Focus/Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss with students the goals of the feminist movement in the 1960s by examining the NOW Bill of Rights. Additionally, students will explore the question: Can Civil Rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer be considered an icon for the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s?

Vital Theme and Narrative

Patterns of Social and Political Interaction

Objective

Students will examine the various goals of the feminist movement. Students will explore the life of SNCC activist Fannie Lou Hamer.

Procedures

A) Opening the Lesson

1. Distribute students National Organization for Women (NOW) Bill of Rights (1968)

2. Students will summarize the NOW Bill of Rights. Students might create a list of these rights on classroom board or butcher paper. After students acquire a general understanding of the aims by NOW, proceed to examine the life of Fannie Lou Hamer to ask the question. To what extent can Fannie Lou Hamer be coined as a feminist in the 1960s and 1970s? Would she have considered herself a feminist? Why or Why not?

B) Developing the Lesson

1. Students will read article on Fannie Lou Hamer, analyze pictures, and listen to speeches by Fannie Lou Hamer in order to answer the question. To what extent can Fannie Lou Hamer be coined a feminist in the 1960s and 1970s? Would she have considered herself a feminist? Why or Why not?

   a. A biographical article discussing Fannie Lou Hamer with pictures
      http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/articles/51/fannie-lou-hamer-civil-rights-activist

   b. Fannie Lou Hamer’s speech and transcript at the 1964 Democratic Convention:
      http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/flhamer.html

   c. Various speeches by Fannie Lou Hamer, particularly #5
      http://www.archive.org/details/pra_powerofafricanamericanwomen_5
d. Read this quote by Fannie Lou Hamer to students… “She went into the doctor for a cold and came out with a Mississippi appendectomy.”

Mississippi Appendectomy - A phrase made popular by Civil Rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer referring to involuntary sterilization procedures. Beginning during the heyday of the American eugenics movement (1920s and 1930s), poor black women were made subject to hysterectomies or tubal ligations against their will and without their knowledge. The practice was considered particularly frequent in the Deep South, although coercive sterilization practices took place in many areas of the country and also affected other women of color, women with physical disabilities whom physicians judged to be “unfit to reproduce,” and poor white women as well.


C) Concluding the Lesson
1. Students will reexamine the NOW Bill of Rights and the article, speeches, and interviews of Fannie Lou Hamer to debate the question: Can Fannie Lou Hamer be considered an icon for the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s?