Road Trip to the Future: Exploring Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Time Frame   90 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How is equity supported in higher education?

- Why is there a greater need for Historically Black Colleges and Universities today?

Summary

In this lesson, students learn the history, culture, and importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Students begin by becoming familiar with some of the many famous and successful people who attended HBCUs. Then, after reading a short article about the history of HBCUs, they perform their own research on an institution of their choice. Students then create an Anchor Chart to share with the rest of the class. This lesson is designed to work in tandem with a campus visit to an HBCU, but it can also work well as a standalone lesson.

Learning Goals

- Students analyze the historical background of HBCUs.

- Students collaborate to research several HBCUs to identify which school best meets their personal and academic goals.

Attachments

- [Lesson Slides—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs.pptx](#)
- [Research Project—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Research Project—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Research Project—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs.docx](#)
- [Research Project—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs.pdf](#)
- [The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs.docx](#)
- [The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Road Trip to the Future HBCUs.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities handout (attached, one per student)
- Research Project handout (attached, one per student)
- Devices with internet access
- Pens/pencils
- Big sticky notes or large piece of paper
- Markers/colored pencils
- Scissors (optional)

Engage

Introduce the activity using the attached **Lesson Slides**. **Slide 2** contains the lesson title.

Inform students that you are showing them different individuals and are sharing a brief background about each individual. As you walk students through each slide, ask them what these individuals have in common.

Display **slide 3**, and give a brief overview of the individuals showcased on the slide. Repeat this step until **slide 7**.

> **Teacher's Note**
>
> If you wish to shorten the activity, chose 4-5 individuals from the list to showcase.

Display **slide 8** and pose the following question to the class: *From politicians to entertainers to corporate America, what do all of these successful African Americans have in common?*

Encourage a few students to share out their responses, then move to **slide 9**. Explain to students that all the individuals mentioned on the slides have attended, graduated from, or are currently attending an Historically Black College or University. Explain to students that HBCUs are institutions that were established with the intention of providing access to higher education to the African American community.

Display **slide 10** with the lesson objectives.

Explore

Display **slide 11** and play "The Importance of HBCUs" video. *Stop the video at the time stamp 5:35.* Following the video, ask students what stood out the most to them from the video. Invite discussion of anything they are interested in learning more about.

Once students have shared out, display **slide 12**. Distribute the attached handout titled **The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities**. Using the Stop and Jot strategy, instruct students to pause after each section and summarize what they have learned in the appropriate section of the handout.

After students have completed the reading and filling out the handout, have them discuss their ideas with their Elbow Partner.

Display **slide 13** and pose the essential questions. Have students use what they learned from the video, handouts, and personal thoughts to respond.

- *Why have Historically Black Colleges and Universities been so important?*

- *Do you think they will continue to be important?*

Explain

Divide students into groups of 3 and distribute the attached **Research Project** handout to the entire class. Have students work together to conduct their research but fill out the information on their own handout.

Display **slide 14** with instructions for the next steps.

> **Teacher's Note: Planning for a Campus Visit**
>
> If your class is completing this lesson in preparation for upcoming campus visits to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, it may be helpful to have students research the institutions they will be visiting. Otherwise, you can let students decide the institution they will research.

Explain to students that they will conducting research over different Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Have students follow the link on **slide 14** to "The Hundred-Seven HBCU" list. Give them some time to explore the site independently as they prepare to conduct their research.

Students select the tab labeled "HBCU List" and choose one school they want to research as a group. In order to help decide which school to research, invite students to look first at the schools by state, displayed on the right-hand side of the list. Once they have determined which state they are interested in, they should look for that school on the left side. You can also assign schools to groups or have them choose from a smaller list you have curated. Make sure no two groups research the same school.

Once each group has selected a school, review the instructions on the top of the handout where it is labeled "Group Research." Instruct students to use Page 2, labeled "Notes Organizer," to fill in their information.

Students can conduct their research directly from the school's website, but if they use any other resources, they should list those on the right-hand side of the Notes Organizer. Take a moment to walk students through each category, providing a short explanation of the expectations.

> **Optional Guided Practice**
>
> If you wish to model the activity, choose a school from the list and select a category from the Notes Organizer to fill in.

Instruct students to focus on the research portion of the handout to prepare for constructing an Anchor Chart.

Extend

Display **slide 15** with instructions for the [Anchor Chart](#). As students near the end of their research, introduce the instructions for the Anchor Chart. Have students follow along with the instructions on the bottom of the first page of the Research Project handout, labeled "Anchor Chart Instructions and Requirements."

The Anchor Chart should be a visual representation of the research already conducted. Walk students through all of the expectations listed on the Research Project handout.

Emphasize to students that they have plenty of freedom in how they choose to present information in the charts but are expected to create well-organized and easy-to-read charts with correctly spelled words. They are also expected to include all the required elements outlined in the instructions.

> **Teacher's Note: Anchor Chart Images**
>
> Encourage students to include as many visuals as possible. This can include printed images from the school's library or something students draw.

Evaluate

Display **slide 16.** After students have finished their Anchor Charts, they will participate in a [Gallery Walk](#). Have students hang their posters on the walls of the classroom and give each student a sticky note.

Have each group elect a spokesperson to stay behind with their poster as the representative for their group. They will be responsible for explaining what is included on the chart and why it is important information for them to know.

Instruct the rest of the class to rotate to each poster and use their sticky note to leave a question on an Anchor Chart that interests them. When coming up with the question, have students choose the school they are most interested in. If students wish to ask multiple questions, provide extra sticky notes.

Optional Activity: If Preparing for an Upcoming Visit

If this activity is done in preparation for a campus visit, have students turn in their questions and bring them to the campus visit to ask at the school.

Optional Activity: Research Questions

If students are not preparing for an upcoming visit to the school, instruct them to research the answer to the question on their sticky note. Once they have found the answer to the question, have them write it on the same sticky note and put it back on the poster. Invite students to share out the answers they found.

Students can turn in their final question(s) and responses to serve as an evaluation.

Follow-Up Activities

Consider following up this activity by taking students on a campus visit. Use The Hundred-Seven to help narrow down what HBCUs are in your state or in your surroundings.

Research Rationale

HBCUs have had an enduring commitment to supporting and housing a safe space of unfettered creativity for African Americans in order for them to reach their highest potential. It is a place where their voices are heard and affirmed (Albritton, 2012; Van Camp, et. al., 2010, Bracey, 2017). When an African American student is surrounded by African American peers, professors, leaders, and professionals, it enables them to see a broad range of positive African American role models, which is instrumental in their growth and development as a professional (Albritton, 2012). HBCUs also accept academically deficient students, usually from a lower socio-economic background, and support them. When compared with aligned HBCU/PWI data, HBCUs outperform PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions) in graduation rates (Hardy, et. al., 2019; Gordon, et. al., 2020, Bracey, 2017).

Resources

- Albritton, T. (2012). Educating our own: The historical legacy of HBCUs and their relevance for educating a new generation of leaders. *The Urban Review, 44*(3), 311-331.
- Bracey, E. (2017). The significance of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the 21st Century: Will such institutions of higher learning survive? *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 76*(3), 670-696.
- Gordon, E., Hawley, Z., Kobler, R., & Rork, J. (2020). The paradox of HBCU graduation rates. *Research in Higher Education, 62*(3), 332-358.
- Hardy, P., Kaganda, E., & Aruguete, M. (2019). Below the surface: HBCU performance, social mobility, and college ranking. *Journal of Black Studies, 50*(5), 468-483.
- The Hundred-Seven. (n.d.). *HBCU Listing.* The hundred-seven. http://www.thehundred-seven.org/hbculist.html
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor charts. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk/carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
- NBA on TNT. (2021, March 7). *Spike Lee, Common, 2-Chainz & More Discuss the Importance of HBCUs | NBA All-Star 2021 [Video].* YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMohxcEn-dw
- Van Camp, D., Barden, J., & Sloan, L. (2010). Predictors of black students' race-related reasons for choosing an HBCU and intentions to engage in racial identity—Relevant behaviors. *Journal of Black Psychology, 36*(2), 226-250.