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A Great Song and Dance: The Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky' Middle School Classrooms

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The Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky's Middle School Classrooms

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Approved by

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my parents Larry and Brenda Hardin. Their continued commitment to my education has been my greatest inspiration.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Minter who has been a constant guide and mentor throughout this project. Her immense dedication and commitment to students has been unmatched by any other faculty member I have encountered at this institution.

My heartfelt thanks go to all of the teachers I interviewed during this project. Their willingness to allow me to take portions of their valuable planning time will not soon be forgotten.

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Abstract

Public educators have a great deal of responsibility to their students. In Kentucky one of their greatest responsibilities comes in the form of preparation for standardized testing. Teachers scrutinize Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies, basing their instruction for the year on these two documents. While these two documents set the standards for instruction many other units are implemented throughout the school year. The purpose of this study was to discover the content of such units, specifically those dealing with the Civil Rights Movement. Middle school Social Studies teachers in different geographic regions of the state were interviewed and asked to describe teaching practices and content. Based on research conducted in this project it is obvious that multiculturalism and diversity education, in terms of relation with civil rights and the Civil Rights Movement, has much room for improvement in Kentucky's middle school social studies classrooms. Teachers have had very little training on how to incorporate multiculturalism into their curriculum and often personal and intellectual biases keep them from successfully doing so. This study also raises a great deal of questions about Hispanic students, who, many educators said, live in white communities that grow increasingly hostile towards them.

When Rosa Parks died in October 2005, the story made the front page of every major newspaper in the country. She was hailed as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement," and black and white film clips of 1960s protests were suddenly a part of every newscast. Major broadcasting networks crammed into the Capitol Rotunda to cover her farewell. The Cable News Network (CNN) called her a "pioneer," an "activist," and "one of America's greatest heroes."[1] During the last few decades before her death Parks was rarely mentioned, save when she was the victim of a crime or when a lawsuit was filed on her behalf. Her death brought her back into the spotlight and was discussed in classrooms across the country.

The media's three-minute photo montages set to song may have been the only exposure to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s that some students would receive. The purpose of this research project was to find out exactly what Kentucky middle grades students were being taught about the American Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s. The National Council for the Social Studies curriculum that spans 5^{th}-8^{th} grades begins with basic state history and geography, and then moves to World/Regional Geography and then World History. Students learn American history from colonization through Reconstruction.[2] Their Social Studies classroom curricula consist of World History and Western Civilization. Eighth graders learn United States History from 1865 to Reconstruction. United States history is developed more fully in high school classes, but most students leave eighth grade with a very basic knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement. This "basic knowledge" they possess often allows them to positively identify

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[1] Cable News Network. "CNN Live," October 30, (2005). www.lexisnexis.com. (accessed Sept. 10, 2006).

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin, Volume 89, (September 1994).

figures like Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle grades students are often encouraged not to think critically but to memorize tidbits about icons' lives. Why is student exposure to figures, themes and ideals of the Movement important? The National Council for the Social Studies set forth ten basic themes that they base their curriculum standards on in their recent publication, Bulletin 89.[3] These ten themes include the following: culture, individual development and identity, power authority and governance. The final theme is civic ideals and practices.[4] According to NCSS these are the ideals that they seek to emphasize in the Social Studies curriculum. Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies, are two documents that guide instruction for teachers statewide. These two documents outline specific ideals and concepts that teachers should focus on, these same ideals correlate with the National Council for the Social Studies themes. An interdisciplinary unit on the Movement would allow for instruction in all of the aforementioned NCSS themes. Most middle school Social Studies classrooms discuss King before or after his birthday. There is an approximate 36 weeks of classroom instruction and in some instances 34 with scheduled standardized testing. Most teachers try to cover all core content before the standardized tests, leaving them a two to three-week period of extra classroom time. Any other information students are given about the Movement might occur in such a time period if it occurs at all. Short biographical blurbs and light-hearted discussion about King every January does little to encourage critical thinking about American culture or develop personal identity growth or strengthen students' understanding of governmental authority.

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[3] Ibid, x-xii.
[4] Ibid.

In an effort to better understand exactly what students were being taught, what racially related topics they were discussing and what sort of discussions teachers were facilitating, four schools were selected and Social Studies teachers were interviewed. Each school was located in a different region of the state and was academically fueled by a different state university. Social Studies teachers were asked a series of questions about their curricula and asked to describe their students' reactions to the material as well as their interaction with each other when discussing race. My aim was also to better understand how teachers were presenting the information, what figures they were emphasizing, and how much time they spent on various aspects of the Movement. Time frames allotted by teachers varied widely, as coverage of any aspect of the Movement was not required.

Great care was taken to select schools in varying geographical regions of the state. There are 175 school districts in Kentucky and 1,249 schools total. These 175 school districts are spread out over 120 counties.[5]

Jefferson County was selected as a representative of the northern part of the state. The Louisville metro area has a population of about 250,000; and about 33 percent of that population is black.[6] Race riots were common in the 1960s. There was the Parkland riot, which left two teenagers dead in 1968. The city's racial difficulties have become evident in the past decade with disputes over racial profiling and public housing.[7] In a report released in 2005, the Brookings Institute ranked Louisville among its top 15 lists of

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[5] Kentucky Department of Education. http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/About+Schools+and+Districts/default.htm. Aug. 2006.
[6] U.S. Census Bureau, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2148000.html, Aug. 2006.
[7] Courier Journal. "ACLU to Monitor cruising, alleging racial profiling." April 27, 2007.

national cities with centralized urban poverty.[8] Most of this poverty was concentrated in the West End, an area that looks like the stereotypical ghetto, the kind one might find depicted on an all-American after-school special warning against the dangers of alcohol use. Homeless people dot the sidewalks while houses crumble to ruins. Graffiti mars trashcans and sidewalks. Those who live there are trapped in a "pocket" of poverty that only intensified after the 2003 redistricting of Jefferson County and Louisville. The city has experienced an epidemic of "white flight" in recent years. A service called City Data provides information on various cities across the United States. It also provides a forum that is used by people who are planning cross-country moves with very little geographical knowledge.[9] An individual planning a move to Louisville requested information about neighborhoods of the city: "We would like a NEWER subdivision -under 20 years old- colonial type houses with average yards, low crime, close to shopping, not too far from downtown..."[10]One Louisville resident responded with: "First thing West End is out (anything west of I-65 and north of I-264). That's the rough side of Louisville and I'd advise you to steer clear of it."[11] The response continues and encourages a move to the East end of the city. They are also advised to consider moving to some of the smaller cities that "still have a rural feel to them and provide a lot of benefits without a lot of the problems of larger cities".[12] One such area is Oldham County with its rolling green pastures, colonial-style architecture and manicured lawns. The county population

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[8] Bruce Schreiner. "Study: Louisville Among Top 15 Nationally in Concentration of Urban Poor". October 11, 2005. www.lexisnexis.com. (accessed Sept. 10, 2006).
[9] City Data. /www.city-data.com/forum. Sept. 9, 2006.
[10] City Data. www.city-data.com/forum/kentucky/9362-louisville-suburbs-help. Sept. 2006.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

continues to grow at about 4 percent a year; some believe that if this growth continues the population will double every 21 years.[13]

The people in the West and South Ends of Louisville are not only trapped but isolated as well. In an effort to better understand what children in local middle schools were being taught about race and how this affected their view of their own city's racial relations, Southern Leadership Academy was selected. The school is located in the South End of the city. The population is predominantly black, but a small percentage of Hispanics and Latinos call it home as well. Southern's student population mirrors that of the West and South Ends, about 48 percent black and about 35 percent of their students are white. The remaining population is made up of Hispanic students.[14]

Clinton County Middle School is located in the Eastern part of the state and is a mere 100 miles from Eastern Kentucky University. The entire county's population is less than 10,000 persons.[15] A whopping 99 percent of that population is white.[16] There are no black students, teachers or administrators at Clinton County Middle School, the only middle school in the county. Furthermore there are no black business owners or professionals in the town and according to the U.S. Census, there are no foreign born persons residing there.[17] Although in matters of census taking one should always consider the margin of error that is present, if one asked a local about the number of "foreign born" persons in the county, you would certainly receive an exaggerated estimate. The small Kentucky town is home to Hispanic immigrants who work primarily for mildly significant farmers. Most are illegal and some end up in even more illegal capacities.

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[13] Answers: Oldham County, KY. www.answers.com/topic/oldham-county-kentucky. Sept. 2006.
[14] http://education.ky.gov/KDE/About+Schools+and+Districts/School+Report+Cards/
[15] U.S. Census Bureau, www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/21053. Aug. 2006.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

Locals will tell one on the sly that illegal immigrants fill the local chicken factory. No work visa means no real health insurance, workman's compensation, or benefits. This creates an especially dire and dangerous situation in a factory job in which thousands of Americans are reported to have been mutilated or killed each year.[18]

Metcalfe County Middle School, located in Edmonton, Kentucky represented the South Central part of the state. The institution's racial demographics are very similar to Clinton County's. The school's proximity to Western Kentucky University has increased the level of involvement the institution has with the local school system. All but one of the middle school's social studies teachers received a bachelor's degree at WKU. And all of them had earned or were earning their master's degree at WKU. Faculty had worked in one-on-one curriculum mapping sessions with WKU professors. When faculty members were asked to attend a professional development program they were most often sent to WKU. Bowling Green was only 50 miles away, but it served as the cultural hub of Metcalfe County. Residents of Edmonton traveled there to dine out or go to the mall.

The western part of the state presented the greatest difficulty. Calloway County was originally selected and teachers were contacted via phone and email. The project was explained and dates were arranged. After an email of confirmation about a pending appointment, social studies teacher Katherine Redding sent an email that stated, "I'm very sorry. Our principal says we are not allowed to participate in your study."[19] The administration was not contacted for comment or pressed on the issue. Lyon County was in the same region as Calloway, and its demographics and proximity to Murray State University made it an excellent substitute. Several phone calls were made to social

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[18] Steve Striffler, (2004).UTNE Reader, http://www.utne.com/issues/2004_121/features/11035-1.html, (2007).

[19] Katherine Redding, "CRM Project, WKU Student," 3 May 2006, persona email, (3 May 2006).

studies faculty. After several phone calls were not returned, I managed to get in touch with Lyon County Middle School faculty member Jennifer Trice via phone on May 18, 2006. She said that she "didn't have time to talk because of end of the year banquets". When pressed, she made the following statement: "I've done some, I guess you would say research, about your research, and what you're trying to prove is that we don't teach the Civil Rights Movement in our classrooms." She went on to say that I was purposely misrepresenting the facts by not interviewing high school faculty, where the Movement was covered in U.S. History. In an effort to ease her paranoia I patiently explained the project again, the questions I was trying to answer, the data I was trying to collect and why. She became increasingly hostile as I talked and accused me of being associated with "some kind of movement in Frankfort." She finally agreed to answer questions, but only if she could do a prior review via email. I told her that I preferred not to interview teachers via email but told her I could send her a list of questions I had asked her colleagues around the state. I also assured her that I would be interested in her responses to any or all of the questions, but I doubted I would be using Lyon County in the study.[20] I sent an email to her with the list of questions and offered a more in-depth explanation of my project. She never responded.

Christian County was eventually selected for the study. The city of Hopkinsville is about 30 percent black, with most of the black population living in the city. The county's population is an overwhelming 80 percent white.[21] Christian County Middle School's faculty had the most diverse racial backgrounds as well as individual teaching methods. Their faculty had earned degrees from various parts of the country and state,

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[20] Adriane Hardin. "Project. Adriane Hardin," 18 May 2006, personal email, (18 May 2006).
[21] Info Please, 2000. http://www.infoplease.com/us/census/data/kentucky/hopkinsville (12 May 2006).

including the University of Louisville and Miami University, in Ohio. Most of the faculty at other schools had degrees from the closest university. This suggests that such teachers brought a better understanding of diversity to their classroom than those in counties like Metcalfe and Clinton. It was clear that the education each teacher had affected the subjects they taught and the vigor with which they approached topics, which were not part of the standard curriculum, like the Movement. One first-year teacher who had written an undergraduate thesis on key sit-in figures of the Movement found herself teaching World History to seventh graders. Her knowledge went mostly untapped save for February's approved (but not mandatory) unit on Black history.

While every classroom was uniquely affected by its geography, three distinctive state patterns emerged. Students in every region of the state seemed to associate the Civil Rights Movement with two key figures: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. King's portrait was in several of the classrooms, usually with the American flag in the background. The majority of audio clips and readings used in student's study were from King's "I Have a Dream Speech." Students were often shown a video biography of King in January or February. Most teachers were skeptical about how much students absorbed from these very short periods of study. As one teacher said, "Most of them just know him because we get off from school." Many said that Parks' recent death had made her almost as familiar as King. Some teachers said their students were able to associate her actions on the bus with the greater goals of the Movement. This is questionable since most teachers also said their students could not comprehend the racial climate or greater goals of the Movement. One teacher had been sent an entire packet of free curriculum materials about the Movement. The package included a play, which her students read

aloud in class. Most said students were familiar with the image of a disgruntled Parks in a bus seat. Very few teachers regretted their students' tendency to gravitate toward King and Parks. One might assume that this lack of regret was due to their own lack of education about the Movement. While some faculty members mentioned obscure black female figures, none of them mentioned Diane Nash, a Chicago native and Nashville resident, who as a student helped establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. There was no mention of Emmitt Till, the teenage boy whose 1955 murder was one of the catalysts of the Movement. These are two figures that students could relate to because of age and geographical location.

When teachers were asked about what time of year they talked about the Movement or related figures and events, almost all said February (Black History Month) or January (before or after King's birthday). A very small number said they talked about the Movement at the end of the year, after standardized testing. Lessons taught in January always seemed to center around King and his non-violence principles. Most teachers did some sort of Black history unit in February where they included other prominent black figures, like Frederick Douglass or George Washington Carver. (In most cases nearly all of the figures studied were black males.) Lessons on the Movement were most certainly lumped into the Black history unit however most teachers said they only included King and Parks. At Metcalfe County Middle School, where white people make up 97.3 percent of the entire county's population, an assembly is held to celebrate Black history month. Students are excused from classes to hear local business people talk about the importance of Black history. Those business people are generally always white and when they speak

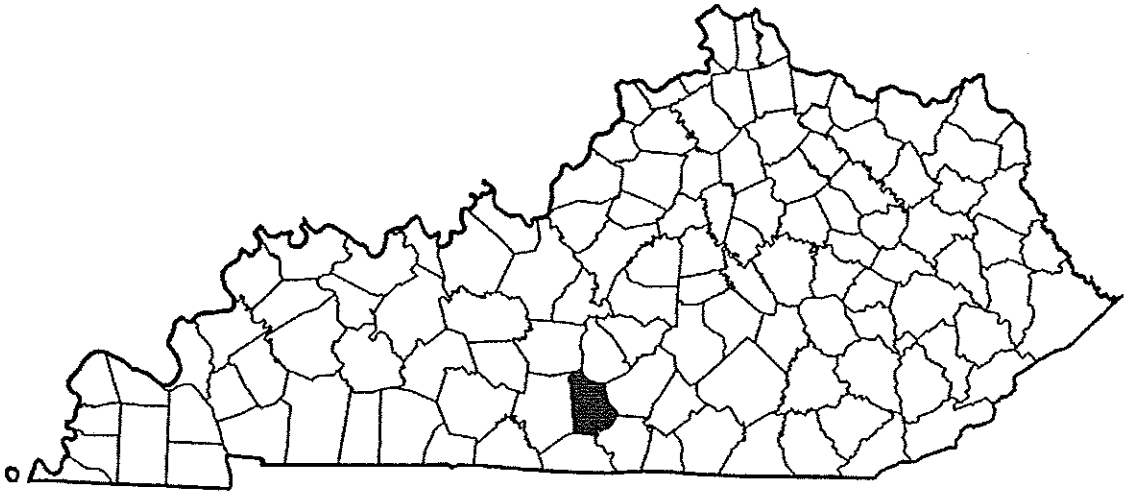
they stare out at a sea of white faces (minus the three black students enrolled at MCMS in 2006).

Teachers said most seventh and eighth graders were able to make connections between the struggles blacks faced in the 1960s and similar struggles of other minorities, such as Hispanics. Kentucky's Hispanic population growth seems evident to students in public schools. This was mentioned a great deal during interviews at more rural schools in Clinton and Metcalfe counties. Many said they discussed the legal battles in immigration with their students when they discussed current events. Some teachers related the struggle for civil rights with less obvious minorities, like those living in Appalachia and women. Several teachers said students could easily discuss and comprehend how the historic treatment of women was comparable to that of blacks. However, no teacher interviewed said he or she was able to connect the struggles that gays and lesbians have with those of blacks. A few looked nonplussed when asked the question while the rest said most students lacked the ability to discuss such a topic maturely.

The answers that most teachers gave weren't concrete. Their students had trouble connecting the struggles of blacks in the 1960s with present day realities. They had trouble understanding how people could be so cruel for no reason save the color of another's skin. While most teachers said their students couldn't comprehend such topics they were also quick to point out that they rarely talk about such ideas or concepts. Their defense for a lack of curricular integration of racial diversity and multiculturalism was standardized testing. While every teacher had a different way of saying it the main concept was the same: standardized testing creates such a rigid curriculum that teachers

dare not deviate from it for fear of high-stakes testing. I am certainly not suggesting that teachers in public schools suspend Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies. Instead, Social Studies teachers should work to integrate important concepts dealing with diversity and multiculturalism into their curriculum. This will benefit students in two ways; they will develop a more holistic picture of racial relations throughout history. Integration of one's curriculum will also encourage critical thinking in history and social studies. It is my belief that Kentucky's teachers have the ability to serve their students in this way. It is also evident, based solely on this research, that most lack the creativity and desire to understand how to do this without professional training. Yet all the seminars and professional development will not help teachers who refuse to deviate from the teaching methods they have always known.

For the Sake of Fashion and Conformity:
Metcalfe County Middle School



When Anita Love's students attend a basketball game against regional foe Glasgow, they are amazed. Their wonderment is due not to the opposing team's athletic ability but race. Her students live in a county which has a population that is 99 percent white; to see a basketball team composed almost entirely of black students is quite the shock.[22] But given her student's geographic locale, it is not surprising that their scope is so limited.

Most of Metcalfe County is picturesque countryside dotted with an occasional clapboard farmhouse. Trailer parks and cow pastures are a common sight as one enters the county seat of Edmonton. The county's population totaled 10,197, with only 1,586 residents living in Edmonton. Most residents live in rural areas and many of those live on privately owned farms. Most of Love's students are the children of farmers, and very few have parents with college educations. Twenty percent of the population lives in poverty with the county's median household income totaling about $25,500.[23] Only seven percent of those 25 years of age or older have a bachelor's degree.[24]

Love, along with teachers Trotter and Jason Peden, make up the Social Studies team at Metcalfe County Middle School. Their Social Studies classroom curricula consist of World History and Western Civilization. Eighth graders learn United States History from 1865 to Reconstruction. This curriculum is in line with state and national standards for these specific grade levels.

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[22] U.S. Census Quick Facts, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/21169.html , July 30, 2006.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

All of the Social Studies faculty members at MCMS have completed or were in the process of completing their masters' degrees at Western Kentucky University. Trotter was the only faculty member who did not complete his undergraduate work at this institution. He attended Lindsey Wilson College, a very small private college in Columbia, Kentucky.[25] His undergraduate career seems to have made a huge difference in how he approached the curriculum. The projects he had his students undertake and the questions he posed encouraged more participation and critical thinking than those of his colleagues. None of the faculty at MCMS had taken specialized courses during their undergraduate careers. This suggests that the lack of coverage of the Civil Rights Movements could be attributed to teachers' lack of basic knowledge about events and figures beyond King and Parks. Teachers are certainly more likely to teach topics of which they have a thorough knowledge.

It also suggests that the institutions did not emphasize thematic interdisciplinary units or basic units on cultural diversity. Thematic interdisciplinary units are a standard part of Teaching Strategies courses for middle grades education majors at WKU. These units are often emphasized because they allow students to understand the how all subjects are connected. These units often have broad themes designed to help students develop and understand their own physical and emotional changes. One unit theme might be "Dealing with Change" another "Facing Challenges." These thematic units are perfect places to include lessons about minority figures and the Civil Rights Movement. None of the Social Studies faculty mentioned participating in thematic units nor did they acknowledge it as a way of teaching about cultural diversity.

Both Love and Peden said their students could not relate to the injustice blacks experienced in the 1960s. While it may be difficult for sixth graders to fully understand the central goals and ideals of the Movement, it is certainly not beyond them to understand human cruelty. The adolescent years spent in middle school are often some of the most trying of students' entire educational careers. As students grow and mature those who are different often become targets for a variety of cruelty and injustice. A student with a lisp, a weight problem or an infatuation with reading might not experience the same level of humiliation that blacks experienced but it is ludicrous to say they could not relate.

The faculty did not mention any thematic units on cultural diversity nor did they cite it as a way to introduce Civil Rights themes and concepts. Middle grades education majors at WKU are not required to take courses that deal specifically with multiculturalism.[26] Elementary and secondary education majors are required to take at least one three hour course that deals directly with the subject. Lindsey Wilson College does not require that elementary, middle or secondary education majors take any course dealing with multiculturalism. It is not surprising that teachers in rural areas seem to be lagging behind in the implementation of multicultural units. Not one member of the MCMS social studies faculty took a course on multiculturalism or diversity in their undergraduate career. While it is likely that they may have discussed some multiculturalism theory in their graduate courses none of them mentioned any courses or cited any theories as being influential to their teaching practices.

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[26] Western Kentucky University, Academics, http://edtech.wku.edu/%7eteached/elem_ed_ug.htm, Oct. 1, 2006.

The school year lasts approximately 36 weeks but every Metcalfe County Middle School social studies faculty said it was hard to cover the entire core content students would need to know for standardized testing in the spring. All members of the faculty said the only time they discussed King was around his birthday. All three teachers said their students were more interested in knowing about the holiday because they didn't have to attend school on that day. Peden who teaches world history, found it particularly difficult to discuss King.[27] He said his students discussed the rise of civil rights in ancient cultures but not their own. His classes' discussions of current events afforded him some opportunities to relate the struggles of present-day immigrants with those of black Americans. Trotter had a little more success with incorporating the CRM into his curriculum. He taught American history to 8th graders.[28] He cited a plethora of groups that have experienced discrimination throughout history: the Chinese, Japanese-Americans and Native Americans. Love, who also taught 8th grade, said she discusses different religions with her students. She said she thinks this is especially important since 9-11 because many of her students have come to categorize those of Middle Eastern descent as inherently "mean".[29] In a county where most small communities have their own one-room churches her students lack a basic knowledge of world religions. The most diverse sect of faith in Metcalfe County is likely a group of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The single greatest complaint among faculty was that they didn't have time to teach students material that was not included in the state's core content. Trotter was the only faculty member who prioritized his curriculum to include Black History Month and the Civil Rights Movement during the two-week span following standardized testing

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[27] Jason Peden, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 21 April 2006.
[28] Allan Trotter, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 21 April 2006.
[29] Anita Love, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 21 April 2006.

where teachers across the state often have little or no material that they are required to cover. Love and Peden discussed the figures and concepts from the CRM mostly during or around King's birthday. One can safely assume that this amount and depth of coverage is fairly consistent at the school unless something unexpected occurs, such as Rosa Parks' death in 2005. It is clear that King is the cornerstone of any discussion about the CRM. Each faculty member said their students had very little prior knowledge of any CRM figure although the overwhelming majority could recognize King.

Trotter was the only one who said he discussed Malcolm X's ideals in his classroom. He used Malcolm X's ideals as a springboard for discussing King's anti-violence tactics. He said it allowed his students to think critically as they contrasted the two men's theories. Contrasting and comparing the two men is an excellent way to encourage students' understanding of religious diversity. Teaching students about those who opposed King's anti-violence tactics gives students a more complete historical picture of the 1960s. It is interesting to note, however, that teachers in Christian and Jefferson counties said their students had significant prior knowledge about Malcolm X's life. Christian and Jefferson County's public school systems have a much larger population of minority teachers and students than those of Metcalfe and Clinton Counties. These reasons likely include their own racial biases, as well as a tendency to shy away from discussing uncomfortable topics with their students. While it may be difficult for younger students (such as sixth graders) to understand a by-any-means necessary philosophy it would not be beyond the intellectual aptitude of an eighth grader. It isn't awkward for teachers to discuss the violence tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. While the overall trend in curriculum seemed to be a focus on King and his anti-violence ideals,

MCMS students were very interested in learning about the Klan. This isn't surprising since the Confederate flag (although most students in this area know it as the Rebel flag) can be seen in the community, flying in front yards and painted tediously onto fencerows and mailboxes. Middle-school students sport Confederate flag t-shirts that say things like "American by birth, Southern by the grace of God." Each faculty member said students were almost "fascinated" by the Klan. Love said she thought that some of the fascination came from the area's ties to the organization. The nearby city of Glasgow was once a regular stop for Klan members in the 1980s. They put up roadblocks and passed out literature at traffic lights. The flaming crosses fascinated students along with the full white robes the members donned as they performed violent acts. Teachers in districts with very few black students said they never discussed black power groups. Although Teachers in Clinton and Metcalfe counties said they never discussed black power groups. On both accounts the students just weren't interested. But apparently, all students were "fascinated" by the Klan. It is apparent that teachers with no pre-planned Black History Month or Civil Rights Movement lessons allowed student interest to dictate their classroom discussion. This is a very dangerous practice. Educators often let students' prior knowledge on subjects guide their instructional design and planning. But it is obvious that educators at MCMS are not designing any kind of instructional practice. Each year then students will spend a minimal amount of time discussing figures King's anti violence philosophy and tactics, and the majority of class time talking about the Ku Klux Klan. This ill planned instruction does nothing more than reinforce these students' fascination with an all-white supremacy group.

Faculty cited a variety of methods used to teach BHM and CRM curriculum. Each one used web resources to discuss King's philosophies. The most common tool was an audio clip of his "I Have a Dream Speech" and short biographical handouts about his life. Trotter said most of his media that focused on racial relations history, as it related to the Civil War was outdated and "not very good". Love had her students read a play about Rosa Parks in class during the month of February.[30] The play does give some background about Parks' life and describes her appointment to secretary in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The "narrator" describes it this way "Rosa is too timid to say no. But she enjoys her role, and helps prepare many articles and letters about civil rights issues."[31] Parks is depicted as a timid, forlorn woman who was approached about being used as a test case only after the incident had occurred.[32] Most history textbooks and media don't mention that plans for finding a test case for a bus boycott were well under way when Parks refused to give up her seat. This suggests that many educators may feel that evidence of prior knowledge and motivation on the park of Parks would ruin the image we have created. It is certain that this image is in many ways accurate but it would seem that many believe evidence of prior knowledge would tarnish the deed itself. The play came as part of a promotional kit produced by Scholastic and included CRM themed posters, DVD, the Rosa Parks play and lesson plan suggestions. Love used only the play in her classroom. Peden said he preferred students to use the standard open response method of writing when he asked them to answer questions about BHM or the CRM. This is not surprising as contrast/compare questions are generally a preferred prompt for open responses and Peden said he used those frequently.

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[30] Suzanne McCabe, *The Legacy of Rosa Parks*, Junior Scholastic, November 28,2005.
[31] Ibid,8.
[32] Ibid.

Other teaching methods used were not so standard as open responses and audio clips. Trotter had his students create an assembly to celebrate Black History Month. The students were in charge of developing the program, decorating and coordinating events during the day. Bulletin boards and posters displaying the accomplishments of blacks throughout history covered the walls most every February. Students took part in the assembly by reading poetry by famous Black Americans or manning the refreshment table. Trotter invited local business owners and professionals to be guest speakers at the assembly. His request was simple: tell MCMS students why Black History Month is important. There are no black business owners or professionals in Edmonton. The county school district's racial demographics seem to hold steady with two or three black students in the district each year. One must admire Trotter for his efforts to spark an interest in diversity.

It became clear that dialogue about racial issues or events of the CRM was scarce in the school. But there was at least one place where students connected on the issues. The school was attempting separate gender classrooms for select subjects and teachers. Love taught an enrichment class where students focused on life skills like anger management and self-esteem building.[33] One day, a discussion about verbal abuse turned into a discussion of racism. A black girl in the class relayed stories of how she had received harassing phone calls. When she told her classmates what the caller said to her they were shocked, Love said. Many argue that single gender classrooms are great places to teach sensitive subjects and Love agrees.

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[33] Anita Love, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 21 April 2006.

"They open up a lot more and you just see this side of them you don't normally see," she said. "All the girls were really offended for this girl."

It is interesting to note that both black and white girls were open to discussing racially related subjects when they were away from the company of black and white males. This suggests that white male masculinity is overpowering even at a young age. It is questionable as to whether or not the black girl would have been comfortable with discussing the same subject in a room that included only black males and other girls.

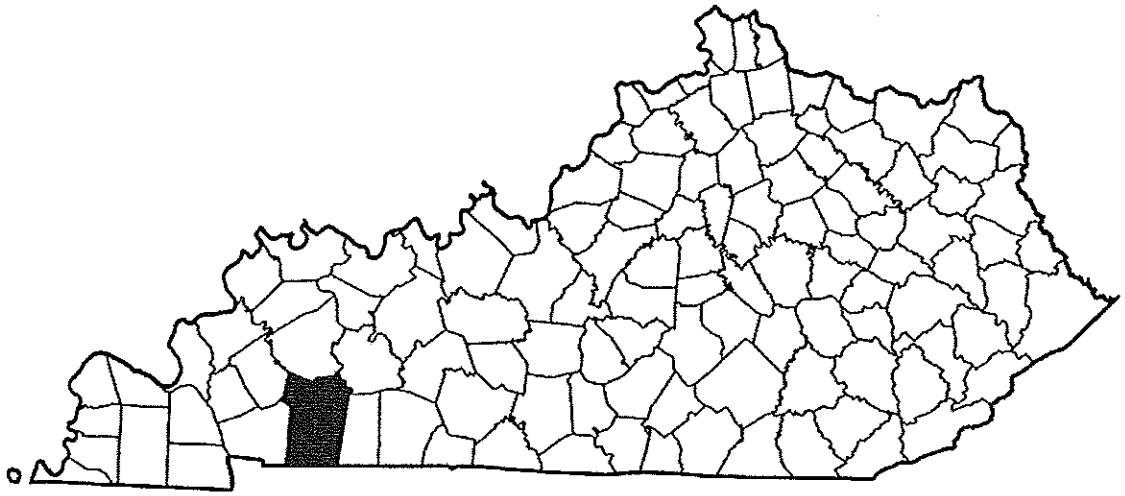
All teachers at MCMS said they didn't have time to teach about the CRM or BHM. They said it was difficult to integrate a unit on any subject related to those topics when standardized testing expectations were so high. While it is true that faculty must cover core curriculum most do not have the desire to seize the opportunity to integrate CRM or BHM into that curriculum. While World History presents more challenges than U.S. History, it is still possible for students to connect ancient civilizations' struggles with those of Black Americans or other groups for that matter. Trotter was the only faculty member who seemed to set a goal for introducing his students to the material. He even made an appointment with a WKU professor to discuss how he might go about covering the material. While this sort of coverage is not preferable to the actual integration and connection of ideas through regular core content, it is preferable to no coverage at all. The other statement and in some instances complaint that faculty members made was, "students just don't understand". A recurring mentality seems to be one of, "Students are not able to understand or relate to human cruelty or injustice". These statements suggest a lack of ingenuity among faculty as well as a general apathy about CRM education. Teachers are prioritizing what they are comfortable with in an

effort to meet all the standards set forth in high stakes testing. And the Civil Rights Movement isn't making the cut. All social studies teachers expressed a desire to cover a more diverse range of topics, especially those they said, that would directly benefit students Significant figures and events of the CRM aren't even being integrated into larger, more generic units that are often popular in middle school classrooms (such units on facing challenges or problem solving).

Trotter who put in a great deal of effort into covering diversity said it was unfortunate that faculty were often encouraged to include multiculturalism because it was "fashionable". Most teachers tend to lump the Civil Rights Movement, Black History Month and diversity into one category. This became more obvious as teachers were interviewed. Teachers often said, "I just don't have time to deal with that *stuff*." Trotter, whose efforts were more extensive than those of his colleagues at Metcalfe County, said of his own strategies, "These are all things I cover, not teach. Do you see the difference?"[34]

[34] Trotter, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 21 April.

Straight Talk and Other Teaching Methods:
Christian County Middle School



Charles Standiford wanted their attention. He stood in a room full of black middle-school students and told them that baseball great Jackie Robinson was routinely called a 'nigger' in and out of the dugout. It was his strategy for bringing history to life. It was his goal to offend students. And offend he did. Parents came in to watch him teach eight grade social studies often. The superintendent made only one visit, asking him, "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" He says he does. He says that his students learn best when they're offended.[35]

"If I can offend you and you can tell me why you're offended, now you're thinking and now you're making your own judgments," he tells his students.[36] His defense is that he uses the word in historical context. Jackie Robinson was actually called a 'nigger' and most of the grandparents of his students were also, he says. While students are distressed when they first hear the word it doesn't last very long. He taught at Christian County Middle School in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The town's population is about 51 percent black. About forty eight percent of the students at CCMS were black.[37]

Multiculturalism can be incorporated into the majority of lesson plans, especially those within arts and humanities. Lesson plans from the sciences often incorporate diversity through word problems and historical studies. The majority of social studies teachers were strong integrators, relating much of their presentations of core content to multiculturalism. Seventh and eighth grade teachers each described numerous ways they integrated multiculturalism into their curriculums. Their classes held discussions,

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[35] Charles Standiford, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 19 May.
[36] Ibid.
[37] School Report Cards, Christian County Middle School, http://education.ky.gov/KDE/About+Schools+and+Districts/School+Report+Cards/ 17 May 2006.

conducted individual and group research projects. Both managed to teach their students about how the struggles of black America related to minority struggles of both the past and present. The sixth grade teacher was less successful and was unable to cite any ways in which she integrated any of the topics into her curriculum. She simply said that such topics were not part of the Core Content for Assessment, so she did not integrate them in anyway save the annual class period dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Integration of multiculturalism is perhaps easiest in eighth grade social studies. Standiford began the year by telling students that America was made up of "a bunch of pound puppies".[38] He told students that all U.S. citizens were forced to leave other countries because they were a minority. He points this out to students by reminding them that blacks weren't the only ones who suffered. Drama students did a production of "Fiddler on the Roof" and when discussing the musical students were shocked to learn that Jewish people were persecuted, too. Students did not understand how a group of people who were white and believed in God could be persecuted, for anything. The students' tendency to view only nonwhites as disadvantaged is easy to understand what with the tremendous focus on black history as well as the Civil War. Students' surprise at learning those of different faiths are persecuted suggests that students know very little about diverse religions.

Sometimes it's all about the audience. Standiford said it was difficult for him to teach at an all-white school in Owensboro, Kentucky. Students had no prior knowledge to draw upon. This was especially difficult as he said "some topics" had to be "danced around" or not covered at all. Students there did not understand what it was like to be poor and black in a small town in the South. Sixty-eight percent of students receive free

[38] Charles Standiford, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 19 May.

lunch at CCMS. Students there understood very well what it was like to be followed in a department store or eyed suspiciously when they walked in groups late at night, he said. Students had some prior knowledge of racial discord and so he felt more at ease using extreme teaching tactics in such a school.

Seventh grade social studies teacher Mindy Edgell also said she felt her students wanted to learn about their heritage.[39] The students were interested in learning about black history because they could relate. She did her student teaching at a school that was almost all white and was amazed at the difference in motivation between the two groups of students. Those at the all white school had very little interest in studying black historical figures. The amount of prior knowledge students possessed was also different. Students at the all white school had some prior knowledge of figures like King and Parks. Besides integrating civil rights themes into her curriculum she taught a two week unit on Black History Month. Her unit began with the middle passage and continued through the Civil Rights Movement. The students did presentations on individuals; she provided them with a list of suitable figures. Students were also exposed to various world religions when she incorporated Mahatma Gandhi's ideals into the lesson. She relates his peaceful tactics back to the nonviolence methods used in the Civil Rights Movement. This is an excellent way of broadening the students' understanding of what they might consider foreign religious and philosophical ideologies. Her students had a prior knowledge of Malcolm X's ideals and had intrinsic motivation to learn more. They were eager to take part in discussion and were interested in how his tactics conflicted with King's. Students in more rural (and whiter) areas had no prior knowledge of Malcolm X and no evident desire to learn about him. Both social studies teachers at MCMS mentioned that their

[39] Mindy Edgell, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 19 May.

students were interested in learning about extreme groups like the black panthers and the Ku Klux Klan. No one said their students were "fascinated" by it as those in rural areas did. One can only assume that these students were not as enamored with the Klan because their parents were not, for obvious reasons. Both Standiford and Edgill stressed that students' cultural background was directly related to their interest in the Civil Rights Movement. Both teachers did an excellent job of incorporating various aspects of multiculturalism into their curriculum. They serve their students well by relating such important topics of interest to the state's Core Content for Assessment. Their students were interested in the subject and eager to learn. Although both certainly provided quality instruction it is likely that students' greatest motivators were their own life experiences. Both teachers said that all white classrooms had little desire to learn about black history and that some topics just weren't discussed. Standiford certainly never used the word nigger in any all-white school.

Jamie Folz was the least resourceful of teachers at this school. She covered the state's Core Content for Assessment but could list no ways that she had incorporated figures or events from the Civil Rights Movement.[40] Sixth graders' curriculum focuses on geography, specifically world and state. There are numerous opportunities to incorporate various strains of diversity into this curriculum. Students should learn about different world religions and cultures. The National Council for the Social Studies also recommends that students participate in a state geography unit. When teachers continuously maintain, like Folz did, that basic coverage of the core content is all that is required it is obvious that they are not interested in integrating diversity into their curriculum. Many times their own background has not prepared them to fully teach

[40] Jamie Folz, 2006, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 19 May.

diversity in the classroom. Many teachers in rural areas of Kentucky grow and learn in an environment where all individuals look and act the same. When these same individuals arrive at college they probably won't be voluntarily enrolling in any classes that will make them question their surroundings. Then as education majors they are not required to enroll in multiculturalism classes. After graduation they return to the rural region they were raised in and quietly begin the process of educating the next generation. A teacher such as Folz who has had no training in incorporating diversity issues is less likely to attempt the integration than one who has had such training. The geographic region in which the teacher was educated also has a great deal to do with preconceived notions about racial relations. A fellow student and I were once working as a team at a summer program. She and I grew up in the same rural region of Kentucky; which is to say we frequented the same Sonic and movie theater on the weekends. She turned to me one day and asked, "Why is it that black people can sing and dance so well? Maybe we should ask Amanda." She was referring to the only black student in our group. It was one of the most awkward moments of my life. Many might argue that since my friend wasn't going to become a teacher her dreadful faux pas need not be mentioned here. I would argue that despite her lack of desire to become a public educator she is an excellent example of students who find it unpleasant to deviate from their accepted, rural view on race. She graduated with a Biology degree and ended up working in admissions and recruitment on a college campus. I'm not sure if she questions applicants about their theatrical abilities.

Folz and others in this study are excellent examples of teachers in need of professional development in areas of diversity and multiculturalism. Teachers such as these lack enthusiasm and interest in improving in this area, most likely due to their own

educational biases. The intrinsic motivation of Edgill and Standiford was the driving force in their curriculum development and integration.

Standiford's earnest enthusiasm was obvious. He treated every lesson like it was the most important of the year, right down to the very last day of school when he showed a video about the Vietnam War and Memorial. When one student complained that he didn't know anyone who fought in the war he prompted a class discussion among the other students who shared about family members of their own. It became obvious that Standiford worked to integrate many of the core concepts of the Civil Rights Movement into his curriculum unit by unit. Black History Month was an insult, he said, because it implied that blacks were only part of American history once a year. When some make this argument it may be a means of avoiding having to plan and implement a Black History Month unit. The examples he set in the classroom make *his* argument valid. Edgill studied the Civil Rights Movement in college and took a plethora of U.S. history courses. She also completed an extensive research project on individuals involved in Freedom Summer. She made special efforts to talk about the importance of voting in her classroom. Both teachers had extensive background knowledge of the various aspects of cultural diversity, including the Civil Rights Movement. This knowledge allowed them to successfully integrate such ideas into their curriculum.

Both teachers used a variety of sources. These included films, poems and biographical sketches. Standiford showed the film "Fat Albert" while Edgill went with a more traditional "Birth of a Nation". Standiford also utilized Langston Hughes' poetry in his class.

While Edgill was more traditional in many aspects of her curriculum integration Standiford was bold. His showing of "Fat Albert" is just one example.[41] The film is based on the popular cartoon series, "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids" which first aired in the 1960s. In the cartoon a bumbling group of young, black misfits known as the "Junkyard Gang" tackle issues like first loves and bully encounters. The cartoon was hailed for its entertainment as well as educational value. It enjoyed a 12-year, syndicated run on television. Kentucky Educational Television recommends the original series for Practical Living/Social Studies curriculum instruction.[42] The feature film "Fat Albert", released in 2004, falls incredibly short of the original cartoon's relevance in regards to young adult issues.[43] In the film four dark-skinned, young, black misfits leap from their cartoon junkyard to a real-world living room in an effort to help a young girl deal with self-esteem issues. The group makes it their mission to help her overcome her negativity and as they help they become aware of their own self-concept problems. The group of black teens slowly lost all of their negative attributes that landed them in the misfit category. Speech impediments disappeared, and I.Q.s went up. Self-esteem issues connected to weight were revamped into more positive outlooks. As the group began to shed individual weaknesses their skin became lighter. After more than 24 hours outside of their virtual junkyard the group becomes alarmed at their whiteness. The group decides to return to cartoon land for fear that they will become too light-skinned and disappear completely. The young black teens return to cartoon land and return to their normal, dysfunctional selves. Speech impediments and I.Q.s returned to their normal sub-par

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[42] Kentucky Educational Television: School Resources, http://www.ket.org/itvvideos/offering/practical/fatalbert.htm, Mar. 1, 2007.
[43] Joel Zwick. (director). (2004). *Fat Albert* [Motion picture]. United States: 20th Century Fox.

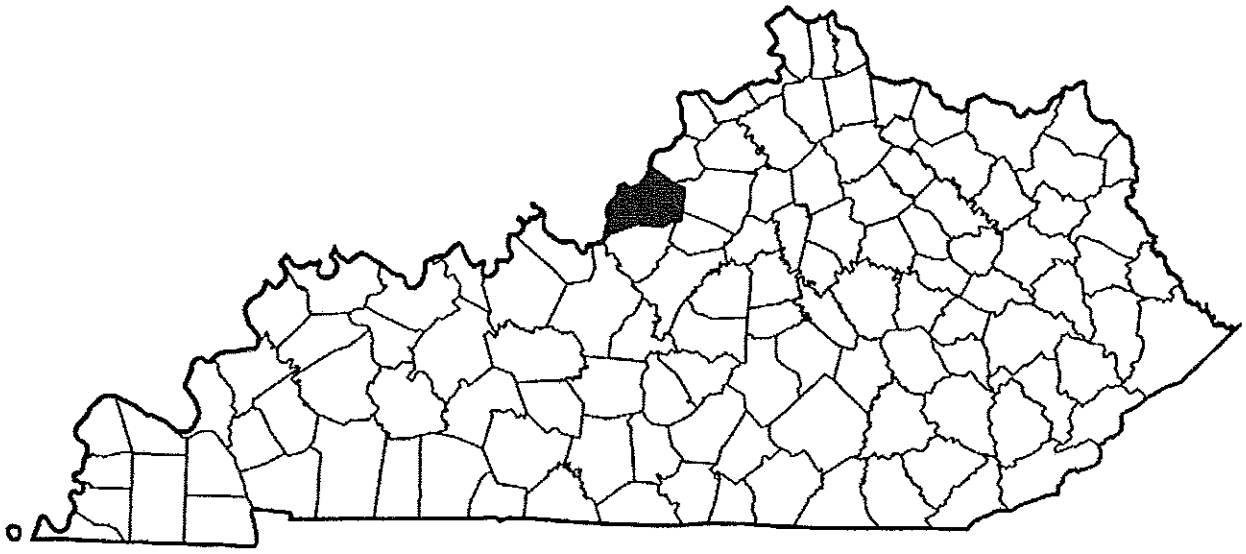
states. Fat Albert no longer felt confident around girls. The group members' skin returned to a normal, darker color. One member of the junkyard gang summed up the experience, "It just goes to show you, you can't be something you're not."

This film provides viewers with a strange mixed message. The teens leave a world that is dark and depressing to find a vibrant, white land where their sophisticated, stylish black and white peers treasure them. They are no longer alienated because of their idiosyncrasies or impairments. The group must leave their new world to return to the darker, blacker world from whence they came. The message is clear: the blacker you are the more hopeless it is to try and rise above your circumstances. Standiford said he felt the film helped students to better understand the every day struggles faced by themselves and their peers. While the surface message seems positive it is the underlying concept that makes this film a poor choice for classroom instruction. It does little to reinforce *any* positive message about racial relations among adolescents.

In addition to his social studies classes Standiford also taught a "teen leadership" course, which focused very heavily on various aspects of social studies content: peer relations, race, etc. He broached the subject of race there just as he did in his other courses, boldly. Students discussed a variety of racial issues including extremist groups, Malcolm X and racial interactions.

"For some people it really makes 'em nervous," he said." For me I'm a big believer in being straight forward and honest with them. Let's talk about it and let's get it out in the open and talk about it here in a controlled environment."

Harsh Realities:
Southern Leadership Academy



Melinda Hargadon's students knew that she was not like them. She taught at Southern Leadership Academy in Louisville. As a resident of the city's East End she was a long way from home, and not just physically. She said her predominantly white classes saw her as an outsider.

"They look at me and they see that I'm old and I'm white and I'm from the East end," she sad. "These kids can not relate."[44]

Southern Leadership Academy's student body is about 65 percent black. Twenty percent of the remaining students are Asian and Hispanic. Several other minorities make up about two percent of the population, while the remaining students (less than 13 percent) are white. Ninety percent of the students received free/reduced lunch. Students of low socioeconomic status often find it difficult to focus on their education. Their energy is often directed towards dealing with the scarcity in their home, rather than school work. Southern students were no exception. The school went gender specific in 2001 and the entire faculty said it was the best decision given the students' lack of parental support and role models. The school's faculty maintained that the separation of students was beneficial, especially for the girls.

The separation of girls and boys was also beneficial for the discussion of sensitive issues, like poverty and race. There was very little discussion of the Civil Rights Movement or any of the key figures in the classroom. None of the faculty said they implemented a Black History Month unit. All of them said their students knew what Dr. King did and his role in the Movement. Each faculty member said they tried not to stray from Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. They each noted in turn that while they could not cover specific events of the Movement, they did include black figures and

[44] Melinda Hargadon. 2007, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 9 October.

events as part of the Core Content for Assessment. Each one's approach was different.

Hargadon, a seventh grade social studies teacher spent 20 years teaching in parochial schools. When her four children graduated she wanted a change of pace and came to Southern. She said her aim was to be as honest as possible with her students: honest about their futures and honest about the struggles they would face as adults. She said she had grown tired of teaching about "dead black people" and that she was sure her students had tired of learning about Dr. King and Frederick Douglass over the years. In a classroom full of girls she focused on strong, black women in hopes of replacing the negative female role models she knew many found at home. She spent an entire two weeks discussing the life and achievements of women like Oprah Winfrey and Condoleeza Rice. Students were allowed to choose any black individual they wanted with the exception of black, male athletes. She said young black students are so often bombarded with images of strong black athletes that they lose touch with reality in their adoration.

"They're all convinced that they're going to be the next Michael Jordan, regardless of whether they're three-foot-two inches tall and don't know what a basketball looks like," she said. Her students had never been told that education and wealth sometimes go hand in hand. While idealism of all sorts is common among middle school students it is particularly dangerous for Hargadon's students. Her students considered homeowners of all varieties to be wealthy. She said students often told her they were going to be doctors, lawyers, actresses and that they would be rich and famous. She said as their teacher she always wanted to connect them to reality.

"The reading levels here are among some of the lowest in the state," she said.

"When they tell me these dreams they have I remind them that education is the only way they're going to achieve anything. I tell them if you don't take your education seriously you're going to end up working at McDonald's…if you can read the buttons."[45]

Hargadon acknowledged that her students did not see her as a role model they could relate to or follow. It was for this reason that Hargadon opened up her classroom each Friday to Kentuckiana College Access Center counselor Candice Johnson. Johnson, a black woman, spoke to her classes each Friday about what they could do to insure they got to college.

Hargadon was the only faculty who focused a great deal on instructing students about post-secondary education. No other teachers mentioned any concerns about that subject. Ann Thiemann, an eighth grade social studies teacher said she was more concerned about helping students develop skills that would help them in the working world: how to speak in public, proper manners, and how to dress.[46] She taught a class of eighth grade boys. She said she did not include figures like Dr. King in her curriculum because she wanted students to understand the bigger historical perspective.

Since women's history, and the history of other minorities, was not separated from mainstream history than there was no reason black history should be either. She said students suffered when historical figures were taken out of context, applauded for a week, and then hastily placed back on the shelf. Thiemann said while she adhered strongly to Kentucky's CCA she always infused it with some of her own ideas. She talked frequently about current events and immigration, as well as her strong disapproval of President George W. Bush.

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[45] Hargadon, ibid.
[46] Ann Thiemann. 2007, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 9 October.

Thiemann maintained that Bush's No Child Left Behind program was unrealistic and poorly managed. She also maintained that the system of testing required by the state was poorly focused and that her students often learned unnecessary material. Many state officials say that mandatory standardized testing is appropriate for low SES students because they are exposed to different cultures. Thiemann said she felt it was wonderful for her students to know how to act at the Opera or to know what a traditional English folk dance looked like, but to test them on the material was a waste of time. "I am all for exposure, everyone needs exposure to such things", she said. She maintained that exposure was necessary but to require students to write essays about such things was cheating them out of valuable instructional time.[47]

Frequent discipline problems were a part of every class and at the time of the interview her class of boys had been put on "lock down" and not allowed to leave the classroom for the entire day. Visitors to the building were able to notice the difference in girls and boys hallways. The school had hired a woman whose job it was to sit and discipline boys as they transitioned from one class to another. She sat at a desk in the hallway with a clipboard and a whistle, pointing her gold-painted, acrylic fingernails at disruptive students. Boys were also often put on silent lunch, a punishment that involved eating without talking in the cafeteria, with each student separated by an empty chair. Thiemann said that despite the constant discipline problems her students gave her, she still supported separate gender education. She said it was "wonderful" and especially beneficial for the girls.[48] She said boys paid much more attention to classroom instruction without the peer pressure to impress their female classmates. In a school like this, she

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[47] Thiemann, ibid.
[48] Thiemann, ibid.

said, it's necessary. Thiemann was most concerned about how Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System was hurting her students.

"These kids are capable they don't have a whole lot of push from home they have a lot of problems that affect their school life that come from home," she said. " It's just that they're busy overcoming a whole lot of other stuff. I told a state lady these kids will survive but it won't be the way you like. We'd be much better off giving them job skills than giving them frivolous goop that looks good to politicos."[49]

Eighth grade social studies teacher Ryan Cook is a West Virginia native who grew up in a rural area. He rarely encountered racial diversity until he came to Southern as a first year teacher in 2005. He taught a classroom of eighth grade girls. Cook followed Kentucky's CCA strictly and said he did not deviate from it at all, not even to talk about Dr. King during January or February. He said he infused his lessons with appropriate figures and kept each one in context. His students discussed Crispus Attackus and the Boston Massacre. He spent some time talking about slavery in the Southern part of the United States but focused a great deal on the Middle Passage. He used the History Alive! curriculum books and had students lay down on white sheets placed in the middle of the room. The students lay close together to mimic the posture that slaves might have had during the difficult journey. As students lay on the sheets, he turned the lights off and read excerpts from Roots.[50] Cook said students really seemed to connect to the experience, although he did not follow the lesson exactly. The actual lesson suggested that students have their feet and hands bound together. Cook said he felt that was a little extreme. Experiential exercises like the one Cook used his classroom are becoming

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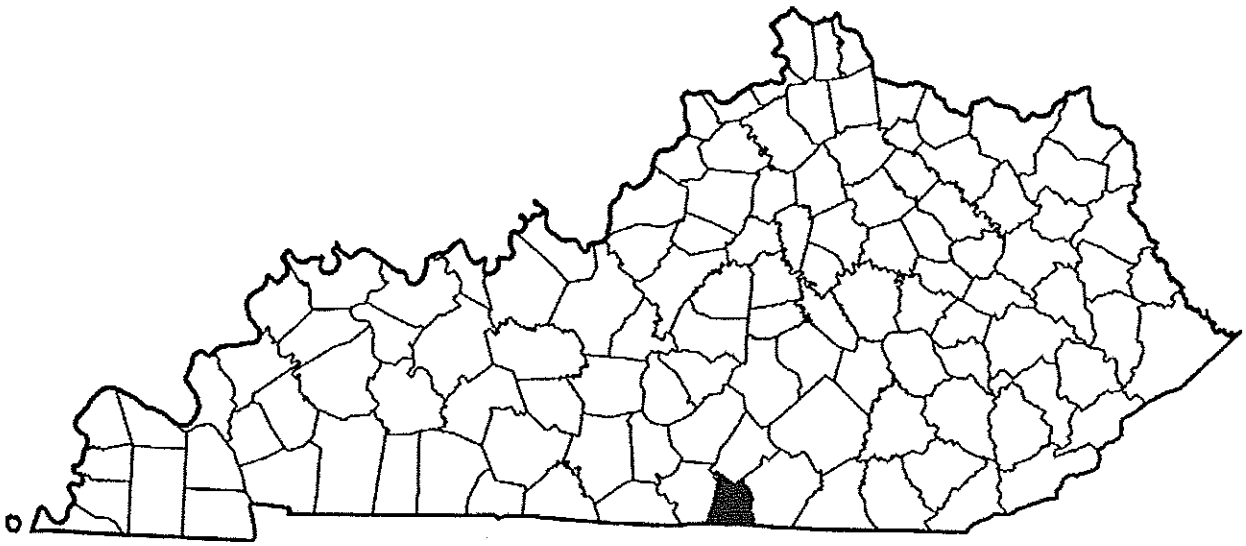
[49] Thiemann, ibid.
[50] Alex Haley, (1976), *Roots*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

increasingly popular in middle grades classrooms, particularly social studies classrooms. Such instructional practices are valuable because they allow students to understand historical experiences, to some degree, on a more tactile level.

Teachers at Southern Leadership Academy faced an interesting dilemma. They were teaching at an economically and socially depressed school. Their students got little support from home and most faced the harsh realities of poverty every day. The separate gender classrooms also added a new element of challenge to every day teaching, as each one had to modify their instructional practices to meet the needs of their students. Teachers here were by far the most outspoken and diverse in their teaching practices.

Old Prejudices, New Truths:
Clinton County Middle School



Allen Flowers towered above his students. Those students to whom puberty had been kind early on found themselves eye level with one of the buttons on his western print shirt. The rest fell somewhere around his glistening belt buckle that had been engraved with an "F".

The other teachers informed me that he struck fear into the heart of the fifth and sixth graders at Clinton County Middle School and I never for a second doubted that this was true. He wore heavy cowboy boots, a long-sleeved, western print shirt and tight wrangler jeans. He looked like he belonged on some pseudo-cattle ranch in Texas rather than in a middle school social studies classroom.

Yet he was the typical faculty member at CCMS- a native of Albany, a graduate of the local high school (indeed the only high school in the entire county).[51] After graduation he drove 60 miles down the road to Somerset Community College to earn an associate's degree and then on to Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, where he earned a degree in middle grades education.

And he was, of course, white. Clinton County's population was just under 10,000 people in 2000. That number included only 10 black people which meant that .1% of the county's population was black. In 2006 the school had three Hispanic students and two black students (cite NCLB report cards).

The small number of minorities in the district (and indeed the town itself) prompted most faculty members to defend the moral attributes of the townspeople. Kevin Groce was the most outspoken and direct of any of the four social studies teachers.[52] He had spent his entire life in Albany and said he was eight years old "when the Civil Rights

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[51] Allen Flowers. 2007, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 16 March.
[52] Kevin Groce. 2007, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 16 March.

Movement started" in 1964. He said he remembers well the harsh way blacks were treated, although he said he never remembers there being more than 10 or 12 black people in the county at one time. By the time he graduated from the local high school in 1974 he had only one black classmate.

" We were racist," he said. "At the same time I tried not to be but people around me were. But like I said since we didn't have 'em we really didn't have the problem."[53]

He taught world and state geography to sixth graders. He, like Flowers had spent two years at Somerset Community College before transferring to Eastern. The university is only 100 miles away and if a student leaves Clinton County High and enrolls in a university (which doesn't happen often, most live at home and attend community college in Somerset) then it is likely that he or she is at Eastern.

It is not like that he would have made his way to any college save his discovery of Rheumatoid Arthritis a few years after his high school graduation. If it hadn't been for the blinding pain that he faced each time he picked up a tool he said he would have been content to stay on the family farm forever.

He taught sixth grade social studies for a full year to students at CCMS. Many schools in the state have taken to splitting their social studies curriculum with practical living courses. These courses are designed to help students better understand real world topics like nutrition and anger management. Schools may sacrifice half the year's social studies curriculum (forcing the social studies teacher to give students a whirlwind course covering all the material in half the instructional time). This most often happened in preparation for standardized testing and NCLB standards. However, this was not happening at CCMS. This is to say that students were getting their fully allotted amount

[53] Groce, ibid.

of instructional time, minus the two week testing period mandated by the state and federal governments.

He said he liked to help his students discover the outside world and that social studies was by far his favorite subject to teach. Groce's certification was left over from the days when psychologists lumped adolescents and elementary aged children together. He was qualified to teach science, social studies, math and English to grades 1-8. Educational psychologists discovered that there is a great deal of difference between the needs of first and eighth graders, and universities changed their degree requirements. Most major universities now offer certification in middle grades education and require the student to choose one or two subject areas for certification.

He displayed an enthusiasm for student learning despite being four years shy of retirement. He talked about Asia and Africa and how he wanted his students to learn about diverse cultures and religions. His aspirations really raise this question: "Is there a difference in learning and exposure?" While one would agree that he is exposing his students to diverse cultures and religions it is not evident that they really understand overall themes and concepts. A teacher who has little educational training in an area or few world-traveling experiences can work very hard to facilitate active learning in the classroom. Active and cooperative learning allows for the scaffolding, which allows students to form their own understanding based on prior knowledge. If he had been helping his students learn these themes and concepts through various interactive, cooperative projects then it is likely his students would have had an excellent understanding of various cultures and themes. He did not, however, have his students

complete projects or do anything other than lecture the material. He worked his coverage of civil rights and diversity in the same manner.

He could not cite any way in which he incorporated the Civil Rights Movement or Black History into his curriculum. Groce did however participate in the great song and dance of most rural schools: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Depending on when King's birthday came on the school calendar students would be subjected to a lot of information before or after they enjoyed a day off from school. Such information usually included but was not limited to: basic facts about King's life and death, black and white video clips and a small introduction to the Movement as a whole. This was also true for Groce who had students watch a Brain Pop video. Brain Pop is an expensive online catalogue of educational resources for students and teachers.[54] The site has a great deal of online videos but includes online quizzes and interactive features as well. Knowledge is, however, pricey: a school wide subscription to the site costs some $975.00 a year.[55] Most schools purchase a subscription and teachers are given a limited number of logins for each quarter. Brain Pop videos certainly seem to be the most popular option for those subscribed to the site. Such videos provide nothing more than the bare basics- birth, death, and major accomplishments.

The information is spooned out by Tim- an average jeans and t-shirt kind of guy, and his sidekick, Moby. He's a robot and his speech is indecipherable-not unlike that of Charlie Brown's teacher. He makes bad jokes and tries to agitate Tim as he recounts the lesson. Quizzes are available after the video is over. Most teachers project the videos on active boards or screens in the classroom. Tim and Moby explain Dr. King's life and his

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[54] Brain Pop, www.brainpop.com, 15 February 2007.
[55] Brain Pop: Subscription Options, http://www.brainpop.com/support/subscription_options_school.weml?pagetype=, 24 April 2007.

nonviolence philosophies without pomp and circumstances. Students are presented information in a clear manner- but just the basics. Many teachers use Brain Pop because they feel it helps simplify subjects for their students. Subscribers have access to videos on the Civil War, slavery, and even the life of Oprah Winfrey.

Clinton County Middle School's use of technology made it different from Christian County Middle School as well as the more rural Metcalfe County School. In some instances individual teachers' use of technology outweighed that of some teachers in Jefferson County schools. Teachers at Clinton County used their active boards for class viewing of videos, especially for Dr. King's birthday. Fifth grade teachers showed their students "Selma, Lord, Selma" every January.[56]

Disney tends to embellish when they produce historic films. The animated film Pocahontas is an excellent example. Besides the obvious glossing over of the settlers' treatment of Native Americans one finds a host of singing forest creatures. Disney manages to redeem itself with Selma, Lord, Selma. The film focuses on Dr. King's time in Selma, Alabama. The main character is a precocious 12-year-old girl, Sheyann, who idolizes Dr. King. She jumps at the chance to meet him and becomes involved in the Movement. Most of the film focuses on her involvement and how it affects her family, and friends. Marching by her side is Jonathan Daniels, a seminary student who believes that following Christ and Dr. King will lead him to the same place. Sheyann eventually convinces her father to join her in marching and protesting. Fifth grade social studies teacher Janice Groce said students sit motionless and watch as Sheyann disappears in a

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[56] Charles Burnett. (director). (1999). *Selma, Lord, Selma* [Motion picture]. United States: Esparza/Kat Productions.

cloud of poisonous gas at a protest.[57] The film does an excellent job of showing violence at the end of the film. Daniels is shot by a bigot in a dark alley, another young friend of Sheyanne's dies after he is the victim of police brutality in Selma.

This film is perhaps most useful to students at Clinton County Middle because it depicts organized, white religion as being faulty. Daniels as well as many black characters in the film are Christians but it is clear that theirs is a different kind of religion. In one particularly moving scene Daniels visits a local priest in hopes of gaining support for the Movement. He's shocked when the priest tells him, "You know nothing of our way of life." Daniels, armed with a cross and a Bible, tells the priest he knows "The best way to fight bigotry is with the Word of God."[58]

The majority of those living in Albany would likely classify themselves as Christians. There's practically a "church on every corner" as many are fond of saying about towns in the Bible Belt. Albany is almost purely Protestant: there is only one Roman Catholic Church, and it's located on the outskirts of town. Young adults in this area have likely had very little exposure to diverse religions. People in rural areas are also likely to view any sect of Christianity that isn't Protestantism as morally weak. For example, students I encountered during fieldwork and student teaching were shocked to learn that the Catholic Church was one of the few Christian groups to speak out against slavery.

Teachers used not only feature but animated films as well. He regularly showed "Our Friend Martin" to her fifth graders.[59] This cartoon was made in 1999 and tells the

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[57] Janice Groce,2007, Interview by Adriane Hardin, Tape Recording, 16 March.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Rob Smiley, Vincenzo Trippetti. (directors). (1999). *Our Friend, Martin,* [Animated Motion Picture]. United States: DiC Enterprises.

story of Miles, an African American 8th grader who is apathetic about the Civil Rights Movement. He is disinterested only until he and a friend travel back in time via an enchanted watch he finds on a visit to a museum. Miles travels back in time and witnesses several key events including police brutality in Birmingham and the march on Washington, D.C. Miles and his friend also experience segregation when they first travel back in time to meet King. Miles and his white friend are talking to King (who is only 13 at the time) and a white woman approaches them. She angrily asks them what they're doing together and the kids look at her, perplexed.

"We're just hanging out," Miles tells her. "These are my friends.

The white lady, who is eerily similar to the June Cleaver look a likes that appear on black and white footage from civil rights riots of the 1960s, is at first stunned by this mixed group. Then she delivers one of the most hard-hitting lines of the film

"The only hanging you're gonna be doin' is from a tree," she says.[60] The facial expressions of the group after this line of dialogue is delivered are priceless. They stand, stunned figures on flashy green animated grass, looking as if they have just been slapped in the face with a reality they cannot even fathom. The remainder of the film focuses on Miles' attempt to change the past as he comes to believe that he can prevent Dr. King's death. When he does manage to prevent the assassination he finds that when he returns to his own time it is eerily similar to the segregated, 1960s south. His middle school, formerly called Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle, is now Robert E. Lee Middle School. Eventually of course young Miles decides that King made the ultimate sacrifice and he heads back in time (armed with the magical watch) to put things back the way they were. A quirky tour guide, whose voice is provided by Whoopi Goldberg, guides Miles and

[60] Ibid.

company on this magical tour. A host of other notable African American actors and actresses lend their talents to this film including James Earl Jones, Angela Bassett, Danny Glover and Samuel L. Jackson.

Groce obviously pulled in a variety of resources, at least when compared with her colleagues. Cope, who taught 8th grade U.S. History, could not cite a single way in which she tied the struggle for civil rights into her curriculum. It is particularly disheartening when one hears such statements because if the teacher is teaching Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment, then they are lying. An eighth grade curriculum begins with European exploration and ends with Reconstruction. As one covers such material they will encounter the 13, 14, and 15th amendments, all of which are at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. Then there's that peculiar institution that rears its ugly head in every part of American history. It is not that Cope does not cover topics related to the Civil Rights Movement; it is simply that she is too ignorant to recognize such instances.

Adolescence is a time of identity crisis. During student teaching I saw so many students label themselves in the margin of their planners: "I am a Mexican Angel" or "Arminian 4 Life". These students took what has likely been a negative label for them over the years and turned it into a positive. Schools claim to do all sorts of things to foster an appreciation of diversity: special assemblies, bulletin boards honoring minorities, and a number of other attempts. The school I student taught had hung flags from their main hallway and each one represented the home country of a student in the building. I don't think any of them paid the slightest bit of attention to those flags as they entered and exited each day. They did, however, notice the colorful Mexican flags drawn on smooth,

brown hands in between classes. And the bright red and green jackets with 'Mexico' embroidered on the front.

But Hispanic students at Clinton County Middle did not have a support system of peers like themselves. There were only 3 Hispanic students in the entire school. It would be difficult for these students to have a positive identity because they have very little peer group support. The school's ESL population is made up of Hispanic students who have no collaborating ESL teacher because they've scored so high on the evaluations provided by the state. They are in fact, alone. But school may be the safest community at hand. The outside world is likely much less kind. Teachers were hesitant to comment about the community as a whole but said that their students' attitudes and beliefs about Hispanic immigrants likely came from their parents.

"They say things like, 'They're taking all of our jobs', things like that," Kevin Groce said. "I always try to say they're just tryin' to make a living like we all are."

He said students are also angry about the large numbers of fatalities that they feel have been caused by Hispanic drivers. According to Groce great deals of traffic accidents have involved Hispanic people who do not have driver's licenses. He said it was likely that all the students knew someone who had been involved in the accident or were connected to the incident in some way. White students saw Hispanic members of the community as strange, foreign enemies who came to steal not only their and their parents' livelihood but their lives as well.

"Hispanic is the new black here," Groce said.

I first came to realize the extreme importance of this project after I had completed an entire year of research. I spent several days a week traveling to schools throughout the state. The rest of the time I was spending my spring afternoons tutoring an eighth grade student in writing. I tutored several students during college in an effort to make extra cash and pad my resume. This student in particular was quite the challenge. He was extremely stubborn and acted like I had asked him to shoot himself with a nail gun rather than diagram a sentence properly. He was an awkward kid: gangly with glasses. He often practiced his vocabulary of swear words, spurting out "hell" and "damn" between open response revisions. His parents weren't around to hear and I opted not to scold him. (Most of the kids I tutored throughout college were left alone in the afternoons. I usually arrived around the same time the cleaning lady did.)

One day after a string of obscenities he announced, "My mother doesn't like it when I say those things. She doesn't like it when I say nigger either."

I dropped my red ink pen onto the card table he did his homework on each day. "What did you say?" I asked incredulously.

"Nigger," he said again with certainty. "You know, black people."

It is a common belief that racism, bigotry and the like are products of ignorance and that such notions reside only among the uneducated of our society. I looked around the basement we worked in each afternoon. There was a fully stocked bar, and the father's latest trophy, a grizzly bear, had been turned into a rug and mounted on the wall. The mother wore a 3-carat diamond ring on her perfectly manicured finger and zipped off to the office each day in a shiny Lexus. They owned their own business and were

respected members of the community. I was flabbergasted at his word choice and what it communicated.

A friend once told me that all of the white students he had encountered as a teacher were much more knowledgeable about the Civil Rights Movement than black students. The eighth grader I spent my afternoons could rattle off names and events pertaining to Black History. Yet in spite of all his training he felt it was appropriate to use the word "nigger".

The student made me realize that ignorance, racism and bigotry cut across socioeconomic lines. He made me realize that this project was valid and necessary. Our students need to be saved from themselves.

Public education is one of the most heavily scrutinized professions. Politicians craft programs that they feel will "fix" public education. Money is funneled into new initiatives in hopes that education will improve. The evidence of which many believe we will find in standardized test scores. The purpose of this project was not to add to the large body of work that proclaims schools inefficient, declares teachers incompetent and labels students as victims. I sought rather to speak candidly to teachers across the state about how they incorporated diversity into their curriculums, using the Civil Rights Movement as a kind of base for questions. I encountered a variety of professionals who were willing to talk about the content taught in their classroom, and their students' responses to different issues.

The most obvious differences I found among these professionals was geography. Urban schools tended to be near metropolitan areas in which their work forces were fed by a variety of universities and colleges. Teachers then came from a variety of educational backgrounds. Teachers with diverse educational background were also found in some rural areas. These teachers practiced a variety of teaching methods and strategies. Their methods were much more varied than those who had spent their entire lives living in a rural area. Urban schools also had a great deal more minority students. Students seemed to want to speak about race relations because it hit close to home. In contrast, rural schools had a small amount of minority students. The culture of these students was not honored or celebrated, but rather they were encouraged to assimilate to the lily-white culture around them.

During student teaching I watched a white boy sit among Hispanic female classmates. Two of the girls were carrying on a conversation in Spanish. The boy became

annoyed, "Why don't you speak English so people can understand you?" One of the girls looked at him, seething with anger and said, "People do understand. We are people." The exchange did not take place at a "rural" school, at least not in the sense that I have defined rural in this project. But the exchange is happening every day across the state of Kentucky. Hispanic students are being asked to redefine who they are in rural schools. They are alienated and often have few allies. The girl who became so angry was an amazing success story and an inspiration to her Hispanic counterparts. She continually earned the top grades in my classes. She spoke English fluently but treated those around her who could not with great dignity and respect. This project has raised many questions about the plight and future of Kentucky's Hispanic students. It is clear that their emotional, social and learning needs are not being met in some school districts. If they are to succeed they must break through educational barriers schools have created for them. They must overcome the animosity of the communities they inhabit, communities where they are seen as greedy foreigners. We will surely reap what we sow if we continue to fail such students.

It is tempting for teachers, who are often overrun with requests from the administration; to let their enthusiasm for students in need dwindle. I encountered all levels of enthusiasm and motivation during interviews. Some teachers believed strongly in diversity education and it was evident through their lesson planning and teaching strategies. Others seemed to genuinely care about the topic. However, they didn't seem to have a firm grasp on how to integrate ideas into their classroom while still adhering to the Core Content for Assessment and Program of Studies. Then there were some who seemed incredulous that I would even ask them questions about the subjects. These were the

same individuals who asked me, "Why are you doing this? You know this isn't going to help you get a job, right?" They assured me that school districts only cared about the bottom line: test scores. And if I thought doing a research project was going to get me more pay, I was terribly mistaken.

This project also raised a variety of questions about gender specific education. Teachers and professionals at Southern Leadership Academy in Louisville claim to have had great success in this area. Their staff regularly attends professional development sessions on gender specific education. It is obvious, based on my interviews alone, that young girls are able to speak about sensitive issues when girls surround them. The question still remains as to what role race plays in gender specific education, and exactly what benefits boys may receive from such educational separation.

While educators must adhere to state and national standards they maintain a great deal of freedom in how they present information to students. Teachers' own personal social and educational biases influence the way they approach subjects in their classroom. The task at hand then is to help teachers recognize the need for multiculturalism and diversity education. It is my hope that educators everywhere will recognize the immense value of the human family and in doing so they will help their students understand civil rights not as a "black thing" or "Hispanic thing," but a "human thing." The basic understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and all of the ideals associated with it is just the beginning of a long battle towards improving educational practices in Kentucky.

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Appendix A

Consent Document

Project Title: The Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky's Classrooms

Investigator:
Adriane Hardin
270.459.0789
Middle Grades Education/ History
Western Kentucky University.

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:**
   The purpose of this project is to better understand what figures and events of the Civil Rights Movement are being emphasized in Kentucky's middle school classrooms.
2. **Explanation of Procedures:**
   You will be asked a series of 21 questions. This will happen during your planning period and will take approximately 20 minutes.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:**
   By agreeing to participate in this study you agree to give me 20 minute of your planning period.

4. **Benefits:**
   This is an opportunity for you to reflect upon your classroom behaviors and instruction.

5. **Confidentiality:**
   This is an undergraduate thesis project. Your responses will be part of a great work by the investigator and is slated for completion in Fall 2006. The project will then be available for public reading. You may request a copy by contacting the University Honors department.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:**
Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____
Witness Date

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD
Sean Rubino, Compliance Manger
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-4652

HSRB APPLICATION # HS06-189
APPROVED 5/9/06 to 10/31/06
EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL BOARD
DATE APPROVED 5/9/06