

Unit 4 – The Power of Civil Society

Module 2: The Chicago Public School Boycott of 1963-64

Lesson 1: Understanding the Context of the Boycott

Introduction

Inequities have existed in American educational systems throughout history. Inequities have deep roots in race, class, gender, culture, linguistic, and geographical differences. The readings in this module encourage students to analyze key social, economic, and political events in Chicago's history of public schools (cause/effect) in order better understand why the massive boycotts by mostly African-American students occurred in 1963 – 64. Before reading, students will have a chance to hypothesize about the root causes of these events.

Concepts

- Enduring Understandings - Individual citizens can and do access power and affect change through participation in civic society. Individual citizens and groups participating in movements and organizations continually shape and re-shape American society.
- Essential Questions - How do citizens participate effectively in a democracy? What are the conditions under which social movements emerge to address an injustice?

Student Outcomes

- Skills - Gather relevant information from authoritative sources to complete a research project. (RH12.9)
- Dispositions - Embrace that the process of change entails struggle.

Objectives

- SWBAT hypothesize on the root causes that led to the 1963-64 student boycotts.
- SWBAT pinpoint 2 to 3 root causes that led to the 1963 boycotts.
- SWBAT summarize key information on the historical root causes of modern education inequalities that led to 1963-64 boycotts.

Time

50 minutes (class 1 of 5 in the module)

Materials

- **Main Reading Packet**
- **Handout 1:** My Hypothesis on the Root Causes to School Problems
- **Handout 2:** Reading comprehension graphic organizer
- **Video,** '63 Boycott, Kartemquin Films, to be released spring of 2014

Procedure

- On a note card or sheet of paper, ask students to write down what *boycott* means and one thing they've either seen boycotted or would boycott. Ask them to turn to a partner and share their definitions and responses. (5 minutes)
- Ask students to make **their own hypotheses** about the historical root causes to the problems they listed using Handout 1. There are 3 parts to this short activity (see *Handout 1*). Their hypothesis will be revisited on Day 5. Walk through the room visiting with students, ensuring they are studying, asking them task-based questions, and answering any questions they may have. (15 minutes)

- Introduce the main packet and begin reading in the style that best suits your students; ask students to highlight or underline key points and important words. Encourage them to begin completing *Handout 2* as they read. (20 minutes)
- Show a clip from the film *'63 Boycott* (or use *Walkout*).
- Ask a few students to share their hypothesis and whether they still feel strongly in their statement.

Closure

Encourage students to re-visit their hypothesis and make any edits or revisions. Invite students to start off tomorrow's class with their re-visited reflections. Emphasize that we are working to understand the context in which a mass movement developed in 1963-64. Subsequent lessons will help students learn about and assess what strategies groups used to affect change in public schools during the 1963-64 boycotts.