



STUDY GUIDE *for*
THEATER OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT'S
presentation of

2004
Center
for the
Arts
2005

January 12-February 6, 2005
Wednesdays-Fridays at 8 pm
Saturdays at 2 & 8 pm
Sundays at 4 pm*



Open
the Door,
Virginia!

Created, Directed and
Choreographed by Dianne McIntyre
Original Music by Olu Dara



**Theater of the First Amendment
George Mason University's
Professional Company**

Artistic Director: Rick Davis
Managing Director: Kevin Murray
Artistic Associates: Paul D'Andrea &
Kristin Johnsen-Neshati

Presents

Open the Door, Virginia!
By Dianne McIntyre
Music by Olu Dara

Directed and Choreographed by
Dianne McIntyre
Musical Direction by Olu Dara

Scenic Design: Narelle Sissons
Costume Design:
David Burdick
Lighting Design:
Allen Lee Hughes
Sound Design: Jens McVoy
Dramaturgy:

Rick Davis, Suzanne Maloney
Company Management:
Kira Hoffmann
Technical Direction:
Ethan Osborne
Costume Shop Manager:
Kate McGhee
Master Electrician:
Allison Bodwell
Stage Management:
Valerie K. Wheeler*

Theater of the First Amendment
is a member of The League of
Washington Theatres and Theatre
Communications Group

Study Guide Editor:
Suzanne Maloney

Contributors:
Kinberley Cetron
Kristin Johnsen-Neshati
Rebecca Pepper
Graphic Design and Illustrations:
Robin DePalma

*Members of the Actor's Equity
Association, the Union of Professional
Actors and Stage Managers



Dear Teachers,

Welcome to *Open the Door, Virginia!* Dianne McIntyre's play centers on the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that helped establish equal educational opportunities in our country. Through words, music and creative movement, this production introduces younger audiences to the 1950s world of segregated classrooms and discrimination based on skin color.

This study guide is designed as a resource for teachers, scout leaders and other volunteers looking for reproducible background materials and related group activities tied to course curricula for students in grades 4 through 12.

We hope you will find this study guide useful as you explore this pivotal point in our nation's history. We welcome your comments by e-mail.

Enjoy the show,

Suzanne Maloney
Study Guide Editor

Ann
Charles
Martin
Dorothy Davis

Open the Door, Virginia! Study Guide

| | |
|---|-------|
| Letter of introduction..... | 2 |
| Interview with Olu Dara and Dianne McIntyre..... | 4-6 |
| Theater etiquette..... | 6 |
| Who Does What in the Theater..... | 7 |
| The 13th and 14th Amendments to the United States Constitution..... | 8 |
| Timeline of Civil Rights Events..... | 9 |
| Jim Crow Laws..... | 10 |
| Personal Histories - Beyond the Veil..... | 11-12 |
| <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> | 13 |
| Dorothy Davis and Moton High School..... | 14 |
| <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> | 15 |
| Oliver Hill..... | 16 |
| Thurgood Marshall..... | 17 |
| “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou..... | 18 |
| Segregation through the Eyes of a Child Reading List..... | 19-21 |
| Activities..... | 22-29 |
| Bibliography..... | 30 |

Moton
Anne
Home
John Harlan
Oliver Hill
Thurgood Marshall

Interview with Dianne McIntyre and Olu Dara

How did you learn to do what you do?

Dianne: For me, dance was innate, it was always inside of me. Formally, I learned through the great teachers I've had and by being a choreographer, working with inspiring directors. I learned about directing by working with great, expansive directors in theater and film. I also learned a lot from the performers I was working with. I've also learned by making mistakes.

Olu: I'm self-taught.

Who inspired you?

Olu: My family and my community. I had musicians in my family. My sisters and brothers played music. My grandmother sang old school songs. My father and godfather were singers.

Dianne: My parents inspired me because they were always supporting whatever aspect of the arts I was interested in pursuing. They were always in my corner—my cheerleaders, so to speak.

I've been inspired by a number of great artists, musicians Olu Dara and Don Pullin, visual artist Romare Beardon, actors Mary Alice and Avery Brooks, and writers of African American literature such as Zora Neale Hurston and Ntozake Shange (with whom I've collaborated a number of times). It was with her work I first started merging movement with language. The list goes on and on. Sometimes I've heard music or seen stellar performances by an actor, or seen a great work of visual art, and at those times I want my work to be like theirs, even though it may be in a different medium.

What drew you to this subject matter?

Dianne: In the early '90s, my sister was working on her PhD. Her dissertation was about *de facto* segregation in the Cleveland public schools. As she was developing her theories and doing her research, the subject of *Brown v. Board of Education* came up. She would share her findings with me. I became more and more interested in those details.

I was working with students at the University of Illinois who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Brown*. Based on their ideas, I did some research which gave me the idea of zeroing in on the Virginia case. I thought of myself at 16, 17 years old. I wondered, "Would I have had the courage to do what they did?" Reading about those students really inspired me.



Dianne McIntyre

Olu: I knew Dianne McIntyre had an interest in it, and it would be done at George Mason University.

What dance and music traditions do you plan to pull from as you create this piece?

Dianne: My own tradition, the styles I have developed over the years, from my modern dance training merged with the influence of jazz musicians. I will also draw from the social dances of the '50s, and maybe some from the popular movement traditions of today.

Olu: Just the African American musical tradition. The tradition is coming out of the African American experience. I'm not Chinese.

How did you begin collaborating on projects?

Olu: We were great fans of each other's work separately before we worked together, so we decided to collaborate because we had similar musical and theatrical backgrounds. Music, dance, theater—we had similar backgrounds in these art forms.

Dianne: We knew each other from the '70s music scene, but I don't really remember meeting Olu for the first time. It's like I've always known Olu. He once did a lecture/demonstration with me . . . and we were like family. In 1984, I was invited to do an outdoor concert at Lincoln Center. I had just finished a show, and I didn't really want to take this on, but they insisted. The person

I thought of working with was Olu because we could put something together quickly, and I knew it would be good. We'd only have to say two or three words and we'd have an understanding. So we've continued since then.

How do you start the creative process?

Dianne: First we'll talk, maybe just one conversation. Usually it has to do with social issues, government, philosophy, culture—we're just talking. As we talk, some ideas rise up. Because we're artists, we think, "Wow, maybe this could be a part of a theater or music piece. Usually, we'll synthesize that into like a thin film of an idea of where we're going to go. From there we just begin working. Our work develops as we rehearse with very little planning or composing ahead of time. It comes out of the people in the rehearsal process.

What's the best thing about working with each other?

Olu: We seem to have like minds on every aspect of our creative process and knowledge of our arts and culture. There are great similarities in the cultures of Cleveland and Natchez where we grew up.

Dianne: He's fun. He never takes himself too seriously. He's spontaneous, and he works amazingly well with all different kinds of people. I don't know where it comes from, but he has a broad background, a pool of sounds he



Olu Dara

uses. It's all inside of him. He's also rooted in the history of his own people. It's like he has an ancestral memory of the music and the way of life of all his ancestors.

What qualities do you look for in actors and dancers?

Dianne: The first quality is . . . will they go for it? Whatever you ask of them, they have to be willing to try. Also, they shouldn't have a limited idea of what dance is, that it doesn't have to just be a pretty, stylistic expression of the body. They should be great collaborators and work well in the group, and that they be very good storytellers, so we can see the story as they tell it.

How did you find the people you interviewed to create this piece?

Dianne: As for Mr. Oliver Hill, I was acquainted with his son, Oliver. In 1989, I did a residency at Virginia State University in Petersburg. That's when I met his son, who was a professor of psychology. I became friends with him and his family. I knew then that his father was a lawyer in the *Brown* case.

As for the Prince Edward County people, I was telling my cousin about the University of Illinois piece, and she knew an acquaintance connected with the people who were unable to go to school in Farmville. She put me in touch with Ernest Miller, the current assistant principal at Moton High School. He was very much involved in the 50th Anniversary celebration activities, so I called him and asked did he know anyone? He arranged the interviews.

I found more information on the internet. There are more people I want to interview. Rita Mosely, who lived in Farmville but is now in New Jersey, will put me in touch with more.

What aspects of creating and performing live theater do you most enjoy?

Dianne: I just love rehearsing. The creative part, the magic of it coming together, the ideas floating in the air from various people. Then it magically forms into something. In performance, I love the connection with the audience. You don't know if it's going to work until the live audience is there. You're creating in a vacuum, in a little box. The live audience and the performer have a spiritual connection. That's the real synergy that makes the work finally what it is. If it's really effective, it touches the heart and soul of the audience member. That's the goal.

What surprised you most about the people you interviewed?

Dianne: What surprised me most about the people in Prince Edward County was that they were some of the few people who were willing to talk about this.

Interview continued on next page

It's still painful to members of the community, and the community as a whole. It was an emotional experience for those who talked about it. Tears would well up in their eyes and mine. The other thing that surprised me, because we take things for granted, is how the lack of opportunity for education can make a person feel less than human—denigrated, so to speak. I had never confronted that before. It showed me the power—the treasure—of education.

What advice would you give students who want to pursue a career creating plays or music?

Olu: To be open to the history of as many musical cultures as you can, from the ancient to the present. Always try to take your musical knowledge to a higher level. Be able to add to the musical ideas of the past and advance them.

Dianne: First, take the steps to find your own voice. It's not that easy. You have teachers and people who inspire you. What is in your mode of expression that's just you? The "just you" aspect can be very close and very easy. One way to begin is to start with subjects that are close to you, that you love. Not earthshaking, necessarily, but it becomes earthshaking through your experience. Start with something you love, something you know, something you have lived. That passion is the fuel for your creativity.

What's the secret to good improvisation?

Olu: To have great knowledge about the works of the great improvisers of our culture, and personally being able to take creativity to a higher level. Having an inner eye. And having a keen sense of observation and respect for the human sensibility. To be aware and respectful of all cultures.

What do you hope audiences will take away from this piece?

Olu: A greater knowledge of American history and American artistic culture.

Dianne: I hope people, especially young people, will come to know the treasure, the power, in education, and gain a knowledge of the energy and sacrifices and courageous acts that helped impact the history of this country. If some people in the audience, even a minute few, are inspired to take some action that they feel might be the 21st century version of *Brown v. Board of Education* so that some idea is taken back to their own community, that would make me happy.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

You are about to attend a live performance. Theater is a participatory experience for everyone, actor and audience member alike. Proper theater etiquette ensures an enjoyable experience for you, other audience members and the performers.

- 1. As always, be polite. Listen to the instructions of your teacher, counselor or parent. If there is an announcement from the theater staff before the show, please pay close attention.*
- 2. Please do not talk, whisper or leave your seat during the performance. Appropriate laughter and applause are always appreciated by the performers.*
- 3. Remain with your group at all times.*
- 4. Food, drinks and gum are not permitted in the theater.*
- 5. Cameras, tape and video recorders, and any electronic devices (pagers, cell phones, games) are not permitted in the theater. These devices are a distraction to the performers and can disrupt the performance.*
- 6. Note the location of fire exits before the performance begins.*

Who Does What in the Theater?

The **playwright** writes a story in the form of an **action**. Something usually happens to transform the play's **protagonist** (or main character), requiring him or her to undergo permanent change. This process is often described as the character's **journey**. The playwright usually writes many drafts, called **rewrites**.

The **actor** is responsible for portraying a **character** through physical action and speech. The actor determines the character's **objective** (the thing the character needs to do) and figures out how he or she will deal with the **obstacles** that get in the way.

The **artistic director** determines the theater's mission and guides its **season planning**. He or she will often direct one or more plays per year and also advise guest directors working at the theater. The artistic director works closely with the **managing director** on the theater's budget, the **production schedule** and long-range planning. The artistic director and managing director meet with the **board of directors** to discuss fund-raising goals, and they work with the **development director** to write **copy for grant proposals**. The managing director also works closely with the **company manager**, who hires the guest artists, prepares their contracts, arranges any necessary travel and lodging, and communicates directly with the stage manager and director on the progress of rehearsals. The company manager (or, in some theaters, the **casting director**) collects actors' **headshots** (pictures and résumés) and calls actors to **audition** for the director.

The **director** is responsible for clearly presenting the **arc** of the play (the story's progress from beginning to end) and the total **stage picture**. He or she ensures that the actors are working together, that their interpretation of the play suits his or her **vision** and that the actors can be seen and heard. The director listens for **volume** and pays attention to **pacing**. If the play runs too long, he or she may make **cuts** to scenes. The director also has final say on the set, costume, lighting and sound design.

The **dramaturg** works with the director (and often the playwright) as a consultant on production. The dramaturg provides **research** on the historical or cultural background of the play and attends **rehearsal**, especially **run-throughs**. The dramaturg looks for many of the same things that concern the director. The dramaturg gives **notes** to the director, often in the form of questions, to help the director see what parts of the **production** may be unclear to the **audience**.

The **set designer** creates the physical environment of the play. He or she provides a **ground plan** (an overhead drawing to scale of the set as it fits into the performance space). The set designer may provide the director with **renderings** (painted or drawn) or a three-dimensional **model** of what the set will look like when it's built. The set designer works closely with the **props designer**, who is responsible for the furniture and hand-held objects used on stage.

The set designer gives his or her plans to the **technical director**, who estimates the cost of materials and labor for building the set, makes detailed **technical drawings** of how the set will be constructed, and hires the **carpenters** and **painters** to do the job in the **scene shop**.

The **costume designer** designs the clothing the actors will wear. The costumes can be **built, bought or rented**. The costume designer considers the **period** in which the play takes place, the season, the gender, age, social status, and personality of each character before designing

his or her clothing. Costume designers use **line** (or silhouette), **color** and **texture** (the weave of cloth) in creating their designs.

The costume designer gives his or her **renderings** to the **costume shop supervisor**, who takes the actors' **measurements**, **drafts the patterns** for **costume construction**, estimates the cost of materials and labor, and then hires **stitchers** to sew the costumes in the **shop**. The **wardrobe crew** is responsible for the costumes once the show is running. Their duties include laundry, repairs, **quick changes** and wig maintenance.

The **lighting designer** listens to the director describe his or her vision of the play in **production** meetings and then attends the **designer run-through** (a rehearsal of the whole play, usually about two weeks into a four-week rehearsal period). The lighting designer creates a **lighting plot**, which indicates where the **instruments** (or lights) will be located over the stage. The lighting designer creates a design that ensures the actors will be visible and also suggests **tempo** (pace) and **mood** (atmosphere).

The lighting designer gives the light plot to the **master electrician**, who will supervise an **electrical crew** to hang the necessary lights, often from a network of metal rods overhead, called a **grid**. The light may be diffuse or sharply outlined, depending on the type of lighting instrument used, and its position when **focused**. Color is controlled by slipping sheets of colored gel in front of each instrument. Light may also be patterned with the use of templates attached to the instruments, called **gobos**.

The **sound designer** is responsible for providing all the sound or music for a production. This may include live sound **cues** (such as an offstage doorbell), recorded **sound effects** (such as rain), **preshow** or **postshow** recorded music, or an original score. Sound can be used to **underscore** or complement the action on stage.

A **choreographer** may be hired to create dance **numbers** or movements to be performed by the actors. In the case of musicals, the choreographer and director **collaborate** with a **musical director**, who hires and trains the **musicians** to play the **composer's** score.

The **stage manager** takes notes throughout rehearsal, paying close attention to the **staging** (actors' movements), the **rehearsal props** the actors will need, and the places where lights and sound **cues** will be incorporated into the show. The stage manager often works with an **assistant stage manager**, who may be assigned the duties of prompting actors in rehearsal when they **call for lines**, and leading the **stage crew** through **scene changes** once **tech** (technical rehearsal) begins.

The **house manager** trains the **ushers** to greet the **patrons**, tear their tickets and guide them to their seats. The house manager needs to be prepared in the event that audience members come late, need special accommodations (such as handicap seating), or an emergency arises.

The **publicist** writes a **press release** describing the production for local papers, and invites **critics** to come to opening night. The publicist also prepares a **press kit** (including photos, a cast list and other helpful information) for the people who will write the **reviews**.

The **audience** comes to the theater and sees the show!

*The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments
to the
Constitution of the United States of America*

XIII - Slavery Abolished

Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.
2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

XIV - Citizen rights not to be abridged

Passed by Congress June 13, 1866. Ratified July 9, 1868

1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor to deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.
2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a State, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.
3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or Elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State Legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.
4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.
5. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

TIMELINE

of Civil Rights Events Leading to Brown v. Board of Education and beyond



1857

Dred Scott case was argued before Supreme Court. Decision was issued that black people, slaves or freedmen, could not be citizens of the United States.



1865

13th Amendment abolished slavery. Freedman's Bureau set up by Congress to help newly freed slaves. Ku Klux Klan was created to promote white supremacy.

1868

14th Amendment overturned *Dred Scott* decision.



1887

Jim Crow laws mandating discrimination were enacted to ensure segregation.

1896

Plessy v. Ferguson case was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. This decision established the idea of "separate but equal" for many aspects of society.



1909

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed to help provide legal representation for civil rights cases involving black citizens.

1951

Davis v. Prince Edward County School Board case was filed to challenge the Virginia segregation laws in public schools.



1954

Brown v. Board of Education case (made up of five civil rights cases) was argued before the Supreme Court. The ruling overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, leading the way for integration of public school systems.

1955

Further ruling on implementation of the *Brown* decision, known as *Brown II*, required desegregation to be executed "with all deliberate speed."



1964

Civil Rights Act passed, which allowed the federal government to intercede in segregation issues by cutting state funding and filing lawsuits against states that were not following the mandates.

Jim Crow Laws

After Reconstruction, many states enacted laws to limit further the civil rights of the newly freed slaves and black population. These rulings were called **Jim Crow laws**, after a character in the minstrel show song “Jump Jim Crow,” performed in blackface by Thomas Rice.

Varying from state to state, these laws covered interracial marriage, separate travel and dining facilities, education, housing and medical care, and voting rights. In total over 400 such laws were enacted between 1865 and 1967. The following are examples from state records:

Marriage

It shall be unlawful for a white person to marry anyone except a white person. Any marriage in violation of this section shall be void. (Georgia)

Education

Separate free schools shall be established for the education of children of African descent and it shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school. (Missouri)

Books shall not be interchangeable between the white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them. (North Carolina)

Teaching

Any instructor who shall teach in any school, college or institution where members of the white and colored races are received and enrolled as pupils for instruction shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each offense. (Oklahoma)

Restaurants

It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment. (Alabama)

Railroads

The conductors or managers on all such railroads shall have the power, and are hereby required, to assign to each white or colored passenger his or her respective car, coach or compartment. If the passenger fails to disclose his race, the conductor and managers, acting in good faith, shall be the sole judges of his race. (Virginia)

Public Facilities

No colored barber shall serve as a barber [to] white women or girls. (Georgia)



Photo: Courtesy of Library of Congress

Negro going in colored entrance of movie house on Saturday afternoon.

Personal histories as recorded in Center for Documentary Studies for the “*Behind the Veil Project*,” Duke University

CHARLES GRATTON - *Birmingham, AL*

Actually, when I got old enough to know myself, to really know I existed. I mean, I was born into this thing and raised in it. I can remember very close in my mind [times] when my mother would send me to this grocery store that was approximately a mile away, which was the only grocery store in Norwood. She would give me instructions before I'd leave home and tell me, “Son, now you go on up to this store and get this or that for me. If you pass any white people on your way, you get off the sidewalk. Give them the sidewalk. You move over. Don't challenge white people.” So I was just brought up in that environment.

They also had a park. It was about a block from where I was born and raised and where I lived, and it was known as the white people's park. They had a tennis court there and nice park trees, and blacks weren't allowed in that park. I mean we just couldn't go there. You know, it's just one of those things.

Some days I would be sick, and I could hear the schoolchildren playing during their lunch hour down at Norwood Elementary School, which was all white, and that's what really stuck in my mind. I'd say, “It's a shame that I have to walk so far to school every day.” When I'd hear those schoolchildren playing, I'd say, “Here I am a block-and-a-half from the elementary school, and I've got to walk six or seven miles to school every day.”

Even now, I can almost hear those kids, those white kids down at this elementary school playing, and the noise and laughing and playing, and I'm at home sick basically from the exposure of walking those six and seven miles to school every day. Whether it was raining or not, I had to go. So those are some of the memories that I have of my childhood growing up over at Norwood.

*Fourth-grade class, Potwin School,
Topeka, Kansas, 1950*



*The one-teacher Negro School, Veazy,
Georgia, 1941*



Photos: Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photo Division, FSA-OWI Collection

Personal histories as recorded in Center for Documentary Studies for the “*Behind the Veil Project*,” Duke University

ANN POINTER - *Macon County, AL*

I tell you, I had to walk to school every day and back no matter if it was storming. We could not ride the buses although we were paying taxes. But we couldn't ride those buses. Nothing rode the bus but the whites. And they would ride and throw trash, throw rocks and everything at us on the road and hoop and holler, “nigger, nigger, nigger” all up and down the road. We weren't allowed to say one word to them or throw back or nothing, because if you threw back at them you was going to jail. Now that's one of the things, that's the only bitter spot in my heart, and I shouldn't have it, but you know, you can't keep from thinking. We were paying tax, but yet we could not ride those buses; our school was the only [school for blacks]. We didn't have nothing at our school. They give the teachers some chalk and a couple of erasers for the board, but no kind of supplies. Not even heat. If your father didn't bring two loads of wood to that school, then they made you go to the woods and gather wood and you, you were not going to sit by the other children's fire. We were told, “All who ain't brought your wood, go to the woods.” We had to go out there and walk up in water trying to find wood to help heat the school.



*White school in Paxville,
South Carolina*



*Colored school in Paxville,
South Carolina*

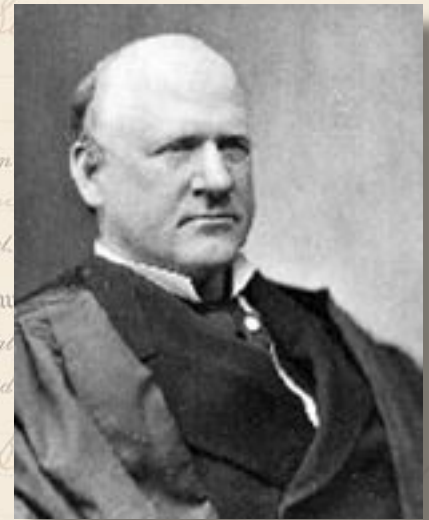
Photos: Courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History

PLESSY V. FERGUSON

Homer Plessy was a thirty-year-old shoemaker who was one-eighth black and seven-eighths white. On June 7, 1892, Plessy was arrested for taking a seat in the “white” car of a train on the East Louisiana Railroad. According to state law, Plessy was considered black and therefore obligated to travel only in “black” railroad cars. Plessy challenged the state in court, arguing that Louisiana’s railroad restrictions against blacks violated the 13th and 14th constitutional amendments. The presiding judge was John Howard Ferguson, who had previously challenged the Separate Car Act as unconstitutional with respect to trains running across state lines. In this case, however, Ferguson ruled that Louisiana could enforce the Separate Car Act, as long as its trains remained within state lines. Plessy was found guilty of refusing to leave the “white” car. Plessy appealed his case before the Louisiana Supreme court, where he was again found guilty. In 1896, Plessy’s case was brought to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the decision of the lower courts. Justice Henry Brown wrote the opinion for the seven-person majority, but it was the conviction of Justice John Harlan, the single voice of opposition, that foretold the direction of future segregation disputes.

*In the words of
Justice John Harlan:*

Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved. ... What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments, which, in fact, proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislation as was enacted in Louisiana.... We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people above all other peoples. But it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of law which, practically, puts the brand of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow-citizens, our equals before the law....



Although Justice Brown’s opinion for the majority never used the phrase “separate, but equal,” his emphasis on the legal equality of the “white and colored” races supported the idea that blacks and whites could legitimately be segregated in restaurants, public schools, and other venues. As Justice Harlan predicted, this point of view would eventually be proven fallacious, but not until the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

Dorothy Davis and Moton High School

In 1939 Prince Edward County opened the Robert R. Moton High School, built to accommodate 180 black students in Farmville, VA. By 1951, the school was bulging with 450 students. The school had no cafeteria, gymnasium or auditorium with permanent seating. After the parents submitted repeated requests for more space, the county agreed to erect three wooden buildings covered in tar paper on the property. Still overcrowded and not nearly as well maintained as the nearby white high school, Moton remained unsatisfactory as a learning environment. The P.T.A. asked the county to consider several sites for construction of a new school, but each was rejected. Finally, the students decided to act.



Exterior, Moton High School, 1951



Exterior, Farmville High School, 1951

After the parents submitted repeated requests for more space, the county agreed to erect three wooden buildings covered in tar paper on the property. Still overcrowded and not nearly as well maintained as the nearby white high school, Moton remained unsatisfactory as a learning environment. The P.T.A. asked the county to consider several sites for construction of a new school, but each was rejected. Finally, the students decided to act.

On April 23, 1951, the principal of Moton was sent off school grounds to resolve what ended up being a false truancy report manufactured by a student. While he was away, several students called the student body to an assembly being held in the auditorium. When the students arrived, Barbara Johns addressed them. Ms. Johns was sixteen years old and had determined that the only way to improve conditions for the students was to go on strike. She spoke, along with several other students, and when they finished, the student body decided to walk out. The parents agreed to support them, as did several influential black clergymen from the town, including Barbara's uncle, Vernon Johns.

The students were told to return to class but instead went to the NAACP and Oliver Hill to ask for legal representation. The lawyers encouraged the students to return to class, saying that they would meet with them. After the meeting, it was decided that the students' case would demand not just a new school, but also an end to segregation. The strike ended on May 7, two weeks after the 400 students had walked out, and the case was filed in Federal District Court in Richmond on May 23. The case was named *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* because Dorothy Davis's name was the first listed on the documents.

Even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the integration of public schools, Prince Edward County did not comply. The county instead chose to close its schools for five years, during which time many white students opted to attend private schools and most black students had no choice but to stay at home without receiving any education.



Auditorium, Moton High School, 1951



Auditorium, Farmville High School, 1951



Mrs. Nettie Hunt and daughter Nikie on steps of Supreme Court, 1954.

Courtesy: Library of Congress

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Barbara Johns' strike at Moton High School in Farmville, VA and the subsequent court case in Prince Edwards County comprised one of five desegregation cases from Virginia, Kansas, Delaware, South Carolina and Washington, DC that were united for argument in the U.S. Supreme Court under the title of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The lead attorney was Thurgood Marshall.

The main argument against segregation in public schools was that, although the mandated "separate but equal" facilities may have been attempted, black students were psychologically damaged by being kept away from white students.

The court agreed, and on May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren handed down the unanimous opinion that overturned both *Dred Scott* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, stating the segregation of black students "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone.... We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

Although this decision was a stride forward, it was met with a lack of enthusiasm and even anger in several southern states. The *Jackson, Mississippi Daily News* editorial in May 1954 read: "Human blood may stain Southern soil in many places because of this decision, but the dark red stains of that blood will be on the marble steps of the United States Supreme Court building."

In Virginia, former governor Harry Byrd started what was called the Massive Resistance, claiming that "if we can organize the Southern States for massive resistance to this order, I think that in time the rest of the country will realize that racial integration is not going to be accepted in the South." The Resistance was organized to impede any movement toward integration of the Virginia schools.

The actual implementation of this ruling was mandated by a separate Supreme Court decision known as *Brown II*. Desegregation of public schools was to be done with "all deliberate speed." This famous phrase was vague enough to allow the southern states the opportunity to move slowly. In Prince Edward County (one of the five original case sites), the local government decided to close schools for five years rather than comply.

The federal government threatened to cut off funding for state schools in response to their non-compliance and, through the 1964 Civil Rights Act, was given the ability to desegregate through legal action when necessary. Justice Hugo Brown, in the 1964 ruling, said "There has been too much deliberation and not enough speed in enforcing the constitutional rights which we held in *Brown*."

Oliver Hill

Virginia-born Oliver Hill attended Howard University Law School, where he met Thurgood Marshall. He set up practice in Virginia, where



Photo courtesy:
Library of Congress

he later became involved in a Norfolk civil rights case in 1940, demanding equal pay for black and white teachers. Several years later he succeeded in winning a Virginia Supreme Court case allowing a bus system for black students that would match the existing one for white students. He helped form the Old Dominion Bar Association and

became a member of the Richmond city council, most unusual for a black man of that era. In 1951, Hill and Spottswood W. Robinson III agreed to represent the students of Moton High School, an overcrowded and under-equipped black school in Farmville, VA in one of the landmark cases that became part of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. While he and the NAACP legal team worked on this case, his family was threatened and a cross was burned on his lawn. Hill's law firm has represented more civil rights cases than any other legal team in the southern United States. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1999 for his work toward the advancement of equal rights.



Thurgood Marshall



George Hayes, Thurgood Marshall and James Nabrit.

Born in Baltimore in 1908 as the grandson of a slave, Thurgood Marshall became the first African American U.S. Supreme Court Justice and a champion of civil rights for all people regardless of skin color or social class. After graduating from college, he was discouraged from applying to the University of Maryland Law School because of its all-white policy. Later, one of his first cases involved taking the same university to court to fight for the acceptance of an African- American student. Marshall attended Howard University Law School, where he met the newly appointed dean, Charles Hamilton Houston. During Houston's term, Howard Law shifted focus to civil rights litigation issues. He followed Houston to New York, where he became Chief Counsel for the NAACP. He became increasingly involved in cases challenging segregation issues, successfully arguing many cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1954, he represented Linda Brown in *Brown v. Board of Education* and was instrumental in striking down the laws requiring separate schooling for black and white children. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson nominated Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court. Up until that time he had argued and won more cases before the Supreme Court than anyone else in the country. He became a strong voice for equal legal and civil rights for the oppressed or historically under-represented. During his service on the Court, he championed the notion of affirmative action. In 1991, Thurgood Marshall retired from the Court, having facilitated great advancements in equal opportunity for all Americans.

Thurgood Marshall and Charles Houston with their client Donald Gaines Murray, 1935



Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

Reprinted with permission from the author

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with you words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.



Segregation through the Eyes of a Child

This is a reading list reprinted here courtesy of Carole C. Lohman and Kay A. Buchanan, University of Virginia Educational Library, Charlottesville, VA

Another kind of Monday / William E. Coles, Jr.
PZ7 .C67746 An 1996

Bayard Rustin: behind the scenes of the civil rights movement / James Haskins.
E185.97 .R93 H37 1997

Betty Shabazz: sharing the vision of Malcolm X / Laura S. Jeffrey.
BP223 .Z8 J44 2000

Black pioneers: an untold story / William Loren Katz.
E185.915 .K38 1999

A bus of our own / written by Freddi Williams Evans; illustrated by Shawn Costello.
PZ7 .E8853 Bu 2001

Chicken Sunday / Patricia Polacco.
PZ 7 .P75186 Ch 1992

Color me dark: the diary of Nellie Lee Love, the great migration North / by Patricia C. McKissack.
PZ7 .M478693 Cm 2000

Crossing blood / Nanci Kincaid.
PS 3561 .I4253 C76 1992

Crossing Jordan / Adrian Fogelin.
PZ7 .F72635 Cr 2000

Dangerous skies / Suzanne Fisher Staples.
PZ7 .S79346 Dan 1996

Daisy and the doll / by Michael Medearis and Angela Shelf Medearis; paintings by Larry Johnson.
PZ7 .M512745 Dai 2000

Darby / Jonathon Scott Fuqua.
PZ7 .F96627 Dar 2002

The double V campaign: African Americans and World War II / Michael L. Cooper.
D810 .N4 C66 1998

Fight on! : Mary Church Terrell's battle for integration / Dennis Brindell Fradin & Judith Bloom Fradin.
E185.97 .T47 F73 2003

The flight of Red Bird: the life of Zitkala-Sa / re-created from the writings of Zitkala-Sa and the research of Doreen Rappaport.
E99 .Y25 Z55 1997

Francie / Karen English.
PZ7 .E7232 Fr 1999

Freedom Summer / by Deborah Wiles; illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue.
PZ7 .W6474 Fr 2001

Freedom's children: young civil rights activists tell their own stories / Ellen Levine; illustrated with photographs.
E 185.615 .L477 1993

Freedom school, yes! / Amy LittleSugar; illustrated by Floyd Cooper.
PZ7 .L7362 Fr 2001

The friendship / Mildred D. Taylor; pictures by Max Ginsburg.
PZ7.T21723 Fr 1987
IVY BY-REQUEST

The geography of hope: Black exodus from the South after Reconstruction / Jim Haskins.
E185.2 .H35 1999

Getting away with murder: the true story of the Emmett Till case / by Chris Crowe.
F350 .N4 C76 2003

Goin' someplace special / Patricia C. McKissack; [illustrated by] Jerry Pinkney.
PZ7 .M478693 Go 2001

Hurry freedom: African Americans in Gold Rush California / Jerry Stanley.
F865 .S813 2000

I am Rosa Parks / by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins; pictures by Wil Clay.
F334 .M753 P37 1997

Ida B. Wells: mother of the civil rights movement / Dennis Brindell Fradin and Judith Bloom Fradin.
E185.97 .W55 F73 2000

I hadn't meant to tell you this / by Jacqueline Woodson.
PZ 7 .W868 Iaad 1994

Jefferson's children: the story of one American family
/ by Shannon Lanier and Jane Feldman; with photo-
graphs by Jane Feldman; and an introduction by Lucian
K. Truscott IV.
E332.2 .L35 2000

Learning by heart / by Ronder Thomas Young.
PZ 7 .Y8767 Le 1993

The land / Mildred D. Taylor.
PZ7 .T21723 Lan 2001

Leon's story / Leon Tillage, with pictures by Susan L.
F264 .F86 T55 1997

Let it shine: stories of Black women freedom fighters
/ Andrea Davis Pinkney ; illustrated by Stephen Alcorn.
E185.96 .P5 2000

Listening for Leroy / Betsy Hearne.
PZ7 .H3464 Li 1998

The meantime / Bernie MacKinnon.
PZ 7 .M1997 Me 1984
IVY BY-REQUEST

Mississippi challenge / Mildred Pitts Walter.
E 185.93 .M6 W24 1992

Mississippi trial, 1955 / Chris Crowe.
PZ7 .C8853845 Mi 2002

My home is over Jordan / Sandra Forrester.
PZ7 .F7717 My 1997

Night talk / by Elizabeth Cox.
PS3553 .O9183 N55 1997

The other side / Jacqueline Woodson; illustrations by
Earl B. Lewis.
PZ7 .W868 Th 2001

The other side of the river: a story of two towns, a
death, and America's dilemma / Alex Kotlowitz.
F574 .S26 K68 1998

Pickle and Price / Pieter van Raven.
PZ 7 .V347 Pi 1990

The red rose box / Brenda Woods.
PZ7 .W86335 Re 2002

The road to Memphis / Mildred D. Taylor.
PZ 7 .T21723 Rm 1990

Rosa Parks. Illustrated by Eric Marlow.
E 185.97 .P3 G74

Run away home / Patricia C. McKissack.
PZ7 .M478693 Ru 1997

Sister Anne's hands / Marybeth Lorbiecki; illustrated
by K. Wendy Popp.
PZ7 .L8766 Si 1998

Slam! / Walter Dean Myers.
PZ7 .M992 Sl 1996

Spite fences / Trudy Krisher.
PZ 7 .K8967 Sp 1994

The stones of Mourning Creek / Diane Les Becquets.
PZ7 .L56245 St 2001

The starplace / Vicki Grove.
PZ7 .G9275 St 1999

Storm warriors / Elisa Carbone.
PZ7 .C1865 Sw 2001

Tell all the children our story: memories and mementos
of being young and Black in America / Tonya Bolden.
E185.86 .B633 2001

There comes a time: the struggle for Civil Rights /
Milton Meltzer.
E185.61 .M53 2001

Through my eyes / Ruby Bridges; articles and
interviews compiled by Margo Lundell.
F379 .N59 N435 1999

Trouble don't last / Shelley Pearsall.
PZ7 .P3166 Tr 2002

Tulsa burning / Anna Myers.
PZ7 .M9814 Tu 2002

Under our skin: kids talk about race / Debbie Holsclaw
Birdseye.
E184 .A1 B5525 1997

Voices of freedom: an oral history of the civil rights
movement from the 1950s through the 1980s / Henry
Hampton and Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn.
E 185.61 .H224 1990

Walking to the bus-rider blues / Harriette Gillem
Robinet.
PZ7 .R553 Wal 2000

The Watsons go to Birmingham—1963 / Christopher Paul Curtis.

The well: David's story / Mildred D. Taylor.
PZ 7 .T21723 We 1995

What are you?: voices of mixed-race young people / [edited by] Pearl Fuyo Gaskins.
E184 .A1 W385 1999

When race becomes real: black and white writers confront their personal histories / edited by Bernestine Singley; epilogue by Derrick Bell.
E185.615 .W44 2002

White lilacs / Carolyn Meyer.
PZ 7 .M5685 Whi 1993

Witness / Karen Hesse.
PZ7 .H4364 Wk 2001

Yo! Yes? / by Chris Raschka.
PZ 7 .R18148 Yo 1993

ADDITIONAL TITLES

Bookpeople: a multicultural album / Sharron L. McElmeel; drawings by Deborah L. McElmeel.
PN 497 .M34 1992

The color of our future / Farai Chideya.
BF723 .R3 C45 1999

Having our say: the Delany sisters' first 100 years / by Sarah Louise and Annie Elizabeth Delany, with Amy Hill Hearth.
E 185.96 .D37 1993

The price they paid: desegregation in an African American community / Vivian Gunn Morris, Curtis L. Morris; foreword by Asa G. Hilliard, III.
LC2803 .T85 M67 2002

Racism, gender identities and young children: social relations in a multi-ethnic, inner-city primary school / Paul Connolly.
BF723 .P75 C65 1998

Refusing racism: white allies and the struggle for civil rights / Cynthia Stokes Brown.
E185.98 .A1 B76 2002

Selma, Lord, Selma: girlhood memories of the civil-rights days / Sheyann Webb, Rachel West Nelson, as told to Frank Sikora.
F334 .S4 W4

To show what an Indian can do: sports at Native American boarding schools / John Bloom.
E98 .G2 B56 2000

The Star Creek papers / Horace Mann Bond & Julia W. Bond ; edited by Adam Fairclough ; foreword by Julian Bond.
F377 .W3 B66 1997

Warriors don't cry: a searing memoir of the battle to integrate Little Rock's Central High / Melba Pattillo Beals.
LC 214.23 .L56 B43 1994

TITLES ABOUT SEGREGATION AND *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION*

Brown v. Board of Education: a civil rights milestone and its troubled legacy / James T. Patterson.
KF4155 .P38 2001

Dismantling desegregation: the quiet reversal of Brown v. Board of Education / Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton, and the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.
LC212.62 .O72 1996

Jim Crow's children: the broken promise of the Brown decision / Peter Irons.
LC212.52 .I76 2002

The NAACP's legal strategy against segregated education, 1925-1950 / Mark V. Tushnet.
KF4155 .T87 1987

Simple justice: the history of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's struggle for equality / Richard Kluger.
KF4155 .K55 1977

Teaching equality: Black schools in the age of Jim Crow / Adam Fairclough.
LC2741 .F35 2001

What Brown v. Board of Education should have said: the nation's top legal experts rewrite America's landmark civil rights decision / edited with an introduction by Jack M. Balkin ; Bruce Ackerman ... [et al.]
KF228 .B76 W48 2001

Classroom Activities

by Kimberley Cetron

Open the Door, Virginia! offers rich opportunities for thematic intersections with a range of curricula including social studies (World Civilizations, American civilization/history, Virginia history), social sciences, English/language arts, and visual/performing arts. The activities suggested in this guide can be adapted to meet standards across the curriculum for students in grades 4 through 12. The following topics, explored during the course of the play, may help you to think of the connections between *Open the Door, Virginia!* and your particular program of studies:

- Segregation/desegregation/integration
- Race relations/racism
- US/VA history, 1950s to present
- Power of individual to effect change
- Good of the group v. good of the individual
- Supreme Court/judicial branch of government
- Civil disobedience
- Massive resistance
- *Brown v. Board of Education*
- Civil rights movement
- Documentary theater
- Non-fiction
- Adolescence
- Leadership
- Interviewing as research (resource/technique)

Pre-Viewing Questions

Before attending the performance, allow students to consider some or all of the following questions. This can be accomplished through journal entries, or small/whole group discussion. A student-led discussion can be facilitated by providing students with a copy of the questions and allowing each student who answers a question to ask the next question.

1. What is the difference between “prejudice” (pre-judgment) and “discrimination” or “racism?”
2. Do you believe that everyone has prejudices/makes pre-judgments about others? Why or why not?
3. How do misconceptions about other people occur? What causes them? Are we born with them or do we learn them? How do we realize when we have misconceptions about others?
4. What are the aspects of our individual identity? Which are the most important or significant? Which are given and indelible, and which are within our power to change if we so choose?
5. How much of a difference can one person make, in the course of historic events or in the lives of others? (For example: The organization Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD] was created by one woman as a reaction to her own personal tragedy. Many students will be familiar with this.)
6. What are race relations like in the United States today? How have they improved since the 1950s? What changes still need to be made? How can people go about making these changes?

Pre-viewing Activities

Prediction

Predict what will happen in the play when:

- A Prince Edward County high school student asks her classmates to stop attending school until the racial discrimination against them is stopped
- Two NAACP lawyers take a case defending the students' right to integrated schooling before the U.S. District Court
- The Supreme Court rules segregation to be unconstitutional – and specifically, predict how the school board in Prince Edward County might respond
- The students who went on strike are eligible to return to school

Challenging Our Assumptions: Stereotyping and Misconceptions

The following activities can be used in language arts lessons to develop voice, to explore first person narrative and point of view, and as components of multigenre writing.

Activity 1

Sunburst Communications (1-800-431-1934) offers a series of four posters featuring adolescent faces of different genders and ethnicities with neutral expressions. Students can respond to the photos in terms of how they would react to the person if they were meeting them for the first time, perhaps in the mall or on the first day of school. Upon closer examination, they will find light text superimposed on the photography; this text is a first-person narrative introducing the person in the photo. Having “met” the person through his/her words, students can then reflect upon how their perception of the person may have changed after reading, or what they now see that they have in common, etc.

This is an excellent, non-threatening exploration of misconceptions, stereotyping, and prejudice/pre-judgment. Even when students do not respond to gender/ethnicity, often they respond to what they perceive to be expressions on the faces. One face is not of obvious gender, nor is any of the narrative indicative of the speaker's gender; this often elicits stronger responses from adolescents than any other aspect of the photographs.

This activity is an excellent preparation for Activity 2.

Activity 2

Students choose someone to interview who is “different” from them in some fundamental way: race, gender, ethnicity, etc. (This has also been successful with students who identified the different cliques they perceived within the social structure of their school, and then interviewed members of cliques to which they did not themselves belong). They will be exposed to a completely different kind of information from what they can glean through readings and other types of research/information gathering – what author Sven Birkerts refers to as “soft data” (for more on this, see his 1994 book *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*, published by Ballantine Books).

You will need to prepare them for this kind of information gathering by teaching them how to ask open-ended questions about someone's personal experience, beliefs, perspectives, etc. Prompts beginning “Tell me about...,” “Tell me a story about...,” “Describe...,” or “Talk about a time when...,” often yield better information and a greater comfort level than a list of prepared questions. You may also wish to extend their preparation to include time to brainstorm a list of potential interview questions, or to practice asking follow-up questions in a mock-interview classroom exercise. Students may need to discuss/brainstorm something as basic as the difference between open-ended and close-ended questions.

It is important ethically that students get the express permission of the person they interview to use their words for this purpose (a public performance) and that they use a pseudonym to protect the person's privacy. Even if the person being interviewed says s/he doesn't mind being identified, it is a better idea to protect his/her privacy than to disclose names and risk someone's discomfort should s/he change his/her mind later.

You may reproduce (cut/paste and photocopy) the following guidelines on a handout if it would be useful to your students.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Use a tape recorder or video camera. Have extra tape and batteries on hand.

Test equipment at the beginning of the interview to be sure it is working properly. If possible, use a back-up.

Plan to spend at least 30 minutes talking. It will take a little while for both you and the person you are interviewing to settle in and become comfortable enough to really talk.

Come to LISTEN.

The voice that should dominate the conversation should be that of your interviewee!

Make a list of questions you plan to ask in advance. The conversation may go in another direction, but it is important to go in with a plan. Think about why you chose to interview this person – why s/he interests you – and ask questions about things that you genuinely want to know.

Try to ask questions that will prompt a lengthy response or, even better, a story.

Avoid yes/no questions.

If you get a short response and want to know more, follow up by (gently..!) asking for more information. Invite the person to say more. Make him/her feel comfortable speaking to you. (“Could you talk more about...?” Or “You mentioned that...could you say a little more about that?”)

Example:

What is your favorite sport? (Soccer.)

Do you play soccer yourself? (Yes.)

OK...so far not very good info...

Tell me about the first game you ever won.

OR Tell me about a game that stands out in your mind.

OR Tell me about the most important game you ever played.

TRUST THE PROCESS.

Be a listener and a learner.

Put the person at ease.

Be willing to allow him or her to take the conversation “off topic” at times -- sometimes the really rich information is in what a person says at moments like this! -- but also feel comfortable asking what you really want to know -- more than once, or more than one way, if need be.

Once students have conducted their interviews, have them select a small portion to deliver verbatim, read aloud or memorized, as monologues in which they try to speak and behave as this person. You may want to discuss authenticity, stereotyping, or the difference between character and caricature if this is not already part of your students’ background.

Note: *It is important that students deliver the monologue as it was spoken, complete with pauses, ums, uhs, awkward grammar, dialect, and the like. This is where they gain insight into difference, especially with regard to voice. Use of video and audio tape is greatly encouraged – as students conduct their interviews, and for evaluating their delivery of the monologues in class.*

Allow for written reflection or discussion about what each student learned about the person s/he interviewed, and about him/herself – particularly where s/he sees similarities and differences between him/herself and the interviewee.

Post-viewing Questions

Whatever your plans for post-viewing discussion and/or activities, it is a good idea to give students a way to capture their own first impressions before engaging in discussion with others. We recommend that you first give students a chance to write journal responses about an issue to which they responded strongly in the play, and/or any of the following discussion questions:

1. What themes do you identify in the play, having seen the production?
2. What is the contemporary relevance of the themes you identified, or considered the most significant?
3. Dianne McIntyre felt strongly enough about the events surrounding the 1951 Moton High School strike to spend years conducting interviews, collaborating with others, developing a script, creating choreography, and directing the performance you attended.
 - a) What story or event moves you enough to invest this amount of time and energy in order to have the story told and remembered?
 - b) Through what art form or genre might you tell your story? Give an explanation about how/why you would choose this particular approach (i.e. theater, music, dance, sculpture, painting, mixed media, photography, animation, website design/construction, journalism/non-fiction writing, documentary or other filmmaking, multigenre writing, fiction, children's literature, other).
4. With which character in the play do you identify most? Why?
5. What is the value of education – to you, personally? Do you feel the same about the value of your education as you did before you saw the play? Would you be willing to leave school right now – as the students at Moton were willing to do – to take a stand for something you believe in? Why or why not? What might the consequences be for you – positive and negative ones – of taking such an action?
6. At what points in the story might someone (or a group of people) have made a different decision and changed the outcome of the events that followed? What might have been different as a result of that person's (or that group's) decision?

Post-viewing Activities

Ethnic Autobiography

Activity 1

Create a first person account of your own identity with regard to your race, nationality, religion, ethnicity/cultural background, or some other aspect of your identity that you consider to be essential to who you are. Represent these ideas in text, visual images, music/sound, or some combination of these media.

Activity 2

Create parallel accounts of related thoughts/events told from the points of view of two different characters in the *Open the Door, Virginia!* story – for example, Barbara Johns asking her classmates to go on strike and the thoughts running through the mind of one of the teachers she deceived to get the students into the auditorium for her speech. **OR**, create parallel accounts of related thoughts/events from your own point of view and that of any character(s) in the play.

Developing a Visual Narrative

*Students might begin by studying photographs (in books, textbooks, news articles, etc.) from the period of the play and/or the larger civil rights movement. You may wish to tailor the assignment to your curricular objectives by requiring that the photographs used in this assignment a) all be “found” objects, based on research or b) all be original photographs to support an original narrative thematically linked to **Open the Door, Virginia!***

Beginner:

Please begin this project immediately – you will need time to conceptualize/design your narrative, find your photographs, or take your photographs and develop the film (or print your photos, if you are using a digital camera). If you are taking/processing your own photos, count on the fact that you will encounter technical problems of some kind – don’t wait until the last minute!

Assignment:

- Tell a story of your choosing visually in approximately 10 photographs.
- No captions, no written explanation. Your photographs should be carefully considered and sequenced in such a way that they speak for themselves.
- As with all strong narratives, yours should have a beginning/middle/end, with special consideration given to the opening/closing images.
- You may work alone or with a partner on this project.
- Please submit in writing a description of a) your creative process and b) what you learned as a result of this assignment.

Advanced:

- Develop a complete narrative (character/relationship/conflict/beg, mid, end/ideology) in 18-30 photographic images.
- Complete a 1-2 page written synopsis of visual narrative – articulates explicitly character names, basic action, and intended ideological statement/ position/ message.
- Complete a 1-2 page statement regarding inspiration, writing process, and/or source material.
- Create a cover page with a title, a logo or representative visual image, and your name (or names, if working collaboratively).

It is a useful revision activity for students to bring their photos before the due date and exchange them with another student. Each can then take a turn telling the story aloud that they see in the photos, to allow the author/photographer to see where sequencing or clarity may need revision as they finalize their narrative.

Alternative Assessments for *Open the Door, Virginia!*

Options:

1) Characterization

Create a series of 5 soliloquies, letters, or journal entries for any character in the play.

Choose significant events/defining moments for the content of your writing – events that literally happened in the play or that you imagine happening based on events in the play.

Represent the beginning, middle, and end of the story (again – perhaps beginning and ending beyond the parameters of the play itself).

Keep in mind these indicators of character: What the person says, does, what others say about him/her, how s/he changes or resists change over time, and what these things reveal about him/her as a person.

Aspects of his/her physical appearance may be included if they reveal something deeper. Try to reflect these aspects of characterization in your writing.

Extra credit: Create a book-on-tape by recording yourself or someone who sounds like this character reading your first person POV (point of view) writings.

2) Theme

Identify a theme in the play.

Create a scrapbook, time capsule/artifact box, museum exhibit or some other means of displaying souvenirs, mementos, and physical artifacts that helps you illustrate the theme you identify.

Provide a brief written explanation for each – what it is, why it is significant to the story, and how it illustrates/represents the theme you chose.

Extra credit: Make a short documentary film in which you display your artifacts and present verbally (rather than in writing) their significance.

3) Plot

Create a series of photographs or illustrations corresponding to five significant events/defining moments in the play. Represent the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Be sure the conflict, climax, and resolution are all represented. Write a brief paragraph for each, explaining its significance (Or, if your illustrations are presented as a comic book, make this evident in the dialogue you create/include). Caption each of your photos/illustrations with a direct quotation, either from the play or from your research on the events of this period. Be sure to cite your sources.

4) Symbolism/metaphor

Create any type of visual art (sculpture, painting, etc.) that deals with the play and its core issues/values in abstract terms. Provide a written explanation of the significance of your artistic choices. This project can also be completed using symbolic story representation (SSR) or collage. Plan to include at least five distinct issues/values/elements in either case, along with their written explanations.

5) Readers' Theater

Choose one of the following:

Produce your own version of any scene from the play with full production values (costumes, props, scenery, blocking, etc.) Choose a key scene from the play and have your director, a narrator, or an appropriate character present important pre/post information to the audience to situate this scene in the context of the play

as a whole. You may present this scene during class time OR videotape it and submit your video on the due date.

OR

Create a playbill (program) for this play, casting it with professional actors whose work you know. Create dramaturgical notes that provide important background information for the play itself, its significance and/or your purpose in producing it, how it connects to the present and spans history, etc.

OR

Create a series of five sketches/designs for sets, lighting, or costumes with written explanations accompanying each to explain your artistic choices, rationale, research on the period, etc.

6) Design Your Own Project

Design your own project in order to utilize your talent/interests as your exhibit your understanding of the play. Have your design approved before beginning work on your project. Read through the other project descriptions to get a sense of the scope/focus of these projects.

Additional Activities

Additional activities for WRITING AND DISCUSSION

[Note to teachers: These are excellent opportunities to meet the demands of your curriculum through post-viewing activities. For example, you could teach the specifics of 'soliloquy' writing as a review or preview to Shakespeare study and have students draft soliloquies instead of monologues. You could explore published poems that address the thematic issues raised by the play – or slam poetry, unique in its capacity to “democratize” poetry and language use – as part of a year-long exploration of poetry/poetic use of language. You can use this play as a paired text to a core literature title or a unit of student choice reading. Social studies classes can use this as an opportunity to explore written forms that get less regular exercise; non-fiction genres rather than essay writing, multigenre research writing, creative writing and other forms of creative expression, etc.]

Activity 1

Write a poem, a song, a monologue or a story about either *Brown v. Board of Education*, or what happened at Moton High School.

Activity 2

Design a newspaper front page or a sign for May 17, 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court decided the Brown case.

Activity 3

There are still places where we feel segregation. Look around for places that don't feel integrated to you. Discuss and/or write about them.

Activity 4

What would you do if someone new came into your class? How could you make him or her feel welcome and become part of the group? What would make that person not feel that he or she belonged? Discuss and/or write about a time when you were in this situation.

Activity 5

What did the students in Prince Edward County risk when they went out on strike? What other young people do you know of who have served as leaders? Discuss and/or write your responses.

Activity 6

What pledge can you make to facilitate racial integration in your class, your school and your community? How might this pledge benefit anyone in your whole community, regardless of racial or ethnic background? Discuss and/or write your responses.

[Note to teachers: Southern Poverty Law Center provides an array of resources and instructional materials for teaching tolerance/cross-cultural understanding. Their publication "Ten Ways to Fight Hate" provides a list of guidelines for people who wish to take action but are unsure of how/where to start. You can access this and more information about the organization and its resources at <http://www.splcenter.org/>]

Additional activities for RESEARCH

Activity 1

Write down what your family does on the weekend. Interview someone with first-hand knowledge, use the internet, or explore print resources to find out which of these activities a black family in 1951 could not do.

Activity 2

Research the reactions to the *Brown* decision by the southern states and the federal government's response. Divide into two teams and debate the topic. Be prepared to argue either point of view.

Activity 3

Compare the career options of black and white high school graduates from fifty years ago. Now compare them with the career options of black and white students who did not graduate from high school. How do these options compare with those of high school graduates and non-graduates today?

Activity 4

Research the other four cases in *Brown v. Board of Education*. How are they alike and how are they different?

Interviewing as research

[Note to teachers: Please refer to Activities in the Pre-Viewing Activities section of this guide for resources supporting student interviewing.]

Activity 5

Talk to older people in your community who may have experienced segregation in the '50s and '60s. Write about their experiences, using their own words in addition to your own.

Activity 6

Interview a member of your family, school or community who remembers the Civil Rights movement. Find out about his or her impressions of that time. Was this person directly affected by school segregation or desegregation? Did this person play a role in bringing the races together? Write about their experiences, using their own words in addition to your own.

Additional activities for integrating the ARTS into instruction

[Note to teachers: Please refer to question #3 in the Post-Viewing Questions section of this guide, which can be extended from a written/verbal exploration of the question to the actual creation of whatever form of expression the student proposes. See also the projects suggested as Alternative Assessments in that section of the guide, many of which call for artistic expression through a range of art forms/genres.]

Activity 1

What images do you think of when you think of civil rights? How would you depict these images through theater, dance or music?

Activity 2

Choose any moment in history to stage dramatically, videotape, or represent through any of the visual/performing arts.

Activity 3

How can you convey ideas through the arts? Why might this be a more effective means of communication than other available media? Discuss these questions and/or represent your personal response through the medium of your choice.

Bibliography

“Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South.” Center for Documentary Studies for the Behind the Veil Project. 15 Oct 04 <http://cds.aas.duke.edu/btv/btv_basic_html/projectoverview.html>.

“Brown v. Board of Education: Virginia Responds.” The Library of Virginia. 6 Nov. 04 <<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/htm>>.

“Brown vs. The Board of Education.” Congress of Racial Equality. 14 Oct. 04 <http://www.core-online.org/history/brown_vs_board.htm>.

“Brown vs. Board of Education.” Landmark Supreme Court Decisions. Street Law & Supreme Court Historical Society 20 Sept. 04 <<http://www.landmarkcases.org/brown/home.html>>.

Cozzens, Lisa. “Plessy v. Ferguson.” African American History. 11 Nov. 04 <<http://fledge.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/early-civilrights/brown.html>>.

Falck, Susan, M.A. “Jim Crow Legislation Overview.” California State University-Northridge, CA 10 Nov. 04 <www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/pdf/>.

“Fight Hate and Promote Tolerance.” Southern Poverty Law Center. 14 Oct. 04 <<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/expand/>>.

“Frontiers in Civil Rights: *Dorothy E. Davis, et al. versus County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia.*” National Archives and Records Administration. 14 Oct. 04 <http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/brown_v_board_documents/brown_v_board.html>.

Hartin, Eric R. “Plessy v. Ferguson 1892.” United States of American Chronology. 12 Mar 03 Northpark University. 11 Nov. 04 <<http://campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/USA/PlessyFerguson.html>>.

“Jim Crow Laws.” Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. 10 Nov. 04 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Crow_law>.

“Jim Crow’ Laws.” Martin Luther King National Historic Site. 10 Nov. 04 <http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm>.

Lohman, Carole C and Kay A. Buchanan. “Segregation through the Eyes of a Child.” University of Virginia Educational Library 9 Nov. 04 <<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/education/instruction/brown.htm>>.

McElrath, Jessica. “Jim Crow Laws.” Your Guide to African-American History. 10 Nov. 04 <http://afroamhistory.about.com/cs/jimcrowlaws/a/jimcrowlaws_p.htm>.

Moton Museum: Timeline: History of the Robert Russa Moton High School. R.R. Moton Museum. 14 Nov. 04 <http://moton.org/history_ext.html>.

“Oliver Hill.” The History Makers:Lawmakers. 27 Oct. 04 <<http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/biography.asp?bioindex=689&category=lawMakers>>.

“Oliver White Hill.” Brown at 50 Fulfilling the Promise. 27 Oct. 04 <<http://www.brownat50.org/brownBios/BioOliverHill.html>>.

“Sitting for Justice.” National Museum of American History. 28 Oct. 04 <<http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/integrate/jimcrow/welcome.html>>.

“Timeline of Events Leading to the Brown v. Board of Education Decision, 1954.” U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. 9 Nov. 04 <<http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/integrate/jimcrow/welcome.html>>.

Williams, Juan. “Thurgood Marshall.” 20 Sept. 04 <<http://www.thurgoodmarshall.com/home.htm>>.