Lesson Plan: The Tuskegee Airmen Story

Teacher:
Grade Levels: Middle and High School
Subjects: History, Government and Citizenship
Duration: 4 days

**Objective:** Students will understand how *aviation* was the root of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

[Image](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tuskegee_airmen_(archive_photo).jpg) This image is available from the Online Public Access (OPA) of the United States National Archives and Records Administration under the National Archives Identifier 535763.

**Overview:** The story of The Tuskegee Airman has inspired many books and movies. In this class, the teacher recounted the story of the “Negro” men who were legally judged to not be fit to operate planes based on the *inferiority* of their race. From political, historical, and human perspectives, students were inspired by the story of the men who became the first Black American Pilots in WW II. Their superior abilities as pilots and their honor and dignity as human beings shadowed others. These men were a powerful catalyst for the Civil Rights movement in the United States that began to gain strength in the 1950-60’s with the emergence of Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Note To Teacher:** Based on the story, activities can be designed throughout the content areas. For the students in the Aviation Camp 2014, the effects of the story and discussions were felt throughout camp activities. For further reading, the following books (and many more) are available on Amazon:
• **The Tuskegee Airmen: An Illustrated History 1939-1949**, by Joseph Carver, Jerome Ennels, and Daniel Haulman; New South Books 2011
• **The Red Tails: World War II Tuskegee’s Airmen**, by Steven L. Jones; Perfect Learning 2000 (grade levels 4 and up)
• **The Tuskegee Airmen** by Lynn M. Holman and Thomas Reilly; Arcadia Publishing 1998

**Curriculum Standards:**

**History.A:** A student should understand that history is a record of human experiences that links the past to the present and the future. A student who meets the content standard should:
1) understand chronological frameworks for organizing historical thought and place significant ideas, institutions, people, and events within time sequences;
2) know that the interpretation of history may change as new evidence is discovered;
3) recognize different theories of history, detect the weakness of broad generalization, and evaluate the debates of historians;
4) understand that history relies on the interpretation of evidence;
5) understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical experience;
6) know that cultural elements, including language, literature, the arts, customs, and belief systems, reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time and know how the cultural elements influence human interaction;
7) understand that history is dynamic and composed of key turning points;
8) know that history is a bridge to understanding groups of people and an individual’s relationship to society; and
9) understand that history is a fundamental connection that unifies all fields of human understanding and endeavor.

**Government and Citizenship.A:** A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process. A student who meets the content standard should:
1) understand the necessity and purpose of government;
2) understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty;
3) understand how nations organize their governments; and
4) compare and contrast how different societies have governed themselves over time and in different places.