories and songs:

We raise de wheat,
Dey gib us de corn;
We bake de bread,
Dey gib us de crust;
We sit de meal,
Dey gib us de huss;
We peel de meat,
Dey gib us de skin;
And dat’s de way
Dey take us in;
We skim de pot,
Dey gib us de liquor,
An say dat’s good enough for nigger.

There was mockery. The poet William Cullen Bryant, after attending a corn shucking in 1843 in South Carolina, told of slave dances turned into a pretended military parade, “a sort of burlesque of our militia trainings. . . .”

Spirituals often had double meanings. The song “O Canaan, sweet Canaan, I am bound for the land of Canaan” often meant that slaves meant to get to the North, their Canaan. During the Civil War, slaves began to make up new spirituals with bolder messages: “Before I’d be a slave, I’d be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord and be saved.” And the spiritual “Many Thousand Go”:

No more peck o’ corn for me, no more, no more,
No more driver’s lash for me, no more, no more.

Levine refers to slave resistance as “pre-political,” expressed in countless ways in daily life and culture. Music, magic, art, religion, were all ways, he says, for slaves to hold on to their humanity.

While southern slaves held on, free blacks in the North (there were about 130,000 in 1830, about 200,000 in 1850) agitated for the abolition
of slavery. In 1829, David Walker, son of a slave, but born free in North Carolina, moved to Boston, where he sold old clothes. The pamphlet he wrote and printed, *Walker's Appeal*, became widely known. It infuriated southern slaveholders; Georgia offered a reward of $10,000 to anyone who would deliver Walker alive, and $1,000 to anyone who would kill him. It is not hard to understand why when you read his *Appeal*.

There was no slavery in history, even that of the Israelites in Egypt, worse than the slavery of the black man in America, Walker said. "...show me a page of history, either sacred or profane, on which a verse can be found, which maintains, that the Egyptians heaped the insupportable insult upon the children of Israel, by telling them that they were not of the human family."

Walker was scathing to his fellow blacks who would assimilate: "I would wish, candidly...to be understood, that I would not give a pinch of snuff to be married to any white person I ever saw in all the days of my life."

Blacks must fight for their freedom, he said:

Let our enemies go on with their butcheries, and at once fill up their cup. Never make an attempt to gain our freedom or natural right from under our cruel oppressors and murderers, until you see your way clear—when that hour arrives and you move, be not afraid or dismayed.... God has been pleased to give us two eyes, two hands, two feet, and some sense in our heads as well as they. They have no more right to hold us in slavery than we have to hold them.... Our sufferings will come to an end, in spite of all the Americans this side of eternity. Then we will want all the learning and talents among ourselves, and perhaps more, to govern ourselves.—"Every dog must have its day," the American's is coming to an end.

One summer day in 1830, David Walker was found dead near the doorway of his shop in Boston.

Some born in slavery acted out the unfulfilled desire of millions. Frederick Douglass, a slave, sent to Baltimore to work as a servant and as a laborer in the shipyard, somehow learned to read and write, and at twenty-one, in the year 1838, escaped to the North, where he became the most famous black man of his time, as lecturer, newspaper editor, writer. In his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, he recalled his first childhood thoughts about his condition:

Why am I a slave? Why are some people slaves, and others masters? Was there ever a time when this was not so? How did the relation commence?

Once, however, engaged in the inquiry, I was not very long in finding out the true solution of the matter. It was not color, but crime, not God, but man, that afforded the true explanation of the existence of slavery; nor was I long in finding out another important truth, viz: what man can make, man can unmake....

I distinctly remember being, even then, most strongly impressed with the idea of being a free man some day. This cheering assurance was an inborn dream of my human nature—a constant menace to slavery—and one which all the powers of slavery were unable to silence or extinguish.

The Fugitive Slave Act passed in 1850 was a concession to the southern states in return for the admission of the Mexican war territories (California, especially) into the Union as nonslave states. The Act made it easy for slaveowners to recapture ex-slaves or simply to pick up blacks they claimed had run away. Northern blacks organized resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act, denouncing President Fillmore, who signed it, and Senator Daniel Webster, who supported it. One of these was J. W. Loguen, son of a slave mother and her white owner. He had escaped to freedom on his master's horse, gone to college, and was now a minister in Syracuse, New York. He spoke to a meeting in that city in 1850:

The time has come to change the tones of submission into tones of defiance—and to tell Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Webster, if they propose to execute this measure upon us, to send on their blood-bounds.... I received my freedom from Heaven, and with it came the command to defend my title to it.... I don't respect this law—I don't fear it—I won't obey it! It outlaws me, and I outaw it.... I will not live a slave, and if force is employed to reenslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man.... Your decision tonight in favor of resistance will give vent to the spirit of liberty, and it will break the bands of party, and shout for joy all over the North.... Heaven knows that this act of noble daring will break out somewhere—and may God grant that Syracuse be the honored spot, whence it shall send an earthquake voice through the land!

The following year, Syracuse had its chance. A runaway slave named Jerry was captured and put on trial. A crowd used crowbars and a battering ram to break into the courthouse, defying marshals with drawn guns, and set Jerry free.

Loguen made his home in Syracuse a major station on the Underground Railroad. It was said that he helped 1,500 slaves on their way to Canada. His memoir of slavery came to the attention of his for-
mer mistress, and she wrote to him, asking him either to return or to send her $1,000 in compensation. Loguen's reply to her was printed in the abolitionist newspaper, The Liberator:

Mrs. Sarah Logue... You say you have offers to buy me, and that you shall sell me if I do not send you $1,000, and in the same breath and almost in the same sentence, you say, "You know we raised you as we did our own children." Woman, did you raise your own children for the market? Did you raise them to be driven off, bound to a coffin in chains?... Shame on you!

But you say I am a thief, because I took the old mare along with me. Have you got to learn that I had a better right to the old mare, as you call her, than Manasseth Logue had to me? Is it a greater sin for me to steal his horse, than it was for him to rob my mother's cradle, and steal me?... Have you got to learn that human rights are mutual and reciprocal, and if you take my liberty and life, you forfeit your own liberty and life? Before God and high heaven, is there a law for one man which is not a law for every other man?

If you or any other speculator on my body and rights, wish to know how I regard my rights, they need but come here, and lay their hands on me to enslave me...

Yours, etc. J. W. Loguen

Frederick Douglass knew that the shame of slavery was not just the South's, that the whole nation was complicit in it. On the Fourth of July, 1852, he gave an Independence Day address:

Fellow Citizens: Pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?...

What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is but a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotsisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival...

Ten years after Nat Turner's rebellion, there was no sign of black insurrection in the South. But that year, 1841, one incident took place which kept alive the idea of rebellion. Slaves being transported on a ship, the Creole, overpowered the crew, killed one of them, and sailed into the British West Indies (where slavery had been abolished in 1833). England refused to return the slaves (there was much agitation in England against American slavery), and this led to angry talk in Congress of war with England, encouraged by Secretary of State Daniel Webster. The Colored Peoples Press denounced Webster's "bullying position," and, recalling the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, wrote:

If war be declared... Will we fight in defense of a government which denies us the most precious right of citizenship?... will we again be repaid with chains and slavery. Shall we a third time kiss the foot that crushes us? If so, we deserve our chains.

As the tension grew, North and South, blacks became more militant.

Frederick Douglass spoke in 1857:

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reforms. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of struggle... If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will...
There were tactical differences between Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, white abolitionist and editor of *The Liberator*—differences between black and white abolitionists in general. Blacks were more willing to engage in armed insurrection, but also more ready to use existing political devices—the ballot box, the Constitution—anything to further their cause. They were not as morally absolute in their tactics as the Garrisonians. Moral pressure would not do it alone, the blacks knew; it would take all sorts of tactics, from elections to rebellion.

How ever-present in the minds of northern Negroes was the question of slavery is shown by black children in a Cincinnati school, a private school financed by Negroes. The children were responding to the question “What do you think most about?” Only five answers remain in the records, and all refer to slavery. A seven-year-old child wrote:

Dear schoolmates, we are going next summer to buy a farm and to work part of the day and to study the other part if we live to see it and come home part of the day to see our mothers and sisters and cousins if we are got any and see our kind folks and to be good boys and when we get a man to get the poor slaves from bondage. And I am sorrow to hear that the boat ... went down with 200 poor slaves from up the river. Oh how sorrow I am to hear that, it grieves my heart so that I could faint in one minute.

White abolitionists did courageous and pioneering work, on the lecture platform, in newspapers, in the Underground Railroad. Black abolitionists, less publicized, were the backbone of the antislavery movement. Before Garrison published his famous *Liberator* in Boston in 1831, the first national convention of Negroes had been held, David Walker had already written his “Appeal,” and a black abolitionist magazine named *Freedom's Journal* had appeared. Of *The Liberator’s* first twenty-five subscribers, most were black.

Blacks had to struggle constantly with the unconscious racism of white abolitionists. They also had to insist on their own independent voice. Douglass wrote for *The Liberator*, but in 1847 started his own newspaper in Rochester, *North Star*, which led to a break with Garrison. In 1854, a conference of Negroes declared: “... it is emphatically our battle; no one else can fight it for us. ... Our relations to the Anti-Slavery movement must be and are changed. Instead of depending upon it we must lead it.”

Certain black women faced the triple hurdle—of being abolitionists in a slave society, of being black among white reformers, and of being women in a reform movement dominated by men. When Sojourner Truth rose to speak in 1853 in New York City at the Fourth National Woman’s Rights Convention, it all came together. There was a hostile mob in the hall shouting, jeering, threatening. She said:

I know that it feels a kind o’ hissin’ and ticklin’ like to see a colored woman get up and tell you about things, and Woman’s Rights. We have all been thrown down so low that nobody thought we’d ever get up again; but ... we will come up again, and now I’m here. ... we’ll have our rights; see if we don’t; and you can’t stop us from them; see if you can. You may hiss as much as you like, but it is comin’. ... I am sittin’ among you to watch; and every once and awhile I will come out and tell you what time of night it is.

After Nat Turner’s violent uprising and Virginia’s bloody repression, the security system inside the South became tighter. Perhaps only an outsider could hope to launch a rebellion. It was such a person, a white man of ferocious courage and determination, John Brown, whose wild scheme it was to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and then set off a revolt of slaves through the South.

Harriet Tubman, 5 feet tall, some of her teeth missing, a veteran of countless secret missions piloting blacks out of slavery, was involved with John Brown and his plans. But sickness prevented her from joining him. Frederick Douglass too had met with Brown. He argued against the plan from the standpoint of its chances of success, but he admired the ailing man of sixty, tall, gaunt, white-haired.

Douglass was right; the plan would not work. The local militia, joined by a hundred marines under the command of Robert E. Lee, surrounded the insurgents. Although his men were dead or captured, John Brown refused to surrender: he barricaded himself in a small brick building near the gate of the armory. The troops battered down a door; a marine lieutenant moved in and struck Brown with his sword. Wounded, sick, he was interrogated. W. E. B. Du Bois, in his book *John Brown*, writes:

Picture the situation: An old and blood-bespattered man, half-dead from the wounds inflicted but a few hours before; a man lying in the cold and dirt, without sleep for fifty-five nerve-wrecking hours, without food for nearly as long, with the dead bodies of his two sons almost before his eyes, the piled corpses of his seven slain comrades near and afar, a wife and a bereaved family listening in vain, and a Lost Cause, the dream of a lifetime, lying dead in his heart.
Lying there, interrogated by the governor of Virginia, Brown said: “You had better—all you people at the South—prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question... You may dispose of me very easily—I am nearly disposed of now, but this question is still to be settled,—this Negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet.”

Du Bois appraises Brown’s action:

If his foray was the work of a handful of fanatics, led by a lunatic and repudiated by the slaves to a man, then the proper procedure would have been to ignore the incident, quietly punish the worst offenders and either pardon the misguided leader or send him to an asylum... While insisting that the raid was too hopelessly and ridiculously small to accomplish anything... the state nevertheless spent $250,000 to punish the invaders, stationed from one to three thousand soldiers in the vicinity and threw the nation into turmoil.

In John Brown’s last written statement, in prison, before he was hanged, he said: “I, John Brown, am quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, not an activist himself, said of the execution of John Brown: “He will make the gallows holy as the cross.”

Of the twenty-two men in John Brown’s striking force, five were black. Two of these were killed on the spot, one escaped, and two were hanged by the authorities. Before his execution, John Copeland wrote to his parents:

Remember that if I must die I die in trying to liberate a few of my poor and oppressed people from my condition of servitude which God in his Holy Writ has hurled his most bitter denunciations against... I am not terrified by the gallows... I imagine that I hear you, and all of you, mother, father, sisters, and brothers, say—“No, there is not a cause for which we, with less sorrow, could see you die.” Believe me when I tell you, that though shut up in prison and under sentence of death, I have spent more happy hours here, and... I would almost as lief die now as at any time, for I feel that I am prepared to meet my Maker...

John Brown was executed by the state of Virginia with the approval of the national government. It was the national government that, in Andrew Jackson’s administration, collaborated with the South to keep abolitionist literature out of the mails in the southern states. It was the Supreme Court of the United States that declared in 1857 that the slave Dred Scott could not sue for his freedom because he was not a person, but property.

Such a national government would never accept an end to slavery by rebellion. It would end slavery only under conditions controlled by whites, and only when required by the political and economic needs of the business elite of the North. It was Abraham Lincoln who combined perfectly the needs of business, the political ambition of the new Republican party, and the rhetoric of humanitarianism. He would keep the abolition of slavery not at the top of his list of priorities, but close enough to the top so it could be pushed there temporarily by abolitionist pressures and by practical political advantage.

Lincoln could skillfully blend the interests of the very rich and the interests of the black at a moment in history when these interests met. And he could link these two with a growing section of Americans, the white, up-and-coming, economically ambitious, politically active middle class. As Richard Hofstadter puts it:

Thoroughly middle class in his ideas, he spoke for those millions of Americans who had begun their lives as hired workers—as farm hands, clerks, teachers, mechanics, flatboat men, and rail-splitters—and had passed into the ranks of landed farmers, prosperous grocers, lawyers, merchants, physicians and politicians.

Lincoln could argue with lucidity and passion against slavery on moral grounds, while acting cautiously in practical politics. He believed “that the institution of slavery is founded on injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends to increase rather than abate its evils.” (Put against this Frederick Douglass’s statement on struggle, or Garrison’s “Sir, slavery will not be overthrown without excitement, a most tremendous excitement.”) Lincoln read the Constitution strictly, to mean that Congress, because of the Tenth Amendment (reserving to the states powers not specifically given to the national government), could not constitutionally bar slavery in the states.

When it was proposed to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, which did not have the rights of a state but was directly under the jurisdiction of Congress, Lincoln said this would be Constitutional, but it should not be done unless the people in the District wanted it. Since
most there were white, this killed the idea. As Hofstadter said of Lincoln's statement, it "breathes the fire of an uncompromising insistence on moderation."

Lincoln refused to denounce the Fugitive Slave Law publicly. He wrote to a friend: "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down ... but I bite my lips and keep quiet." And when he did propose, in 1849, as a Congressman, a resolution to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, he accompanied this with a section requiring local authorities to arrest and return fugitive slaves coming into Washington. (This led Wendell Phillips, the Boston abolitionist, to refer to him years later as "that slavehound from Illinois.") He opposed slavery, but could not see blacks as equals, so a constant theme in his approach was to free the slaves and to send them back to Africa.

In his 1858 campaign in Illinois for the Senate against Stephen Douglas, Lincoln spoke differently depending on the views of his listeners (and also perhaps depending on how close it was to the election).

Speaking in northern Illinois in July (in Chicago), he said:

Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.

Two months later in Charleston, in southern Illinois, Lincoln told his audience:

I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races (applause); that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people ...

And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

Behind the secession of the South from the Union, after Lincoln was elected President in the fall of 1860 as candidate of the new Republican party, was a long series of policy clashes between South and North. The clash was not over slavery as a moral institution—most northerners did not care enough about slavery to make sacrifices for it, certainly not the sacrifice of war. It was not a clash of peoples (most northern whites were not economically favored, nor politically powerful; most southern whites were poor farmers, not decisionmakers) but of elites. The northern elite wanted economic expansion—free land, free labor, a free market, a high protective tariff for manufacturers, a bank of the United States. The slave interests opposed all that; they saw Lincoln and the Republicans as making continuation of their pleasant and prosperous way of life impossible in the future.

So, when Lincoln was elected, seven southern states seceded from the Union. Lincoln initiated hostilities by trying to repossess the federal base at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and four more states seceded. The Confederacy was formed; the Civil War was on.

Lincoln's first Inaugural Address, in March 1861, was conciliatory toward the South and the seceded states: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." And with the war four months on, when General John C. Frémont in Missouri declared martial law and said slaves of owners resisting the United States were to be free, Lincoln countermanded this order. He was anxious to hold in the Union the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Delaware.

It was only as the war grew more bitter, the casualties mounted, desperation to win heightened, and the criticism of the abolitionists threatened to unravel the tattered coalition behind Lincoln that he began to act against slavery. Hofstadter puts it this way: "Like a delicate barometer, he recorded the trend of pressures, and as the Radical pressure increased he moved toward the left." Wendell Phillips said that if Lincoln was able to grow "it is because we have watered him."

Racism in the North was as entrenched as slavery in the South, and it would take the war to shake both. New York blacks could not vote unless they owned $250 in property (a qualification not applied to whites). A proposal to abolish this, put on the ballot in 1860, was defeated two to one (although Lincoln carried New York by 50,000 votes). Frederick Douglass commented: "The black baby of Negro suffrage was thought too ugly to exhibit on so grand an occasion. The Negro was stowed away like some people put out of sight their deformed children when company comes."

Wendell Phillips, with all his criticism of Lincoln, recognized the possibilities in his election. Speaking at the Tremont Temple in Boston the day after the election, Phillips said:
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