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## Separate is never equal: Utilizing question-answer relationships to foster elementary students' reading comprehension

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## *Separate Is Never Equal*

### Utilizing Question-Answer Relationships to Foster Students' Reading Comprehension

Elena M. Venegas

This chapter presents lessons for the English language arts and reading classroom using the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy with the book *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. Both the book and the lessons presented center on historical and contemporary issues surrounding school segregation, desegregation, and resegregation. Thus, the lessons presented in this chapter are also appropriate for the social studies classroom and may be used to address curriculum standards set forth by the National Council for the Social Studies.

Through its use of both explicit and implicit questioning, the Question-Answer Relationships strategy can be utilized to help students prepare for the types of questions that they may encounter on standardized examinations. *Separate Is Never Equal* and the lessons that follow celebrate the accomplishments of people of color and linguistically diverse peoples in enacting societal change within the United States.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE LITERATURE

Duncan Tonatiuh authored *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. Tonatiuh tells the lesser-known story of Sylvia Mendez, whose family's fight to end school segregation preceded the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) U.S. Supreme Court decision, which mandated school integration.

In 1944, the aunt of Sylvia Mendez attempted to enroll her own daughters along with Sylvia and her brothers in school in Westminster, California. The secretary informed Sylvia's aunt that her daughters could enroll but that the

Mendez children had to enroll in “the Mexican school” (Tonatiuh, 2014, p. 8). Sylvia wondered if her cousins could attend the Westminster school because of their fair skin, light-colored hair, and French surname.

As her niece and nephews faced colorism, Aunt Soledad did not enroll any of the children in the Westminster school. Instead, the children attended “the Mexican school” (Tonatiuh, 2014, p. 15). The facilities and quality of education offered to the Latinx students were inferior to those offered to white students, which reflected the perception of students of color held by district administrators. However, the Mendez family refused to accept the status quo.

*Separate Is Never Equal* can be used to discuss historic school segregation with elementary students through the lens of young children such as Sylvia Mendez and Ruby Bridges. *Separate Is Never Equal* is a springboard for discussing resistance to school desegregation as well as researching school (de)segregation within local communities at the middle school level.

For secondary students, the book serves as a catalyst for discussing the resegregation of contemporary schools. The rich resources included at the end of the book are tools that can enhance these lessons. For example, the author’s note on pages 36–37 features photos of the Mendez family and elaborates on their story while also addressing contemporary school segregation.

Other helpful resources in the book include a glossary, a bibliography of resources utilized by Tonatiuh to inform the book, and an index. These resources can help the reader to define terms, conduct further research, and easily locate information within the text. Finally, the Spanish language is interspersed throughout *Separate Is Never Equal*. An English translation immediately follows Spanish sentences. For example, “No queremos problemas” precedes the English translation, “We don’t want any problems” (Tonatiuh, 2014, p. 17). The inclusion of the Spanish language enhances the authenticity of the book, given its focus on Latinx characters, and may particularly resonate with Spanish-speaking readers.

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter recommends utilizing Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) to facilitate students’ reading comprehension of *Separate Is Never Equal* in the English language arts and reading classroom. However, the lessons presented below are closely related to social studies and could be used to address the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.

*Separate Is Never Equal* as well as the lessons presented below focus on historical segregation and could be used to address Standard 2, “Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the

past and its legacy” (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d., n.p.). The book and lessons focused on the fight to desegregate schools could address Standards 6 and 10.

Standard 6 focuses on societal changes and states, “Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance” (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d., n.p.). Similarly, Standard 10 states, “Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic” (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d., n.p.).

Raphael (1986) developed QAR, a reading comprehension strategy that requires students to answer both explicit and implicit questions. QAR can be taught to students as a test preparation strategy as it reflects the types of questions they will encounter on standardized examinations (Green, 2016). Several reading comprehension strategies are accessed via QAR such as (1) activating prior knowledge, (2) making connections, (3) recognizing text features, (4) summarizing, (5) visualizing, (6) clarifying, and (7) inferring (Raphael & Au, 2005).

QAR is a versatile strategy that is appropriate across disciplines, including mathematics (McIntosh & Draper, 1995), science (Kinniburgh & Baxter, 2012), and social studies (Ouzts, 1998). To use the Question-Answer Relationships strategy, a teacher should first preview the corresponding text(s). Then teachers can write one of four types of questions that fall into two categories: explicit questions and implicit questions.

The first type of explicit question is categorized as “Right There” (Raphael, 1986, p. 518), the answer to which is directly stated in the text. “Think and Search” questions (Raphael, 1986, p. 518) are also explicit questions yet task students with synthesizing information presented throughout the text. The second category of questions are implicit. “Author and You” questions (Raphael, 1986, p. 518) are implicit in that students must utilize their own background knowledge coupled with the text to answer them, whereas students can answer “On My Own” questions (Raphael, 1986, p. 518) solely using their own background knowledge.

When introducing QAR to students, it is important for teachers to first communicate the objectives of the lesson, model the strategy while verbalizing related terminology (e.g., Right There question, Author and You question), and engage students in guided practice before expecting them to independently use the QAR strategy (Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012).

Introduce an anchor chart depicting the two categories of questions and the two question types within each category to students when modeling QAR. Students will find this anchor chart especially useful as they begin to use



QAR independently. Social understanding, or understanding and sympathizing with others, may be built through reading (Kozak & Recchia, 2018). Thus, reading multicultural children's literature such as *Separate Is Never Equal* has the potential to foster students' social understanding of diverse peoples and/or cultural groups.

Furthermore, a study conducted by May (2010) suggested that strategies that engage students in making connections, visualizing, and inferring align well with culturally relevant teaching. These strategies, as previously mentioned, are among several reading comprehension strategies utilized in QAR. *Separate Is Never Equal* may particularly resonate with students of color whose predecessors faced racially and/or ethnically based segregation not only in the South but also in other regions of the United States.

Linguistically diverse students may connect with the language discrimination presented in the book. For example, the Westminster School District superintendent claimed to send Latinx children "to the Mexican school to help them improve their English" (Tonatiuh, 2014, p. 25). The lesson activities presented below use *Separate Is Never Equal* to facilitate conversations about school segregation and desegregation. Such conversations are also intended to foster respect for racial and/or ethnic diversity.

### Lesson Objectives

- "Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works" (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p. 19).
- "Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics)" (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p. 22).
- "Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience" (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p. 27).

- “Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge” (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p. 28).
- “Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles” (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p. 29).

## Content Overview

This lesson uses QAR with *Separate Is Never Equal* to foster a discussion about social issues such as racism, colorism, prejudice, and discrimination through questioning. For example, answering the Right There questions in Table 2.1 below can lead to a discussion of colorism. Colorism “centers on advantages and disadvantages of people who identify as the same race experience based on the lightness or darkness of their skin tone, and other external traits” (Keith & Monroe, 2016, p. 4).

Answering Think and Search questions, such as the one presented in Table 2.1, requires students to reflect on the book in its entirety as well as provide evidence from the text to support their assertions. The Author and You question presented in Table 2.1 requires the use of the text and students’ background knowledge. Answering this question may lead to a discussion of how the victory of one group of students of color (e.g., Latinx students) extended to *all* students of color.

**Table 2.1. Examples of Questions for Usage with Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)**

Question	Type of Question-Answer Relationship
Why were Sylvia and her brothers denied admission into the Westminster school while their cousins were not?	Right There
On what basis did the school district superintendents deny students of color admission into the white schools such as the Westminster school?	Think and Search
Why did other racially and ethnically based organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) write letters of support to the judges on the Court of Appeals?	Author and You
How has school integration affected the United States?	On My Own

On My Own questions, such as the one presented in Table 2.1, require students to rely solely on their prior knowledge. For elementary students, the primary focus of the lesson is on the *Mendez v. Westminster* case itself; however, the last activity connects the case with the larger nationwide fight against school desegregation.

For middle school students, *Separate Is Never Equal* serves as a springboard for research into resistance to school desegregation as well as research into the impact of school segregation and desegregation upon local communities.

After reading *Separate Is Never Equal*, secondary students will explore audio and video resources that present a historical view of desegregation as well as argue that American schools have become resegregated. Students will then research in preparation to debate whether contemporary schools are desegregated but not integrated or both integrated and desegregated.

## Materials/Supplies

- Above the Noise. (2018). *Why are schools still segregated?* Retrieved from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2TG9n0vc-4&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2TG9n0vc-4&feature=youtu.be)
- Anchor chart depicting Question-Answer Relationships
- Bell, Debra. (2013). George Wallace stood in a doorway at the University of Alabama 50 years ago today. *U.S. News & World Report*. Retrieved from [www.usnews.com/news/blogs/press-past/2013/06/11/george-wallace-stood-in-a-doorway-at-the-university-of-alabama-50-years-ago-today](http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/press-past/2013/06/11/george-wallace-stood-in-a-doorway-at-the-university-of-alabama-50-years-ago-today)
- Computer with Internet access and connected projector
- iPad/tablet with Internet access and headphones/earbuds
- National Public Radio. (2014). *Nearly six decades later, integration remains a work in progress*. Retrieved from [listenwise.com/current\\_events/159-racial-integration-in-little-rock-decades-later](http://listenwise.com/current_events/159-racial-integration-in-little-rock-decades-later)
- National Public Radio. (2003). *Wallace in the schoolhouse door*. Retrieved from [listenwise.com/lessons/286-george-wallace-at-the-school-door](http://listenwise.com/lessons/286-george-wallace-at-the-school-door)
- Photographs of the following historical figures: young Felicitas Mendez (Sylvia's mom), older Felicitas Mendez, young Sylvia Mendez, adult Sylvia Mendez, young Gonzalo Mendez (Sylvia's dad), David Marcus (attorney), Paul J. McCormick (federal judge), young Thurgood Marshall (attorney), Linda Brown of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Earl Warren (California governor), older Thurgood Marshall (Supreme Court justice), older Earl Warren (chief justice of the Supreme Court)

- Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer (two per student)
- Scholastic. (2018). *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement slide show for grades K–2*. Retrieved from [www.scholastic.com/teachers/slideshows/teaching-content/ruby-bridges-and-the-civil-rights-movement-slide-show-for-kinder/](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/slideshows/teaching-content/ruby-bridges-and-the-civil-rights-movement-slide-show-for-kinder/)
- Scholastic. (2018). *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement slide show teaching guide, kindergarten to grade 2*. Retrieved from [www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/ruby-bridges-and-civil-rights-movement-slide-show-teaching-guide-kindergarten-grade-2/#tech-tips](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/ruby-bridges-and-civil-rights-movement-slide-show-teaching-guide-kindergarten-grade-2/#tech-tips)
- Tonatiuh, Duncan. (2014). *Separate is never equal: Sylvia Mendez and her family's fight for desegregation*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers.
- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. (2018). *Script—Mendez v. Westminster re-enactment*. Retrieved from [www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/script-mendez-v-westminster-re-enactment](http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/script-mendez-v-westminster-re-enactment)
- WBUR News. (2018). *How the Boston busing decision still affects city schools 40 years later*. Retrieved from [www.wbur.org/news/2014/06/20/boston-busing-ruling-anniversary](http://www.wbur.org/news/2014/06/20/boston-busing-ruling-anniversary)
- Writing utensil (one per student)

## SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

### Elementary

#### Hook

The teacher will open the lesson with a hook to engage students by stating, “How would you feel if someone told you that you could no longer go to [name of school] because of your hair color? Instead, you must go to a school built especially for students with your hair color. Only your school is not as nice as the school for students with other colored hair. Your school is dirty and smelly and does not have any materials to enhance your learning. [Solicit students’ reactions, thoughts, and feelings to the presented scenario.]

“Before 1954, it was legal for schools to be segregated, and students were often separated based on the color of their skin. Today, we are going to read *Separate Is Never Equal* by Duncan Tonatiuh, which tells the story about one family’s fight against school segregation.”

### Activity No. 1: Teacher Read-Aloud and QAR Strategy

*Separate Is Never Equal* has a Lexile level of AD870L, which is at the reading level of grade 4 through grade 6 students, although recommended to be read by and/or with an adult. Thus, the teacher will first conduct a whole class read-aloud of the text.

The book is quite lengthy so the teacher may need to read it over the course of several days, depending on the students' grade level. Use the anchor chart (see example in Table 2.2 below) to introduce the QAR strategy to students in teacher-directed small groups wherein students will meet to apply the strategy to the book.

**Table 2.2. Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) Anchor Chart**

<i>Explicit questions</i>	<i>Implicit questions</i>
Right There The answer is directly stated in the text.	Author and You Use your background knowledge and the text to answer this question.
Think and Search The answer is stated across several sentences, paragraphs, and/or pages.	On My Own Answer this question using your background knowledge.

Be sure to use strategy-related terminology (e.g., On My Own question) as you model for students how to determine the answer to one of four questions (see examples in Figure 2.1 below) and identify the type of question-answer relationship. Model for students how to complete the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer for the first question.

Engage students in guided practice by answering two other questions, identifying the types of question-answer relationships, and completing the related sections of the graphic organizer. Finally, students will answer the last question as independent practice, identify the type of question-answer relationship, and complete the corresponding section of the graphic organizer on their own.

### Activity No. 2: Reenacting Sylvia Mendez's Story

As a class, students will reenact Sylvia Mendez's story. The script (i.e., *Script—Mendez v. Westminster re-enactment*) features prominent persons involved in the *Mendez v. Westminster* case, including Mendez family members, attorney David Marcus, (later U.S. Supreme Court justice) Earl Warren, and others. Prior to performing the reenactment, assign each student the role of one prominent figure. The roles of narrator and greeter must also be filled. As each figure speaks about his or her role in the *Mendez v. Westminster* case, another student will hold up a historical photograph of that person.

Question	Answer	Type of Question-Answer Relationship
Why were Sylvia and her brothers denied admission into the Westminster school while their cousins were not?		<p>Right There</p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>
On what basis did the school district superintendents deny students of color admission into the White schools such as Westminster school?		<p>Right There</p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>
Why did other race- and ethnically-based organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) write letters of support to the judges on the Court of Appeals?		<p>Right There</p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>
How has school integration affected the United States?		<p>Right There</p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>

Figure 2.1. QAR Graphic Organizer Using *Separate is Never Equal*

This reenactment could be performed within the classroom, for other students, or for the students' families. The purpose of this reenactment is to extend students' knowledge of the role each person played not only in the Mendez case but in advancing civil rights in California and the United States at large.



### Activity No. 3: Connecting the Experiences of Sylvia Mendez and Ruby Bridges

The purpose of connecting Sylvia Mendez's experience to that of Ruby Bridges is to expand students' understanding that school segregation was a problem across the United States and was not unique to California or to Latinx students. This will be accomplished through a whole class lesson using a slideshow featuring historical photographs from the civil rights era and of Ruby Bridges, an African American girl who integrated a previously all-white school.

First, read the accompanying teaching guide (i.e., *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement Slide Show Teaching Guide, Kindergarten to Grade 2*) to become familiar or reacquainted with the historical content presented in the slideshow. Then present the slideshow (i.e., *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement Slide Show for Grades K-2*) to the class.

Based on students' previous success and familiarity with QAR, students will work either independently or with a partner to complete a Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer applicable to both the book (i.e., *Separate Is Never Equal*) and the slideshow (i.e., *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement Slide Show for Grades K-2*).

Students will answer each question that you pose as well as determine the type of question-answer relationship for each question. Completion of this graphic organizer will be used as a means of formative assessment to determine (a) students' understanding of school segregation and integration and (b) students' application of the QAR strategy.

## Middle

### Hook

The teacher will open the lesson with a hook to engage students by stating, "Did you know that schools in our state (or a neighboring state or in the South) used to be segregated? School segregation was based on the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which stated that segregation was acceptable if facilities were 'separate but equal.' In terms of schools, this meant that some were designated as all-white schools whereas others were created specifically for African American students or Latinx students. Although the law stated that schools and other institutions could be segregated based on race and/or ethnicity, the institutions that served whites were often far superior to those that served people of color.

"Therefore, people of color were not treated equally to whites. Today, you are going to read *Separate Is Never Equal* authored by Duncan Tonatiuh. In the book, Tonatiuh describes the poor conditions of a 'Mexican school' in California attended by Sylvia Mendez and other Latinx children. Tonatiuh



Question	Answer	Type of Question-Answer Relationship
Slide 1	Was school segregation limited to California? If not, in what region was school segregation primarily concentrated?	Right There Think and Search <b>Author and You</b> On My Own
		(This question can be answered the <i>Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement</i> slide show for grades K-2 and the students' knowledge, acquired previously from reading <i>Separate is Never Equal</i> )
Slide 5	What were some similarities between the African-American schools in the South and the Mexican-American schools in California? How did the African-American and Mexican-American schools differ from the White schools?	Right There <b>Think and Search</b> Author and You On My Own
		(This question requires students to synthesize information presented in both the book and the slideshow.)
Slide 6	How was the <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) Supreme	<b>Right There</b> Think and Search Author and You

Figure 2.2. QAR Graphic Organizer for Elementary Students Using Ruby Bridges Slideshow

Court ruling connected to Sylvia's case, *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947)?

On My Own

(The answer to this question is explicitly stated in the Author's Note in *Separate is Never Equal* and can be expounded upon using information presented in the slideshow.)

Slides 9-11

Right There

Why do you think many people were angry that Ruby and the other African-American girls integrated what were previously all-White schools?

Think and Search

Author and You

On My Own

(Students can answer this question solely using their background knowledge.)

Figure 2.2. (continued)

then describes the *Mendez v. Westminster* court case, which challenged school segregation in California.”

### Activity No. 1: Paired Reading and QAR Strategy

While the readability level of *Separate Is Never Equal* is appropriate for most middle school students, reading the book in pairs may be helpful, especially for students who may read dysfluently. First, rank-order students based on their current grade-equivalent reading levels (e.g., seventh grade) and their fluency rates (e.g., 180 words correct per minute). Next, divide the list in half and pair students accordingly. For example, in a class of ten students, #1 is paired with #6 whereas #5 is paired with #10.

This approach ensures that the less fluent reader receives scaffolded support, if needed, from his or her partner while ideally preventing the more fluent reader from becoming frustrated with his or her partner. After a paired reading of *Separate Is Never Equal*, students will continue to work with

partners to complete the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer (see example in Figure 2.1). Be sure to display the QAR anchor chart (Table 2.2) for students to refer to as they complete the graphic organizer.

To ensure that students have correctly applied the QAR strategy, call on random pairs of students to share their answer to each question as well as provide the type of question-answer relationship behind each question. (Note: This activity assumes that students were previously introduced to QAR. If students are unfamiliar with QAR, please see Elementary, Activity 1 for a guide on how to introduce the strategy.)

### *Activity No. 2: Resistance to School Desegregation*

Just as Westminster School resisted school desegregation in the Mendez case, school desegregation was met with resistance across the United States. Despite the favorable U.S. Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), many academic institutions continued to be segregated and had to be forcibly integrated.

Independently, each student will read Bell's (2013) article "George Wallace Stood in a Doorway at the University of Alabama 50 Years Ago Today." This article is unique in that Bell writes of resistance to school desegregation from a contemporary perspective. However, the article also includes the historical perspective through photographs and snippets of articles published during 1963, at the time of these tumultuous events, in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Reading this article provides students with greater insight into the historical perspective of school desegregation. After reading Bell's article, each student will complete the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer (see Figure 2.3). This graphic organizer will be collected as a means of formative assessment to determine (a) students' understanding of resistance to school desegregation and (b) students' application of the QAR strategy.

### *Activity No. 3: School Segregation and Desegregation in the Community*

For this activity, students will work in small groups to research the impact of school segregation and desegregation in a community. Ideally, students will research their own or a neighboring community, if applicable. Students can interview family and/or community members who experienced school segregation and/or desegregation. Students can also visit the local library to access related newspaper articles and/or other media resources published during that time. The Internet and other online resources can also serve as sources of information.

Question	Answer	Type of Question-Answer Relationship
<p>Why do you think that the majority of African-American students in the South attended higher education institutions known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, such as Tuskegee Institute, during this era?</p>		<p>Right There</p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p><b>Author and You</b></p> <p>On My Own</p> <p>(This question can be answered using Bell's (2013) article and students' prior knowledge.)</p>
<p>How did the federal government respond to states who resisted school desegregation? Why did the federal government respond in this way?</p>		<p>Right There</p> <p><b>Think and Search</b></p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p> <p>(This question requires students to synthesize information presented throughout Bell's (2013) article.)</p>
<p>Who was President of the United States during this era, and what was political support for desegregation like during this era?</p>		<p><b>Right There</b></p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>

**Figure 2.3. QAR Graphic Organizer for Middle School Students Using Bell's (2013) Article**

(The answers to these questions are explicitly stated in Bell's (2013) article.)

Who were some of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who helped to champion the cause of African-Americans and other people of color?

Right There

Think and Search

Author and You

On My Own

(Students can answer this question solely using their background knowledge.)

If school segregation was not an issue in the local community, then students can identify a community whose school desegregation was well-publicized (e.g., Little Rock, Arkansas—Little Rock Nine; Topeka, Kansas—Linda Brown of *Brown v. Board of Education*; Oxford, Mississippi—James Meredith at University of Mississippi). Again, students can use the Internet and other online resources to inform their research. Students can likewise visit the library to gather other sources of information. Present your students with questions to guide their research such as:

- What were schools in (selected community) like at the time of segregation?
- What efforts were made to desegregate schools in (selected community)?
- Who were the individuals, groups, and/or organizations that played a role in desegregating the schools in (selected community)?
- How did the people of (selected community) respond to efforts to desegregate their community schools?
- When were schools in (selected community) ultimately desegregated?
- How did the desegregation of schools impact (selected community)?

Students will then present their research before the class, school, and/or families via a multimedia presentation. Use a rubric to evaluate each group's presentation.

## Secondary

### Hook

The teacher will open the lesson with a hook to engage students by stating, “Segregation found its legal basis in the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which stated that whites and people of color could be segregated so long as their facilities were ‘separate but equal.’ Prior to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, therefore, students could legally be segregated into separate schools based on their race and/or ethnicity. Although it is now against the law for schools to be segregated, many argue that schools are more segregated now than they were prior to 1954.

“Today, you are going to read *Separate Is Never Equal* authored by Duncan Tonatiuh. In the book, Tonatiuh describes how Sylvia Mendez and other Latinx families challenged school segregation in California. This book will serve as a basis for research into historical and contemporary school segregation in the United States.”

### Activity No. 1: Independent Reading and QAR Strategy

The readability level of the book *Separate Is Never Equal* makes it appropriate for most high school students to read the book independently. After independently reading *Separate Is Never Equal*, students will continue to work individually to complete the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer (see example in Table 2.3). Be sure to display the QAR anchor chart (Table 2.2) for students to refer to as they complete the graphic organizer.

To ensure that students have correctly applied the QAR strategy, call on random students to share their answer to each question as well as provide the type of question-answer relationship behind each question. (Note: This activity assumes that students were previously introduced to QAR. If students are unfamiliar with QAR, please see Elementary, Activity 1 for a guide on how to introduce the strategy.)

### Activity No. 2: Contemporary Schools: Desegregated or Integrated?

The second learning activity tasks students with accessing three media files related to historic school desegregation and the contemporary resegregation of schools in many American communities. Using an iPad/tablet with Internet access and headphones/earbuds, students should independently watch the video *Why Are Schools Still So Segregated?* by Above the Noise (2018).

Students will also listen to an audio file, *Nearly Six Decades Later, Integration Remains a Work in Progress*, produced by National Public Radio (2014). Finally, students should listen to another audio file, *How the Boston Busing Decision Still Affects City Schools 40 Years Later*, produced by WBUR News (2014).

After watching the video and listening to both audio files, each student will complete the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizer (see Figure 2.4). This graphic organizer will be collected as a means of formative assessment to determine (a) students' understanding of school desegregation and resegregation and (b) students' application of the QAR strategy.

Question	Answer	Type of Question-Answer Relationship
<u>Video: <i>Why are schools still so segregated?</i></u>		<p><b>Right There</b></p> <p>Think and Search</p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>
What is cross-district bussing? What is the phenomenon known as "White flight"?		<p>(The answers to these questions are explicitly stated in the video by Above the Noise (2018).)</p>
<u>Audio: <i>Nearly six decades later, integration remains a work in progress</i></u>		<p>Right There</p> <p><b>Think and Search</b></p> <p>Author and You</p> <p>On My Own</p>
Why do contemporary students at Central High School claim to be desegregated but not integrated?		<p>(This question requires students to synthesize information presented in the audio file published by National Public Radio, Inc. (2014, January 13).)</p>

Figure 2.4. QAR Graphic Organizer for Secondary School Students Using Media Files



Audio: *How the Boston busing decision still affects city schools 40 years later*

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Right There

Think and Search

Author and You

**On My Own**

Why were some in the Boston community resistant to cross-district busing and school integration?

(Students can answer this question solely using their background knowledge.)

- Video: *Why are school still so segregated?*
  - Audio: *Nearly six decades later, integration remains a work in progress*
  - Audio: *How the Boston busing decision still affects city schools 40 years later*
- 

Right There

Think and Search

**Author and You**

On My Own

To what factor(s) do community members attribute the racial segregation of their local schools?

(This question can be answered using the video and both audio files as well as students' prior knowledge.)

**Figure 2.4.** (continued)

### Activity No. 3: Research and Debate

As a cumulative activity, divide the class in half to prepare for an in-class debate. One-half of the class will argue that contemporary schools are merely legally desegregated (but not integrated) whereas the other half of the class will argue that contemporary schools are integrated (and desegregated).

In preparation for the debate, students will need to conduct research in order to cite evidence from credible sources that support the position to which they were assigned. Students can visit the school and/or community library as well as use the Internet to conduct their research.

The class will then engage in an in-class debate with each side arguing the merit(s) of their assigned position. The winner of the debate could be determined by either (a) the teacher, (b) a majority vote by the students, or (c) an outside panel consisting of other teachers, administrators, community members, and so on.

## Tips for Struggling/Reluctant Readers

Students for whom reading can be challenging will benefit from additional time to read *Separate Is Never Equal*. By receiving the book in advance, students could read it with a teacher, paraprofessional/tutor, or at home with a family member. Reading can be a challenge for approximately 80% of students with learning disabilities (Levine & Wagner, 2003), and these students particularly benefit from the same strategy being reinforced across their classes (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Utilizing QAR in other discipline-related classes (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) helps students internalize the strategy for independent use and become more proficient in applying it to a variety of texts. Students who find reading challenging may also benefit from a personal-sized version of the QAR anchor chart, which can be kept at their desks, to facilitate their application of the strategy. The following are means of differentiating the lesson for unique activities.

- Elementary, Activity 2: Provide students for whom reading is challenging with the reenactment script in advance. This will allow these students to have additional time to read and practice the speech with a teacher, paraprofessional/tutor, and/or family member at home.
- Middle, Activity 1: This activity already provides differentiation for students for whom reading is challenging as students will be assigned a partner with whom to read *Separate Is Never Equal*. When partnered appropriately, each student for whom reading is a challenge can receive scaffolding from his or her partner.
- Middle, Activity 3 and Secondary, Activity 3: Encourage students to use an array of print and non-print texts as they conduct their research. Students should not be discouraged from reading texts that are either below or above their current grade level.

## Tips for English Learners

Regardless of grade level, English learners can listen to an audio version of *Separate Is Never Equal* to enhance their comprehension of the text. (Note: The audio CD is listed in the Additional Online Resources section.) Following along with the audiobook while reading the printed version can resolve any unknown words that English learners may encounter as well as model the pronunciation of such words.

To complete the second QAR graphic organizer (i.e., Elementary, Activity 3—Figure 2.2; Middle, Activity 2—Figure 2.3; Secondary, Activity 2—Figure 2.4), each English learner can be paired with a student who is bilin-

gual in both English and the English learner's first language or with a native English speaker. The following are means of differentiating the lesson for unique activities.

- Elementary, Activity 2: Provide English learners who were selected for one of the reenactment roles with the corresponding script in advance. This will allow English learners to have additional time to practice the speech with the teacher, paraprofessional/tutor, and/or family member at home.
- Middle, Activity 2: For this activity, English learners can listen to the audio file, *Wallace in the Schoolhouse Door*, using an iPad/tablet with Internet access and headphones/earbuds.
- Secondary, Activity 2: English learners can read the transcript of the audio file, *How the Boston Busing Decision Still Affects City Schools 40 Years Later*.

### Evaluation of Skills

- Lesson objective 1: To evaluate students' synthesis of information from various print and non-print texts, teachers can rely upon students' completed Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) graphic organizers. (See evaluation of lesson objective 2 below.) Additionally, middle school teachers can evaluate students' small group presentations whereas secondary teachers can evaluate their students' in-class debates. (For both activities, see evaluation of lesson objective 3 below.)
- Lesson objective 2: To evaluate students' application of the QAR strategy, collect the second QAR graphic organizer that students completed. For elementary students, this QAR graphic organizer (i.e., Figure 2.2) was based on *Ruby Bridges and the Civil Rights Movement Slide Show for Grades K-2* and completed either independently or with a partner during Activity 3. For middle school students, this QAR graphic organizer (i.e., Figure 2.3), for Bell's (2013) article "George Wallace Stood in a Doorway at the University of Alabama 50 Years Ago Today" was completed independently during Activity 2. Secondary students independently completed this QAR graphic organizer (i.e., Figure 2.4) during Activity 2 for three files (1) *Why Are Schools Still So Segregated?* (Above the Noise, 2018), (2) *Nearly Six Decades Later, Integration Remains a Work in Progress* (National Public Radio, 2014), and (3) *How the Boston Busing Decision Still Affects City Schools 40 Years Later* (WBUR News, 2014).

- Lesson objective 3: To evaluate students' use of print and technological resources to conduct and present research, a teacher-created rubric should be utilized. Prior to creating the rubric, consider the traits of a successful presentation. Middle school teachers will need to create a rubric for students' small group presentations on the impact of school segregation and desegregation within a local community (i.e., Activity 3). The *Oral Presentation Rubric*, listed in the Additional Online Resources section below, may be of use in creating or adapting a rubric to evaluate the presentations. Secondary teachers will need to create a rubric to evaluate the in-class debate on whether contemporary schools are desegregated yet not integrated or integrated. This rubric will be needed to evaluate learning during Activity 3. The *Debate Rubric*, listed in the Additional Online Resources section below, may be of use to create or adapt a means of evaluating the in-class debate.
- Lesson objective 4: To evaluate students' understanding of and respect for racial and/or ethnic diversity, teachers can utilize the *Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework*, which is listed in the Additional Online Resources section below. The framework presents grade-level outcomes for students in the following grade bands: K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Teachers may utilize *Separate Is Never Equal* and the lessons presented within this chapter to foster discussions of societal issues such as racism, colorism, prejudice, and racially and/or ethnically based discrimination within their classrooms. While this chapter presented lessons primarily for the English language arts and reading classroom, these lessons could easily address curriculum standards set forth by the National Council for the Social Studies.

In fact, the Question-Answer Relationships strategy presented in this chapter is appropriate for the social studies classroom (Ouzts, 1998), and uniform strategy usage is recommended across the content areas (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Nevertheless, the use of multicultural children's literature across the content areas is imperative. Multicultural children's literature helps to foster cultural understanding by integrating culturally relevant pedagogy in the content areas.

The lessons presented in this chapter, for example, rely on a transformative approach to culturally relevant pedagogy (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2017). This transformative approach required students to think critically to generate their own conclusions about historical and contemporary issues surrounding school segregation, desegregation, and resegregation through reading and synthesizing information from various sources.

Moreover, multicultural children's literature such as *Separate Is Never Equal* can be used to affirm and celebrate the accomplishments of students of color, linguistically diverse students, and students of diverse cultural heritage. This is not only important for traditionally marginalized students but also to foster cultural understanding among students from dominant populations.

### ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

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