

Black Freedom Struggle: Learning Outcomes

This list, building on a core list from an article by Judy Richardson about Eyes on the Prize, was developed during the summer 2017 teacher institute at Tougaloo College.

1. The Civil Rights Movement was a primary force for the expansion of democracy for all.
2. The Movement was based on the work of thousands of local “ordinary” people who both organized and sustained it.
3. The Movement emphasized our responsibility to each other.
4. The Movement was based on humane values that brought out the best in each individual involved.
5. The Movement was not simply a series of spontaneous demonstrations--it was carefully planned and executed.
6. A continuity of protest exists within African American history.
7. Women and youth were a fundamental part of the leadership and the troops of the Movement.
8. The Freedom Struggle had many demands including an end to state sponsored and condoned violence, voting rights, access to health care, education, housing, land rights, recreation environmental justice, peace (anti-war), labor rights, desegregation, and more. Note that quality education has (always) been a primary focus of the Freedom Movement for African Americans.
9. The tactics of the Movement included economic boycotts, protests, grassroots organizing, economic coops, engaging other organizations, non-violence, freedom schools, public education, and more.
10. With few exceptions, the commercial white press played an active role in promoting white supremacy through lies, omissions, and exposing activists while the Black press played a key role in supporting the Movement.
11. Most Black people were not part of the Movement.
12. State sponsored and/or condoned violence against African Americans was frequent and random and carried out with impunity.
13. Even the smallest acts of solidarity by white people with African Americans were nipped in the bud with swift and harsh punishment.
14. Music played a major role in strengthening and unifying the Movement.
15. A diverse group of national and international participants was involved in the Movement.
16. Oppression and resistance existed in both the South and the North.