

Interview with Stacy Hoeflich
Fourth grade teacher
Massive Resistance

1. Meet the Sources (1:18)

Two editorial cartoons done by Fred O. Siebel, and one is from 1954 from May of 1954 and one is from I think September of 1958. And they were published in *The Richmond Times Dispatch*.

The first one is entitled “Now What” and it’s saying we don’t really know what to do at this point because of the Supreme Court desegregation decision. And the second one is a much more determined called “Riding Out The Storm.” That he’s going to make it through and figure out how to get through this desegregation without actually desegregating.

These have the same sets of symbols so it really works for this particular lesson because even if they don’t know how to read an editorial cartoon, I could walk them through the first one and they could be really successful in understanding the second one.

I really was excited about how successful they were at identifying what the second one really meant. What really matters is that they understand this is Virginia’s response. Virginia is saying, “No we’re not going to do it. We’re going to do this to get out of doing it.” And that’s what this one is really capturing.

2. Standards of Learning (2:32)

The lesson goes with VS 9B. 9B specifically says, “identifying the social and political events in Virginia linked to desegregation and massive resistance and the relationship to national history.” And when it clarifies exactly what that means, it specifically talks about them needing to know “desegregation” as a term. Needing to know “integration” as a term. Needing to know about the *Brown* versus *Board of Education* case. Needing to know that Virginia schools were ordered to integrate by the Supreme Court.

Virginia’s government established a policy of “massive resistance” which fought to resist the integration of public schools. Some schools were closed to avoid the integration and the policy of massive resistance failed. Virginia’s public schools were integrated. Specifically they also need to know that Harry F. Byrd senior led the massive resistance movement against the integration of public schools.

The other piece that I think is important is that they felt they could just waste enough time and that they would get past it. So that’s not part of our curriculum. But I think it’s important, especially when you’re looking at these two cartoons.

We had done some stuff on visual clues, with visual sources but we hadn’t done things on editorial cartoons and I wanted them to understand that it’s representative of a story that he’s trying to tell. That it’s not really about an ocean, it’s not really about a ship, it’s not really about a rock. That this is symbolic.

I definitely wanted them to understand it's just one perspective and that was really hard. So when I'm using the words "fact versus opinion" they know this. They know what this means. But it's important, especially when you're talking about something like this, that as controversial as this, that they're understanding that there are two sides. And that not everybody agrees and this is this one person's opinion.

I really like that it says "public school closing." It doesn't say "massive resistance" which for my students I think is helpful. They need to know massive resistance and public school closing go together. That's what, at least Virginia says for fourth graders, that that means very specifically, "We'll close the schools. If you can afford to, go to private school." Who would be able to afford to go to private school? What does that mean? And it's kind of like an echo of poll taxes and literacy tests, it's not a very it's not something that we've already talked about.

3. Background & Prior Knowledge (2:46)

There isn't actually anything in our fourth grade curriculum about World War I or World War II or pretty much anything at all after reconstruction, until we get to civil rights. So the unit that we do this in, we combine reconstruction and civil rights together. So we talk about reconstruction. We talk about the different parts of reconstruction that we are required to know. We talk about African Americans gaining rights during reconstruction and then we talk about African Americans losing rights. Partially due to poll taxes and literacy tests.

There are some photographs of actual schools that were segregated. And so like this is the same county and here is the black school and the white school. And so they have that really vivid picture of what segregation for schools in particular is.

So what we did immediately prior to this, they had done a whole lesson using the actual text of certain Jim Crow laws from different places all through the South. So they're really clear on what Jim Crow laws were and what segregation was. And then we read a biography of Thurgood Marshall because it really connects it. I think it is really well written and it sort of talks in the beginning, Thurgood Marshall's a troublemaker as a kid. And he went to this school all for black children and whenever anybody at school got in trouble, they had to go sit in the boiler room and read the Constitution.

And so here's a kid who got in trouble a lot. So he's sitting in a boiler room of his really horrible segregated school. And he's reading the Constitution. And he keeps reading over, over and over, everybody should have equal rights and he doesn't understand why everybody should have equal rights. Clearly he's looking around in his own world and he's not. So he says, "Dad how come, you know, this says this?" And his dad quite wisely says, "The Constitution is the way things ought to be not the way things are." And so then that sets up the whole rest of his life like, "Okay I'm going to make things the way they ought to be instead of the way things are."

We talk about Harry Byrd; we talk about massive resistance. And we talk about massive big resistance to put up resistance. Go back and talk about our science curriculum resistance, friction

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/mcpstah/source-analysis/massive-resistance-cartoons/>

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the whole science thing. So they should know as sort of something that slows something down. And I think that's where this comes in is showing what it means to massively resist what the United States Supreme Court tells you to do.

They have bits and pieces but they don't know Brown versus Board of Education is all these schools coming together and sort of arguing that we're not getting an equal education and we can't possibly get an equal education even if you make our school building look really nice.

4. Overview (0:59)

I put together a packet that has a table and I wanted it to be really, really basic. What do you see in the picture? What do you think that that thing you see in the picture? Why did the artist choose to put that in there? I went through the first cartoon with them because I wanted them to be really successful and because the advantage of these two particular cartoons is that they have the same set of symbols.

So they fill out a packet. And then they have a couple of questions about what do you think the overall opinion that he's trying to say here is? And we did that together, me leading them through it. And then the second part, they were in buddies and we have social studies buddies which are high-low pairs. And in buddies, they then had the second cartoon and they had to fill out the same kind of table where they pulled out what they see and what they thought it meant. And then answer a question about what did they think that the cartoon was telling them at the end.

5. Hook (1:29)

Five weeks after the Supreme Court made its ruling, the governor of Virginia said, "I shall use every legal means at my command to continue segregated schools in Virginia." Similar response is echoed through the South.

And we talk about what legal means, what it means to be legal. And so we have a whole discussion and we've had this discussion lots of times about what it means to be legal and illegal. And again, I'll go back to poll taxes and literacy tests. And so he's saying "what legal means can I use to make sure segregation stays in place." And do a, you know, a quick brain storming activity about what can you do. Here you are and you're told that you have to integrate. What can you do and what are your options?

And then bring it back to that quote at the end. And talk about other things that he could have done. And maybe that's part of your wrap up discussion and your extension.

What other things, when you say "any legal means that I can to keep segregation in place," what's legal? Is it really legal to close all the public schools? Is that fair? And of course they know the Supreme Court is the arbiter of legal right. The Supreme Court does say this is not legal. Well, from there what are his other options? Like what are the other things Harry Byrd could legally have done and gotten away with, to try and keep the integration from happening? To keep things segregated.

6. Cartoon #1 (2:21)

The first thing I said was, “The rock, I see a big rock.” Very basic—what do I see? I see a big rock and I think a big rock in the middle of the ocean is a problem, like that’s what I see. And then I see a boat on top of the rock. The boat shouldn’t be on top of the rock. Where should the boat be? The boat should be in the water obviously.

So the boat, well what is the boat? And they—you know they see that it’s labeled “The South,” it’s labeled “Public Schools.” I’m telling them that I see the boat. But I’m trying to get them to tell me, “Oh, I see that it says the South. I see that it says public schools and there’s a little school house.”

Well what do we think that means? Well it looks like public schools in the South have a problem ‘cause they’re up on this big rock and what kind of problem is it? They know Supreme Court segregation decision. It took me a little while to get them to connect that to *Brown versus Board of Ed* ‘cause it doesn’t say *Brown versus Board of Ed*.

I pointed out to them, the man, or as my students said, “dude with a hat and moustache.” He’s white, clearly, and so we were able to talk about him as the stereotype or as a character that means a white southern, gentile sort of like, the plantation guy who has lots of money. That’s who he represents.

Then I pointed out to them his face and they were really good at this part. They were really good at looking at his eyebrows and knowing that he wasn’t angry and he wasn’t sad. That he was just like, they said, shocked. They said a little bit surprised and they said confused.

And I didn’t point out the title and the date until the end. The date kind of just helped me go back to *Brown versus Board of Education* ‘cause we had already talked about that. And then we talked a little bit about the water. The water’s really calm. okay, it doesn’t look scary at all although there is this little sort of sketchy cloud in the bottom right hand corner that isn’t scary. . I mean it’s a cute little cumulus cloud, but there is some dark sky behind it.

So I led them through that piece by piece. And then I said—you know, we talked about also what do we think it’s saying and they were able to pull the title and pull the pictures and say, “Virginia’s being told that they have to integrate their public schools. They don’t really know what to do about that.”

7. Cartoon #2 (2:37)

So then I gave them the next one and they were like all excited. Because it’s the same set of symbols. When I set them off on their own to look at it, I mean it was just this overwhelming explosion of they knew exactly what to look at.

And it was interesting because they didn’t all write down “ocean” or “boat.” They all wrote down different things first. Some of them wrote down “man’s face” because his eyebrows are

pretty scary and they had really latched on to the idea of what he was looking like. And so he's looking kind of angry. He's got this determined he's kind of leaning forward which is a very sort of determined. So that's telling you a lot about his mindset.

Number one thing, thunder storm. Integration is becoming a big problem. Scary, powerful, going to kill you. Second thing, his face and his body language, he looks angry and fierce and ready to fight. The boat, public schools are closing. High waves, there is not calm. Boat, South public schools closing. Big waves. It can sink the ship. Nobody else talked about sinking the ship. Public school closing, the public schools are closed. Storm clouds, it's a big problem. Man, he looks serious.

"What is similar about the opinions of the two cartoons?" Both have a problem, big problem about *Brown* versus *Board of Education* case. So they're able to really get that they're both talking about a problem, they're both talking about integration. They're both talking about a problem with integration and that at first they don't know what to do and then they have this idea that they're just going to hold it out.

So unlike in other lessons where I had to do a lot more prompting and assisting, I really, I didn't. —I mean there were a couple of time that there were certain groups that were pulling apart wave and lightening and cloud into separate boxes and so I feel like they were missing the point of a storm. So I did for them sort of say, well I think those things all go together and what do we call that? And kind of encourage them in that way.

But the things I really wanted them to get, they really looked at his face and his body language, and his face tells everything about how Virginia was dealing with this. And they got that. They got that we're still talking about the school and he's at the helm. He's in charge of the school and that we're talking about integration.

8. Wrap-up (1:25)

And then we kind of came back together and I went around, and I, you know, made sure that what they were pointing out. I was really interested to notice that they all didn't pick up on the same symbol the first time through. That they picked up on lots of different symbols, but they all picked up on the main symbols. They all got the boat, they all got the guy, they all got the guy's face, which I was really impressed that they managed to get the guy's face. And they got the storm.

And I just asked them to share, you know, just a review of what massive resistance is. What is the South's response to this demand that you integrate? And they were able to get, definitely that they're just going to wait it out. But they definitely understood that this was the South's decision.

The comparison really helped. That they were able to say, "We don't know what to do and now we've made a decision about what to do. We're not sure what the right choice is or how we're going to respond and now clearly we have a response." If you don't have the one where they don't know what to do, and its just "were just going to ride out the storm of integration." You

don't get the fact that somebody actively made a decision to go against what they were told to do.

The last question or the second to the last question is the two titles of the cartoons. and that really, if you focus on the titles as part of your wrap up discussion, leads you to, "we don't really know and now we have an idea this is what we're going to do."

9. Homework (2:52)

When I was researching, I actually found a lot of different cartoons from Fred Seibel. I thought one of the interesting things would be to give them the massive resistance, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* cartoon. Give them that one as a homework assignment and say, "Here it is, tell me what it's saying. And pick out five symbols and tell me what you think those symbols mean." So that would be something that they were really taking the exact same skills. You could even modify the packet, you know, and the table that's in the packet to show that.

Another one, which is a little bit more intricate, would be to have them draw a cartoon showing the opposite. Like how could you use the same sort of symbols if you were showing a cartoon for people who are gung ho to integrate? Could you use the same actual thing and just, you know, change the expression on his face and make him happy? You know, like yes it's rough seas, but. . . —you know, so how could you draw a cartoon that shows that using this—using the man, the boat and the water.

We had already studied Thurgood Marshall and we had already studied Harry Byrd and my students had done, several times this year, in small group or partners, write a skit. I thought it would be interesting, especially if you were to integrate the quote from Harry Byrd. If that's your starting comment, what would be Thurgood Marshall's response to that and then what would be Harry Byrd's response to that. And could you extend it just ten lines of dialogue?

Another thing I came up to was the idea of protest posters and this book, which I love—Toni Morrison, *Remember*. Very few words, very unbelievably moving pictures. So like some of these pictures, "I can't go to school because of segregation." "Our children play together, why can't they learn together?" And on the other page here, it's the white children, "We, the pupils of this school in —Clinton High, don't want negroes in our school." "We won't go to school with negroes. Strike against integration." I thought it would be interesting to have them make a poster. Either protesting *Brown versus Board of Ed* or in support of *Brown versus Board of Ed*.

Have the students write a letter to the school board. Why shouldn't schools be closed? Why shouldn't schools be closed regardless of who you are or what color you are or whatever? And so I thought that we could also do a five paragraph letter where, you know, where they're saying, "Hi, this is why I am writing, I'm writing because I think it's a bad idea for you to close the schools." And then three reasons why and then a closing so that they would you know. And write it specifically to Prince Edward County.