

Bringing History Home Project: Final Evaluation Report

Center for Evaluation and Assessment
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Evaluation Staff: Julie M. Kearney & Emily R. Lai
Donald B. Yarbrough, Director
Center for Evaluation and Assessment
College of Education, 210 Lindquist Center South
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
Coe-CEA@uiowa.edu

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Executive Summary

This report is the final evaluation report for the *Bringing History Home Project (BHH)*, which was funded in 2001 as part of the US Department of Education *Teaching American History* program. The project was evaluated throughout the grant period by a third-party evaluator, the Center for Evaluation and Assessment at The University of Iowa. Evaluation methodology included classroom observation, teacher surveys, teacher individual and focus group interviews, collection of student work products, student focus groups, and written student assessments. Data collected through these methods was analyzed and summarized and summaries are included in the Appendix.

The purposes of the evaluation were to contribute to project improvement, to document the actual activities and procedures of the project as implemented, to investigate changes over the three years in participating teachers and their implemented curricula in participating schools, and to begin to develop outcome measures to document changes in students who learned with these developed curricula.

The *BHH* project produced a set of 14 curricular units in American history intended for use in grades K-6. Since project inception, the curricula have undergone revisions, teachers have created adaptations and three additional units authored by project participants have been added to the *BHH* curricula. To accompany the written curricula, the project provided professional development in history content and pedagogy to 29 teachers in the Washington (Iowa) Community School District. Throughout the grant period, the project also provided ongoing intense support from the project staff in terms of personal visits and frequent email and telephone communication. Prior to the grant, there was little or no history taught at the elementary level in the community served by the project. Over the course of the grant over 1200 students were taught the curriculum, the great majority receiving instruction in history for two to three years of their elementary years.

The project's reach went beyond teaching historical content, historical thinking skills, and pedagogical techniques – the *BHH* project fostered excitement, motivation, and interest in teachers and students to learn and study history. Teachers report that they feel rejuvenated about teaching in general. Some teachers were particularly energized by the content and pedagogy of *BHH* and became natural leaders within their peer groups and school, spreading their enthusiasm to the more reticent teachers. About a third of the teachers have taken on an expanded role as mentors to new teachers learning the *BHH* curriculum in the second phase of the project, *BHH II*.

As a result of the *BHH* project, in general, teachers are more knowledgeable about historical content, more able and confident in their use of new methods of effective history teaching pedagogy, feel they know more about their students, and have increased their expectations about their students' ability to learn to think historically. As teachers began to repeat implementations of the curricula each new school year, many gained confidence with new methods of teaching history – using primary sources, creating timelines and maps, analyzing photographs, artifacts and documents, and inviting historical inquiry – as well as becoming more comfortable in their growing familiarity with historical content. They also prospered from the encouragement the project staff offered them to be creative in their teaching and to always be responsive to student needs.

Students learned to be wise consumers of historical information. From the early grades on, students learned that there may be multiple accounts of an event and that they need to interpret what they see and read. They also learned to ask insightful questions about documents

and photographs, use what they learned about history to create historical narratives, support inferences they made with historical evidence, and ways to use evidence from maps, graphs, and charts to help them understand a time in history.

Like the teachers, many students expressed interest and excitement in learning history. Students enthusiastically participated in class discussions, produced written work that showed command of historical thinking skills and creativity, and participated in group and individual presentations on historical topics with exuberant confidence. From kindergarten and first graders presenting their personal histories to second graders explaining their “environmental superheroes”, to third graders arguing the injustice of literacy tests for African American males, to fourth graders acting out the effect of the Great Depression on family life, to fifth graders interviewing grandparents who had lived during WWII, to sixth graders acting as wax museum figures of famous American women, the children displayed a fervor for learning about history.

In addition, students developed a strong empathy for people from another time. Third graders were saddened by the blatant wrong of slavery and segregation as well as the labor practices during industrialization, fourth graders wrote passionately about the extreme hardships of dustbowl denizens and drew sensitive portrayals of tenement life during the progressive era, and fifth graders were outraged by the treatment of Japanese-Americans during WWII. While support for historical identification or empathy was written into the curriculum, the teachers picked up on empathy as a “hook” for successful teaching of history and as a natural extension of their goals in teaching morals and character.

From the beginning of the *BHH* project, building and district administration in Washington provided strong support. In return, the project had a clear-cut positive impact on the schools and community as a whole, promoting family and community cooperation and unity into the history activities. Parents and other family members helped with constructing personal histories, many community members became involved with history-related activities such as an Ellis Island simulation and an Industrialization unit craft night, and family members and other community members became valuable resources for providing first-person accounts of life during the depression and WWII.

A final measure of the success of any project is seen in its sustainability. The *Bringing History Home* curricula in its entirety has been adopted as the official curricula of the Washington Community School District for grades K-6 and, during the one year no-cost extension period of the grant, the project director conducted workshops for teachers in the junior and senior high schools to fully incorporate the *BHH* methods into the districts’ secondary curricula.

Introduction

The evaluation of the *Bringing History Home* project was planned and designed at the time of the original conception of the project and began prior to the receipt of project funding. From the beginning of the funding cycle, it has been an integral but independent third party evaluation sub-project with a separate sub-contract and budget.

The following description of the evaluation begins with the statement of evaluation purposes and intended users and addresses evaluation design, methodology and implementation before providing summaries of evaluation information, discussion and conclusions.

Purposes of the Evaluation

The primary purposes of the *Bringing History Home* project evaluation were to contribute to project improvement (a formative purpose), to document the actual activities and procedures of the project as implemented (accountability and monitoring) to investigate changes over the three years in participating teachers and their implemented curricula in participating schools (a summative purpose), and to begin to develop outcome measures to document changes in students who learned with these developed curricula (a summative purpose). The evaluation team, project directors and staff, and other interested stakeholders, including teachers and steering committee members, reviewed and contributed to the evolving evaluation design and its implementation over the three years of the project. Two guiding questions for on-going review of the evaluation as implemented were the accuracy of the description of the project as implemented and the quality of the investigation of intended and unintended outcomes. . Evaluators were in regular contact with the project director throughout the grant period to share pertinent information as soon as it was collected. As a result of this frequent communication, all components of the evaluation, even those in place for summative evaluation purposes, could also serve a formative purpose.

This evaluation report is intended for several primary audiences, beginning with the sponsoring agency, the US Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. Other primary intended users are the project director, steering committee members, participant teachers and administrators, and all other interested stakeholders. The First and Second Year Annual reports, also submitted to the Department of Education, provide some additional documentation not included in this final report.

Because the project was in development (i.e., not an established program) the primary focuses of the evaluation were description of the implemented project for purposes of dissemination and replication and documenting changes in the participating teachers and their curricula, especially changes in the ways teachers taught history and their beliefs and opinions about teaching history. One important change in teachers that resulted from the project and its evaluation was a new attitude and some new skills related to student outcomes assessment in the history classroom. Thus the focus on developing reliable and sound student evaluations in the service of student learning is also addressed in this report.

Brief Description of the Project

The *Bringing History Home Project (BHH)* was funded in 2003 as part of the US Department of Education's *Teach American History Program*. The major stated goals of the *BHH* project were to:

- Provide high quality K-6 history curricula that develop both student content knowledge and interpretative research skills.
- Promote disadvantaged and minority students' successful participation in the study of American History.
- Instruct K-6 teachers in discovery and guided inquiry methods for history teaching. Implement the *BHH* project in the classroom and evaluate the effectiveness of its components.

The project took place in the Washington Community School District (WCSD) in Washington, IA. Washington has a population of 7,047 according to the 2000 US Census. It is a

rural community, located about 30 miles from the closest metro area, Iowa City, with a population of approximately 65,000. The school district agreed to participate in the project at the system level with all teachers in grades Kindergarten through sixth participating. There are two elementary schools in Washington: Stewart Elementary, which serves Pre-K to third grade, and Lincoln Elementary, which serves grades four to six. Table 1 shows the combined student demographics of the two elementary schools for 2003-04, the first year of the project. Assuming a new incoming kindergarten class of approximately 120 students each year, the number of students who learned history through the *BHH* project during the grant period would be approximately 1200 with the majority of those students receiving more than one year of instruction.

Table 1. Racial/Ethnic Identity of Males and Females at Washington Stewart and Lincoln Schools and Total Lunch Program Participation by Grade Level, Spring 2003

	Racial/Ethnic Identity								Lunch Program		
	Males				Females				TOTAL	Free	Reduced
	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian			
K	43	5	1		51	3	2		105	27	8
1	63	6	1		51	8	2	1	132	41	9
2	56	3			54	7		1	121	33	9
3	37	9	3		52	5	2		108	28	7
4	54	5	3		48	11	3		124	49	6
5	52	7			54	7	1		121	30	6
6	71	6	3		63	7	1	1	152	40	12
TOTAL	376	41	11		373	48	11	3	863	248	57

Note. Race/ethnicity is in order by number in group.

Source: Washington Community School District 2003.

At the outset of the project there were 26 classroom teachers in grades K-6 with a mean of 18 years of teaching experience and a range of 2-33 years. Over the grant period, there were only a few personnel changes and the number of teachers teaching K-6 ranged from 26-28.

The first year of the project was primarily for curriculum development, documented in the first and second year project and evaluation reports. During the second year and third year, project staff worked with the WCSD teachers to prepare them to teach the curriculum through a series of teacher professional development summer workshops and frequent visits by the project staff to the schools. The curriculum was originally delivered to teachers on paper and by year three was fully available via the project's website, www.bringinghistoryhome.org. All books, other print materials, and media for the project were also delivered during the second year of the project. At the time of this report, bibliographies and resources used in teaching the curriculum are also listed on the *BHH* website.

The complete set of curricula includes two complete history units for each grade. Each grade level unit was written to be developmentally appropriate for the students and to flow logically into the next grade's curriculum. The curricular units for the *BHH* project are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *BHH* Curriculum Units

Grade Level	First Unit	Second Unit
Kindergarten	History of Me	Children Long Ago
First Grade	My First Grade History	Community History
Second Grade	History of Immigration	Environmental History
Third Grade	History of Industrialization	History of Segregation
Fourth Grade	The Progressive Era	The Great Depression
Fifth Grade	19 th and 20 th Century Native Americans	WWII – The Home Front
Sixth Grade	Pre-History Methods and Controversies	Women's History and Biography

During the second year of the project, each participating teacher taught one curriculum unit and during year three (and in subsequent years), each teacher taught two grade level curriculum units. [During 2004-05, participating teachers who teach Grades 1-3 wrote an additional unit for each of those grades that employs the *BHH* methods and have added those units to their curriculum.]

The curriculum units were designed to promote the use of primary source documents and to invite student inquiry. All units employ hands-on historical inquiry methods such as photo and document analysis, creation and use of timelines, mapping, and construction of historical narratives. The curricula also introduce thematic elements in the early grades that recur in later units. For example, discussion of the impact of mechanization and industry on society throughout US history is seen in the second grade environmental unit and then reappears in the third grade industrialization unit, the fourth grade progressive era unit, and the fifth grade WWII Home Front unit.

The complete *BHH* curriculum was reviewed by a historical curriculum expert, M. Gail Hickey, Ph.D., and her full reviews were included in the Year Two Annual Report. The *BHH* website delineates how each unit reflects the National History Standards. Many of the grade level units were selected to fit with curriculum typically taught at that grade level, e.g., slavery and civil rights are often taught in third grade, so segregation history is a natural extension. Environmentalism is often addressed in grade two, and the *BHH* curriculum adds a historical element to that study.

Throughout the project, teachers were encouraged to adapt the curriculum to suit their classroom and teaching style and were invited to submit ideas for successful adaptations to the project director. Teacher adaptations have been added to the curriculum on the *BHH* website.

Evaluation Methods

During the three year evaluation of the *Bringing History Home* Project, six primary data collection methods were used: 1) Classroom Observation, 2) Individual Teacher Interviews/and or Focus Group Interviews, 3) Surveys, 4) Student Focus Group Interviews, 5), Collection of

Student Products and 6) Evaluator-led Teacher Brainstorming Sessions. Table 3 shows the different types of data collection methods, when and from whom the data were collected, and which evaluation questions the data addressed. A description of each method follows Table 3.

Table 3. *BHH* Evaluation Data Collection Methods Summary

Method	When data was collected	From whom data was collected	Yield	Evaluation Questions addressed	Description of Analysis
Implementation Surveys					
	March 2004	WCSD Kindergarten teachers	6/6 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways have teachers' motivation and ability to learn and teach history changed as a result of the <i>BHH</i> project? How have teachers pedagogical practices changed as a result of the <i>BHH</i> curriculum, particularly in teaching history/social studies? In what ways have students gained improved knowledge of history content in selected historical content areas? In what ways do students demonstrate improved ability to carry out historical research? Do students have improved ability to construct a historical narrative? 	Descriptive statistics and summaries of responses to qualitative items
	March 2004	WCSD First grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Descriptive statistics and summaries of responses to qualitative items
	March 2004	WCSD Second grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Descriptive statistics and summaries of responses to qualitative items
	March 2004	WCSD Third grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Descriptive statistics and summaries of responses to qualitative items
Workshop Surveys					
	August	All WCSD K-	27/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways have teachers' 	Descriptive statistics and summaries of

	2002	6 teachers	100%	<p>motivation and ability to learn and teach history changed as a result of the <i>BHH</i> project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have teachers pedagogical practices changed as a result of the <i>BHH</i> curriculum, particularly in teaching history/social studies? • In what ways have students gained improved knowledge of history content in selected historical content areas? • In what ways have students of all ability levels and learning styles benefited from the use of the <i>BHH</i> curriculum? • In what ways have students not benefited as intended or suffered negative consequences? • What other student outcomes have occurred as a result of the <i>BHH</i> project? • In what ways have systemic features of the schools or district facilitated the teaching of history long-term? • In what ways did systemic features of the schools or district impede the teaching of history? • What impact did the <i>BHH</i> curriculum have on the schools and community as a whole? • To what extent did participation in the <i>BHH</i> project stimulate collaboration among teachers? • What unintended outcomes were observed during the implementation of the <i>BHH</i> project? 	responses to qualitative items
	August	All WCSD K-	28/28	(same as above)	Descriptive statistics and summaries of

	2003	6 teachers	100%		responses to qualitative items
Email Surveys					
	March 2004	WCSD Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers	2/3 67%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
Teacher Focus Groups/Interviews					
	August 2002	All WCSD K-6 teachers	28/28 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	April 2003	WCSD Kindergarten teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	April 2003	WCSD First grade teachers	5/6 83%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	April 2003	WCSD Second grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	February 2003	WCSD Third grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	February 2003	WCSD Fourth grade teacher	1/1 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	March 2003	WCSD Fifth grade teacher	1/1 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	March 2003	WCSD Sixth grade teacher	1/1 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	June 2003	All WCSD K-6 teachers	28/28 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	August 2003	All WCSD K-6 teachers	28/28 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.

	June 2004	WCSD Kindergarten teachers	7/7 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	May 2004	WCSD First grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	January 2004	WCSD Second grade teachers	5/6 83%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	January 2004	WCSD Third grade teachers	6/6 100%	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
Classroom Observations					
	Spring 2003	Kindergarten classrooms – sixth grade	21 visits	Not analyzed	Not analyzed
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Kindergarten classrooms	4 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	First grade classrooms	8 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Second grade classrooms	13 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Third grade classrooms	18 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Fourth grade classroom	12 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Fifth grade classroom	7 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
	Fall 2003-Spring2004	Sixth grade classroom	9 visits	(same as above)	Narrative summary.
Student Focus Groups					
	Spring 2004	Two third grade classrooms	Sample of 6 focus groups,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways have students gained knowledge of history content and processes in selected areas? 	Narrative summary of focus groups.

			4-5 students per group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other student outcomes have occurred as a result of the project? • In what ways have students of all levels and learning styles benefit from the use of the <i>BHH</i> curriculum? • In what ways have they not benefited as intended or suffered negative consequences? • In what ways have students' abilities to emphasize/identify with people from the past changed? 	
	Spring 2004	Two fifth grade classrooms	Sample of 4 focus groups, 5 students per group	(same as above)	Narrative summary of focus groups.
Student Outcomes and Performance: Work Products*					
	Spring 2004	Random sample of Fourth grade students	24/120 students 20%	(same as above)	Coding of essays and narrative summary of results.
	Spring 2004	All sixth grade students	119/119 100%	(same as above)	Coding of answers to questions and narrative summary of results.
	Spring 2005	Third grade students from one classroom	19/19 100%	(same as above)	Responses coded. Total scores and difference scores in pre-post.

* These student products were intended to serve as pilots for further student outcome measures in *BHH II*. In addition to the above, student products that the teachers required were collected from all grades as a way of investigating existing classroom outcomes assessment. A brief description is included in the Appendix.

Classroom Observation

Members of the evaluation staff observed the *BHH* classrooms: teachers' and students' learning through the *BHH* curriculum. The observers sat in the back of the classroom while the teachers were presenting materials and circulated throughout the room if there were group or individual activities, observing as many students as possible. For grades K-3, the observers visited classrooms of several different teachers, in most cases observing all of the teachers implementing the *BHH* curriculum. For grades 4-6, only one teacher teaches the *BHH* curriculum to all students in the grade, so observers visited the classroom for several periods in a row on several different days. Observations during Year Three were summarized and are included in the Appendix, pp. 80-106.

Teacher Interview and Focus Groups

Individual teacher interviews and focus group interviews were conducted at various times throughout the three year period. During Year Three, the evaluation team conducted focus group interviews with teachers in grades K-3. Interviews took place either after school or during the teachers' prep time while teachers were implementing the material during class hours. The interviews were audio taped. Focus groups were intended to gather information about the teachers' experiences teaching the *BHH* curriculum, in particular to learn about the teachers' opinions about the second set of *BHH* curricula that they had taught for the first time during Year Three. These focus group interviews were transcribed and summarized and are included in the Appendix, pp. 28-79.

Student Outcomes: Products and Performance

Members of the evaluation staff talked with the teachers of each grade about the kinds of products their students might produce that would give evidence of student learning. Each grade, and in some cases each classroom, had different kinds of products available for the evaluation files. For some of the grades, the major student product was a final oral presentation for their class. During the second year of the project, evaluation team members observed the final presentations in the fifth and sixth grade classes and watched a videotape of the final presentations of the fourth grade class. In addition to the oral presentation in grade six, students created folders with their research notes and sources. Some fifth grade students also prepared posters, scrapbooks, or written reports. The fourth grade students kept folders of all their work, one page of which was an in-class essay about the dustbowl. [These essays were sampled and are summarized in the Appendix.] Evaluators took photographs and/or photo copies of written materials from the fourth through sixth grade students.

The kindergarten student products were presentations of their "Shoebox History of Me", maps of their birthplace, and pictures they drew of their homes and families. Each first grade student created a "Ziploc History of My Year" containing a collection of pictures, timelines, stories, and maps. Second grade students also created maps, timelines, puppets, and posters. Because the students wanted to keep their products, evaluators took photographs of samples of the student products. Photos of examples of student products are included in Appendix____

In addition to these teacher-assigned products, the evaluators collected several types of data that were primarily intended to be used as pilots for further data collection for the *Bringing History Home II* grant. These consisted of 1) a short writing assignment done by all sixth grade students concerning the focus of their individual study topics for their women's history unit and 2) narratives written by third grade students in response to words that represented key concepts

from the two third grade curriculum units. Summaries of these pilot assessments are included in the Appendix, pp.118-147.

Surveys

Teachers completed evaluation surveys several times during the *BHH* project. Workshop surveys were conducted at most workshops, and summaries were included in Year One and Year Two reports. During the third year, teachers completed surveys that were primarily concerned with learning more about the thoroughness of their coverage of the *BHH* curriculum, their perceptions of their students' competency at the process and content goals of the project, their perception of the benefits of the curriculum for students, their attitudes about teaching history and using the *BHH* curriculum, their use of primary sources in the classroom, and modifications made by project teachers to the *BHH* units. Summaries of the results are included in the Appendix, pp. 3-27.

Student Focus Groups

Near the end of the third year of the *BHH* project, evaluators conducted focus group interviews with samples of third and fifth grade students. Focus groups were selected by the teachers from the pool of students who had returned permission forms allowing them to participate. Most students returned the permission forms. Teachers were asked to select groups of 4-6 students that were heterogeneous as to general ability level. Six focus groups interviews were conducted with third graders from two different classrooms. Four focus groups were conducted with fifth graders from two different classes, both taught by the same teacher.

During the third grade focus group interviews, students were asked questions about history, their likes and dislikes of the history curriculum, some of the things they had learned, and what else they might like to learn about history. Fifth grade focus group interviews also solicited students' opinions about learning history, but in addition they included a performance task that required students' to use their knowledge of the WWII home front and poster analysis to analyze unfamiliar WWII posters. Interview questions also required students to recall and discuss content knowledge taught during a previous *BHH* unit implementation. Focus group interviews were audio-taped and transcribed and summaries of the interviews are attached in the Appendix, pp. 107-117.

Evaluator-led Teacher Brainstorming Sessions

After the end of the second grant year, all *BHH* teachers (with the exception of one who had retired and another who had recently had a baby) took part in a one-day workshop. The workshop served as a review of the year and an introduction to the curriculum for the second year. For part of the day, teachers were all in the same room, but kindergarten through third grade teachers sat in groups by grade level, and fourth through sixth grade teachers sat together as one group. During that session, the evaluation team led a two hour long brainstorming session for teachers to report on their experiences with the project. Teachers focused on three key issues: everything that they would tell other teachers about how to implement the *BHH* units, what worries or concerns or impediments they had felt while implementing the curriculum, and what benefits they and their students had experienced as a result of the *BHH* units. Teachers prepared and presented about their unit for the rest of the teachers. Evaluators collected the notes that the teachers took during their brainstorming session and documented the content of their presentations.

Evaluators collected and compiled the responses from all teachers. The compilation is in the Appendix, p.148.

Focus of the Evaluation

This evaluation examined the impact of the *Bringing History Home* in the Washington Community School District, which received funding from the US Department of Education to plan and implement the Teach American History program.

To examine the impact of the project and its success in achieving the stated goals of the project, the evaluation investigated the following questions:

- In what ways have teachers' motivation and ability to learn and teach history changed as a result of the *BHH* project?
- How have teachers pedagogical practices changed as a result of the *BHH* curriculum, particularly in teaching history/social studies?
- Do teachers have improved knowledge of history content?
- In what ways have students gained improved knowledge of history content in selected historical content areas?
- In what ways do students demonstrate improved ability to carry out historical research?
- Do students have improved ability to construct a historical narrative?
- In what ways have students of all ability levels and learning styles benefited from the use of the *BHH* curriculum?
- In what ways have students not benefited as intended or suffered negative consequences?
- In what ways have students' ability to empathize/identify with people from the past changed?
- What other student outcomes have occurred as a result of the *BHH* project?
- In what ways have systemic features of the schools or district facilitated the teaching of history long-term?
- In what ways did systemic features of the schools or district impede the teaching of history?
- What impact did the *BHH* curriculum have on the schools and community as a whole?
- To what extent did participation in the *BHH* project stimulate collaboration among teachers?
- What unintended outcomes were observed during the implementation of the *BHH* project?

The next section of the report summarizes information gathered from all sources of information as presented in Table 3. The complete results related to any of these sources are provided in the Appendices for those who want to review all of the information available. The following sections present the evaluation team's best summary of information and conclusions that can be drawn from that information. The evaluation team producing, reviewing and (meta)evaluating this report includes members who were involved in data collection and design as well as those who simply reviewed the information.

Evaluation Questions and Supporting Information

In what ways have teachers' motivation and ability to learn and teach history changed as a result of the BHH project?

Across all three years of the grant and across all three data collection methods (surveys, interviews/focus groups, and classroom observations), most teachers demonstrated a strong, positive reaction to the *BHH* curriculum. Teachers reported in surveys and interviews/focus groups that their participation in workshops and experience teaching the *BHH* history units had given them more excitement and enthusiasm to teach history; that project participation had made them more comfortable and confident in their ability to teach history; that the *BHH* curriculum was more fun and resulted in higher levels of engagement, both for students and teachers, than a standard social studies approach; and that teachers had learned more about their students as a result of teaching the units. Each of these is discussed separately below.

From the first summer workshop in 2002, teachers at all grade levels reported their excitement about teaching the curriculum to their students. One teacher used the phrase “pumped up” to describe their anticipation of starting the school year and teaching the *BHH* curriculum. Other teachers reported that they were excited to learn more about history or were more motivated to teach.¹ Although some teachers in some grades expressed a few concerns, this excitement and enthusiasm for the curriculum persisted beyond teachers' first implementations of the curriculum during school year 2002-2003,. Teachers in the second and third grades expressed concern during focus groups conducted in Spring 2003 that they did not have enough time to teach the units; in addition, some of the second grade teachers were not completely confident that they had adequate resources to implement the unit's activities.² One teacher characterized one of the activities as “overwhelming” to implement.³ Teachers in other grades (Kindergarten and the fourth grade teacher) continued to feel excited and enthusiastic about the curriculum, evident in the consistently positive tenor of their responses. During brainstorming sessions conducted at the 2003 summer workshops, fourth-sixth grade teachers identified as one benefit of the *BHH* curriculum that they were excited to teach the topics and motivated to learn more about history by seeking out individuals to ask about the era. After the first year of implementations, teachers reported during focus groups conducted in August 2003 that, overall, they “loved teaching the curriculum,” although classroom observation evidence collected during school year 2003-2004 indicated that teacher enthusiasm and excitement continued to vary both across and within grade levels.⁴ In general, observations documented at least moderate enthusiasm and excitement; particular teachers were more excited than others. For example, the fourth grade teacher's style of instruction was characterized by one observer as being extremely enthusiastic. This teacher used words such as “cool,” “exciting,” and “wild” to discuss ideas related to the Great Depression unit. This variation in teacher excitement and outward enthusiasm was also evident in focus group/interview data collected during the same

¹ A complete summary of focus group results from the Summer Workshops conducted in 2002 can be found in Appendix pages 28-33.

² The unit they had just completed was the Environmental History unit, and the activity referred to was the Mapping Activity.

³ Complete summaries of teacher interviews and focus groups conducted during school year 2002-2003 are located in Appendix pages 34-45.

⁴ Complete summaries of classroom observations conducted during school year 2003-2004 can be found in Appendix pages 80-106.

time period.⁵ While teachers in some grades reported high levels of interest in the content area and anticipation of future implementations (particularly the second grade teachers), some teachers in other grades were less positive. For example, some teachers in the third grade reportedly found the Industrialization unit a challenge to teach, using words like “arduous,” “difficult,” and “crazy” to refer to their experience implementing the unit. Despite this fluctuation in levels of enthusiasm for the curriculum during the implementation period, when teachers were surveyed and interviewed at the conclusion of their implementations in Spring 2004, teachers expressed almost uniformly strong, positive feelings about the curriculum. Teachers in several grades wrote positive comments about the curriculum on their surveys, saying things like, “I find myself wanting to learn more about the past! It is really exciting and so much fun for the kids.” Another teacher wrote, “It’s great! I am so thankful that we have this, because it’s wonderful.”

Teachers also reported at various points during the project that their participation had made them more confident and comfortable in teaching the *BHH* curriculum. After the very first summer workshop in 2002, teachers reported in focus groups that the workshop had eased their apprehensions about teaching history to young children; that they felt more confident in their ability to teach, because they now had the skills and information to be successful; and that they felt more comfortable with the idea of teaching history and less “stressed out” about the prospect of implementing the curriculum. After the first year of implementations, teachers were asked to rate their confidence in many aspects of teaching the curriculum on a survey administered during the summer workshops in 2003. Teachers rated their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements about their confidence in implementing the *BHH* curriculum. In general, teachers in all grades rated themselves as confident across almost all statements. For example, 100% of survey respondents reported that they either strongly or moderately agreed with the statement, “I am confident that I can implement the curriculum and instruction to support the most important learner outcomes.”⁶ Teachers also reported during focus groups conducted the same summer that they felt more confident about teaching their units. More than one teacher reported that they were becoming more comfortable with the idea that teachers did not possess all the answers and were not expected to have all the answers. Classroom observations conducted during school year 2003-2004 document varying levels of apparent comfort in implementing the curriculum, both across and within grade levels. Focus groups conducted during the same period also support the conclusion that a few teachers were not completely comfortable in their instruction of some units. For example, third grade reactions to the Industrialization unit were mixed. A few teachers said they didn’t feel comfortable in their ability to teach the unit, because it was unfamiliar content, something “entirely new,” and they felt they lacked adequate background knowledge. However, in response to final implementation surveys administered to teachers during Spring 2004, all teachers in first through third grades reported that they moderately or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel comfortable teaching the *BHH* curriculum.” All Kindergarten teachers reported that they at least mildly agreed with the same statement. It is indeterminate whether these differences in comfort level are the direct result of differences in teachers or differences in the units or unit topics. The best conclusion at this point is that some units are more difficult for some teachers to implement, and that getting comfortable with implementation takes time.

⁵ Complete summaries of interviews and focus groups conducted during school year 2003-2004 are located in Appendix pages 53-79.

⁶ A complete summary of workshop survey responses can be found in Appendix pages 21-25.

Another aspect of teacher motivation concerns teachers' enjoyment of teaching the *BHH* units. Teachers repeatedly indicated that they enjoyed teaching the *BHH* curriculum. From the first summer workshop in 2002, teachers reported during focus groups that they had had more fun engaging with the workshop content and the curriculum than they initially expected. During focus groups conducted with Kindergarten teachers after their first implementation, they reported the fun of teaching the unit, saying the students' engagement with the unit had fueled their own enjoyment. Teachers in all grades reported during focus groups conducted at the summer 2003 workshop that one benefit of their participation was the fun they had teaching the units. One of the teachers in the third-sixth grade focus groups, for example, referred to the "joy of teaching a new curriculum." Finally, when surveyed at the conclusion of the implementation cycle during Spring 2004, teachers were almost uniformly positive about their experiences teaching the *BHH* units, writing, for example, "I have loved this project. I have not only learned more history and lots about my students, but I have learned about myself." Similarly, final focus groups conducted with teachers revealed that they enjoyed teaching the units, particularly Kindergarten and first grade teachers.

Finally, another factor influencing teachers' motivation and ability to teach history is what they learned about their students as a result of teaching the *BHH* units. During a brainstorming session conducted with teachers at the 2003 summer workshop, first grade teachers identified as one benefit of the curriculum that they had gotten to know their students better.⁷ Kindergarten through third grade teachers, as well as the sixth grade teacher, reported on their final implementation surveys that they had learned more about their own students. The sixth grade teacher reported, for example, that she had a better understanding of her students, their abilities and their weaknesses. Further, all Kindergarten through third grade teachers reported that they strongly or moderately agreed with the statement, "I learned more about my students using the curriculum."

How have teachers' pedagogical practices changed as a result of BHH, particularly in teaching history/social studies?

In general, teachers across all grades reported numerous and varied ways in which their participation in *BHH* has affected their teaching of history and social studies, as well as their teaching of other subjects. Teacher responses across all grade levels and across multiple data sources tend to cluster into three, somewhat overlapping categories: changes in teachers' general approach to teaching history; changes in the specific strategies and techniques that teachers employ in their teaching of history; and changes in their expectations for student performance. Each of these is discussed separately below.

The most frequently mentioned types of changes in pedagogy concerned changes in teachers' general approach to teaching history. Beginning after the very first workshop, conducted in summer 2002, teachers in focus groups identified several changes in the way they would approach history instruction, including the use of "hands-on" and engaging activities, as opposed to presenting material through dry lectures or not teaching history at all; a move from the belief that history instruction should maintain control of the classroom to the idea that history instruction should be geared toward creating a fun and engaging atmosphere for students, and that teachers should have more fun themselves; a shift in focus on "drill and practice" to a focus on "manipulatives and thinking skills and making it more exciting;" a change in how teachers

⁷ Summary of brainstorming session, Appendix pages 148-158.

view what it means to learn history, from an approach that emphasizes memorization and regurgitation; and the addition of multiple modes of instruction and ways of presenting information to students, particularly visual modes of representation.⁸ Subsequent data collection confirmed these changes in teachers. For example, the fourth-grade teacher reported during an interview after his first implementation in Spring 2003 that the *BHH* curriculum affords more in-depth study of history than previous curricula. The fifth grade teacher reported, during an interview over the same time period, that he had moved from assessing students using end-of-unit tests to allowing students to demonstrate their understanding through creative projects. In June 2003, teachers verified in focus groups that they had indeed changed their practices to include more hands-on activities and “active units,” that they were making more cross-curricular connections with history, and making history content more meaningful for their students. During a brainstorming session conducted at the 2003 summer workshops, first grade teachers identified as benefits of the *BHH* curriculum that they were more relaxed about their instruction, that the curriculum had changed the way they look at history, and that their instruction was more “free of standards.” Finally, when teachers were surveyed at the conclusion of unit implementations during Spring 2004, teachers re-affirmed that their participation had changed the way they approach history. In particular, third grade teachers reported that they now teach “actual history rather than a social studies mini-unit,” and that they make more connections across the curriculum. Second grade teachers similarly reported that they were more aware of history, more aware of making curricular connections, and actually teach history now, which is a change in and of itself.

Another category of changes in pedagogical practices is the specific strategies and techniques that teachers reported using. After the first workshop in summer 2002, teachers participating in focus groups discussed many new activities and classroom applications they had been introduced to, including using timelines, mapping, mind mapping, and adapting letter-writing exercises for young students. Focus groups and interviews conducted across all grade levels after (or during) teachers’ first implementations in school year 2002-2003 verified that teachers were adopting these practices into their instruction. When asked about the types of activities they were using in their classrooms, teachers reported that they were utilizing mapping, photograph analysis, discussion of differences between primary and secondary sources, poster analysis, writing historical narratives, using timelines, constructing mind maps, artifact analysis, and sharing oral histories. Teachers in the upper grades (fifth and sixth) reported that, as a result of their participation, they were using more primary sources in their instruction than they had ever used before. After the summer 2003 workshop, when asked to identify important changes that had resulted from their participation in *BHH*, teachers repeated these new techniques and strategies—use of primary sources, documents analysis, and writing. During school year 2003-2004, evaluators conducted classroom observations across all grade levels. Pedagogical practices observed in use included photograph analysis, poster analysis, use of timelines and primary sources, use of maps, examining graphs and charts, analysis of written documents, individual writing activities, chronological and sequential thinking, cooperative learning, cross-curricular connections, construction of mind maps, sharing of oral histories, and artifact analysis. Finally, at the conclusion of the implementation cycle, teachers reported on their spring 2004 surveys that their instruction had changed as a result of their participation. Particular strategies and techniques mentioned included use of primary source documents, technology, timelines, and mind maps.

⁸ A complete summary of the summer 2002 focus group responses is located in Appendix pages 28-33.

Finally, a third category of changes in pedagogical practices exhibited by *BHH* participants includes an increase in teachers' expectations for student performance. When surveyed at the conclusion of unit implementations in spring 2004, teachers reported that one outcome of project participation had been increased expectations for their students. Teachers in second and third grade said that they now see student abilities differently, that they expect more from their students, and that they now let students do more on their own instead of "telling them the answers."

Do teachers have improved knowledge of history content?

There is some evidence that project participation in *BHH* made teachers more aware of the importance of content, background, or subject-matter knowledge for teaching history. While several teachers reported that their subject-matter knowledge had increased as a result of their participation, other teachers were less sure of their own content knowledge, sometimes identifying a lack of adequate background knowledge as an impediment to their implementation of the curriculum. After the first teacher workshop in summer 2002, teachers participating in focus groups reported that what they most needed to be successful in teaching history was a good understanding of the content. Some teachers (particularly in lower elementary grades) believed that they needed more background knowledge in history before they could start teaching the unit. This group of teachers also reported, however, that a benefit of the workshop had been that they had discovered they possess more history knowledge and skill than they first thought, but also that their definition of history had changed as a result of their participation. Most teachers also reported an increased interest in learning more history on their own.

Teachers in third-sixth grades also reported that, as a result of their workshop training, their definition of history had changed. This theme continued to surface during teachers' first implementation in school year 2002-2003. For example, the fourth grade teacher reported that he felt adequately prepared to teach the unit by reading the materials and viewing some History Channel videos on the Great Depression, but also said he felt very comfortable with the idea that he was learning right along with his students. Teachers in all grades participating in a focus group during the summer 2003 workshops reported that they had learned more about their own, personal history and more about history in general. Teachers also said they were more aware of history than before. However, teachers also sounded a note of caution. When asked what they thought was most important for their success in teaching history, teachers reiterated that they needed to get accustomed to the content of the units, stay ahead of the students, and gain more knowledge about the overall content. Finally, at the conclusion of the implementation cycle in spring 2004, some teachers reported on their surveys that they themselves had learned a lot and were more aware of history as a result of their *BHH* participation. At the same time, a few other teachers also reported that their own lack of subject-matter knowledge had sometimes posed a barrier to their implementation of the units, saying that before they taught the units again, they would need to conduct some independent research to fortify their own knowledge.⁹ For example, teachers in grades 2-6 participating in a brainstorming session during the summer 2003 workshops identified as a barrier to their implementations their own ignorance of the topics they taught.¹⁰ The *BHH* project provides ideas of resources for the teachers to use to expand their

⁹ Spring 2004 second grade teacher implementation survey summary and sixth grade teacher email interview summary are located in Appendix pages 10-12 and 27, respectively.

¹⁰ Summer 2003 Brainstorming session results, Appendix pages 148-158.

content knowledge, but teachers cited lack of time to do too much outside work, especially in their first implementations. As the grant period passed, teachers reported that they had more and more frequently sought out other information about their content areas. A few teachers even asked members of the evaluation team for books to read (such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) or specific questions about historical events (for example, penny auctions), which the evaluation team members forwarded to collaborating historians to answer or provide resources for.

In what ways have students gained improved knowledge of history content in selected historical content areas?

All three data sources (teacher interviews/focus groups, classroom observations, and teacher surveys) provide evidence that student learning as a result of exposure to the *BHH* curriculum was substantial. Furthermore, there is some evidence that student learning was cumulative, in the sense that over time students with progressively more exposure to the curriculum exhibited greater learning outcomes. A few teachers, however, indicated certain parts of the curriculum their students had difficulty grasping. Each of these points is discussed separately below.

During interviews/focus groups conducted with teachers after their first implementations in Spring 2003, teachers in grades 2-5 reported that their students demonstrated an increased knowledge of history, although the forms this increased knowledge took varied depending on the grade level. For example, second grade teachers reported that their students understood different logging methods, what it was like to live on a logging camp, the consequences associated with overusing the land, and the link between farm products and the things they ate as a result of their exposure to the Environmental History unit. One teacher in third grade reported that her students were developing insight into the importance of learning history (“so that people don’t repeat their mistakes”). Students in the fourth grade, according to their teacher, were gaining a more nuanced understanding of history as being composed of multiple, sometimes differing, perspectives. Fifth grade students were assuming even greater autonomy as they learned to construct their own historical interpretations based on the available evidence.

During summer 2003 workshops, teachers in all grades participated in a brainstorming session. When asked to identify benefits for themselves or for their students as a result of exposure to the curriculum, teachers in all grades identified student learning outcomes. Kindergarten teachers mentioned acquisition of new vocabulary, heightened awareness of history, understanding of historical documents, and an enhancement of math and spatial learning of students. First grade teachers reported that their students better understood the importance of history. Second grade teachers listed more than forty discrete student learning outcomes, including that students knew more about the states, were familiar with land forms and oceans, could identify products made in each state, could explain the definitions of “endangered” and “extinct,” could compare past farming methods to present methods, knew who Rachel Carson was, could identify causes of and ways to prevent air, water and land pollution, and had learned about various methods for extracting natural resources from the earth. Third grade teachers reported that their students had a deeper understanding of the past, checked out more history-related books from the library, asked more questions, and had developed an appreciation for the differences between people. Fourth through sixth grade teachers reported that their students’ higher order thinking skills had improved as a result of exposure to the *BHH* curriculum.¹¹

¹¹Summer 2003 Brainstorming session results, Appendix pages 148-158.

During classroom observations conducted over the 2003-2004 school year, evaluators noted student learning outcomes across all grades, including the ability to successfully answer questions posed by teachers; the ability to generate insightful questions of their own, which they were then able to answer; the ability to make connections between the content they were currently learning and content learned during previous history units; chronological thinking; and an appreciation for cause and effect relationships. During focus groups conducted with teachers after their second implementations in Spring 2004, teachers reported a variety of learning outcomes. First grade teachers reported that their students had developed an understanding of the distinction between “long, long ago,” “long ago,” and “now,” as well as developing the ability to correctly manipulate pictures on a timeline and place things in sequential order. Second grade teachers reported that their students had learned a great deal, with one teacher saying that the highlight of the unit was watching the students construct an end-of-unit KWL chart, especially under the “learned” category as the students “just kept generating all these things that they had learned.” The teacher continued: “Things that before when we started and I looked through the books and thought, they are never going to understand this, they are never going to get this—and then that was kind of fun to see all the things that they had learned and to watch their eyes as the chart kept getting longer and longer.” Third grade teachers reported a variety of outcomes, including how impressed students were with the concept of the assembly line; students’ grasp of difficult concepts like business owners, profits, corporations, individual owners, partnerships and stocks, and a general understanding of the notion of time. Teachers said they were actually surprised by the amount their students had learned.

Finally, in response to implementation surveys administered at the conclusion of the implementation cycle in spring 2004, teachers in multiple grades identified important student learning outcomes. Kindergarten through second grade teachers were asked to rate how competent they believed their students were at performing some of the process and content goals of the *BHH* units. Kindergarten teachers indicated that their students were at least somewhat competent at performing all but one of the process and content goals. According to teachers, students were particularly skilled at telling something about their history using pictures or artifacts. As one Kindergarten teacher wrote, “I never would have imagined kids this age being able to understand history and terms but I have been proven wrong!” First grade teachers indicated that their students were at least somewhat competent at performing all the content and process goals listed. Teachers were most confident in their students’ ability to describe the differences between a true and made-up story, describe the meaning of the word “history,” and tell a story about their own life. Second grade teachers reported that their students were at least minimally competent at performing all of the process and content goals of the Environmental History unit. According to teachers, students were particularly skilled at brainstorming ways to protect the environment. In addition, when asked to identify other, important student learning outcomes, teachers responded that students had developed an increased awareness that history is “not just long, long ago;” an appreciation for the historical context of other units; a “general knowledge of the United States ecosystems and what materials we get from them;” an awareness of the consequences of environmental damage; knowledge about environmental protection measures; familiarity with environmental figures such as Roosevelt, Muir, Pinchot, and Carson; and more generally, an understanding of change over time and how history continues to impact us today.

When surveyed over the Segregation unit during spring 2004, third grade teachers on average reported moderate to large increases in student knowledge and skills for the entire

Segregation unit, particularly with respect to the topic of prejudice, in which all teachers reported their students demonstrating large increases in knowledge. When asked to identify the most important student knowledge and skill outcomes, responses ranged from students becoming more aware of history to students developing empathy. Other responses included that students better understand their own role in history, have a deeper appreciation for the notion of change over time, and understand that there are multiple perspectives of historical events.

There is some evidence that student learning under the *BHH* curriculum was cumulative in nature. Near the end of the project, when most students in grades 1-5 had received almost two years of instruction, teachers were able to observe their students retaining and applying knowledge and skills they had learned in previous units (and even previous grades). For example, Kindergarten teachers reported during a focus group conducted in spring 2004 that their students were retaining information learned during a previous history unit that was taught in fall 2003, including specific vocabulary and terminology, the ability to analyze photographs and artifacts, the ability to make inferences from primary sources, an appreciation for the concept of “long, long ago,” a general awareness that life in the past was different, a greater attention to detail, and a recognition that history is telling stories from long ago. Teachers in first grade similarly reported during focus groups conducted over the same time period that, due to previous exposure to the curriculum, their students already had a familiarity and comfort level with the idea of timelines; paid greater attention to detail when performing photo analysis; and made connections between the content they were learning about community history and the History of Me unit from Kindergarten. Second grade teachers likewise reported that their students remembered timelines and the baggy books they had constructed in first grade. Teachers in third grade reported during a focus group conducted over the same time period that their students were adept at working with timelines and were making connections between the Industrialization unit they were learning and the previous *BHH* units. For example, one teacher reported her students asking questions that related the factories from the Industrialization unit to the polluting factories discussed during the second grade Environmental History unit. Teachers also reported that students continued to discuss land forms, different U.S. regions, and were curious about the U.S. presidents through history. One teacher said that even when students were not making explicit connections to the Industrialization unit, previous experiences learning history had “given them an eye for history.”

Although overall student learning appeared to be significant, a few, isolated teachers indicated that certain parts of the curriculum were difficult for students to grasp. Second grade teachers reported that students had difficulty with some concepts from the Environmental History unit, including understanding the process from forests to paper and from mines to metal,¹² as well as a section of the unit on famous environmentalists, such as Muir and Carson. These teachers also pointed out that their students seemed to understand the Immigration unit better, because the content of the latter unit is so personal to students.¹³ Third grade teachers also expressed some concerns about student understanding during a focus group conducted in spring 2003. Some teachers reported that they thought students had a hard time understanding the sequence of things, and that chronology is a difficult concept for students that age to grasp. When asked what they thought about teaching American History to third graders, reactions were mixed. One teacher responded that she thought some of the basic ideas were almost “incomprehensible” to the students. Finally, on the concluding implementation surveys

¹² Second grade teacher focus groups, conducted during spring 2003, are summarized in Appendix pages 36-37.

¹³ Second grade teacher focus groups, conducted during spring 2004, are detailed in Appendix pages 60-71.

administered during spring 2004, one third grade teacher offered slightly negative feedback about the Segregation unit as a whole, saying that while she thought the unit was “fine,” she felt that some of the concepts were a bit beyond the intellectual level of her students (i.e., the Constitution, Amendments, government rules) and would be better delayed until the students were older.¹⁴

In addition to the observations and data gathered from teacher interviews and surveys, student content knowledge gains were measured directly in several ways, all of which were primarily part of pilot research of assessments for potential use in the evaluation of student outcomes in the dissemination project, *BHH II*. These data includes: third grade pre- and post narrative tests on segregation and industrialization units,^{15 16} fourth grade student essays written about one concept covered in the Great Depression unit,¹⁷ sixth grade open-ended questions on women’s history research topics,¹⁸ and focus groups conducted with third and fifth grade students.^{19 20} Summaries of each of these methods of examining student content knowledge gains and copies of the instruments used are included in the Appendix.

Gains in third grade student content knowledge as a result of the industrialization and segregation units were found when students completed pre-and post measures asking them to write a narrative about their *BHH* history unit. Students were given six or seven words (such as slavery, the Constitution, Jim Crow Laws, etc.) as prompts representing key concepts in each unit, before and after being taught the *BHH* units. The narratives were rated and gain scores were calculated for each student. All students, regardless of teacher-rated ability level, who completed both the pre-test and the post-test showed gains in content knowledge. A few examples of students’ pre- and post tests from each unit are shown below. [The spelling has been corrected, but responses are otherwise shown as they were written.]

SEGREGATION UNIT (Grade 3)

Student ID 1 [Teacher rated student as high ability]

Pre-Test

Slavery is what people are slaves and they work for someone who orders them to do something. Jim Crow laws I think is a guy named Jim Crow who makes laws that you have to obey.

Post-Test

Slavery is one person who owns another person and that person does all their work for them. The constitution is a list of rules. Segregation is theses rules for blacks called the Jim Crow Laws. The Jim Crow Laws are laws for black people like blacks have to sit in the back of the bus. Or blacks had to go to different hotels, schools, restaurants, bathrooms, and even had to drink out of different water fountains. There are also many more laws.

Student ID 2 [Teacher rated student as medium ability]

Pre-Test

¹⁴ On the same survey, 83% of third grade teachers (or 5 out of 6 teachers) rated their students’ increase in knowledge and skills regarding the U.S. Constitution as being moderate to large.

¹⁵ 2005 Third Grade Pilot Assessments, Appendix, p.144.

¹⁶ 2005 Summary of Third Grade Pilot Assessments, Appendix, p.146.

¹⁷ 2004 Summary of Fourth Grade Student Writing Samples, Appendix, p.134.

¹⁸ 2004 Summary of Sixth Grade Student Writing Samples, Appendix, p.138.

¹⁹ 2004 Summary of Third Grade Student Focus Groups, Appendix, p.107.

²⁰ 2004 Summary of Fifth Grade Student Focus Groups, Appendix, p.113.

Slavery is people who are slaves.

Post-Test

Slavery is when other people owned other people and people were sold. The Constitution is a big piece of paper with a lot of rules. The 13th Amendment is what changed the constitution. Segregation is when slaves were freed, but they were not in a good condition. Jim Crow Laws are when black and whites had separate everything.

INDUSTRIALIZATION UNIT Grade 3

Student ID 1 [Teacher rated student as high ability]

Pre-Test

Craftsman: A good artist that paints and colors really good pictures. Single owners: Only one person who owns a building. Partnerships: Working together with no fighting.

Post-test

Craftsman man is a person who makes a product in their own shop. A single owner is one owner get all the money. Has one assembly line and makes cars. Partnership is two people own two factories two assembly lines make more cars and split profits in half. Corporation is original owners plus people who buy stock they have many assembly lines and make many cars. Factory conditions were not fun to work in. You would always be dirty and had to work a long time.

Student 9 [Teacher rated student as high ability]

Pre-Test

A craftsman is a man who makes crafts or art. Partnerships are two people who get together and work together to think of ideas as partners. Single owner is one person who owns a store by their self.

Student 9

Post-Test

A craftsman is a person who works in his/her own shop. Single owners are one person that owns his/her own shop. The single owner gets all the profits and does all the work. A partnership is two people that own a store together. They split the profits and do half of the work. Corporations are two people the own a factory. They have workers. They give some of the profits to the workers, but the two owners get the most profits. And there business can be found many places. And the profits keep going up! The factory conditions were very bad in the Industrial Revolution. They would not let workers open windows! They were nailed shut! They could get sick or hurt or killed very easily! It was bad! And the people wore bad clothes! I would hate it! Back then they had not telephone. But Alexander Graham Bell made the first telephone. Yah! And we had no cars! But Henry Ford invented the first car! Yahhoo! Back then we had not a lot of things we have today! Thank the inventors!

Student 3 [Teacher rated student as low-medium ability]

Pre-Test

Partnerships is two kids sit together for a project.

Post-test

A single owners are one person and his own factory. Partnerships are two people who own two factories. Craftsman are many people who own many factories. Factory conditions working in factories is tiring and hard. Age of inventions. Are you have to work hard and make many of the inventions.

In each example, although students do not always have everything entirely accurate, there is some growth in content knowledge.

To document student content knowledge with fourth grade students, the evaluation staff collected essays that students wrote about the dust bowl during a regular fourthgrade class period. Students were not pre-tested, but the teacher said that the students' knowledge of the dustbowl prior to instruction was limited if they had any at all. The teacher asked the students simply to write everything they could think of that they had learned about the dust bowl. During the 35-40 minutes that they spent writing, he gave them occasional prompts, such as: "What caused it?" "What was it like to live there?" "Did farmers stay where they were or move?" but he did not give any hints as to answers to these questions.

The students' essays were coded for content based on the content that occurred in the aggregate of the essays. Thirteen content categories emerged. Each essay was scored as to whether the content was correct in that essay. The frequency of each category was counted to calculate the percentage of students who correctly used each content category. The categories, in descending order of the percentage of students who mentioned them are (with percentage of students in parentheses):

- What it was like to be outside during the dust bowl (88%)
- Climate conditions (81%)
- What is was like to be inside the homes during the dust bowl (81%)
- Loss of topsoil as cause of the dustbowl (73%)
- Moving to California to escape dustbowl (69%)
- Conditions for migrants in California (58%)
- General negative statements about how bad conditions were in dustbowl (58%)
- Geographical location of the dustbowl (46%)
- Problems animals had in the dustbowl (42%)
- Health problems of people because of dustbowl (35%)
- Economic problems during Depression (33%)
- Damage done by grasshoppers during the dustbowl (21%)
- Hunger problems during dustbowl (16%).

A third measure of student content knowledge was the sixth grade student writing assignment. [A complete summary of this assignment can be found in the Appendix.] All sixth grade students completed an independent research packet on the history of an important American woman in history. After they had completed their research, evaluators asked students to write their answers to the following questions:

Write a paragraph or two telling the story of the woman that you did your research on during the Women's History unit. Tell an interesting story about what it was that made this woman important, what her life was like, and the qualities she had that made you admire her. Then explain why it is important that people learn about women like her.

For this assignment we wanted to know whether students across ability levels had gained content knowledge about their research area, so the teacher administered the test to all students in the sixth grade. First, evaluators coded responses for general writing skills as an indicator of ability level. The writing was coded using the following criteria: maturity of print, length of the passage, syntax, spelling, and vocabulary. All essays were sorted into “low”, “average”, and “high” writing ability. After sorting for ability, we looked at each category to see the nature of the content for the different ability levels.

In general, across writing ability levels, students displayed some command of content knowledge about their research topic. Responses written by students whose writing ability, as rated by their teacher, was categorized as “low” included very little content knowledge, but still tended to include the woman’s name and at least one detail about the woman. Students whose writing ability was coded as “average” tended to include slightly more content than the “low” students, with a large degree of variability in the type of content included. “Average” students were more likely than “high” students to include details about their subject that were not central to why the woman was important in history. Students whose writing was coded as “high” tended to write fairly comprehensive responses displaying content knowledge that was relevant and interesting.

Students’ content knowledge was also directly examined through pilot focus groups conducted with groups of third and fifth graders during spring of 2004. [Complete summaries of these groups can be found in the Appendix.] Focus groups consisted of four or five students of varying ability levels at each grade level. In each group, students responded to several questions about various content and process goals of the units they had studied. For the third grade groups on the Segregation unit, the students were asked to tell some of the things they had learned in the unit. Students enthusiastically listed a number of different answers including providing accurate details about:

- Segregation
- Prejudice
- De-segregation
- The Bill of Rights
- The US Constitution
- Jim Crow laws
- Harriet Tubman
- Rosa Parks
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Literacy tests for African American males

There were times when students provided responses that were not entirely accurate or had details confused, such as mixing up things that happened during segregation and slavery, but for the most part, students’ content knowledge was accurate and aligned with the content goals of the units.

The fifth grade focus groups were asked to examine WWII posters and to talk about the posters. For each poster presented, the students showed that they knew quite a bit about the WWII home front and the posters elicited students’ knowledge of content on:

- The necessity of women in the work force
- Encouragement for manufacturing of items necessary for the war
- Patriotism during the war
- Recycling and salvage efforts on the home front

- Rationing
- Victory gardens

During the same focus groups, students were also asked to think back to the Native American unit that they had completed four to six months before. The students were not as successful at displaying content knowledge about that unit. Although many students seemed to have trouble spontaneously recalling details about US policies toward Native Americans, in each group there was usually one child who could remember some of the central content knowledge and when that child spoke, the others would begin to remember other details that they knew about the questions. In general, there were more holes in their knowledge about the unit that they had learned about in the more distant past, but with some encouragement, they could generate some examples of content knowledge.

In addition to the above assessments, examples of student work products that display content knowledge can be found in the Appendix. The evaluation team conducted no further analyses of student work products, other than review for consideration in the development of valid and authentic assessment practices.

In what ways do students demonstrate improved ability to carry out historical research?

Various data sources, collected at various points in time, suggest that as a result of learning with the *BHH* curriculum, students were afforded opportunities to acquire and practice skills related to historical research including the ability to:

- work with primary sources
- conduct photograph, document, and artifact analysis
- form interpretations based on available evidence
- glean relevant information from a historical documentary and take appropriate notes
- make inferences based on information contained in charts, graphs, and maps
- compare and contrast two different accounts of the same historical event
- construct and use timelines
- critically examine ideas, theories, and sources
- work in groups
- construct a story based on photographs or artifacts.

Further, teachers reported at various points that their students were becoming more skilled in these types of abilities. Particular units in the curriculum offered more opportunities for developing these skills than others. However, not all opportunities for helping students develop research skills were always fully exploited by all teachers. These ideas are discussed more fully below.

After teachers' first implementations in spring 2003, the fifth and sixth grade teachers reported during interviews that their students' exposure to history would improve their ability to work with primary sources. The fifth grade teacher further reported that his students would have a better understanding of the interpretive nature of historical inquiry.²¹ During a brainstorming session conducted at the summer 2003 workshop, fourth-sixth grade teachers identified as one outcome of exposure to the *BHH* curriculum that students had improved their research skills.²²

²¹ Summaries of the 2003 interviews with fifth and sixth grade teachers can be found in Appendix pages 42-22 and 45, respectively.

²² Summer 2003 Brainstorming session results, Appendix pages 148-158.

Classroom observations conducted during school year 2003-2004 confirmed that students were receiving ample opportunities to acquire and refine their historical research skills. Kindergarten classroom observations document students learning to use information in photographs and artifacts to make inferences. Similarly, students in first grade were observed using critical thinking skills to identify relevant information in written documents and photographs and to make inferences based on their analysis of the documents. Observations conducted in the third grade documented extensive use of photographs to help students learn how to generate research questions and make inferences about the context depicted in the photograph. Fifth grade classroom observations documented that fifth grade students were instructed how to identify major themes in a documentary and to organize their notes and thoughts about the information contained in the movie. Students examined charts, graphs, and maps showing employment and migration patterns during WWII to make inferences about the home front and learned to critically examine WWII posters to determine important messages and to use photographs to construct a narrative.²³

Finally, data collected during spring 2004 also support the idea that students were able to improve historical research skills. During an interview conducted in spring 2004, the sixth grade teacher reported that her students had learned to work with primary and secondary sources and were taught to critically examine ideas and theories.²⁴ Implementation surveys administered at the conclusion of the implementation cycle during spring 2004 suggest students' research skills had improved as a result of exposure to the *BHH* curriculum. Third grade teachers reported that one of the most important knowledge and skill outcomes of the project was that students were better able to use primary source documents and timelines, exhibited an increased interest in others, were better able to work in groups, and had better overall research skills. Kindergarten teachers reported that their students were able to orally share their personal histories using photographs or artifacts, correctly order photographs or artifacts sequentially, and had a better understanding of concepts like "first," "second," "last," and "before" and "after."²⁵

Particular curricular units were better suited to foster historical research skills than others, although primary source use was integrated liberally throughout all units, across all grades. The Kindergarten and first grade units featured especially heavy use of primary sources for making interpretations. The fifth grade unit on WWII involved the use of such varied primary sources as posters, a documentary, photographs, and newspaper articles. The sixth grade unit on Women's History featured an individual or group research project that is the centerpiece of the unit. Students working in pairs or alone created a biography of an important female historical figure. Because of their heavy use of, and emphasis on, primary sources, the above curricular units offered numerous opportunities for students to improve their historical research skills. However, the extent to which teachers maximized the unit's potential for developing these skills varied. For example, observations conducted during school year 2003-2004 documented that students conducting research in the school's media center were not always closely supervised to ensure the integrity of the research process. Students were allowed to conduct unmediated Internet searches, without instructions about how to locate relevant and appropriate sources for their

²³ Summaries of classroom observations conducted during 2003-2004 in all grades can be found in Appendix pages 80-106..

²⁴ A complete summary of the sixth grade teacher's 2004 email interview responses can be found in Appendix page 27 .

²⁵ Complete summaries of all implementation survey data collected during spring 2004 are located in Appendix pages 3-15.

research projects. Thus, although the unit offered opportunities for teachers to explain and reinforce ideas about the credibility, authenticity, and reliability of research sources for historical information, these opportunities were sometimes missed.²⁶ At the same time, observations also documented some teachers creating additional opportunities (not necessarily prescribed by the curriculum) for students to refine their research skills. For example, one third grade teacher frequently had her students brainstorm lists of research questions using the KWL format. Often, this teacher would ask students how they could find the answers to these questions. Students became quite adept at coming up with information sources they could use to answer their own questions. Other times, the lesson would come to a temporary halt as students went off in search of the answer to a question.²⁷ In this same class, students often worked in small groups locating information from reference sources. Thus, the extent to which students were afforded opportunities for acquiring sophisticated historical research skills sometimes depended more on the teacher than on the curriculum.

The only attempt to directly measure students' ability to carry out historical research was the sixth grade writing assignment described briefly above and in detail in the summary in the Appendix. In addition to asking students about the woman that they had researched, students were asked:

If you wanted to learn more about another woman in history, how would you go about doing it? Make a list of the types of resources you would use. Where might you find each source? What would you hope to learn from each source? Indicate whether each source is a primary or a secondary source.

As noted in the summary of the sixth grade writing, the compound nature of this writing prompt seemed to be difficult for students to grapple with, so the conclusions reached about the students' abilities to conduct historical research are not entirely clear. In general, students listed a variety of sources that they would use to do research, including (in order of the frequency in which they were named): the internet, books, libraries, autobiographies, interviews, biographies, journals, dictionaries, letters, magazines, movies, speeches, newspapers, television, almanacs, and their teacher. Students who had been rated as having a "high" writing ability level were more likely to indicate whether the sources they would use were primary or secondary sources, however, of those who mentioned primary and secondary sources, only about half demonstrated their understanding of the differences between the two types of sources. Quite a few students correctly identified autobiographies, interviews, journals, speeches, and letters as primary sources, and encyclopedias as secondary sources, but there was more confusion when they chose a source that could be either primary or secondary, such as things found on a web site.

Do students have improved ability to construct a historical narrative?²⁸

Classroom observations conducted in Kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grades during school year 2003-2004 documented numerous examples of classroom activities that encouraged students to begin constructing narratives. In the Kindergarten classrooms observed, students were able (some with minimal teacher scaffolding) to reconstruct and orally share their own

²⁶ Evaluators notified the project director about this incident. The sixth grade portion of the *BHH* curriculum has subsequently been edited out for this (and a number of other) reasons.

²⁷ Third grade classroom observation summaries, Appendix pages 92-95 .

²⁸ See the discussion of student-constructed narratives in the description of the pilot student data collected in 2004, located in Appendix pages 118-147.

personal histories using photographs and personal artifacts. Students also constructed physical timelines by placing the objects they brought in correct, sequential order. In this way, students created visual or pictorial historical narratives. Similarly, in the first grade classrooms observed, students practiced creating written narratives by writing stories about something that happened in their lives. Students were also given multiple opportunities to tell stories about their day at school and to share stories from their personal and family histories with each other. Teachers modeled desired narrative skills by telling their own engaging stories of the past. In a third grade classroom observation, students were asked to create a narrative about something they had learned during the industrialization unit. Students worked independently on their narrative, some students following a format that was familiar to them from the Tree House series of books that involve time travel and then shared their narratives with a partner who then told the class about their partner's narrative. In addition, observations conducted in the fifth grade classroom during spring 2004 document students using photographs to construct narratives. During one activity used with the WWII unit, students broke up into groups, and each group received a set of photographs depicting Japanese-Americans being forced into internment camps. Groups were instructed to put the photographs into an order that would allow them to tell a story from the photographs. Students were then instructed to write captions that would appear at the bottom of the photographs and relay the story to the reader. In this way, fifth grade students received opportunities for improving their skills in constructing narratives.²⁹

At the same time, first grade teachers reported during a focus group conducted after their first implementations that the most difficult activity in the unit (and the one that students appeared to least enjoy) was using written documents to tell a story, such as using school lunch menus and school newsletters to tell a story about a child's school history.

Three of the pilot student assessments shed some preliminary light on students' abilities to construct historical narratives. The third grade pilot study asked students to write a "story" that included words that represented key concepts in the unit. Although in the preliminary analysis these narratives were not specifically scored for their general narrative quality, there is a great variability in the narrative quality of these responses. In general, many students treated the prompts simply as a list of words to be defined and did not appear to make an effort to link the words together into a "story" or a narrative.

In the case of the fourth grade student essays on the dust bowl [described in full in the Appendix], the students were not specifically told to write their essays in the form of a story, but to recall what they knew about the dust bowl. However, some of the essays took on a narrative form and demonstrated students ability to "tell the story" of what happened in the dust bowl. Three examples are included below as written, with spelling and grammatical errors uncorrected:

"Then there was a drought. It lasted 8 years. So then the wheat died so there was just dirt. So now when the wind blew on the dirt it would make the dirt fly up in the air. Since there were so many feidls (sic) that were just dirt, so strong winds came and all the dirt went in the air and it turned black."

"It was so bad they dissided to mover to California they thought it would be great, but it was not. The California people didn't want them there because they were afraid they would take the jobs. So they treated them really bad the made them live in little huts they were treated bad they were paid like a \$1.00 a DAY! They did not like there

²⁹ Classroom observation summaries organized by grade level, located in Appendix pages 80-106.

jobs eather they had to pick potatoes and oranges and apples, ect. It was not a very good life at all.”

“The dust bowl was harsh dusty and kept sneezing dust up! People (farmers mostly) moved to California and thought Oh my God its gonna be so great... but it wasn't. They got there went to the bank got money asked if there was a room here. There wasn't and ... NO ROOM! Dang it they just felt terrible. Farmers had to go back by foot or horse 3 states away burn ouch! Some people had to do extra work because of the stupid drou called the dust bowl. People even had to put towels in the crack of the door so dust (or dirt!) wouldn't come in + they had to tip out their class to make no dust com in! And the gramas + grampas and the Black Storms. I'll tell y'all who read this a story. There was a dust bowl a reallllllllllllllllly bad drou and during this drou was the Black Storms. I'll continue later. Sorry. Kids had to walk to school backwards so dust would not hit them in the face! And when they got home they had to pick the nose of the farm animals such as cattle cows and chicken when they had to do house work they needed a peice of cloth to cover thier eyes!”

The sixth grade writing assignment asked students to “Tell an interesting story about what it was that made this woman important, what her life was like, and the qualities she had that made you admire her.” As described in the summary of the assignments, quite a few students merely listed a detail or two about their research topic, but some students were able to give their responses a more narrative quality, such as the examples below:

“She was the first comedian woman, and the first woman to run her own production company by herself! She was born and raised in Jamestown, NY. When she was 17, she went to N.Y.C. to be in a modeling school. She got her big hit when she appeared in a poster where the public noticed her beauty. She made a movie with costar Desi Arnaz, and they married and had 2 kids. I Love Lucy was a #1 hit of a show that features Lucy and Desi's real life situations. There are still reruns of her today!”

“She is famous for bringing jazz to life. She was first ‘discovered’ when she went to a performance and she was supposed to dance, but had stage fright and sang a song she knew by heart. She was introduced to Chick Webb, who was a music director. When he died, he left his band to her and she became the first woman ‘bandleader’.”

In what ways have students of all levels and learning styles benefited from the use of the BHH curriculum?

All three data sources (observations, focus groups/interviews, and surveys) indicate that the BHH curriculum is generally well-suited for all types of learners at all levels. Teachers at different grade levels have praised project resources³⁰ and activities³¹ as being appropriate for students who are not strong readers. Furthermore, teachers report³² and classroom observations

³⁰ 2003 fourth grade teacher interview summary, Appendix pages 40-41.

³¹ 2003 summer workshop focus groups summary, Appendix pages 46-52.

³² Third grade teacher implementation survey summary, Appendix pages 13-15.

support³³ that most units encouraged high rates of participation amongst all types of learners. At times, teachers described slight modifications they had made to the units to allow even greater levels of participation by all students. The types of modifications varied depending on the grade level. For example, during the Kindergarten History of Me unit, classroom observations document that some students who had difficulty remembering or reading parts of their oral history received gentle scaffolding and guidance from the teachers that allowed all students to participate in the activity. In subsequent conversations with the Kindergarten teachers, teachers reported that students who did not bring any photos or artifacts from home were able to substitute some drawings and digital photos taken at school, which meant that no students were left out of the unit. During the first grade My History at School unit classroom observations, evaluators noted that teachers appeared to maintain a sensitivity to differences in learning styles of the students. For example, students were often given choices about whether their contributions would be oral, written, or pictorial. Students were able to use multiple modes of communication in completing assignments, such as constructing a timeline or writing books about their personal histories. In one first grade classroom, a teacher read aloud to the students in both Spanish and English, for the benefit of one ESL student. Observations conducted in the fourth grade classroom indicate that one modification of the Great Depression unit that facilitated learning across all levels was the use of mixed ability groupings. Students were grouped in mixed ability clusters to facilitate cooperative learning. This strategy appeared to pay off, in that the more able students appeared to be able to perform tasks independently and could then help the less able students. Collaboration also appeared to foster good relationships among students. In addition, the fourth-grade teacher reported that students with difficulty writing were often able to demonstrate their understanding by providing oral responses to his questions, and final projects offered multiple modes of communication to students—student products included written reports, illustrated comic books, and skits performed by students. The fifth grade teacher also reported that the students were able to choose the format of their final project to make the best use of each student’s strengths and the reports, in the form of skits, movies, written reports, interviews, and drawings, etc., showcased this diversity. Finally, the sixth grade teacher reported during an interview in 2003 that during the Women’s History unit, students were allowed to select the format for their final research projects, adding that less able students could choose to turn in a “Wanted” poster as opposed to a formal research report on an important female historical figure.

As described in the section on student content knowledge acquisition, the pilot measures of student outcomes provide some additional confirmation that students of different ability levels are benefiting from the *BHH* curriculum. In the third grade pilot study, growth in content knowledge between the pre- and post tests was seen across ability levels, with students of higher ability levels showing more growth, but lower students also demonstrating new content knowledge.

The same was true for the sixth graders completing the writing assignments: all students demonstrated content knowledge, with students of higher ability demonstrating more knowledge.

The heterogeneous third and fifth grade focus groups also provided an opportunity to look at students across ability levels. Although the ability level of each student was not known by the focus group facilitator, the focus group technique used required the facilitator to ask each student to respond, although students had the opportunity to say “pass” if they were not ready to

³³ Kindergarten, 1st grade, third grade and fourth grade classroom observations summaries, Appendix pages 80-83, 84-88, and 96-100, respectively.

respond. The opportunity to respond first to different questions also rotated through the group of students so that students were called on in different orders.. In addition, the procedures allowed students to add to or respond to what other students had said, giving more reticent students a chance to think about their responses in terms of what other students had said and then add their own comments. There were no instances of children in focus groups who remained silent or gave irrelevant or evasive responses throughout the group.

In what ways have they not benefited as intended or suffered negative consequences?

Classroom observations across almost all grade levels documented that students did not respond uniformly to the curriculum. In almost all grades, there were students who seemed particularly highly motivated to respond to questions and volunteer responses. At the same time, there were a few students in almost every classroom who appeared to have more trouble paying attention and remaining on task, or who engaged in slightly disruptive behaviors.³⁴ However, as one third grade teacher expressed it, "...no matter what you teach, there's always kids who understand and there are kids that have a pretty good understanding of it, and there's going to be some that don't necessarily catch everything you wish they would."³⁵ The only negative consequence of note appeared to be that some kindergarten and first grade students who did not have the materials from home (artifacts documenting their births and personal histories) needed to participate in some of the personal history activities may have felt left out.³⁶

In what ways have students' ability to empathize/identify with people from the past changed?

For the most part, student exposure to the *BHH* units appeared to stimulate their ability to empathize or identify with people from the past. Primarily, this seemed to be a consequence of the empathy intentionally built into the curriculum, but there was also evidence that teachers' abilities to demonstrate and model empathic behaviors to their students helped them appreciate the perspectives and experiences of those who lived in the past.

During focus groups conducted after teachers' first implementations in spring 2003, third grade teachers reported that one outcome of students' exposure to the Segregation unit was that students had learned the importance of respect for other human beings. According to teachers, students were shocked and horrified that fellow human beings had ever been treated so cruelly. Teachers also pointed out that small group activities they used with the unit had enhanced this reaction, as students were encouraged to work together. Teachers reported that their students had been very caring for each other and wanted to help one another. Another instance of students' developing sense of empathy was shared by the fifth grade teacher, during an interview conducted over the same time period. The fifth grade teacher reported that the WWII unit had stimulated his students to wonder about what other people's lives were like, and that they had discovered that life on the home front during WWII was very different from life today. Focus groups conducted with all teachers during the summer 2003 workshops affirmed that teachers were noticing this type of outcome in their students. Teachers in first through sixth grades identified empathy as an important student outcome, particularly understanding what it was like

³⁴ Summaries of classroom observations, particularly the 1st grade, third grade, and sixth grade observation summaries, located in Appendix pages 84-88, 92-95, and 105-106, respectively.

³⁵ Transcript of 2004 third grade teacher focus group, Appendix pages 72-79 .

³⁶ Summary of 2003 summer workshop teacher focus groups, Appendix pages 46-52.

for people living during the past and recognizing that life was more difficult in the past than it is for students today.

During school year 2003-2004, teachers continued to point to empathy as a by-product of student exposure to the *BHH* curriculum. Kindergarten teachers reported in focus groups that their students had developed a better understanding of how difficult it was to live in the past. Children were particularly impressed by the idea that kids from long ago did not have access to television or video games, and might only receive a single Christmas gift. First grade teachers similarly reported that during a covered wagon ride simulation, students were forced to sit under the “wagon” when a strong storm passed over the “prairie.” Teachers reported that initially, their students had thought traveling across the country in a covered wagon would have been fun, but once they were able to imagine what it was like to sit under the wagon during a storm, with all their possessions and clothes getting wet and muddy, they realized how hard it must have been to travel by wagon. Another teacher said the students were “enthralled” with the idea of traveling by covered wagon, but were very “bothered” by the idea of the hardships people had to face along the way. Second grade students learning about immigration also participated in a simulation. Students assumed the role of immigrants coming to Ellis Island, and the teachers posed as inspectors, doctors, and customs officials who “processed” the immigrants. During the simulation, some students were allowed to enter America, but some were “deported.” According to the second grade teachers, most students experienced quite emotional reactions to the simulation, particularly those who were “deported.” In the same simulation, children carried their own coats and backpacks and experienced some of the heat and fatigue that real Ellis Island arrivals would have experienced and the children noticed how hard it must have been. Similarly, third grade teachers reported that during the Industrialization unit, the students were horrified by the descriptions of working conditions in factories. Students reportedly thought it was “awful” that the factories had no windows for fresh air. Two teachers said they taught the unit during a time of the school year when it was very hot outside, so students were relating to the discomfort of having to work in an overheated area. One teacher said, “That made an impression on them.” In observations, students seemed particularly aware of the fact that during industrialization, it was often children who experienced the difficult and dangerous conditions.

A few teachers were able to enhance the curriculum’s potential for encouraging student empathy by modeling empathic behaviors for their students. For example, classroom observations document that the fourth grade teacher’s naturally caring personality and teaching style provided concrete demonstrations of desired empathic behaviors. This teacher would often pause movies or halt while reading a story to ask students to imagine what it would feel like to live during the Great Depression. On one occasion, when he sent students down the hall to lunch he told them to stop and touch a brick near a plaque at the school entrance because it explains that the WPA built their school, and asked them to imagine when they touched the brick just how grateful and thankful the workers must have been for a job. The same teacher introduced the Dorothea Lange slides to students by asking them to imagine what it was like to live during the Dust Bowl. His instruction tended to emphasize the more visceral aspects of the unit, relating stories of a man walking outside during a dust storm who could not see his own hand in front of his face or describing the layers of fine dust that would settle inside the houses, so that everything had to be washed repeatedly. When the class viewed a video segment in which a woman talked about the thrill of going to get ice cream, he stopped the video to ask students why this would be so exciting for her. After a student responded that the woman probably didn’t have much money for things like ice cream, the teacher said, “Yeah, and the people felt so glad to be

working again. Not just for money, but for the satisfaction of being able to do a job.” Observations also document that students demonstrated their empathy for people living during the Great Depression through their final projects. Several student groups chose to perform skits portraying particular aspects of the Great Depression, including dance marathons and westward migration of farmers during the Dust Bowl.

Although in general, exposure to the *BHH* curriculum appeared to foster a strong sense of student empathy for others, there is one instance of students being somewhat insensitive toward the people they were studying. The fifth grade WWII unit focuses on the United States home front, including the internment of Japanese-Americans. For the most part, observations document that student empathy for what it was like to live on the home front was encouraged in many ways, including class discussions about the sacrifices people made and how hard people worked to support the war effort. In addition, students were encouraged to interview their grandparents or other people who were alive during WWII to find out what it was like. However, there were also some missed opportunities to view war from the perspectives of different groups of people over time, both in the past and in the present. During one activity in which groups of students arranged photographs of Japanese-Americans in sequential order and composed captions for the pictures that told a story about what was happening in the photos related to internment camps, students were observed referring to the people in the photos as “Japs.” Students probably picked up this term as a result of their use of newspaper articles written during the war that referred to Japanese people as “Japs.” However, they probably should have been aware that the term is considered derogatory and should not be used out of context.³⁷

In addition to the information gathered from observations and teacher interviews and surveys, there are examples throughout the pilot student assessments of students demonstrating empathy for people from the past. Excerpts are given below:

From the third grade narrative assessments on industrialization:

- *The factory conditions were very bad in the industrial revolution. They would not let workers open windows! They were nailed shut! They could get sick or hurt or killed very easily! It was bad! And the people wore bad clothes. I wuld hate it!*
- *Factory conditions is loud, bad air, and dangerous.*
- *In a factory, the windows were nailed shut. And the air was very bad for people to breath and the wages were they got some money from the wages then they went low.*

From the third grade narrative assessments on segregation and slavery:

- *Slavery is where one person owns another person. The person that is owned work from sunup till sundown.*
- *Jim Crow Laws are thing like black people were separated from white people. And slavery was wrong to me that isn't fun at all. And segregation is like black people were separated from white pools, hotels, too.*

From the fourth grade dust bowl essays (one of many examples):

³⁷ Evaluators reported this incident to the project director, and an addition to the fifth grade curriculum materials has since been added that explains to teachers the need for sensitivity in dealing with this issue.

- *“The Dust bowl was horrible in Kansas and the reason way is because the farmers where so gredy the whanted to get so much money well when the wind came around it took all the left over soil and blew it everywhere and every famer in Kansas whanted to make wheat so the kepted doing it and that’s what started it. Then later when it stoped the grasshoppers came and ate every little green part not only that it blocked up the trains way so it could not go. Whell some people could not take it so they moved to California. Whell they treated them horrible and this is what they did they charged a quarter for a house each day they only got a dollar for working they did not have any bath rooms and if they could not pay the money they shot them Back at Kansas it was getting bad to and some people died because of it one man put his hand up to his nose and could not see his hand it was that dark in Kansas. Oh ya I forgot to tell you all the kids had to walk home from school and they had to cover up their face so it would not get dirt all over it. And when they got home they had to clean out the nostrils in their animals so they would not die. And they did not have enounf money because none of their wheat would grow because all of the plants need top soil to servie and all that got picke up by the winde that way they could not survive. And back up at California the oners of the stores whould not let them by food so now the people who lived up in California wish they would have stayed where they were and back at Kansas as I told you they did not have enough money or have enogh food to survive some died but then it whent away little by little bad it got better little by little and enfenually all of the farmers wernt so gredy and they worked together to get back the life they lost and some of the California people problule wished they where back in Kansas afer it stoped and thats how it was in the dark dust of the bowl.”*

From the sixth grade writing assignment:

- *[from a response on Rosa Parks] “She was an African-American and back then life wasn't easy for them. Whites hated them. The drinking fountains and bathrooms were very crappy, but the whites' were good. Whites also made black people sit on the back of the bus, and Rosa Parks sat up front and got arrested and changed that rule. I admire her for her determination of trying to get equal without fighting with the whites.”*

Comments from the third and fifth grade focus groups:

- *“I like to learn about it [history] because, you know how slaves were treated, it’s kind of sad. And you sometimes imagine if that was you, and you feel really sad, so you learn.”*
- *“We did a lot of things that I didn’t like it when we were talking about slavery because it is like, it’s wrong. It’s just wrong! And so was segregation and about women too how they couldn’t do all the things – couldn’t own their own land and couldn’t own their own children – which stinks.”*
- *“Now you have to do things on your own because the men in war are mostly men and so that means that women have to step up too.”*

In addition to the observed use of the word “Japs” described above, a student in the fifth grade focus group on Native Americans, made a comment that the Native Americans became “civilized”. When probed on that usage, the student revealed that she knew that was what the white people at the time believed they were doing for the Native Americans, not what we believe today, but as in the “Jap” example, it reinforces the importance of making sure that students fully

understand the context to which the use of these kind of words pertains. Throughout the project, when these types of incidents occurred, the evaluators conferred and reported to the project director was so that she could take quick action to report to teachers about these important and sensitive issues.

What other student outcomes have occurred as a result of the project?

The most notable student outcome, other than those already discussed above, appears to be the extent to which students enjoyed learning about history through the *BHH* curriculum and their excitement to learn more history. Across all grade levels and over multiple years, teachers continually mentioned their students' enjoyment of the curriculum and their excitement to learn history. For example, one third grade teacher reported during a focus group in spring 2003 that the students were "so willing to listen," and that their appetites were whetted for learning more history.³⁸ During an interview with the fifth grade teacher during the same time period, the teacher reported that all his students were able to find something that interested them in the curriculum, and that since beginning the unit, he had noticed his students saying they went to the library to check out a book on WWII, or had watched something on the History Channel, or looked something up that was discussed in class. Many students were also interested in interviewing their grandparents about what it was like on the home front during WWII.³⁹ During focus groups conducted with teachers after the conclusion of unit implementations in spring 2004, teachers in multiple grades continually referenced their students' interest in and excitement about history.⁴⁰ For instance, kindergarten teachers reported that their students had developed an attitude that history can be fun. Second grade teachers reported that they had to double the length of time to teach the Immigration unit because the students were so excited, so interested, and asked so many questions that instruction took twice as long as they originally anticipated. When asked about the highlights of the unit, one teacher responded, "It was the fact that the kids really enjoyed it. You never know how they are going to react and how much they are going to absorb, and they were really involved and interested." Finally, classroom observations clearly demonstrated that students enjoyed their experiences with the *BHH* curriculum and instruction.⁴¹ Students in almost all observed classes were attentive, with high rates of participation in classroom discussions and other activities. Classroom management issues were rare.⁴² Student excitement was particularly evident during games and simulations embedded in the units. The third grade unit on Segregation featured a Jeopardy-type trivia game, during which students were so excited they could barely keep their seats. The fourth grade unit on the Great Depression featured a role-playing game where student teams tried to hold on to enough money to allow them to survive through successive disasters, including the stock market crash, bank foreclosures, and the dust bowl. Students in both grades were intensely engaged in applying their new knowledge and skills to the games. Finally, in addition to promoting increased interest

³⁸ Spring 2003 third grade teacher focus group summary, Appendix pages 38-39.

³⁹ Spring 2003 fifth grade teacher interview summary, Appendix pages 42-44.

⁴⁰ See especially the Spring 2004 Kindergarten, 1st and second grade teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 53-56, 57-59, and 60-71, respectively.

⁴¹ Classroom observation summaries organized by grade level are located in Appendix pages 80-106.

⁴² With the exception of the sixth grade, where disruptions were relatively frequent.

in the study of history, the fourth grade teacher also suggested that exposure to the *BHH* curriculum had increased his students' confidence about their own history knowledge.⁴³

Student's motivation and interest in learning history was directly examined in the third and fifth grade student focus groups. In the third grade group, students listed some of the things they liked about learning history, e.g, the books and the movies, and one student said they liked to learn (referring to segregation and slavery), "About happy moments and about how it wasn't fair and how it is fair today." Third graders were also asked what else they might like to learn about in history and they listed quite a few things that indicate an ongoing interest in history, such as wanting to learn more about: schools in the past, jobs people had in the past, some children wanted to learn more about the topics they had studied such as, what the literacy test for African American males was like, the Civil War, what ever happened to Harriet Tubman, and other laws that existed in the past.

Fifth grade focus group participants said that they liked the group projects they did as part of the history unit, often going into great detail about the project. They also enjoyed both doing and watching interviews with older people about historical times. They named a number of other specific things they liked, as opposed to when they were asked what they didn't like when they tended to name generalizations, like "reading all that" or "doing the writing". Only one student said that history was boring.

In what ways have systemic features facilitated the teaching of history long-term?

The largest systemic support feature present during the *BHH* grant period was the strong support of the school district. The wholesale involvement of all the teachers in grades K-6 allowed the project to prosper in its pilot years and has contributed to the sustainability of the project in the years to come. Of particular help to the project in its first years and to its longevity was the support of the Assistant Superintendent / Curriculum Director. She sat on the steering committee for the grant and provided strong support for all the teachers and project staff. She championed the effort to make the *BHH* curriculum the official social studies/history curriculum for the district and facilitated the spread of the *BHH* methods into the secondary schools. Within district guidelines and to the extent possible given other commitments, she supported teachers having the time necessary for professional development

In what ways do systemic features create an impediment to the teaching of history?

Teachers in both kindergarten and third grade reported during focus groups that the adoption of a new reading series was putting pressure on teachers in the district to limit the time available for history instruction.⁴⁴ Further, the sixth grade teacher reported that the mandated adoption of two weeks' worth of "Character Counts" classes would force her to shorten the duration of future history units.⁴⁵

What impact did the BHH curriculum have on the school or community as a whole?

⁴³ Spring 2003 fourth grade teacher interview summary and Spring 2004 fourth grade teacher email survey summary, Appendix pages 40-41 and 26, respectively.

⁴⁴ Spring 2003 third grade focus group summary and spring 2004 Kindergarten focus group summary, Appendix pages 38-39 and 53-56, respectively.

⁴⁵ Spring 2004 sixth grade teacher email survey summary, Appendix page 27.

Teachers in the lower elementary grades (kindergarten through third grade) were particularly interested in supporting community involvement with the *BHH* curriculum, primarily in the form of parental involvement. Teachers identified parental involvement as one of the most important factors in the success of their implementations; at the same time, teachers expressed the need for greater parental involvement. For example, during spring 2003 focus groups, kindergarten teachers discussed the possibility of hosting an open house for parents the following year, so that parents could see all the things the children had done and the pride and sense of accomplishment they have in displaying their personal histories. Kindergarten parents helped their students complete their own history interviews and often helped them create drawings of their homes. During first grade teacher focus groups conducted at the same time, teachers reported getting very positive feedback from parents on the unit—particularly parents who had stopped in to school and seen the timelines with the photographs of the students. First grade parents helped with taking community pictures, a non-parent volunteer helped the students map their birthplaces, the same volunteer sent the first graders postcards from a trip he took, and one volunteer came in and gave a first person “eye-witness” account of an experience that a teacher had also talked about so that students could learn that there may be different versions of the same historical event and that although they are different, they can both be accurate. One teacher said a parent had said she thought it [the history grant] was “the greatest thing ever.”⁴⁶ During summer workshop focus groups conducted in 2003, lower elementary teachers reiterated the importance of parental involvement for the success of the unit. One teacher estimated that only 20% of the parents had no involvement with *BHH* that year. Teachers brainstormed ways of promoting even greater parental participation, including the idea of hosting a Parents’ Night, where students could display their personal histories. When asked what type of support they still needed to teach the units, teachers responded that they wanted more help from parents, which would require informing more parents about the project in the first place. Teachers discussed a newspaper article about the project as being only partially successful in publicizing what they were doing. In addition to a Parents’ or Family Night, teachers also mentioned the possibility of sharing student projects with the general community or posting photographs of students’ work on the school’s website.⁴⁷ The second grade classes visited the farm of one of the teachers as part of the Environmental unit activities on farming history and many parents and community members were involved with the second grade Ellis Island simulation.

The third grade hosted a Family Night during school year 2003-2004 to highlight the Industrialization unit, and during a focus group conducted with third grade teachers in spring 2004, teachers discussed the event as a “big success.” Parents were invited and several local craftsmen attended and gave demonstrations. Children sold the tablets they had made during an assembly line simulation, with one teacher saying they had made almost \$300 selling the tablets. One teacher remarked, “We had so many positive responses from the people that attended. Hopefully if we do that next year, people—even more will come from hearing about it.” Another said, “We even had craftsmen as they were going out the door saying when you do this again, let me know and I will come back.”⁴⁸ Kindergarten teachers also reported during their spring 2004 focus group that they thought the Children Long Ago unit had prompted their students to go home and initiate conversations with their parents or grandparents about what it

⁴⁶ Spring 2003 kindergarten and 1st grade teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 34 and 35, respectively.

⁴⁷ Summer 2003 teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 46-52.

⁴⁸ Spring 2004 third grade teacher focus group transcript, Appendix pages 72-79.

was like to live in the past.⁴⁹ Further, teachers in the third grade said they thought the Segregation unit enhanced their school's character education curriculum.⁵⁰

The fourth grade teacher invited two women from the local senior citizens home to come to tell about their experiences during the Great Depression. The children enjoyed the women's talk and the talk was videotaped for later use, too. The fifth grade students involved a lot of their family and neighbors in their projects as they interviewed relatives and friends who had been alive during WWII.

To what extent did participation in the BHH project stimulate collaboration among teachers?

From the very first summer workshop, participants were appreciative of the opportunities their participation provided for them to work together in grade level groups and to learn what teachers in other grades were doing. Teachers expressed the feeling that at school, even during breaks, teachers do not collaborate much or just get to know each other. Kindergarten through first grade teachers praised workshop activities that allowed them to sit in grade-level groups, which allowed them to bounce ideas off each other. First and second grade teachers brought up the issue of collaboration with other teachers in response to two separate focus group questions (What are the most important factors for your success in teaching history next year? Was the workshop beneficial to you in other ways?). Upper elementary teachers (third – sixth grade) mentioned in response to three separate focus group questions the importance of collaboration with others, the time to share ideas about what's working and what's not, knowing what others are doing, getting concrete ideas, and simply communicating with other teachers.⁵¹ During focus groups conducted after teachers' first implementations in 2003, teachers in first and second grades reiterated the importance of working with others. Kindergarten teachers simply said they enjoyed the opportunities to debrief with one another about how the unit had gone and to share ideas for next time.⁵² During summer 2003 focus groups, teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the best thing about the workshops had been the presentations by teachers about what they were doing in their grade levels. One teacher said, "It was interesting to hear what the other grade levels were doing with their lessons/units and to see how it all fits together." Teachers mentioned that they thought it was helpful both to see where students were going in the curriculum in later years and to see what older students would be able to accomplish, as well as to get an idea about the types of knowledge and skills they could expect incoming students from lower grades to possess. The teachers also appreciated being able to talk over the year and the unit with their grade-level peers, both as a wrap-up and analysis of the last year and for brainstorming ideas for the next year.⁵³ During August 2003 teacher focus groups, teachers identified additional time to work together as the most important factor for success. Teachers also reported that grade-level collaboration had changed their thinking about what they needed to be successful in teaching history, and characterized the group work and collaboration during workshops as being especially enjoyable.⁵⁴ Subsequent data collection (a focus group with kindergarten teachers and a third grade teacher implementation survey) affirmed that participants

⁴⁹ Spring 2004 kindergarten teacher focus group summary, Appendix pages 53-56.

⁵⁰ Spring 2003 third grade teacher focus group summary, Appendix pages 38-39.

⁵¹ Summer 2002 workshop teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 28-33.

⁵² Spring 2003 kindergarten, 1st and second grade teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 34, 35, and 36-37, respectively.

⁵³ June 2003 workshop teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 46-47.

⁵⁴ August 2003 workshop teacher focus group summaries, Appendix pages 48-52.

valued opportunities for collaboration with one another. Kindergarten teachers reported that their collaboration had mostly taken the form of lunches together, during which they would talk and brainstorm ideas for implementation.⁵⁵ Third grade teachers rated collaboration with their peers as being important or very important for providing ideas for activities, soliciting feedback, comparing student outcomes, discussing unit modifications and sharing success stories as well as materials and resources with one another.⁵⁶

Throughout the project, teachers cited the importance of the collaboration with and support from the project director and co-director. From the early workshop surveys to later surveys and interviews, teachers mentioned the unconditional support they received from the project director and staff and how they valued the way that their ideas were accepted with enthusiasm and they were always treated like professionals. This collegiality extended to the evaluators whose frequent visits were not treated as interruptions, but as welcome opportunities to have another person see the fruits of their labors and another person with whom teachers could exchange ideas.

At the end of the third year of the *BHH* project and during the no-cost extension year, quite a few of the teachers became involved in another collaborative opportunity by becoming mentor teachers for the three new districts that became involved in the *BHH II* project. Near the end of year three, the project director made the WCSD teachers aware that the opportunity existed for them to become mentors and there were more qualified and interested participants than were needed. Teachers created a recruitment video and were a vital part of the recruitment visits to each of the districts. A group of about 10 teachers became mentors and attended the teacher professional development workshops for the new phase of the project. Evaluator observations of that workshop suggested that these teachers enjoyed the experience and that it gave them a new level of professionalism to take on the new role of expert mentor.

What unintended outcomes were observed during the implementation of the BHH curriculum?

As a result of implementations of the *BHH* units, teachers in multiple grades identified issues implicated in the curriculum that may be particularly sensitive for certain types of students. Kindergarten teachers reported that the History of Me unit requires a sensitivity to student privacy issues, such as the student's place of birth, type of house the child lives in, who the child lives with, and other personal background and situation factors. Teacher reported that they were not always sure how to facilitate the participation of students living in non-traditional families or students who could not bring documents to class. Similarly, during the second grade unit on Immigration, some teachers reported that during an Ellis Island simulation, a few students had become quite upset about being "deported," and that the issue of immigration may have been particularly sensitive for students whose parents had recently immigrated. For example, one teacher said that one of her students who was "deported" was actually a recent Mexican immigrant and that she was worried that the simulation would upset the student.

Teachers in the third grade had concerns about issues associated with both the Segregation and Industrialization units. When discussing the Segregation unit, for example, some teachers were concerned about how to use the unit with sensitivity when they have African-American children in the classroom. One teacher said she felt as if they might be introducing the idea of prejudice against groups when the children might not have thought of

⁵⁵ Spring 2004 Kindergarten teacher focus group summary, Appendix pages 53-56.

⁵⁶ Spring 2004 third grade teacher implementation survey summary, Appendix pages 13-15.

something like that on their own. This teacher said, “I think one of the hardest things that I am having a problem with is, I have an African-American student in my class, and he came to me a couple weeks ago and said that someone had called him ‘black.’ And now I’m reading these stories that refer to—we have colored, we have blacks—and I don’t want to offend this child, but I just read the words and I just say that’s just how it used to be, I don’t know what else to say. He just gets real quiet, and the ‘n’ word is in some of those movies.” In addition, teachers also raised questions about the developmental readiness of their students to handle particular information. For example, the third grade teachers explained that they chose to eliminate one activity from the Segregation unit—the activity on the KKK—because they thought the ideas contained in it were too difficult for the children and the cruelty was too extreme for third graders. During one classroom observation, the evaluator witnessed a single African-American student being singled out from all the other students during a discussion of segregation, pressed for comments on the topic of race relations in front of classmates, and made to work up front with the teacher when other students were allowed to sit at their desks and work independently. When discussing the Industrialization unit, teachers reported that there were certain aspects of the curriculum that they either did not complete, or would not undertake in future implementations because they tended to make particular groups of students feel uncomfortable. For example, when discussing housing and different socio-economic classes of people, more than one teacher said that the topic of social classes “came too close to home” for their students. One teacher said, “The activity where the Venn diagram of comparing the different classes of people—that was very uncomfortable in my room, because you could see the kids that were relating to it and that is one personally that I will not do again.”

Finally, the evaluator noted during one classroom observation of the fifth grade unit on WWII that at least one student made the connection between the U.S. home front during the Second World War and the contemporary U.S. home front in the context of the war in Iraq. This student asked the teacher why the U.S. was not doing rationing and recycling for the war in Iraq as they had done during WWII. During a subsequent interview with the fifth grade teacher, he reported that this was the first time the issue had come up, and that he tried to be sensitive to the issue, particularly for students with family members in the service, but that in general, most students appeared to be un-bothered by the unit’s connections with the war in Iraq.

As in the cases of less appropriate language used by fifth grade children talking about the units discussed above, when incidents occurred like the ones listed above, the evaluation staff made the project director aware of potential problems. She took immediate steps to make sure that the teachers were aware of the sensitive issues and how to handle them. She also worked to preclude or reduce the likelihood of these issues becoming problems for students during future implementations by writing supplements for several of the units that talked explicitly about ways to avoid pitfalls or problems for students and to take advantage of teachable moments.

Conclusions

The original goals of the *Bringing History Home* project included the development of a high-quality, K-6 history curriculum, the promotion of disadvantaged and minority students’ successful participation in the study of history, instruction of K-6 teachers in discovery and guided inquiry methods for the teaching of history, implementation of the *BHH* curriculum at a system-wide level, and an evaluation of the project’s effectiveness in promoting teacher and student history knowledge and skills and motivation for learning history. Over a three-year

period, the *Bringing History Home* project brought these goals to fruition in the Washington Community School District in Washington, Iowa. Accomplishments of the *BHH* project that have been documented by the project's evaluation include the following: development and refinement of 14 original history curricular units designed for K-6 classrooms and a comprehensive website for curriculum dissemination; the delivery of high-quality teacher professional development workshops and ongoing professional support for participating teachers; implementation of the *BHH* curriculum in 29 classrooms for two and a half years, reaching over 800 students a year; the identification of potential student learning outcomes and the design of potential student assessments for documenting those outcomes; and the creation of curriculum adaptations and additional history curricular units by participating teachers.

The evaluation collected data from multiple sources using multiple methods for documenting outcomes at the teacher, student, and school level. Methods included classroom observations, interviews and focus groups conducted with teachers, and teacher surveys. In addition, evaluators worked with teachers at all grade levels to identify potential student learning outcomes and to construct appropriate instruments for documenting such outcomes. Student assessment instruments were piloted in fourth through sixth grades, and student products were collected to provide information on existing student outcomes. Both the piloted instruments and the methods developed for analyzing these assessments will allow more in-depth examination of student learning outcomes under *BHH II*. As such, the evaluation of *BHH* has laid the groundwork for more systematic research on teachers' and students' historical thinking.

Although the evaluation evidence produced overwhelmingly points to positive project outcomes during the life of the grant, a few limitations of the project were observed, including the following:

- Teachers continued to identify limited time as a factor that may have impeded their ability to implement the curriculum as fully as they wished
- Classroom implementations of some units highlighted the need for sensitivity in teaching some history topics, including social classes, immigration, and racism
- Teacher interest in the curriculum fluctuated and was not uniform
- Some teachers identified parts of the curriculum as being too difficult for their students

Despite these few limitations, a number of benefits of the *BHH* project have been observed and documented, including the following:

Instruction in history as a separate discipline has been added to the curriculum in K-12 at WCSD.

History instruction was limited in some grades and non-existent in others in the Washington Community School District before the *BHH* project; now, history is taught in all six grades, and the seventh through twelfth grades are adopting the *BHH* methodology in their history classes.

The *BHH* curriculum was used successfully across all ability levels in all seven grades.

Teachers are more motivated to teach and learn about history.

In general, teachers are interested and motivated to teach history, even teachers who were originally skeptical of their ability to teach history to young children. Individual interest and

motivation varied, both across and within grades, as well as over time, but in general, project participation increased teachers' excitement and enthusiasm to teach history, made teachers more confident and comfortable with teaching history, and taught them more about their students.

History instruction has improved.

Teachers' instructional practices have changed, including changes in their general approach to history instruction (from a focus on Social Studies to a focus on the study of history as a separate discipline); the addition of new strategies and techniques for teaching history, including the use of primary sources and timelines, documents analysis, and narrative construction; and an increase in teachers' expectations for their students.

Teachers know more about American history.

Teachers improved their history content knowledge, despite a general concern at the outset of the project that they lacked adequate history knowledge. Most teachers learned to be comfortable with the idea that they were learning right along with the students, gained content knowledge through their teaching, and became more interested and motivated to learn more about the subject as time passed.

Students know more about American history.

Students across all ability levels demonstrate increased content knowledge, both through anecdotal evidence and teacher self-reports and through student pilot assessments. This increased knowledge was exhibited through students' ability to participate in the units, answer questions posed by teachers, generate their own insightful questions, construct historical narratives, identify during interviews examples of things they learned, perform documents analysis, and acquire and appropriate the vocabulary of the units.

Students are thinking historically.

Students across all ability levels demonstrate increased ability to think historically, including the ability to conduct documents analysis, support inferences drawn from historical evidence, construct and interpret information in maps, graphs, and charts, conduct historical research on a particular historical figure, and generally appreciate the interpretive nature of all historical research.

Students are experiencing historical empathy.

Students exhibit an increased ability to empathize or identify with people from the past.

Students are more engaged with and interested in history.

Most students demonstrated enjoyment, engagement with, interest in, and excitement about the curriculum and history in general.

There is support for history instruction at the district level.

Strong administrative support at the district level promoted the success of the project.

The overall school and community benefited from the *BHH* project.

Positive effects of project participation were experienced in the larger community, primarily through the involvement of parents, volunteers and other members of the community.

Teacher collaboration increased as a result of the *BHH* project.

Strong, collaborative relationships were fostered and supported by teachers' participation and highlighted the importance of collegial relationships and opportunities to work together during the school day.

Overall, it is clear that the benefits of the *Bringing History Home* project observed and documented over the course of the grant period far outweigh any drawbacks associated with the project.

Metaevaluation

The metaevaluation is in process and will be added to this report in January, 2006.

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March 2004 Kindergarten Teacher Implementation Survey Summary

In March 2004, participating BHH first grade teachers were asked to complete a survey concerning their implementation of the BHH Unit, *History of Me*, during the 2003-04 school year. All six kindergarten teachers from the Washington Community School District completed this survey for a response rate of 100%. The amount of teaching experience for teachers in this group ranged from 3-27 years with a mean of 18.2 years of experience – two teachers had five or fewer years of experience and the other four had more than 20 years of experience. All teachers had K-6 certification with one teacher having preschool/early childhood certification, one K-8, and two had reading certification. All teachers reported that their previous preparation for teaching history was very limited – one said they had no previous preparation, four teachers said their experience was limited to curriculum guides, and a couple said they had one or two courses in college. Teachers' experience in teaching history before the BHH program was also very limited, confined to teaching about things like national holidays, teaching about the history of the town in which they had previously taught, or in reading non-fiction books with children.

Thoroughness of coverage and amount of time to teach the activities

Teachers were asked to indicate the degree of thoroughness with which they covered each of the *History of Me* unit activities on a five-point scale where “1” is “Not at all” and “5” is “Very Thoroughly.” The teachers reported that they covered all but two of the units at least “Moderately Well” (“3”). The two units receiving less thorough coverage were the *Music* unit and the *Food* unit. For the *Music* unit, half the teachers reported covering the unit “moderately well” or better, one reported covering it “only slightly”, and two did not cover that activity at all. Two teachers also said that they did not do the *Food* activity at all and the others ratings of their thoroughness ranged from “only slightly” to “very thoroughly.” The activity covered the most thoroughly seemed to be the *Timeline* unit with half the teachers saying they had covered it “very thoroughly” and half saying “thoroughly.” In addition to the timeline, teachers covered four units, on average, at least “thoroughly” – *What is history?*, *Physical change over time*, *Photos*, and *Toys*.

The teachers for the most part reported that they were able to cover the unit about as thoroughly as they had hoped, but that they felt time pressure from their new reading curriculum. One teacher wished that more time would have been available to work on the curriculum because the kids were so interested in it. Another teacher said that her classroom was active this year and that behavioral issues were a distraction for her. One teacher wished that the curriculum would have involved more hands on things that are ready to use because she felt that too much time had to be used in searching for books, pictures, and activities to use with the lessons.

The teachers were also asked to estimate the amount of time spent on teaching the *History of Me* unit activities. The teachers reported that it was difficult to estimate the time since they often pooled several of the activities together. The teachers ranged in their estimates of the total time spent on the activities from 7 ½ hours to 17 hours in total, averaging about 13 hours total. Agreeing with their estimation of thoroughness of coverage, the teachers spent the most time on the *Timeline* activity, averaging about 2 ½ hours on that activity and the least on the *Food* and *Music* activity, averaging less than 30 minutes and less than 20 minutes on those two activities, respectively. Since most teachers chose to do the interviews and sharing of artifacts from home activity as students brought their items in, many teachers did the unit over quite a few days – up to 30 different days – with only a short time spent on the lesson. Using the interviews

and artifacts together meant that each day that they shared a child's interview, they covered the *Physical Change over Time, Photos, Letters, Toys, and Timelines* activities.

Student competencies

Teachers were also asked to rate how competent they believed that their students were at performing some of the process and content goals of the BHH units. This rating was also on five-point scale, with "1" meaning "Not at all" and "5" meaning "Completely Competent." Teachers indicated that their students were at least somewhat competent at performing all but one of the process and content goals listed. Teachers were most confident of their students' abilities in the areas that they spent the most time on. They expressed the most confidence in their students' ability to tell something about their own history using pictures or artifacts, with four of the six teachers rating their students as "Completely competent" in this skill. The other skills that students also used during the interviews that were combined with the *Timeline* skill were (with the mean rating for that skill in parentheses):

- Indicating which comes first, second, and last for their sequence of pictures and artifacts (4.33)
- Indicating which comes before or after for their sequence of pictures and artifacts (4.33)
- Put pictures of themselves and other artifacts that they had when they were babies, toddlers, and kindergarteners in sequence (4.17)

At all other skills, teachers rated their students as somewhat or completely competent with the exception of the skill, "Describe how music that young children like might be different from music that adults like" on which they rated their students as only minimally competent, although two teachers rated their students as "Mostly competent" on that skill. Again the *Music* activity was the one that teachers felt that they had covered the least thoroughly and reported spending the least amount of time on.

Benefits to students

Teachers were also asked to rate how beneficial they thought each of the unit activities were for their students. They were asked to rate each activity on a five point scale with "1" being "Not at all beneficial" to "5" being "Very beneficial." The activity rated as the most beneficial was the *Timelines* activity, with five teachers rating it as a "5" and one as a "4". The *What is history* and *Photos* activities were also rated very high with four teachers rating them both as "5" and two teachers rating them as "4". Even those activities that the teachers covered less thoroughly, *Music* and *Food* were rated at least at the mid-point of the scale by most teachers. Those two activities were the only activities receiving individual teacher ratings of "2" and no activity was rated by any teacher as being "Not at all beneficial."

Teacher attitudes

Teachers were asked to rate their attitudes about teaching the BHH curriculum. Six questions were asked and teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with the item with "6" indicating "Strongly Agree" and "1" indicating "Strongly disagree." There was very little variability in teachers' responses to these items with all teachers saying that they at least moderately agreed (a rating of at least 5 on the six-point scale) that:

- They learned more about their students using the BHH curriculum (all teachers strongly agree with this statement)
- Their students have a positive attitude toward history (five of the six teachers strongly agreed with this statement and one moderately agreed).

All teachers at least mildly agreed (a rating of at least 4 on the six-point scale) that they were comfortable teaching the BHH curriculum, are interested in learning more about history as a result of teaching the BHH curriculum, that they learned about how to use primary sources in their instruction and curriculum development as a result of teaching the BHH units, and that they plan to teach the BHH curriculum next year.

Modifications

Teachers were asked to describe any modifications they had made to the unit. Two modifications made by several teachers were:

- Bringing in their own artifacts from their personal history to share
- Having children set up their artifacts as a gallery and having the other children take a “gallery walk” to view the exhibit.

Teachers also said they modified some units slightly to make them quicker and more interactive.

Primary sources

The primary sources that teachers reported using with their classroom were:

- Personal artifacts from their own lives
- Toys
- Pictures
- Clothes
- Kitchen tools
- Games
- Photos
- Antique museum
- Personal letters
- Birth certificates
- Preschool diplomas

One teacher said, “My uncle of 80 years passed away last year and as we went through all of the things in his house we came to realize that he and his mother never threw anything away! While it was difficult going through all of their things, it was also wonderful to find out and remember things about their past. I shared many artifacts from their lives with my students and look forward to reading through the many boxes of letters and pictures they saved in order to share some of them with next year's class.”

Additional comments

Teachers were asked if they had additional comments about the BHH project and five of the six teachers took the opportunity to make positive comments about the project. Most of the comments dealt with how beneficial they thought the project was for both students and teachers, how it stimulated their own interest in history, and how much they and their students enjoyed it. One teacher said, “It has changed my entire view about history! Also I never would have imagined kids this age being able to understand history and terms but I have been proven wrong!” Another teacher commented, “I find myself wanting to learn more about the past! It is

really exciting and so much fun for the kids. We had a "museum" set up in the hallway of artifacts from long ago. The kids were enthralled.”

March 2004 First Grade Teacher Implementation Survey Summary

In March 2004, participating BHH first grade teachers were asked to complete a survey concerning their implementation of the BHH Unit, *Ziploc Baggie Book of Me*, during the 2003-04 school year. All six first grade teachers from the Washington Community School District completed this survey for a response rate of 100%. The amount of teaching experience for teachers in this group ranged from 7-30 years with a mean of 14.5 years experience. All teachers had K-6 or K-8 certification with one teacher having math and reading certification. All teachers reported that their previous preparation for teaching history was very limited – one said they had no previous preparation, four teachers said their experience was limited to grade level curriculum guides, and another said their preparation was only through personal interest in history topics. Teachers' experience in teaching history before the BHH program was also very limited, confined to teaching about things like national holidays.

Thoroughness of coverage and amount of time to teach the activities

Teachers were asked to indicate the degree of thoroughness with which they covered each of the *Ziploc Baggie Book of Me* unit activities on a five-point scale where "1" is "Not at all" and "5" is "Very Thoroughly." The first grade teachers indicated that they covered most *Bringing History Home* activities quite thoroughly. All teachers rated that they covered all activities at least moderately well. They felt that they had covered the *What is History?*, "Timeline" and "Mapping" units the most thoroughly. *Mind Maps* and *Other Sources* (concerning games, clothes, and food) were the topics that teachers covered less thoroughly although both were rated as covered at least moderately well. When asked if they felt they had covered the units as thoroughly as they would have liked to, teachers appeared to feel that for the most part they had, but several teachers said that problems in sharing access to a digital camera made it difficult to stay on schedule and that there were time conflicts with their new reading series implementation. One teacher reported using more time than they had planned because children's artifacts trickled in over the course of a month.

The teachers varied quite widely in the amount of time they spent on the *Ziploc Baggie Book of Me* curriculum unit. During the 2003-04 implementation of the unit, most but not all of the teachers took a three-day intensive approach to the unit, doing it all day on the three days preceding Thanksgiving. Some teachers liked this approach and others said they would probably not do it this way again. This approach may have had an impact on the amount of time that teachers spend on the unit.

All but one of the teachers took the most time to do the *Timeline* activity, with a range of an hour and a half to four hours spent on this activity. One teacher took the most time for the *Other sources* activity, but this includes the food activity and that teacher expanded that activity by asking students to bring in recipes and descriptions of the recipes so that would take longer than the activity as written. The average times for each activity were: one hour for the *What is history?* activity, about three hours for the *Timeline* activity, about one and a half hours for the *Written Document* and *Mind Maps* activities and for teacher modifications, and about two hours for the *Photos*, *Other sources* and *Mapping* activities. The total time spent on the BHH unit as a whole ranged from 8 ½ hours to more than 23 hours, in other words from about 1 hour per activity to almost 3 hours per activity. The average time spent on each activity was not quite 2 hours.

Student competencies

Teachers were also asked to rate how competent they believed that their students were at performing some of the process and content goals of the BHH units. This rating was also on a five-point scale, with “1” meaning “Not at all” and “5” meaning “Completely Competent.” Again teachers indicated that their students were at least somewhat competent at performing all the process and content goals listed. The teachers were most confident in their students’ ability to describe the difference between a true story and a make-believe story, describe the meaning of the word “history”, and tell a story about their own life. The activities that they rated lower were those in the sections that the teachers felt they had covered less thoroughly – games and mind maps, and one of the more difficult ideas in mapping, that map size does not predict the size of the place mapped, where five teachers indicated that their students would be somewhat competent and one mostly competent at understanding that concept.

Benefits to students

Teachers were also asked to rate how beneficial they thought each of the unit activities were for their students. They were asked to rate each activity on a five point scale with “1” being “Not at all beneficial” to “5” being “Very beneficial.” There was very little variation among the teachers on how beneficial they found the activities. All of the activities had a mean of at least 4.17 and for five of the seven activities no one rated that activity as less than a “4” on the five-point scale. The activity thought to be the most beneficial was the *Timelines* activity.

Teacher attitudes

Teachers were asked to rate their attitudes about teaching the BHH curriculum. Six questions were asked and teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with the item with “6” indicating “Strongly Agree” and “1” indicating “Strongly disagree.” There was again very little variability in teachers’ responses to these items with all teachers saying that they at least moderately agreed (a rating of at least 5 on the six-point scale) that:

- They were comfortable teaching the BHH curriculum
- Their students have a positive attitude toward history
- They plan to teach the BHH curriculum next year
- They learned more about their students using the BHH curriculum.

All teachers at least mildly agreed (a rating of at least 4 on the six-point scale) that they are interested in learning more about history as a result of teaching the BHH curriculum and that they learned about how to use primary sources in their instruction and curriculum development as a result of teaching the BHH units.

Modifications

Teachers were asked to describe any modifications they had made to the unit. Most of the modifications described were relatively minor. Two teachers said that they had made a modification to the food unit by asking students to bring in the recipe for the snack they brought for the favorite food activity and asked students to talk about the history of that family recipe. Another teacher said that they did the food sharing activity on five separate days so that they did not have so much food on one day.

One teacher reported modifying the photo activity by asking students who brought their photos to dictate their oral histories to her and then she typed them up. For the mapping activity, one teacher said that the class toured the school using the map and stopped and colored in things

as they went around the building. The same teacher also had students plot their home addresses on a county map. Two teachers reported slight modifications to the timeline activity – one said that they used digital photos of the classroom to add to the timeline and another said that they used the timeline throughout the year adding in events as the year went on.

Primary sources

The primary sources that teachers reported using with their classroom were:

- Newspapers
- Menus
- Report cards
- Scrapbooks
- Attendance registers
- Programs
- Report cards
- Newsletters – classroom and school
- Photo albums
- Photos
- Maps – school, city, county.

Additional comments

Teachers were asked if they had additional comments about the BHH project, but only one teacher took this opportunity, saying that, “Whenever we read a book students want to know if the they are real photos. They like the real photos.”

March 2004 Second Grade Teacher Implementation Survey Summary

In March 2004, participating BHH second grade teachers were asked to complete a survey on the usefulness of the most recent unit on Environmental History. All six of the second grade teachers from the Washington Community School District completed this survey for a response rate of 100%. On the first section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the completeness of their coverage of each separate portion of the Environmental History curriculum. In general, teachers rated their coverage as being thorough or very thorough. The segments of the curriculum receiving the most complete coverage were Activity 1: Mapping the American Landscape and Activity 6: Taking care of the Earth. The portion of the curriculum receiving the least complete coverage was Activity 4: Timeline of Farming.

In the second section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the competence of their students in satisfying a number of BHH content and process goals. Generally, teachers responded that their students were somewhat to mostly competent; however, a great deal of variation characterized these responses. In particular, the content/process goal earning the lowest rating by teachers was “Describing environmentally-friendly farming methods,” which teachers believed their students were only somewhat or minimally competent at satisfying. The content/process goal earning the highest teacher ratings was “Brainstorming ideas for protecting the environment,” at which teachers said their students were mostly or completely competent.

Teachers were also asked to identify the most important student knowledge and skill outcomes of BHH project. Five out of six teachers responded to this question. Outcomes identified by teachers include an awareness that history is “not just long, long ago;” an appreciation for the historical context of other units; a “general knowledge of the United States’ ecosystems and what materials we get from them;” an awareness of the consequences of environmental damage; knowledge about environmental protection measures; familiarity with environmental figures such as Roosevelt, Muir, Pinchot and Carson; and more generally, an understanding of change over time and how history impacts us today.

In the third section of the survey, teachers were asked to estimate the amount of time they had spent teaching the Environmental History unit as a whole. On average, teachers reported spending approximately eleven hours on the entire unit, although individual responses ranged from a minimum of approximately five hours to a maximum of fifteen hours (reported by two teachers). Teachers were also asked if they were able to implement the curriculum to the extent that they had hoped for. Five out of six teachers responded to this question; three teachers responded “yes,” one teacher responded negatively, and another teacher did not specify, writing instead, “I just wish I had more time to dedicate to it, because there are so many possibilities!” One reason given for not being able to complete the unit was that the teacher did not feel “totally comfortable” with the Environmental History content, because they had not studied it before. This person said they planned to do some independent research in the future. Two teachers said they had to stretch the unit out a little to “fit everything in.”

In the fourth section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate how beneficial they thought each segment of the Environmental History unit was for their students. Generally, teachers rated the entire unit as being beneficial or very beneficial for their students. The segment of the curriculum receiving the lowest rating in this section was Activity 4: Timeline of Farming (although this item still received an average rating of 4 on a 5-point scale). The highest-rated portion of the curriculum was Activity 6: Taking care of the Earth.

In the fifth section of the survey, teachers were asked to describe any modifications they had made to the Environmental History unit. Four out of six teachers responded to this question. Three teachers described minor changes to the curriculum: a field trip to Cuddeback farms, the addition of the book *The Lorax*, and discussion of individual state agricultural products instead of regional products. One teacher made more substantial modifications to the unit, saying they had visually depicted different ecosystems on the classroom map, included a “Where Does it Come From?” homework assignment, constructed timelines with photographs, and had student groups create pollution collages.

In the sixth section of the survey, teachers were asked to identify the primary source documents they had used, as well as provide a brief description of the ways in which they were used in the classroom. Four out of six teachers responded to this question. One teacher simply responded that they had “used all books and videos available.” Another teacher said that they had used all the photos, plus others they had found on the Internet. Another teacher responded that they had used “lots of photos” for the purpose of examination, making posters and constructing timelines. Another teacher said they had examined Muir’s writings on the web and had also looked for Carson’s writings.

In the seventh section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the importance of a number of instructional techniques, including discovery learning, guided inquiry, use of primary source documents, group work, student presentations, and drawing connections between new and previously encountered material. Generally, teachers responded that they found these instructional techniques to be important or very important. These responses were marked in their consensus, with very little variation in the ratings among teachers. In particular, each instructional strategy was given an average rating of 4-5 on a 5-point scale, 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “very important.”

Teachers were also asked to describe how their teaching of History had been affected by their participation in the BHH project. Three teachers reported that they were more aware of history, more aware of connections, more interested in history or more confident about teaching it. Two teachers said that they now actually teach history, which is a change in and of itself. Finally, one teacher reported that they had a better understanding of “effective ways to get material across.” Teachers were also asked to identify how their teaching of other subjects had been affected by the project. Five out of six teachers responded to this question, listing ideas such as using mind maps and other strategies learned in the workshops in other areas of the curriculum, relating history to other parts of the curriculum, letting students do more on their own as opposed to “telling them all the answers,” making connections between new and previously encountered material, and increasing student expectations. One teacher responded, “not sure, other than my kids see that I learn right along with them.” Teachers were also asked to list the ways they had found collaborative relationships with other teachers to be important. Five out of six teachers responded to this question, although comments tended to be vague. One teacher simply wrote, “collaborative relationships were already in place.” Two teachers responded that they had successfully worked together. Two other teachers responded that it was reassuring to know that they had a support staff and that their peers were teaching “the exact same lessons at approximately the same time.”

In the eighth section of the survey, teachers were asked to express their attitudes toward the BHH curriculum. In general, teachers expressed strong, positive feelings toward the curriculum. In particular, teachers responded that they moderately or strongly agreed with all of the following statements: I feel comfortable teaching the BHH curriculum; I am interested in

learning more about history myself as a result of teaching the unit; I plan to teach the curriculum next year; I learned more about my students using the curriculum; and I learned a lot about how to use primary sources in my instruction and curriculum development. A single teacher mildly disagreed with the statement “My students have a positive attitude toward history.”

Additional comments about the curriculum were provided by half of the teachers. These comments consisted entirely of positive feedback. One teacher simply wrote, “It’s been great!” Another reported that it had been a positive experience for them and their students. Finally, one teacher said, “I have loved this project. I have not only learned more history and learned lots about my students, but I have learned about myself. I feel privileged to ‘loop’—I get to teach four history units!”

The second grade teachers reported that they had been teaching on average for a little over fifteen years. Five out of six teachers reported that they had little to no preparation for teaching history before the project began. A single teacher reported that they had been a history major in college, before switching to elementary education with an emphasis on history instruction. Three teachers said they had little to no experience teaching history before the project began. One teacher identified the 2nd grade social studies units as their only history teaching experience, another teacher reported teaching the Immigration unit as previous experience, and another teacher said they had previously taught Communities of Long Ago and Native Americans.

March 2004 Third Grade Teacher Implementation Survey Summary

In March 2004, participating BHH third grade teachers were asked to complete a survey on the usefulness of the most recent unit on Segregation. All of the six third grade teachers from the Washington Community School District completed this survey for a response rate of 100%. In the first section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the completeness of their coverage of each separate portion of the Segregation curriculum. In general, teachers reported that they had covered each aspect of the entire Segregation unit moderately well to thoroughly. The lesson receiving the most complete coverage was the portion of the unit devoted to the Former Slave States. All but one teacher reported having covered this segment very thoroughly. The lesson receiving the least complete coverage was the section on Review and Conclusion. In particular, five out of six teachers reported that they had not created a Declaration of Human Rights with their students. Other areas of the curriculum receiving only slight coverage were the prejudice and segregation KWL; student role playing using Jim Crow laws; discussion of the sharecropping system; and having students construct a collage of photographs depicting African-American experiences under the Jim Crow laws. In addition, teachers reported that they did not utilize all the books suggested in the curriculum, including *One More River to Cross* and *Langston Hughes* (3 out of 6 teachers reported not reading at all).

In the second section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the observed increase in student knowledge and skills as a result of instruction in the Segregation unit. In general, teachers tended to report a moderate to large increase in student knowledge and skills. In particular, teachers reported the greatest increase in student knowledge and skills related to the topic of prejudice (all 6 teachers reported large increases in knowledge and skills for this portion of the unit). The most modest increases in student knowledge and skills were reported for the topic of the United States Constitution, which were rated as only moderate changes.

In the third section of the survey, teachers were asked to record the amount of time they had spent on each portion of the unit. On average, teachers spent approximately eleven hours on the entire curriculum, although individual responses were marked in their variation, ranging from a minimum of eight and one-half hours to a maximum of almost nineteen hours.⁵⁷ Interestingly, the teacher who reported having spent the largest amount of time on the entire unit is also the teacher who rated herself the lowest in terms of complete coverage. Across all lessons, this teacher reported having covered the entire Segregation unit only slightly or moderately well. In addition, she declined to describe any modifications made to the unit.⁵⁸ Without additional information, it is unclear why the unit took almost nineteen hours to teach. Overall, teachers reported spending the most amount of class time discussing Prejudice against African-Americans (a little over 2 hours) and the least amount of class time talking about the Former Slave States (a little less than one hour). A few teachers were unable to specify how much time they had spent on each portion of the unit; one teacher wrote that she had discussed Prejudice against African-Americans every day for the duration of the unit (3 months). Another teacher responded that she had discussed each portion of the curriculum continuously during the entire unit (6 weeks). This teacher wrote on her survey, "This is almost impossible to say, as so many times were split, or covered two times a day." She also wrote "We still discuss it" and "Always came up."

⁵⁷ One teacher, who was unable to estimate how much time she had spent on each part of the curriculum, was not counted in this estimate.

⁵⁸ When this teacher's reported time is dropped from the estimate, the overall teacher average for the entire unit falls to 9.25 hours.

Teachers were also asked if they were able to implement the unit to the extent that they intended. Four teachers responded “yes,” one teacher wrote “pretty much,” and another teacher responded negatively. Reasons given for not being able to complete the entire unit were that the class was not motivated to discuss things and that the class was very challenging, both academically and behaviorally. One teacher elaborated, saying, “Difficult to keep attention; few willing to discuss; content to just sit.”

In the fourth section of the survey, teachers were asked to describe any modifications they had made to the unit. Four out of six teachers responded to this question, although the length and complexity of teacher responses varied. One teacher reported that she had simply added an “Africa packet” to the unit, covering people, land and animals. Other teachers listed books they had added to the curriculum, including *Goin’ Someplace Special, If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad*, and the books from the *Addy* series. One teacher responded that she had assigned her students to write a story about the Underground Railroad. The most extensive set of modifications to the unit included several additions: inclusion of the 15th and 19th Amendments, a Freedmen’s Bureau photo analysis in conjunction with the lesson on the 15th Amendment, a Negro league lesson/photo analysis, and an independent biographical research project in which students selected individuals for the creation of a biographical sketch.

In the fifth section of the survey, teachers were asked to identify the primary source documents they had used, as well as a brief description of the ways the class had used them. Four out of six teachers responded to this question. Again, teacher responses were quite varied. One teacher simply responded that she “used them as suggested in the lesson plans.” Another teacher merely wrote “discussed photos.” Two teachers identified the Constitution and African-American photographs. One teacher also identified the Bill of Rights, and the 13th, 15th and 19th Amendments.

In the sixth section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate the importance of several different instructional techniques, including discovery learning, guided inquiry, the use of primary source documents, group work, student presentations, and drawing connections between previous and current units. In general, teachers reported that they found these techniques to be important. In particular, the highest rated technique was guided inquiry, which five out of six teachers reported was very important to their teaching. The lowest rated instructional technique was the use of student presentations, with four out of six teachers rating it as only moderately or slightly important.

In the seventh section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate their attitudes towards the Segregation curriculum. In general, teachers expressed strong, positive feelings towards the curriculum. In particular, teachers responded that they moderately to strongly agreed with all of the following statements: I feel comfortable teaching the BHH curriculum; I am interested in learning more about history myself as a result of teaching the unit; my students have a positive attitude toward history; I plan to teach the curriculum next year; I learned more about my students using the curriculum; and I learned a lot about how to use primary sources in my instruction and curriculum development.

Teachers were also asked to identify the ways in which their teaching of History or Social Studies had been affected by participation in the project. In general, teachers responded that their teaching of History had been changed as a result of the project, ranging from becoming more aware of and increasing their use of primary source documents to experiencing a change in the way they view student abilities. There was a great deal of variation in these responses. One teacher simply wrote, “The BHH curriculum has replaced our S.S. curriculum.” Other teachers

offered more detailed responses, including that they have changed their use of technology, that they see students differently, and that they now approach the subject as “actual History rather than a social studies mini-unit.” Furthermore, teachers were also asked to identify how participation had affected their teaching of other subjects. One teacher left this question blank. Other teachers offered a variety of responses, including that they look for more in their students, that they try to make connections across the curriculum, and that they use more primary source documents and timelines. One teacher responded, “It’s replaced S.S. and taken away time from science.”

Teachers were also asked to rate the importance of collaboration with their BHH peers. Overall, teachers rated collaboration as being important or very important for providing ideas for activities, for soliciting feedback, comparing student outcomes, discussing modifications to the unit, and sharing success stories as well as materials and resources with one another.

Teachers were also asked to identify the most important student knowledge and skill outcomes of the BHH project, as well as other potential student outcomes. Teacher responses to this question varied, from their students simply being more aware of things to developing empathy. Other teachers responded that as a result of participation in the program, their students better understand their own role in history, have a deeper appreciation for the notion of change over time, understand that there are multiple perspectives, and exhibit an increased ability to utilize primary source documents and timelines. Other types of student knowledge and skills identified are a curiosity about others, the ability to work in groups, research skills, and compassion.

Additional comments by teachers consisted of either positive or slightly negative feedback about the unit as a whole. Three teachers offered positive comments about the unit as a whole. Two teachers communicated that they had enjoyed and strongly endorse the curriculum, that their students had reacted positively to the unit, and that the activities had resulted in higher participation rates among all types of learners. Another teacher expressed her gratitude for the administrative support she had received. One teacher offered slightly negative feedback about the unit as a whole, saying that while she thought the unit was “fine,” she felt that some of the concepts were a bit beyond the intellectual level of her students (i.e., the Constitution, Amendments, government rules) and would be better delayed until the students were older.

Summer 2002 Workshop Survey Summary

Table 1: Summary Statistics for BHH Teacher Workshop Survey Items

1. The workshop environment was physically comfortable.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	16	10	0	1	0	0	0
%	59.3	37.0	0	3.7	0	0	0

2. There was enough time for my questions and comments.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	5	0	0	0	0	0
%	81.5	18.5	0	0	0	0	0

3. My prior knowledge and opinions were respected.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	26	1	0	0	0	0	0
%	96.3	3.7	0	0	0	0	0

4. The refreshments and breaks met my needs.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	24	3	0	0	0	0	0
%	88.9	11.1	0	0	0	0	0

5. I knew and understood the goals of the workshop.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	9	9	8	1	0	0	0
%	33.3	33.3	29.6	3.7	0	0	0

6. I learned a lot about how to use primary sources in my instruction and curriculum development

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	20	6	1	0	0	0	0

%	74.1	22.2	3.7	0	0	0	0
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7. The document analysis activities were beneficial.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	92.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0

8. I am confident I can generate my own classroom applications based on workshop activities.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	20	6	0	0	0	0	1
%	74.1	22.2	0	0	0	0	3.7

9. The workshop prepared me to generate my own analysis activities for my students.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	20	5	1	0	0	0	1
%	74.1	18.5	3.7	0	0	0	3.7

10. It was helpful for me to hear how history instruction in the early grades can build a foundation for students' future learning.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	92.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0

11. The workshop addressed most of my concerns about next year's history curriculum and instruction in the Bringing History Home project.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	7	7	11	2	0	0	0
%	25.9	25.9	40.7	7.4	0	0	0

12. I wanted more time during the workshop to brainstorm activities and applications for next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	0	10	8	1	2	4	0
%	0	40.0	32.0	4.0	8.0	16.0	0

13. The workshop provided enough opportunity for reflection and processing of ideas.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	15	8	3	0	1	0	0
%	55.6	29.6	11.1	0	3.7	0	0

14. I doubt that I have the knowledge and skill to teach history effectively to my students next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	0	2	1	1	6	15	2
%	0	7.4	3.7	3.7	22.2	55.6	7.4

15. Now, I have a much more positive attitude about teaching history to my students next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	4	0	0	0	0	1
%	81.5	14.8	0	0	0	0	3.7

16. I have a different understanding of what it means to teach history than I did before the workshop.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	19	5	1	0	1	1	0
%	70.4	18.5	3.7	0	3.7	3.7	0

17. I have a different understanding of what it means to learn history than I did before the workshop.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	18	6	2	0	0	1	0
%	66.7	22.2	7.4	0	0	3.7	0

18. I am looking forward to learning more about history myself.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	24	1	2	0	0	0	0
%	88.9	3.7	7.4	0	0	0	0

19. I am looking forward to helping my students learn more about history.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	24	2	0	0	0	0	1
%	88.9	7.4	0	0	0	0	3.7

20. As a result of the workshop, participating teachers are more likely to consult with each other about our history instruction next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	4	1	0	0	0	0
%	81.5	14.8	3.7	0	0	0	0

21. All in all, the workshop activities were enjoyable.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	92.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0

22. All in all, the workshop was very beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	92.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0

23. All in all, my time was used efficiently and effectively on important topics and activities.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	23	4	0	0	0	0	0
%	85.2	14.8	0	0	0	0	0

24. All in all, the presentations were beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	24	3	0	0	0	0	0
%	88.9	11.1	0	0	0	0	0

25. All in all, the small group work was beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	92.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2: Aggregated Items from the Teacher Workshop Evaluation Survey

Workshop Facilities and Environment (Items 1, 3, 4, 21)

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
27	1.18	.284

Workshop Structure and Organization (Items 2, 12, 13, 23, 24, 25)

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
25	1.65	.466

Workshop Content (Items 5, 6, 7, 22)

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
27	1.37	.321

Future Applications and Use (Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 20)

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
25	1.47	.410

Attitudes Toward Future Teaching and Learning of History (Items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19)

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
26	1.32	.552

Summer 2003 Workshop Survey Summary

Table 1: Summary Statistics for BHH Teacher Workshop Survey Items

1. The workshop environment was physically comfortable.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	13	9	3	3	0	0	0
%	46	32	11	11	0	0	0

2. There was enough time for my questions and comments.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	26	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	93	7	0	0	0	0	0

3. My prior knowledge and opinions were respected.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	3	0	0	0	0	0
%	89	11	0	0	0	0	0

4. The refreshments and breaks met my needs.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	27	0	1	0	0	0	0
%	96	0	4	0	0	0	0

5. I knew and understood the goals of the workshop.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	6	0	0	0	0	0
%	79	21	0	0	0	0	0

6. I learned a lot about how to use the internet in my instruction and curriculum development.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	7	12	4	2	1	0	0
%	27	46	15	8	4	0	0

7. The work in groups and grade level breakouts were beneficial.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	23	4	1	0	0	0	0
%	82	14	4	0	0	0	0

8. I am confident I can determine the learning styles utilized in each lesson to improve learner outcomes.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	13	14	0	0	0	0	0
%	48	52	0	0	0	0	0

9. I am confident I can use questioning strategies to enhance each lesson and improve learner outcomes.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	17	10	0	0	0	0	0
%	63	37	0	0	0	0	0

10. I am confident I can incorporate technology where appropriate to enhance lessons and improve learner outcomes.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	9	15	2	1	0	0	0
%	33	56	7	4	0	0	0

11. I am confident I can incorporate cooperative learning where appropriate to enhance lessons and improve learner outcomes.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	5	0	0	0	0	0
%	81	19	0	0	0	0	0

12. I am confident I can identify and select the most important learner outcomes to focus on.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	16	10	1	0	0	0	0
%	59	37	4	0	0	0	0

13. I am confident I can communicate the selected important learner outcomes to students in ways they will understand.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	18	9	0	0	0	0	0
%	67	33	0	0	0	0	0

14. I am confident I can implement the curriculum and instruction to support the most important learner outcomes.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	17	10	0	0	0	0	0
%	63	37	0	0	0	0	0

15. I am confident I can investigate and document important learner outcomes that are and are not accomplished or achieved.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	7	20	0	0	0	0	0
%	26	74	0	0	0	0	0

16. I am confident I can report learner outcomes accurately, fairly, and in useful ways.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	7	20	0	0	0	0	0
%	26	74	0	0	0	0	0

17. The workshop addressed most of my concerns about next year's history curriculum and instruction.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	16	10	2	0	0	0	0
%	57	36	7	0	0	0	0

18. I wanted more time during the workshop to brainstorm activities and applications for next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	6	9	6	0	4	3	0
%	21	32	21	0	14	11	0

19. The workshop provided enough opportunity for reflection and processing of ideas.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	17	10	1	0	0	0	0
%	61	36	4	0	0	0	0

20. I am confident that I have the knowledge and skill to teach history effectively to my students next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	11	15	1	0	0	0	0
%	41	56	4	0	0	0	0

21. I have a positive attitude about teaching history to my students next year.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	23	4	0	0	0	0	0
%	85	15	0	0	0	0	3.7

22. I am looking forward to learning more about history myself.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	6	0	0	0	0	0
%	79	21	0	0	0	0	0

23. I am looking forward to helping my students learn more about history.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	25	2	0	0	0	0	0
%	93	7	0	0	0	0	0

24. All in all, the workshop activities were enjoyable.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	23	5	0	0	0	0	0
%	82	18	0	0	0	0	0

25. All in all, the workshop was very beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	20	8	0	0	0	0	0
%	71	29	0	0	0	0	0

26. All in all, my time was used efficiently and effectively on important topics and activities.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	20	5	3	0	0	0	0
%	71	18	11	0	0	0	0

27. All in all, the presentations were beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	21	6	1	0	0	0	0
%	75	21	4	0	0	0	0

28. All in all, the small group work was beneficial to me.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
N	22	4	2	0	0	0	0
%	79	14	7	0	0	0	0

March 2004 Fourth Grade Teacher Email Survey Summary

In general, the teacher expressed a positive regard for both BHH fourth-grade units. Responses to the email survey questions were incredibly brief and occasionally vague or circular. For example, when asked to identify the greatest benefits to students of learning about the Progressive Era, the teacher responded that the greatest benefit was the students' learning. The teacher reported no weaknesses in the Progressive Era unit. When asked what he would do differently in his next implementation of the unit, the teacher responded that he would know the material better, feel more comfortable teaching, and be more prepared and organized. The greatest difference, he reported, between the Progressive Era unit and an earlier unit on the Great Depression is that the Great Depression unit was more exciting for the students, who especially liked the movies, games and learning about the Dust Bowl. The teacher did not specify clearly how primary sources were used in the unit, nor did he explain how their use was different from that of the Great Depression unit. When asked whether he thought earlier exposure to history in the third grade had affected the readiness of his students to tackle a new unit, the teacher simply replied that his students had learned a lot in the third grade and that he was very impressed. He added that, as a result of being exposed to previous history units, his students were probably less nervous about approaching a new history unit. When asked for additional comments about the Progressive Era unit, the teacher wrote, "The leaders have been so positive all the time. I'm so impressed with all people involved and thankful for the opportunity to teach these units. Thank you!"

March 2004 Sixth Grade Teacher Email Survey Summary

Responses to the email survey questions tended to be relatively brief. In general, the teacher expressed a positive regard for the Polynesian Prehistory unit, although she also reported that she would like to adjust the length of the unit to preserve the integrity of her curriculum schedule. The teacher reported that the biggest benefit of her teaching of the unit had been learning to operate outside her “comfort zone” of content knowledge. The biggest benefit to the students of being exposed to the unit was the notion that multiple theories and explanations of historical events exist, with varying degrees of evidentiary support, none of which represents the one, correct answer. One weakness of the unit reported by the teacher was her own lack of subject knowledge. In addition, she added that some of the materials and Internet resources provided by Elise were not “kid friendly,” suggesting that the vocabulary may have been too advanced for her students.

When asked what she would do differently in future implementations of the unit, the teacher responded that she would attempt to correct the weaknesses of some materials and resources, as well as conducting independent research to supplement her own content knowledge on the topic. She also added that she would adjust the method used to score points during the debate. The teacher downplayed the differences between teaching the Polynesian Prehistory unit as compared to the Women’s History unit; as she put it, the students “were still researching specific facts and relating them, it was just a different product outcome.” In terms of primary source use, the teacher reported that her students had read a book written by Thor, as well as researching information on the Internet for reenactment groups and for the debate. Primary sources were used in the same way for both units—as methods for fact finding. However, the teacher added that in the Women’s History unit, the class also did document analysis.

The teacher reported that teaching the Women’s History unit had made her more open and receptive to trying new things in the Polynesian Prehistory unit. Her students’ previous exposure to history in fifth grade, the teacher reported, introduced them to primary and secondary sources and made them more receptive to and excited about beginning a new unit. The teacher said that as a result of her teaching, she had increased her own understanding of her students, their abilities, and their weaknesses. The teacher also reported that her students had come to the Polynesian Prehistory unit armed with note-taking skills and technological abilities that helped them in their learning.

When asked for additional comments on the Polynesian Prehistory unit, the teacher elaborated on many of her earlier points, detailing additional benefits for her students: the unit taught students to analyze ideas and theories, gave students the opportunity to learn about a foreign culture, and also to engage in group work and experience a debate for the first time. The teacher reiterated that teaching the unit had allowed her to test the limits of her comfort zone, but that it had been difficult to remain true to her curriculum schedule, because of the length of the unit and the addition of Character Counts classes, which took over two weeks. As a result of this, the teacher said that she planned to reevaluate her teaching of the units and try to prioritize the most important elements so that she could shorten the duration. In closing, the teacher added, “I have enjoyed working with all of the grant people. I appreciate all your [and others involved] positive interaction and laid-back approach to things. It makes it much easier to try new things when the energy is positive. Thank you!”

August 2002 Teacher Focus Groups Summary

In August 2002, BHH participants attended a workshop during which evaluators conducted focus groups. Teachers were divided into three groups with 8-10 teachers in each group (for a total of 27). The groups were organized such that kindergarten teachers were combined with half of the first grade teachers to form one group, the second grade teachers were combined with the remaining first grade teachers to form a second group, and the third through sixth grade teachers formed the third group. The focus group interview questions were developed by the evaluation team, reviewed by project team members, and then revised and standardized for the focus group interview. Experienced interviewers from the CEA followed a standard focus group protocol, but constructed the focus group as a more conversational interview and allowed for participants to self-direct to some extent in order to gather the most important information from their perspectives. The following summaries are aggregated across all three interviews. There were slightly different emphases and themes in the different groups, but for the most part the interview comments were remarkably positive and convergent. Interview responses are summarized for each general question.

Question 1A: As you think about teaching history to your students next year, what are the most important factors for success?

Workshop participants responded that they needed guidance from the project director, good materials, compelling stories that illustrate aspects of history they are discussing, and materials that are simple and that they can get easily so they do not have to take a long time searching for them. They also said that they need materials at the students' level to incorporate some of the questioning techniques discussed in the workshop, to make sure the historical materials fit with the existing curriculum and relate to what the students already know and understand, and to make sure the historical material is applicable to students at their developmental stage. Some teachers wanted to integrate the new curriculum over the course of the year and in different curricular topics rather than all at once. In addition, some teachers in some groups added the following factors needed for success:

- Guidance, knowing what I am expected and supposed to do
- Preparation, a full basket of activities to pull out that might be appropriate in the class
- Opportunities to share ideas with others about what's working and what's not
- Good communication in the fall between us and the project team to know as soon as possible what will be available in our curriculum packets
- Knowing what other social studies teachers are doing, so that they can fit in
- More time for communication and planning with one another through in-services or half day scheduling
- Plenty of materials/books(trade books) and American girl dolls for each classroom

Question 1B: What do you need as a teacher to be successful?

Teachers listed the following specifically that they needed for success.

- Materials

- Planning time, being able to plan in order to know what to do with the materials
- Having great new stories and a chance for students to feel like U.S. history is something to claim as their own
- Having a good understanding, good background knowledge of what is supposed to be taught
- Developmentally appropriate materials
- Clear expectations for teachers at different grade levels, especially about what standards need to be met with regard to knowledge about the different events in history
- More background knowledge in history and how to teach it to the students

Question 1C: What do you think the students need to be successful?

- Developmentally appropriate materials for the different developmental levels
- Different materials to target the different learning styles: visuals, auditory, picture books, technology that would work
- Sense of belonging in their classrooms so students feel comfortable to critique and make comments about the materials and a sense of belonging to the nation (state and town) at large.
- Students' being able to identify and relate to history in important ways, so that it is not so abstract that they can't get an idea of what teachers are trying to convey to them.

Question 2: How did the workshop change your thinking about what teachers need to be successful?

The participants agreed that the workshop activities and recommendations were comprehensive and could be integrated in the curriculum. They found the workshop to be a good review of history curriculum for the teachers. They reported that having the historical source documents and objects for the students to use was half the battle. Normally, they would spend more time finding and organizing materials than they do teaching.

Some participants worried that the curriculum is so new that the project director and staff will have to create the objects that students need or that teachers need, and prepare a different set for each level. Teachers know now that they need a larger number of resources, but there is concern about how and where to store these artifacts. Even so, the consensus was that storage problems were solvable and should not interfere with the actual implementation of the project and use of the materials.

Teachers also mentioned that the workshop provided new ideas for teaching their units and that it was refreshing to come to a workshop and get something really useful. They found it useful to hear what others have done.

Question 3. In what ways did the workshop help prepare you to teach history successfully to your students?

There was excitement about the hands-on activities and projects as an alternative and complement to reading, presentation of facts and discussion. The teachers believed that the children would learn more of the material and have more fun with these new activities. One teacher stated, "... before this workshop, thinking about teaching history to second graders had

me scared...how am I going to present this to them in a fun way that makes sense to them so they can make real connections? All of the activities we did I can see in some way being reformatted and working for them. So I'm excited about it now."

Other teachers commented how the workshops helped them see that they do have a little more knowledge than they thought at first, and that "history" is broader than what they thought before. It also reminded some how much they don't know, but helped them to take what they already are comfortable with and add to it to have something substantial. They believed the workshop would allow them to take instruction to another level to where the students are more involved.

Some teachers expressed appreciation for the Workshop focus on how to introduce the same topic with a couple of different approaches, such as the timeline and concept mapping, approaches that would work with different styles of learning. Others mentioned that these activities would help the students who were not good readers and that the learning from the activities could be as important as learning from reading.

Question 4. Was the workshop beneficial to you in other ways?

Teachers talked about the importance of spending time with other teachers and how meaningful the workshop had been. One group talked about how they liked to spend time with both their own grade levels as well as with teachers from other grades. There was a feeling that at school, even during breaks, teachers do not collaborate much or talk informally just to get to know each other.

The workshop leader's enthusiasm also had positive effects on the teachers. By watching him having a fun and engaging time, the teachers' perspectives on their own approaches changed. They found themselves motivated to be more fun and engaging in their own classrooms. Some reported that they changed from thinking that students had to sit in their chairs paying attention to thinking that they as teachers should provide a fun and engaging atmosphere and activities. Perhaps most importantly, they thought that they as teachers should be having more fun themselves.

Some teachers emphasized that they felt more in control of the subject matter after the workshop and that they felt less stressed-out. Some mentioned that they benefited from knowing about the content on Web sites, and that they were excited to learn more about the things they will be teaching next spring.

Question 5: In what ways will your participation in the workshop benefit your future students?

The shift in thinking from "...drill and practice to thinking skills... and making it more exciting (with hands-on activities...)" will have benefits on this next group of students, but it will (hopefully) have even more of an impact on the students in a few years. As the teachers find what works and what doesn't and revise their lesson plans, students should benefit even more. Teachers said that future students would benefit from their increased level of information, enthusiasm, fresh ideas, new ways to present information, and sharing with other teachers to find what works best for different students.

Question 6: What do you need to know more about or what do you need greater skill in doing in order to be as successful as you can be in your future history teaching?

The teachers of older children were especially concerned about having basic resources and information. They wanted to know more about how to order books, when and how much they could order, and how to find out which materials would be most helpful for their spring curriculum. The most important need that all teachers expressed was for more time. They said they needed time to read and prepare activities and materials, to collaborate with other teachers, and to get everything in order for teaching in the spring. They especially requested more information about what they would teach in the spring and how to blend it in with their existing curriculum. They also wanted to know more about what the project director and the project staff expected from them.

Question 7: What about the workshop was not beneficial to you? What needs to be improved?

Teachers used this question as an opportunity to emphasize again how pleased they were with the workshop, rather than to suggest improvements. They expressed appreciation for the balance of on-task activities interspersed with humor and entertaining anecdotes. They mentioned that the group leader did a good job of developing a relationship with the teachers by asking them for their input and ideas on incorporating this program into the elementary schools. In this way, he was ‘practicing what he preached’ by not being the all-knowing presenter, but instead facilitating a collaborative learning environment. They felt like the workshop moved at a comfortable pace and that they had sufficient time to ask and receive answers to all of their questions.

While not a criticism of this workshop, because they understood that this workshop needed to come first, some of the teachers did use this opportunity to request an additional workshop or in-service to provide the plans for the spring, more information about what is coming and where and when they fit into the plan. This request was viewed as very pressing. The teachers of older children especially felt the need to have their curriculum available to work on in the fall to have adequate time for integration and planning before spring.

Question 8: Did participating in the workshop have any impact on your attitude toward or skill in history or teaching history?

Workshop participants indicated that the workshop had increased their excitement about teaching history. One commented that before she thought that history was just facts that you spit back on tests and then forget. Now she was completely captivated by the historical approach of the workshop presenter. She could now value history much more. She said, “I just want to learn more about where I came from and those things that I don’t remember now.”

Others indicated that their understanding of what history is changed during the workshop. Previously, they thought that history was only things that happened in the past. Now they understand that history is interpretations put forward by historians. They believe that their students can grasp the idea that what we are now creating will be interpreted by historians in the future and that some of our letters or other artifacts may be source documents for future historians.

Some participants reported that they had become more excited about teaching history and that they had developed a positive attitude about teaching history to students who don't know much history. Others indicated that the workshop had left them more positive at the start of the school year. One said that the workshop had left her a little nervous about what she didn't know about history.

Question 9: How confident are you that you can build a foundation for students to learn history in the later grades and use these activities in your classrooms to build this foundation?

According to participants, the workshop demonstrated a good approach for children to learn and retain history. They thought that the hands-on, process-oriented activities would help to lay down a good foundation of knowledge and ways to learn so that the children could learn the material in high school and later in life. Because the processes were open-ended as well, both teachers and children could provide input. The teachers in general felt that the activities were going to be useful and had more confidence about their ability to teach history.

Question 10: Are there structural or system changes that could increase your success next year?

Participants suggested a Web site that they could access at any time to provide the resources they need. They would like concrete dates for implementing the new curriculum. They would also like to know what is expected of them next year and how they will be held accountable. They wanted to know where they are supposed to be at the end of the project, when they need to have their lesson plans completed, what they need to be preparing to document and in general what is on the agenda.

Some participants emphasized the need to integrate these new activities into their current practices instead of having the mindset that this is another thing to "fit in" or "add on". Ideas of how to achieve this included having more time for teachers to collaborate with each other, for example through professional development half-days.

Question 11. In general, what did you expect from this workshop? How were your expectations met or not met?

The general consensus was that participants' initial expectations were greatly exceeded. They had more fun, learned more useful information, and were more engaged than they had expected. Also, the teachers enjoyed being able to contribute their own ideas and opinions and felt that the presenters were genuinely interested in these ideas. Some participants indicated that they came with low expectations based on past experiences and that this workshop had set a new standard by being very useful as well as entertaining. One participant said that her expectations were not entirely met because she had expected to be given the lesson plans for her class. She said she new that was not an entirely reasonable expectation for this two-day workshop, and that she was looking forward to the next meeting where she would find out more information.

Question 12: What other things could the BHH project do to help you be as successful as you can be in teaching next year?

Participants suggested that a follow-up workshop might be beneficial, with the intentions of having time for teachers to collaborate, for the presenters to “refresh our memories,” and for the teachers to give input on what they actually have been doing in the classroom. They asked that the project director and staff keep them informed about what is going on and what is expected.

Spring 2003 Kindergarten Teacher Focus Group Summary

All six kindergarten teachers were present for the focus group. Most of the teachers had just recently started working on their BHH unit, so comments were limited to the beginning stages of the process.

Teachers were first asked to describe what they had been working on so far. The main activities described by the teachers were:

- Children bringing in and sharing artifacts from their own histories
- Children creating maps of their homes and/or rooms
- Teachers presenting their own history
- Teachers using history vocabulary (such as “history”, “artifacts” and bird’s eye view) as a model for the children
- Children and teachers mapping the place of birth of students and teachers
- Children and teachers creating timelines of a kindergarten school day.

Teachers also mentioned using videos and books – a video called, “Long ago, Yesterday, and Today,” and books called “Clues to Long Ago” and “Me on the Map” and another one about different types of houses.

It was clear that teachers felt free to modify the ideas described in the curriculum unit. Some teachers had children each present all the items in their baggie at once, and others had all the children in the class present the same type item on a particular day. One teacher said she held up the baby clothes that the children brought in to show how the item would not fit the child anymore. One teacher made a pictorial time line of herself over the years to demonstrate a timeline, others had the children create a timeline of their kindergarten day. One brought in old toys that she had played with as a child.

Teachers expressed that they had been reluctant to start the unit to begin with, that they were uncertain of how it would go. They said that once they got started they realized that the children really enjoyed it and were interested in it and then they realized it would go a lot better than they had expected. One teacher said, “It’s really fun and they are such good listeners when it is that time of the day.”

Teachers in general said that there were few problems in implementing the curriculum, but the ones they mentioned were:

- Time – partly because they had delayed implementing, they felt time pressure, particularly because they did not know how long each activity would take
- Some problems encouraging children to bring in their artifacts (After the children started presenting their things, this improved.)
- Safe storage for all the items the children brought in
- Sensitivity to privacy issues in terms of place of birth, type of house that the child lives in, who child lives with, etc.
- Original curriculum suggested categorizing sources of items with icon stickers – these have not been developed yet, so they were not used.

Teachers enjoyed the opportunity to talk with each other about how the unit was going and to share ideas. They talked about possibly planning an open house next year when they do the unit so that parents can come in and see all the things that the children have done and the pride they have in displaying the artifacts of their histories. They said the students liked to do their own presentations, but also were enthusiastic about other children’s presentations.

Spring 2003 First Grade Teacher Focus Group Summary

Five of the six 1st grade teachers were present for the focus group. One teacher was sick. Teachers were at different stages in implementing the curriculum – one teacher had just started and another had done everything except the last activity.

Teachers were asked to describe what they had been working on so far. The main activities described by the teachers were:

- Using photographs to make predictions and tell stories
- Writing stories
- Timelines
- Reinforcing the idea that you can tell a story/history from artifacts, photographs or timelines
- Showing own history and pictures
- Talking about sources to learn about history
- Brainstorming what history is
- Creating and using maps of school, city
- Comparing clothes, homes, food, and games with other people, other times
- Sharing food and making connection with family traditions
- Mind maps.

The teachers reported that the activities were going well and the students enjoyed the activities but agreed that most things took more time than they had planned for, which was primarily seen as a good thing, but one that required revising their plans. Several of the teachers said they would like to start the unit earlier in the year next time so that they would have the time the activities demand.

The teachers agreed that the most difficult activity and the one that the children appeared to least enjoy was using written documents to tell a story. One teacher said they used a school lunch menu and another teacher used a school newsletter and a snowy day notice, but the teacher said, “They probably didn’t understand – it wasn’t as exciting for me or the kids compared to the other ones.”

The teachers said that students really enjoyed using pictures that the teacher had taken at school using the digital camera provided by the grant. They said that having these pictures taken at school made the process very immediate and personal for the students. Several teachers also reported getting very positive feedback from the parents on the unit – particularly parents who had stopped in to school and seen the timelines with the photographs of the children. One teacher said a parent said she thought it was “the greatest thing ever.”

The teachers mentioned using the book *Plains Indians* to talk about the differences in games, homes, and food between the children and the Indian children in the story. Other resources named as helpful by several teachers were the book, *Me on the Map*, and school maps. One teacher also obtained a map of the city of Washington from a parent who worked for the city and said that since it was such a great resource, she would try to arrange to get city maps for all the rooms for next year.

In general, the teachers were very enthusiastic about teaching the curriculum. They agreed that the students enjoy the units. Teachers were particularly pleased with the number of opportunities there are for students to write about their history and to share their history and writing with other students.

Spring 2003 Second Grade Teacher Focus Group Summary

All six of the second grade teachers were present for the focus group. Teachers were at various stages in implementing the curriculum – most of the teachers had finished the first activity and had started other activities and one teacher was on the seventh of the nine activities. Teachers were asked to describe what they had been working on so far. The main activities described by the teachers were:

- Mapping
- Natural products/resources and where they come from
- Coal mining
- Logging
- Farming
- Timelines
- Endangered animals
- Environmental protection.

Several of the teachers were concerned about the amount of time that it was taking to work on the maps. They also felt that they didn't have adequate resources to come up with ideas of how to do the maps and resources to make sure that they plotted the different areas (forests, mountains, plains, etc.) accurately. One teacher said she thought trying to do the map unit was "overwhelming." One teacher had started using the map early in the year when they were talking about habitats and felt that incorporating it into her other units worked much better than waiting and doing it separately. Other teachers agreed that this was probably the best idea, but also mentioned that they will be using a different curriculum next year and it may not work as well with it.

For the most part, the teachers thought that although the mapping is time-consuming, it is worthwhile and the students enjoy it. One teacher said, "Even now they like to go over there with a partner and say – find Alabama on the map – and they give clues and they have thought of that themselves, too." Teachers had lots of different methods they used to depict the different environments on the map. Some classrooms did one large map only, in others students made their own maps. The teachers felt that exchanging ideas on how to approach the mapping was very helpful and one teacher said she was really glad that the others were available as models. One teacher said she thought trying to do the map unit was "overwhelming."

Teachers approached the "Where do these things come from?" unit in different ways. One teacher started the unit during a unit on fairy tales when they were making gingerbread castles and talked about the ingredients then and came back to it when they started the history unit. Most teachers felt like the children understood the link between farm products, like corn and flour and the things they ate, but had a harder time understanding the process from forests to paper, and particularly, from mines to metal. The teachers thought that since the students live in farm country it's easier to see that connection and that in order to talk about logging and mining and what happens to those products, they need more resources. They said that the students liked the videos more than they expected them, too, but that they needed to stop and explain things fairly often during the video. Most teachers were adding items depicting the different natural resources present in the United States.

A couple of the teachers said that their class enjoyed the book *V is for Vanishing*. One teacher said her class had a hard time with the book *The Everglades*, but another teacher said she couldn't believe how much her class got from that book. One teacher also recommended a

chapter book called, The Lumber Camp Library that she thought helped the children understand more about logging and living in a logging camp. A teacher said that the book Common Ground was a really good book for students to learn about overusing the land. Her class acted the story out and thought it was “awesome.”

Spring 2003 Third Grade Teacher Focus Group Summary

An evaluator conducted two focus groups and one individual interview with the third grade teachers. All teachers were present for at least one group or individual session. Most were present for more than one session. The interviews were done at various stages during the curriculum implementation.

Teachers were asked to describe what they had been working on so far. The main activities mentioned by the teachers were:

- Prejudice
- The Constitution
- The Thirteenth Amendment
- Photos of African American people in everyday lives
- Jim Crow laws
- Rosa Parks
- African American women's biographies
- Slavery
- Underground Railroad
- Martin Luther King
- Harriet Tubman
- Africa
- Civil Rights
- Mapping of Confederate and Union states
- Mapping of Underground Railroad Routes

For the most part the teachers thought that teaching the BHH units lasted about the right amount of time. Some said it seemed like they could have kept spent more time on it, but that three weeks was probably adequate. In the past, the third grade had done a unit on slavery and the Underground Railroad and BHH curriculum allowed them to expand upon those ideas and bring them into the 20th century. Some of the teachers thought that it was difficult for the students to understand the sequence of things. Several thought that time sequencing is a hard idea in general for children of this age. Some teachers thought that if they created a physical timeline that the children will be able to grasp the sequence more easily. Another teacher said that the teachers were expecting more and challenging the students more and that the students were rising to the occasion.

Some teachers were concerned about how to use the unit with sensitivity when they have African American children in their classroom. One teacher said she felt as if sometimes they might be introducing the idea of prejudice against groups when the children might not have thought of something like that on their own. She said "I think one of the hardest things that I am having a problem with is, I have an African American student in my class and he came to me a couple weeks ago and said that someone had called him "black." And now I'm reading these stories that refer to – we have colored, we have blacks – and I don't want to offend this child but I just read the words and I just say that's just how it used to be, I don't know what else to say. He just gets real quiet – and the "N" word is in some of those movies.

The third grade teachers chose to eliminate one activity from the original written curriculum for the BHH third grade unit – The unit on the Ku Klux Klan. They came to the consensus that the ideas contained in it were too difficult for the children and that the cruelty was

too extreme for third graders. They said that the illustrations were scary and violent. Teachers felt that their decision was based on a combination of concern about exposing young children to these images and concern about complaints from parents about it.

The teachers thought that the resource for the projects were very good. One teacher said, “Our cup is over flowing.” Some of the resources they mentioned using that they particularly liked were:

- Booker T. Washington books
- Rosa Parks book (other Adler books about Harriet Tubman and Jesse Owens)
- McKissick book
- Book on the Bill of Rights
- Underground Railroad
- The Wagon
- Uncle Jed’s Barbershop
- Working Cotton
- Tug of War video
- A video from IPTV on slavery

Sentiments were mixed on the Snoopy Video about the Constitution. Some teachers thought it was effective, others thought the humor interfered with the content. They found the book Let It Shine too difficult for the students and gave it to the fourth grade teachers for their use.

The teachers were asked what they thought of teaching American History to third graders. One teacher’s response was that she had “mixed feelings” and that seemed to typify the group. She continued by saying that when you talk about “something 50 years ago, that’s just almost incomprehensible.” Another responded that she thought “until you have some history, it’s difficult to understand history.” However, another teacher said, “But today I asked them [the students] ‘why do you think we need to learn about this? Why do you think I’m going to all the trouble to talk about these horrible things?’ And one kid raised his hand and said, ‘So we don’t do it again.’ And I thought, well I guess that’s all they really need to get out of it is that we learn about it so that we can learn from our mistakes and go on and learn to treat people fairly. ...That’s what a little eight year-old got and I thought that was pretty good.”

Teachers were asked what effect they thought the BHH unit had on students. Several teachers said that the students are “so willing to listen” and that their appetites were whetted for more. Another teacher thought that the unit really helped with the school’s character education curriculum. She thought that the children learned the importance of respect for other human beings. Another teacher said that the children couldn’t believe that people were treated like that and the resources brought the ideas home to children well by having topics like the book where two friends couldn’t go swimming together because one was black. They also said that working in groups (for reading books, etc.) worked well for this unit because it encouraged people to work together and that the children were very caring for each other and wanted to help each other.

The teachers said that they looked at this first year of curriculum implementation as a learning experience – getting familiar with materials, deciding what they like and don’t like. They had a continued concern about having enough time to do the unit, particularly because they have a new reading series that they will be using next year. They said they may have to drop or limit the use of some materials in response to the reading curriculum.

Spring 2003 Fourth Grade Teacher Interview Summary

The fourth grade teacher teaching the unit on the Depression was very pleased with the BHH curriculum. He said that he really appreciated that he has the time to go into the topic in more depth than fourth graders typically have for American History. He said the students like knowing that they will spend time on it too. He said, “They expect it – which is really neat. They know we’re going to talk about the depression and they’re excited about it...They know a little bit about it already because they’ve learned it the day before. I think they feel more confident this way.” He said he has seen a lot more confidence in the students about their knowledge.

A big positive for him was being given the lesson plans and told to give them a try to see if they were appropriate for fourth grade. He said he went in with a positive attitude assuming that the students could do it and has been very pleasantly surprised to see how well they have done. He thought that the lessons were very well-planned and he likes taking the time to do them – sometimes doing a lesson over two days if the students are really enjoying it and want more time to work.

For the most part, he thought the resources provided to him through the BHH grant were very good. He said there was only one thing he didn’t use which was a video on the Roaring ‘20s that, in its discussion of the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre, depicted a lot of violence and men smoking and drinking that he didn’t find appropriate for 10 year olds. He used a chapter in a book (*The Dirty 30’s*) to help the students understand what life was like in the 1920’s instead of using the video. He said he really liked the book that has the grandfather telling his grandson what it was like in the Depression and *The Dirty 30’s*. He thought the book with the grandfather worked particularly well for students who weren’t as good readers and *The Dirty 30’s* did a good job of explaining some hard concepts (such as the stock market crash), so that students could understand them. As an additional resource, he was planning to ask some people who were alive during the Depression to come to talk to the class about their experiences.

In general he thought the unit worked pretty well for all levels because he could have students work in groups and the more able students could help out some of the ones who had trouble. He said some students were raising their hands and talking about some of the ideas that he wouldn’t have thought they would have been interested in, or as able to understand the ideas, as they were. He said that students who had trouble writing were often able to provide oral responses for him. He asked the students to “rehearse” some of the new vocabulary words they were learning related to the BHH curriculum and they also rehearsed some important times on the timeline they were creating.

He felt that he was adequately prepared to teach the unit by reading the materials and watching some History Channel videos on the Depression, but also said he felt very comfortable with the idea that sometimes he was learning along with the students. He thought that added to his excitement in teaching. In addition, he thought the Project Directors were very knowledgeable and were good resources for him if he needed more information. He liked having the project and evaluation staff come to visit his class and appreciated their positive spirit and constructive criticisms.

When asked what students felt about learning history, he said that they would define history as something that happened in the past but that they were now gaining a deeper knowledge of history – learning that there are different parts and views of history. One example that he mentioned was that they talked about how the History Channel movie depicted Mrs.

Roosevelt in a much more positive light than it did Mrs. Hoover and that they had to think about the viewpoint and that there might be different ways of seeing the same event or person.

In order to assess what the students have learned and document student outcomes, he is planning to ask them to write about the Depression. He said some students will probably write 3-4 pages on it. He said that he might also have them do shorter, smaller topics, such as by asking them to tell about “Hooverilles” or penny auctions. He also has each child keeping a folder with their history project work in it. He said he really likes teaching like this because he “is not much of a grade person” and likes giving the students the confidence to talk and write without too much pressure.

Spring 2003 Fifth Grade Teacher Interview Summary

(Tape recorder did not work. This is reconstructed from my notes. Sometimes he answered another question in the process of answering, so I skipped a few questions.)

What of the BHH have you been working on, so far, in your classroom?

We started off with a video background on war. About the war front. The class was to be taking notes. Then we talked some about primary and secondary sources. Then we used the book “Children of the Homefront” to talk about what that meant. In the last couple classes we have been talking about rationing and recycling in what that meant on the homefront during WWII. The kids have been looking at the posters as primary sources and doing their analysis of the posters. We have also talked about doing a final project and how we are going to do that. The curriculum suggested doing a class project, but we decided we will do small group projects. Some will do live projects, some videos, some computer programs... they have told me some of their ideas and they have some good ones. I will approve their ideas before they work on them and then they will present them to each other... probably in about mid-April.

Have you taught history in the primary grades before?

Yes, the regular fifth grade social studies curriculum is US History. We usually do Native Americans, Revolutionary War, and the thirteen colonies. I have usually taught using a textbook, so this is different because I am using primary sources and trade books a lot more. I don't ever use just the textbook, but definitely more than I do now. I also used to give a test at the end of the units and now they will be doing projects. The kids are really excited about doing the projects – they are glad they don't have to have a test!

What do you think you will do differently next year?

I have been writing down things that I want to try a little differently every day. I think you do that anytime you teach. I even do things differently in the afternoon than I did in the morning. The kids in the morning are at a disadvantage because I learn what things work by the afternoon. Mostly its little things. Like working with the posters. I made copies and transparencies of the posters this year, but next year I will laminate them so that they are easier for the kids work with and pass around. Little things like that.

What is your opinion about teaching history to students in the primary grades?

I think it is good and it is interesting for them. Each student finds something that interests them. After starting this unit, students have told me that they went to the library and took out a book about something in WWII, or they saw something on the History Channel or they looked up something that we talked about. Some of the kids are talking about interviewing their grandparents about what it was like on the homefront during WWII.

Tell me about the resources that you have been using and how they have worked for you. Positives? Negatives?

The resources have been great. There have been a few that weren't there when I wanted them. Like that book that I wanted more copies of [Children of the Home Front], but then Elise got me those for the whole class and another book that I decided I needed a whole class set of too, she is getting those for me. They are good books. That book [Children of the Home Front] is really good and has a lot of information. Also the posters that we have up in the room are great and I refer to them a lot. Really I have no negatives about the resources.

How have the students reacted to the lessons so far? Have any been upset? Bored?

The students have been very positive and interested. They are checking out books on their own. They are really excited about the projects – they like doing projects. [I asked if it became any different to do this unit since the onset of the Iraq war.] I have been trying to be aware of changes and we have a list of people who are affected directly by it – have a relative in the war or anything, but I have not noticed anything different, they haven't talked about it until today, when that girl asked that question. [I was observing during that class. They were talking about posters dealing with rationing and recycling and the girl asked why they did those things, but we aren't doing them today. He answered by saying that WWII went on for a long time, and the Iraq war has just started and also that we already do a lot of recycling.] I will be definitely watching to see if anything bothers them and how I can relate what happened then to what is happening now, if it seems like a good idea. Mostly they are excited to do their projects – they've suggested doing scrapbooks, interviews, game shows, skits, newspapers, Power Point or Hyper-studio presentations, and maybe an i-movie.

So in terms of student products that we can take back and look at or take pictures of to show the kinds of learning that has occurred, these are the kinds of things you would suggest?

Yes, all these you could get a copy of their visuals, or I will definitely video the presentations if they are not already on a video or computer. I don't know that the worksheets (photo document analysis) would be that interesting to look at.

What do you think the students are learning as far as what "history" means? What kind of relevance do you think they see for their own lives?

I think they see history as finding out what other peoples' lives were like. Finding out its not the same for them as it was before...learning about what it was like to live during WWII. I think they see relevance because of the war now, but also just because of the differences in their lives.

When your students move on next year to the next grade, how will this exposure to history help them?

I think the greater understanding of primary and secondary sources will help them a lot. They learn that in history you can make your own decisions about what happened from the primary sources. They can decide what happened and can interpret the information.

Do you feel you had adequate input into the topic for the unit?

This year they did it all – they put it together and decided what to do and that was great. They did a great job and maybe I will have more ideas later that I might want to incorporate, but this year it was great to have it all laid out and ready for me.

What about the scope of the unit?

Well, I think I will be working on it for about one month and I think I had just about the right amount of material for it and I think that is a good amount of time to work on it. We're on day 10 now and I am sure that I am going slower this year than I will next year because it is my first time doing the unit. In fact, like I said before, I do it a little faster by the end of the day I do it faster than I did in the morning, because I know more what I need to say to explain things, etc.

Spring 2003 Sixth Grade Teacher Interview Summary

Having taught Social Studies for three years, the sixth grade BHH teacher is a firm believer in teaching history in the primary grades. World History has been the designated curriculum for sixth grade so she was already teaching history, but had some concerns about trying to work American History into the curriculum. The Women's History Unit grew out of her experience in teaching a brief Women's History unit to her classroom last year and she was pleased to be able to provide that input to the curriculum writers.

In the past years, their use of primary sources was more limited. She said she might show them a picture or letter, but she had not used photo and document analysis techniques before. Although she likes the idea, some students in the class had trouble finding appropriate written documents for many of the women they were researching. She thinks they will either need to have documents provided for the class to use, or limit the research subjects to those women for whom they know good documents are accessible. In general, she thinks the resources provided by the program staff were "excellent". She asked for and received several trade books and a play to supplement the books supplied by the BHH staff and GWAEA also provided a series of women's biographies for the class to use.

She feels that the students are enjoying the unit. She said, "Some of them really get into it once we get going and think its cool." When they were doing the suffrage unit she said that students working in groups would turn to another group and tell them something they learned that they thought was interesting. While teaching, she tries to point out how ideas that people had in the past are still a part of our lives today.

She believes that the unit will have an impact on the students' basic skills performance in the social studies area and anticipates that the students who come into her classroom will have important skills especially in the use of primary sources.

She adapted the curriculum to some extent to allow for different learning styles. Some students did an abbreviated final project in the form of a "Wanted" poster on their research subject that required the student to do less research.

Student projects that will be available for the evaluation are posters, word searches, other visuals, or "Wanted" posters. Some students are also acting as "wax figures" or experts who will respond to questions as their presentations. Student research packets (including photo and document analysis and research notes) will also be available.

June 2003 Teacher Focus Groups Summary

What are the five most important ways you as a teacher have grown, benefited or changed as a result of the project?

Kindergarten teachers

The most common benefit mentioned by the kindergarten teachers was that they had learned that kindergartners can do more than they thought. One teacher said, “Not only do they understand it, they enjoy it!” Most teachers also said they had learned more about their own history, more about history in general and that they had fun doing the history unit. They also realized that the students benefited by making a personal connection to history. Teachers also mentioned the positive impact of getting to know more about their students and, in general becoming more aware of history.

First Grade

The first grade teachers most often mentioned that they learned about the enthusiasm students could have about history because it is taught with this method. They also said that they also had more fun teaching history this way and that this method provided a new framework for teaching. Several teachers said that they also learned more about history themselves. Other positives teachers mentioned were:

- the importance of writing in helping students process materials
- the importance of using primary sources
- sharing ideas with peers
- learning how much students of all ability levels can accomplish.

Second Grade

Second grade teachers said that the benefits of teaching the history unit were learning more about history themselves, learning to teach active units that the students enjoy, learning to make more cross-curricular connections, learning to be more flexible, and getting positive feedback from the program staff. They also mentioned exchanging ideas with peers, the power of using hands-on methods, and learning the important contributions students can make to other students' learning.

Third through sixth grade

Many of the third through sixth grade teachers said a benefit of teaching the BHH curriculum was learning about the ability of students to deal with historical ideas with sensitivity. It also taught them that students can learn more than you might expect. One teacher said, “I’ve learned that kids are able to comprehend far more difficult and sensitive issues than I ever thought possible.” Several teachers also mentioned their own gains in content knowledge of history as an important benefit. Teachers also named as positive affects of teaching the BHH curriculum:

- having access to great materials
- connecting learning across the curriculum
- the joy of teaching a new curriculum
- learning to use primary sources more
- learning what kids can do with final projects – letting students be the teachers

- learning photo analysis
- having fun!

What are the things that worked well about this workshop today? [Responses aggregated across grades because there was no difference between grades.]

The teachers overwhelmingly thought that the best thing about the workshop was the presentations by the teachers about what they had done in their grade. One teacher said, “It was interesting to hear what the other grade levels were doing with their lessons/units and to see how it all ‘fits’ together.” Teachers mentioned that they thought it was helpful both to see where students were going in the curriculum in later years and what older students could accomplish, and to see what students from earlier grades were learning so that they would know what their students would already know when they enter their grade. The teachers also appreciated being able to talk over the year and the unit with their grade-level peers both as a wrap up and analysis of the last year and for brainstorming ideas for changes for next year.

Teachers also said they appreciated:

- the positive comments from program and evaluation staff
- the laid-back, relaxed atmosphere of the workshop
- the food!
- hearing the enthusiasm from other teachers
- the chance to go over the new unit with their peers
- the pace of the workshop
- the “student” driven feeling of the workshop
- hearing similar concerns from other teachers

What things could have been improved about the workshop today? [Responses aggregated across grades because there was no difference between grades.]

There were very few suggestions for improvement. The only one mentioned by more than one person was they thought it might have been helpful to take a little time to make comments or give suggestions to other grades after seeing their presentations. One teacher also suggested having more time to talk within their own grade level about what kinds of changes they should think about for next year. One teacher also thought it would have been good to have some time to talk individually with project staff and evaluators.

August 2003 Teacher Focus Groups Summary

As you think about teaching history to your students this fall, what do you consider the most important thing for success?

In the responses to the first question, what is the most important thing for success, four broad categories of need emerged: technical, teachers as a group, individual teachers, and those of the students. The evaluation of this first question will be delineated in this order.

The first technical need was storage space to organize projects. Teachers were open to having a community storage space. The need for storage arises as student projects, books and other objects used in the curriculum demand organization. This leads to a related need – a system for knowing where books and the digital camera are at and how long they are being used. There was a problem with finding books and the digital camera last year. The addition of these two, the storage and a check out system, would improve the success of BHH. In a second note on the technical needs, teachers felt they would also benefit from a session on Adobe Photoshop. The third technical need deals with an alternative to passing pictures around the room. Suggestions included enlarging the photo or using an overhead, computer, or slides. Finally, teachers felt the lessons would be more successful with additional concrete objects. A suggestion for finding these was to go to goodwill.

To be successful at the group level, teachers felt they needed more time to work together at grade level, as was pointed out from experience from the past year: “collaboration that ended up really working well the last year we talked about what we did and how we did it and then we kind of used it as a spring board for the next activity or one of us hadn’t studied it yet, we would try what the other person had tried.”

At the level of the individual teacher, success included getting used to the content. That is, being ahead of the students and to gain more knowledge about the projects and overall content. “As far as the importance of success I also believe in the knowledge of the background in the subject you are teaching for the teacher to be successful, I think the books and resources that the grant gives us is great and I think that is probably the most important that we have that to fall back on, to look at, to use in the classroom.” In addition, there was a need to be aware of time constraints. The use of a timeline would help to guide teachers to stay on track. In a similar vein, a few teachers cited their need as to simply be more organized. Finally, a part of being successful as an individual teacher is the openness to try something new: “I think observing what everybody has done and said, that they have to be willing to do something that they haven’t done before, go outside your box, the comfort zone so to speak. It’s hard but I think we all did a commendable job doing that.” A few teachers were wary of whether the students would understand the material, but after teaching it the kids “got it” better than she had anticipated.

Finally, at the level of the students, teachers need to ensure that the students build on knowledge throughout the grades. A problem encountered with the older grades was “getting them [the students] prepped” to do new activities such as photo analysis. Also, it is essential to have all of the kids engaged, versus having a handful of students answering all the questions or contributing. Finally, there was a problem with some students not having materials and feeling left out. It was suggested that more help was needed from parents and/or that items from goodwill could possibly alleviate this problem.

How did last year's experiences, your teaching, your collaborating with one another, your attending the workshops, how did any of that change your thinking about what you need to be successful in teaching?

The teachers generally felt more confident about teaching the units for a variety of reasons. Simply the experience of teaching the unit, paired with the students' engagement and excitement, gave the teachers more confidence both that they could teach it and the students could understand it. "I think teaching the unit last year we had a preconceived notion that the kids of this age don't know about history or it's too high level of concept for them and the kids got into the unit so much last spring that that is just not true." Due to their year of experience the teachers see the content as less abstract. Also they have been able to see what has worked and what has not worked, leaving them able to "tweak" portion of the lessons.

Most of the teachers agreed that making the material meaningful keeps the kids more engaged. The 'history of me' project helped the children's personal histories become a part of history in general: "Before we kind of talked about me being special and history as separate things and now being able to put together I think it makes it a lot more meaningful for the kids and that has helped me too." Over all grades, teachers were thinking of ways to connect the BHH curriculum with other subjects, most obvious, reading. Another example of this is incorporating the wealth of books for the project to other areas. A final way to make content meaningful was the use of original documents.

The group work and the workshops were also cited as contributing to success in implementing the new curriculum. As one teacher stated, the research team took the lead while also giving teachers some freedom in how they teach the lessons. Multiple teachers felt that collaborating with the group, especially small groups, was important. One of the 4-6 teachers kept a journal last spring of everything she did, since this group is not able to collaborate like the younger grades.

What ideas do you have for identifying and choosing the most important part of outcomes for this fall and for next spring?

The responses to this question are summarized in their original groups, as to distinguish between the youngest grades, the middle grades, and the upper elementary grades. This is due to the fact that the nature of gathering outcomes and the outcome goals vary at different stages of development. Thus, the youngest group is discussed first, continuing in chronological order to end with the upper elementary.

For the youngest kids, the teachers put forth many ideas that included the parents' involvement. One teacher estimated that 20% of the parents had no involvement last year. Ideas for outcomes included using videotapes, taking pictures of students with their projects, or displaying student projects at a parent night. There was some discussion of using the first grade zip lock bag as a final project: "...[I would like] the first grade zip lock to compile information and I felt we needed to do something as a final project or to pull it all together with that history rather than just having a baggie and they explained it and then put everything back in the bag and then take it home." A couple of teachers also believed it was important to "expose" the youngest kids to what they are going to do by explicitly telling them what they are going to do, followed by a review of it at the end. One teacher suggested anecdotal evidence as feasible. Finally, there

was some discussion on having the students do a non-test-like activity on paper. Another possibility to have the kids do a pretest and posttest.

For the middle elementary group, outcomes became a little clearer. Overall, it was suggested that outcomes should be assessed at the individual level; concrete suggestions included using a KWL chart, to make a book using digital photos, or to make a portfolio. Another concrete outcome that was desired was knowledge of the vocabulary. One suggestion of how to do this effectively would be to put up a chart of words. Another idea that opens up a few doors was stated: “We might be able to do things like having students look up people, inventors, and research reports on that particular person. We would be able to, from what they found, find out what they have learned and what they thought was important.” A second broad outcome the teachers wanted to see was empathy about what it was like for people in a different historical time; to realize how life today is different than in the past. The teachers wanted the students to have a general understanding of how life in the past was difficult as well as how older ideas can be useful. No outcomes for measuring this empathy were suggested besides a comment on increasing children’s discussion with grandparents and other relatives – a potential project. A third desired outcome, mentioned by a few teachers, was to connect the information learned in the new fall units to what was learned last spring. An example of this is the residual of our technology on the environment, as was seen in books such as *A River Ran Wild*.

In the upper elementary classrooms, outcomes continued to be more clearly delineated. Ideas given include how to compare and contrast, how to do critical thinking, photo analysis, document analysis, research, and other skills to prepare these kids for middle and high school. One teacher had compiled an array of assessments for students’ outcomes, including a rubric for the women’s unit and a reflection sheet to assess critical thinking about the various theories of how the Polynesian Islands were settled. In addition to the above content knowledge, two other desired outcomes were noted; understanding of stereotypes and empathy of “what it’s like to be a ten year old back then,” but no solid ideas emerged for how this would be assessed. A few teachers suggested putting checkmarks in the grade book to document observed behaviors in these areas. Another potential idea would be a research project on a particular figure, with the outcome being a report or other type of writing assessment.

One of the things that we say about focus groups is it gives everybody a chance to debrief and issues come up that you guys need to talk about even more after the focus group. If we shift our focus just a little but rather than just today’s workshop, what did you come in expecting and were your expectations met?

The expectations of the teachers were met; only one teacher expressed a little concern about how to implement the lessons (which he/she thought would be taken care of with a grade level meeting and taking the initiative to ask for help). Teachers reported that not only were the content expectations met, but that the workshop was a positive experience in general. One teacher commented “...this is one of the most beneficial workshops we have ever had.” Another teacher exclaimed: “I think it is a neat thing to see myself react to positive feedback knowing that my children just might respond that way too, if I gave it!” The upper elementary teachers enjoyed seeing what was going on in Stewart school, as they could see how the knowledge is growing through the grades. Overall, the feelings of the teachers are summed up well with this comment: “It is just a positive experience – the whole thing. I think that is so helpful to us to know that we are okay. We may not have all the ideas but somebody else might – it’s okay not

to know and all of a sudden you might have a good idea that you didn't think was there. I just appreciate the time -- we never have this much time."

What did you especially like about today's workshop?

An aspect that many teachers enjoyed were the group activities, which included brainstorming, tackling questions as a group, and collaborating. One teacher noted that the workshop was well paced: "I thought it was a good mix of you guys [evaluators and program leaders] getting up talking and then giving us [teachers] time to interact." An additional aspect a number of teachers respected was the work Jim and Elise had done, both with providing resources and with support. One teacher even called them "Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus." Many teachers commended the effort put into making the lessons: "The time that they have spent putting these units, because we all know how long it takes putting a unit together, the time is phenomenal so for us to be able to add our ideas in is easier to me because they have it all there for us." Other aspects that a single teacher commented on included seeing across grade levels to see what each grade was contributing, time to explore the websites, the ideas on the handouts, the information about the learning styles. Finally, a number of people enjoyed the food.

What about the workshop was less beneficial to you, what needs to be improved or replaced and that's just in today's workshop?

There were only a few suggestions in response to this question as most of the respondents reported they were satisfied with the workshop. There was one complaint about the facilities being too small for the number of people attending. The other suggestions revolved around doing more concrete activities including small group planning time instead of listening to the grade 4-6 talk or abstract discussions about types of learners. One teacher commented on actually going through the process of doing the activities: "...maybe we [could] get into levels and we have a facilitator with three or four of us and we would actually practice a little bit what we would be doing instead of reading and talking about it because it, even after reading and talking about it, it's still a little abstract so I like to do stuff."

What do you need to know more about and what do you need greater skill in doing in order to be successful as you can be in teaching history this fall?

Two teachers summarized the change in role they have experienced as teachers, "It's kind of like we don't know all the answers," followed by another teacher chiming in, "And that's okay." The teachers were becoming more comfortable with the fact that they will not know all the answers, they just need resources to look up the answers (books, ibook, internet). The teachers felt they themselves needed to look at the content more in depth, to ask Jim questions, and to find more resources at grade level. In addition, they felt they needed more knowledge and skill in using the digital camera.

What kind of support do you want from any of us? What can any of us do to help you? That's not just the project staff but also those who are involved in evaluation.

All of the teachers felt they had not only sufficient, but “unbelievable” support. They reported that when a question arose, they could email Jim or Elise and have a response that same day. One teacher did express concern about support. He would like to meet with someone on a regular basis, possibly during prep time, to go over how to implement the new curriculum.

The few problems included: the digital camera, the storage, the pictures, which were discussed in more detail in response to the first question. In addition, some requests were made for additional resources: videos at grade level (an animated Harriet Tubman video), money to buy ingredients to make food, money for field trips, local and regional information (Iowa Indians, Washington county), and a half hour with local historian Mike Zahs. One question posed was whether Elise wants the teachers to inform Elise when they start a new lesson.

On a different level, teachers expressed a need for support from parents, which includes informing more parents about the project, was only partially successful with the newspaper article. Suggestions included getting help from community members to gain information about the community history, showing projects to the community, and writing a letter home to inform parents about the grant. Another suggestion was to officially add BHH to the curriculum.

Anything else you would like to comment on?

Overall, the teachers loved teaching it and the students loved learning it. The students were excited about the lessons, even asking when they would get to work on a project again.

The importance of the photographs was noted, because “that was half of my battle, is trying to figure out what our type of product was going to be and so to see that.” Digital photos were found to be useful because you can share a students project that would otherwise be unfeasible, such as a large timeline.

Doing the ‘history of me’ at the beginning helps to foster greater empathy between student and teacher. One teacher commented: “I also got to know more about the students than I would have done otherwise because they were sharing personal things about them I was like, well I didn’t know that, or you found that you had more things in common with them or they had more things in common with the kids in the class. ‘Well I have two brothers too you know...’”

Another tangential conversation included informing and incorporating parents into the BHH curriculum. One teacher had sent out a newsletter, which had reached some but not all the parents in that class. Other suggestions included having a family fun night with snacks and projects (an idea adapted from a science night in Iowa City), inviting parents into the classroom for parties or when they make food, sharing students projects with the general community, and putting more digital pictures on the website. An issue with this last idea is the time it takes to do this: “I think as we are starting a unit, if we had taken pictures of the kids sharing their things and were able to get them on the website right away and sending the newsletter out saying look at the pictures of the kids doing it already and that might motivate the others. But is so hard, and you have to go through so much paperwork for each picture and it really makes it so you don't want to do it.”

Spring 2004 Kindergarten Teachers Focus Group Summary

The focus group was conducted in an empty Kindergarten classroom at Stewart Elementary School in Washington, Iowa on the morning of June 2, 2004. Seven teachers participated, and the discussion lasted approximately thirty minutes. During the interview, teachers interacted easily and comfortably with one another, frequently finishing one another's sentences. Teachers cracked jokes and laughed together as they shared their experiences with the BHH unit Children Long Ago. The group seemed cohesive and their responses were characterized by a high degree of consensus.

For the most part, teachers felt the implementation of the unit had gone well. In particular, students had responded positively to the mock museum containing the teachers' personal artifacts. Teachers generally felt their students were more aware of history, and more attuned to the differences between life in the past and life today. The most significant modification to the unit was a change in the sequencing/timing of the unit; teachers described how they had disaggregated the unit and tried to integrate individual pieces into the overall curriculum. Areas for improvement identified by the teachers included the need for more hands-on activities to go with each part of the unit; access to more and better quality photographs specifically related to the unit; and more resources (e.g., web resources) related to their unit.

What did you think were the strengths of the Children Long Ago unit?

Only a few teachers contributed ideas. One teacher mentioned the literature, both fiction and nonfiction, especially the book about schools from long ago. Another teacher brought up the videos they had watched, called Yesterday, Today and Long Ago. Finally, another teacher talked about the mock museum, where teachers brought in old artifacts from home and the students had to guess what the artifacts were and what they were used for.

What were the weaknesses of the unit?

Generally, teachers wished the unit had contained more hands-on activities designed for the students, more existing reproductions of old photographs specifically tailored to go along with the Children Long Ago unit, and better quality photographs. Teachers said they did not want to have to search for activities and photographs to use, but wanted them included already in the resources given to them. One teacher said she wanted more time.

What important student outcomes did you see as a result of teaching the unit?

The most frequently mentioned student outcome was simply an appreciation for the differences between life long ago and life today. Two teachers mentioned that their students were egocentric, that it was difficult for them simply to comprehend that other people's lives are different from their own. Another idea mentioned was that students began to appreciate how hard life was in the past—that children who lived long ago did not have access to television or video games, and they might only receive a single gift for Christmas—an orange, a candy cane, or a doll made out of a corncob, for example. One teacher said she thought her students were not only more interested in the past, but thought it seemed like fun to live in the past.

What kinds of skills or knowledge, if any, did you observe the students remembering from the previous unit and applying to the Children of Long Ago?

Several teachers mentioned their students continuing to use the vocabulary and terminology from previous units. Other skills included the ability to analyze photographs and artifacts; an appreciation for the concept of “long ago” or the past; a greater attention to detail; and a recognition that history is telling stories from long ago.

Did you make any modifications to the unit?

Modifications included the mock museum, a segment in which students constructed button yo-yos, and a field trip to a local park, which involved games and crafts from long ago, a prairie walk, and storytelling. Other additions to the curriculum included an in-class bread-making activity and watching videos that went along with the transportation segment. One teacher explained that instead of approaching the unit as a separate piece, they had tried to integrate parts of the unit piecemeal, wherever they fit into the curriculum. For example, when the Kindergarten classes studied the letter M, they talked about music, when they did the letter T, they discussed transportation, etc. Another teacher said she had to shorten particular lessons to keep her students interested.

What advice would you give to teachers who were going to be teaching this unit for the first time?

Teachers made a number of recommendations. One teacher advised future program participants not to be afraid to get started. Other teachers recommended trying to come up with enough hands-on activities to keep the Kindergarteners interested. Another idea mentioned by a few teachers was to use as many personal artifacts and photographs as possible, perhaps trying to get other teachers involved or coordinate an entire school-wide mock museum. A similar idea was to construct a bulletin board displaying old pictures of all the staff members and having a contest to see who could correctly identify the most teachers.

Did you all find collaboration with each other to be important, and if so, what form did that take, mostly?

All the teachers agreed heartily that collaboration with their peers had been extremely important. For the most part, teachers said they were able to communicate during their lunch period, which they shared together. In addition, teachers said they talked about the unit during their weekly grade-level meetings.

How about collaborating with teachers in other grade levels?

Teachers agreed that they had not really collaborated with teachers from other grade levels; none of the teachers elaborated on that point.

What were some of the primary sources that you liked to use?

Sources mentioned include the Little House on the Prairie picture books and the easy reader books, including books on children of long ago, transportation, school then and now, and toys of long ago [It is possible that the teachers misinterpreted this question, confusing primary source documents with “resources” more generally].

How was the timing of the unit?

The teachers reiterated that they had disaggregated the unit and tried to integrate it into other areas of the curriculum. One teacher explained that she didn’t know how they could possibly teach the unit as a whole during the spring, considering the testing requirements and hectic schedule. Other teachers agreed that it was hard to fit everything in. One teacher observed that disaggregating the unit over the entire year allowed for continuity, meaning students were less likely to forget things they had learned previously. Several teachers agreed that the History of Me unit works extremely well as an introductory unit.

Were you able to do everything that you wanted to?

All the teachers agreed that they were unable to do everything they wished with the unit. A few teachers said they wanted to do more with food and music. Another teacher said she needed more time to find activities to go along with each part of the unit. One teacher surmised that the unit might be easier to implement next year, because the teachers will be more familiar with the reading materials. Another teacher said she felt as if she had just touched on each part of the unit, instead of going in-depth.

How much time did you use for the unit?

Because the teachers had stretched the unit across the year, they said it was impossible to estimate how much time they had spent on it. One teacher explained that during the year, they had to make frequent and unplanned detours in the unit, because students would have questions or bring up issues spontaneously that seemed to connect with other topics, so some segments took longer than teachers thought they would.

Anything else to tell about the unit in general?

Most teachers took this opportunity to offer positive feedback about the unit or share personal stories about how their students had responded to it. Comments included:

- “It’s great!”
- “The kids love it!”
- “I am so thankful that we have this, because it’s wonderful.”
- “The kids really enjoyed everything.”

Teachers reiterated the positive student outcomes they were noticing, such as an awareness of the passage of time, the attitude that history can be fun, and the tendency of the

curriculum to stimulate discussions between the students and their parents/grandparents about the past.

Did you guys have any suggestions about hands-on activities needed in the curriculum?

Teachers suggested using the pictures given in the packet as manipulatives for the students, having them already cut out and ready to go. One teacher suggested having separate pieces for an old house and a new house, which could be juxtaposed onto a bulletin board. Another teacher shared her realization that one of the transportation activities that they had been doing for years--in which students cut out pictures of transportation for land, water and air and then constructed collages—was actually a Mind Map. Other teachers suggested using wooden train sets to supplement the segment on transportation. Another teacher said she wished they had a collection of websites they could visit to obtain good photographs relevant to the unit.

Do you feel like your students really have their curiosity primed for entering first grade and continuing history?

Teachers nodded enthusiastically, but failed to elaborate on this point.

Spring 2004 First Grade Teacher Focus Group Summary

This focus group was conducted at Stewart School after school on a day during the last week of school. The teachers were in high spirits and were very glad for the opportunity to talk together since they apparently do not have common planning or lunch time during the day. They often were side-tracked from the focus group questions by talking to each other about specific ideas that they had tried in their classrooms that other teachers wanted to learn more about. They were quite clearly excited about the things they talked about and often agreed on ideas.

What did you think were the strengths of the Communities Long Ago unit?

The teachers were uniformly positive about the unit. They said that the kids really enjoyed it and they enjoyed teaching it. They were particularly excited about the books that went with the unit. They said they liked all the books that came with the unit and some others that the project director had recommended. The ones they named were: Right Here on this Spot, Since 1920, I is for Iowa People, Aurora Means Dawn, and In the Kitchen. They agreed that the children liked both the books that they could read themselves and the ones that the teachers read to them.

Several teachers also said that the pictures of their town past and present were a real strength of the unit. The BHH staff provided them with the both sets of pictures. One teacher said that he handed out the pictures to the students and then each student had to find their partner who had the picture of the same building in a different era.

All of the teachers thought that one of the strengths of the unit was their adaptation of coordinating the unit with their field trip to the Old Threshers Museum. The Old Threshers Museum is in a town about ½ hour away and consists of displays of early farm machinery and other aspects of early farm life in Iowa. The field trip is one they would have taken regardless of the history project, but the teachers thought that it was far more meaningful because they had studied communities from that era and were more aware of what the concept of long ago meant.

They also said that the Building a Town activity was a real strength of the unit. They said that the kids were very enthusiastic about it and that it really seemed to add to their understanding of the difference between now and long ago. The teachers felt that the students really grasped the ideas of “long, long ago”, “long ago” and “now”.

One teacher said that another strength of the unit was the study of modes of transportation. She said that it also lead to a different use for a timeline using the comparison of how long it takes to get somewhere today with how long it took to travel the same distance a long time ago. She said, “My kids were enthralled about the modes of transportation and we tried to get the length of time. It takes ½ hour to get to Iowa City now but long, long ago when the grass was taller than your dad, there were no trails and it was really – they have this odd sense of time anyway, but I think they got it.”

What were the weaknesses of the Communities Long Ago unit?

The teachers did not have too many comments for this question. One teacher said it was hard for him to tap into other resources to use for the unit, but said that this was not a weakness of the unit, but that he wanted to be able to know more about things like games, etc., so that he could do more hands on activities that related to the topic in other areas of his class.

What important student outcomes did you see as a result of teaching the unit?

The outcome mentioned by the teachers was an understanding of the “long, long ago”, “long ago” and “now” distinction. One teacher said that she defined this for the students in a way she thought they would understand. Her definition was, “Long, long ago there are no people alive anymore that remember that, and long ago – the older people alive can sort of remember it.” One teacher said that the timeline activity of having the kids try to draw a picture of what their town would have looked like before it was a town was interesting and a difficult, but successful start for them. She said, “The timeline was a great activity for them to see how it would fit together because it was a pre-activity thing. It was the first one when they had to draw a picture of what Washington looked like long ago and I was so skeptical of going how are they going to do this. I don’t even know what it looked like and some were way off – I do think that was a little abstract to start out with that. Then the books helped. Then seeing the black and white photos we just talked about 100 years ago was long ago.”

What kinds of skills or knowledge, if any, did you observe the students remembering from the previous unit and applying to the Communities Long Ago?

The teachers said that they could see that the students had a familiarity and comfort level with the idea of timelines that they would not have had if they had not had the first unit. They also were able to use the vocabulary easily, e.g., the definition of the word history, artifacts. They were also able to use the photo analysis skills that they had learned during the other BHH unit. Another thing that students carried over from the previous history unit was the excitement and interest that they had in the other unit. One teacher said, “From their perspective of history they knew that this was history and they knew it related to what we had done in the fall” and another said, “They were excited. The second year they brought a lot with them from kindergarten rather than just being the first year.” Another teacher also said that doing the other unit first was a good introduction to this one because the other one was so personal and age appropriate, but then this also has a personal association, too.

What if any modifications did you make to the unit?

Teachers said that they found that this unit lent itself well to doing adaptations – having enough structure, but room for adaptation to fit their class. The modifications the teachers listed were:

- Using videos about businesses long ago from United Streaming
- Reading the Little House in the Big Woods along with the unit
- Using the photos of their town now and long ago to make their timeline
- Taking the field trip to the Old Threshers Museum
- One teacher had a student teacher who was Native American who talked about the Native Americans in Iowa.

What advice would you give to teachers who were going to be teaching this unit for the first time?

The most commonly mentioned piece of advice was to allow plenty of time to do the unit. One teacher said that allowing plenty of time gives you the freedom to adapt the unit as you see the interests and excitement of the students go in particular directions. He said, “Generally just making adaptations to what your kids are doing and what they really like. If they really like something just go with it and don’t worry about getting something done. If they are getting into something just let them go because that is when they are learning the best is when they are really engaged. So to allow for more time for adaptations.”

Another teacher said to add role plays to the unit. She did a role play with one of the books, Aurora Means Dawn and thought that acting out the wagon ride was very meaningful for them. She said, “They pretended they were on a wagon and they traveled with the storm came and they had to get under their wagon and they were sitting there just really acting it out. Before we acted it out they thought it sounded really fun to get under the wagon and then when we acted it out – oh this isn’t fun.”

Several teachers said she would advise teachers to add as many hands-on things to the unit as they could. They suggested things like creating a covered wagon, bringing in horses and trains for the kids to manipulate. Another teacher said to use as many modes for instruction as you can – computers, videos, role playing, reading, drawing pictures, etc.

One teacher said that the photos of their own town were really important to have and that they should make sure they get them no matter how difficult it is to find them. Another teacher said that if possible, when they are getting ready to build the town, they should walk to the town to see the buildings up close, so that they can look at things like the windows and the doors.

What were some of the primary sources that you used during this unit?

The things they listed for this question were:

- The things that they saw on the field trip to the Old Threshers Museum
- A visit to the Conger House (a historic house in town)
- Photos of the town, now and long ago.

How was the timing of the unit? How much time did it take to do the unit?

Most teachers said that you could use up a lot of time on the unit, but that you didn’t have to. The teachers said that the activities for the most part lent themselves well to doing one activity per day, with the exception of the building of the town, which took longer than one day. They said that it took a hour or so for each activity, but that they mostly had added on to each activity so that it took about two weeks to cover the whole unit.

Anything else to tell about the unit in general?

One comment that teachers made was that it would be really nice to have some collaboration time built into doing the BHH units. They said that the evaluation session had provided them with time to talk that they wish they had been able to have earlier in the year. Another teacher asked the other teachers if they would be interested in writing a third history unit for the first grade and said that he would be willing to write it. They decided to meet again to brainstorm topics.

Spring 2004 Second Grade Teacher Focus Group Transcript

Evaluator: Let's start by talking about what some of the highlights were to you and your students of teaching the immigration unit.

Person 1: It was the fact that the kids really enjoyed it. You never know how they are going to react and how much they are going to absorb and they were really involved and interested. I had planned on doing it one week and planned on working on it hard and it turned into two weeks.

Evaluator: Were there particular things that they liked?

Person 1: They loved the books. The books were great. It would take me 45 minutes to read a book because there would be so much discussion and so many questions, good questions which was great but it would just take forever but the books were wonderful and I think that helps a lot to have the good literature and good stories to go with it.

Person 2: The kids were so excited about it that some of the books they wanted to read and there weren't enough copies and they didn't get all done but I didn't know if I should just leave the books and hope they didn't get lost in the shuffle of all my other books are just take it away from them. It wasn't that we were expecting more copies I just wish they would have had more just to get to all the kids so they could do their reading. I found a new book that I really like to go along with it. I read it to the kids and it was called The Christmas Tapestry and it just fit in so well with it. It had a lot of questions about what happened and why did they get put in camps and all that.

Person 1: It was the same author as The Keeping Quilt

Person 2: They really liked that and they liked the illustrations but they liked the story and it just hit me really hard because one of my cousins was like that. Had been in a concentration camp and had given up for dead and then they found each other in Los Angeles, CA.

Person 3: I think the highlight for me was when we were doing our KWL chart and we did our L chart at the end because they just kept generating all these things that they had learned. Things that before when we started and I looked through the books and thought they are never going to understand this they are never going to get this and then that was kind of fun to see all the things that they had learned and to watch their eyes as the chart kept getting longer and longer.

Evaluator: You kept that?

Person 3: Yes it is downstairs

Evaluator: I would really like to see it

Person 4: My kids – the movie set them off right away. They were excited from the beginning and there were a lot of things that could tie into it. I'd say, "Do you remember in the movie where...?" They'd go, "Oh yeah, yeah," and it was just great to have that to start out with and

go back and work with that. My kids just thought whenever we talked about the potato famine. I could say those two words and they would instantly burst with laughing and it was just the funniest thing in the world. Every time for some reason – it was just the funniest thing in the world that potatoes could be a reason that people would leave. I would say well it is not just potatoes. I just couldn't say those two words without them stopping and laughing.

Person 2: My kids also had the same reaction and I thought about that when they were having this Iowa State Climatologist talk about 100 years from now and how the temperature is going to rise and we were not going to have water in the summer and so our crops wouldn't grow.

Person 4: They understood, but it was something that they couldn't get over I think if you asked them they would start laughing about it and they know what it is and they learned about it for sure.

Person 5: The part I like best was doing the map and showing them where their one family member came from and show them how far they traveled and that was after we talked about the hardships of traveling. It made it more meaningful for them.

Person 6: I liked how the final activity really pulled it together because I think some of mine were still a little bit questioning about how everything worked and then to see it all come together that last day I think that was. I mean we worked really long and hard on that and sometimes the best laid plans can go awry, especially when you have as many kids as we did and so I think that pulling it all together was a really good thing.

Evaluator: Did you all do talking in your classrooms after that about the Ellis Island experience and they understood all the things and did they feel like they learned more by going through the experience?

Person 2: What did you out in your room?

Person 4: When they got deported? When they came I just kind of asked them if they got deported and I was like, "Well what happened? What did you do wrong?" Some of them were like, "I don't know" and I asked which room they were in and they would tell me which room and I would say well lets look at your passport and they would see that they got kicked out and some of them said, "I was talking and they said no talking." Some of them said – the medical one had some good ones like, "My eyes were too green." I just kind of asked what happened to each one of them and when we got done we got the books out and talked about that but most of the time we just spent talking about what happened to each one. We had one room come in from my room and I asked what she did to get deported. She said "I don't know" and started crying. It was like, "Oh no."

Evaluator: I was out there for part of that and I thought it was really interesting. The first couple kids I thought their eyes were really big and they were wondering, "What's going to happen to me?"

Person 1: I had a couple of kids who, I think it is pretty safe to say going into it, they didn't understand. They could follow along, they could add to discussion but I don't think they truly understood and by the end of that day when we were discussing it I think they got it. They just kept talking about how they had to wait forever to fill out the forms. They were hot.

Person 2: It was probably a pretty good thing they couldn't get my window open.

Person: I think I had a couple who did not truly get it before hand and afterwards. I mean those kids probably aren't ever going to get the big, big picture but I think they understood bits and pieces of it.

Evaluator: How about weaknesses or things you would change about the unit, or barriers to doing it?

Person 2: I would spend longer on it. I think part of the reason I didn't was because it was squeezed in with my reading and other things that I want to get done that I would just spread it out a little bit more.

Evaluator: How long did you take on it?

Person 2: Two and a half weeks.

Evaluator: So even longer than that?

Person 2: Yes, I think it could really be spread out a little bit more and be a little more in-depth and help those other kids.

Person 1: I once again didn't do the timeline activity. I did it different, I mean we had talked about the whole making a chart and making like one person represent 5,000 people or something like that and I think the activity called for making some sort of a timeline but I didn't do it. I felt though through discussion and through our books and talking about...I think they understood the concept and to me that was what was important that they understood that concept and so I didn't do that.

Person 3: I didn't either.

Person 2: I had the kids make individual timelines and then I showed them the graph of how the people went and we talked about it that way because I didn't think they could...

Person 4: I broke mine down by those family tiles they brought back. We put them in different countries and then we talked about why that particular country when their big rush was and why they came.

Evaluator: So sort of in general but without making it exact?

Person 3: Yes, and I didn't do the timeline but we talked about it just with the different stories. Because there were different reasons for different for different people to leave. Plus we tied it in with the pilgrims even though that was way before we were talking about really but I think it helped them understand the whole thing because it gave them another reason why people were leaving.

Evaluator: So did anybody do the timeline?

Person 4: I did.

People: No

Evaluator: Have you talked to Elise and Jim about that modification?

People: I don't think so.

Person 1: I did briefly

Evaluator: Are there any other barriers that you found in doing this?

Person 4: I would agree with time is all.

Person 3: We need to continue to be on the lookout for books because

Person 5: That's what I was going to say like on some of the plans we didn't have the right books for what they wanted us to do, so we were trying to figure out what other book would fit in.

Evaluator: Those were the ones that were out of print?

Person 5: Yes

Evaluator: I know they are working on that and do they have the list sent of which ones you couldn't find?

Person 5: Yes

Evaluator: As far as time do you wish you would have had more time?

Person 4: Yes, I wish I would have had time. There were other things that I would have liked to do and go in-depth more.

Person 6: Because there were some people in tears for that deportation if we could somehow put a star on their passport without them knowing it, that would be a signal to the final group that this would be an okay one to be deported because there were a few people who were really upset about it and that was not our goal.

Person 1: I think it was just the initial moment – when they got deported from that room. I know mine was a little upset but once she got out there she was like – oh I wasn't the only one.

Person 4: Most of the time they came out there they were fine I just had the one that was a little nervous.

Person 6: There was the one of mine that had a buddy. She was with somebody and he probably shouldn't have been deported just because...

Person 3: One of mine like that got deported too, but he didn't seem really upset about it. I think his friend was more upset than he was.

Evaluator: You had a discussion ahead of time saying they might be deported before hand?

People: Yes

Person 1: Someone said that they talked to the kids about it being a game. So I know that was how then that I adjusted I think maybe it was you that said it was like a game and so that's how I addressed it with my kids.

Person 3: We talked about it in the room just because I was concerned about some of them and we talked about it and there could be some of you that get deported for various reasons. It could be something with your passport or the medical people because we had talked about every room and then they said they asked about what would happen when we all got done. I said we'll we will all go to the gym. "Well what about the people that are deported?" I said well...I didn't finish the sentence and one kid said, "Well that really wouldn't be very fair if we didn't let them come." I said, "Well, we will probably go get them and let them come into the party." And then they were like, "Oh, so it is not really real – it is more like a game." I said yes it is a game that we are playing that afternoon and then they were okay with it. I didn't have anybody that was really upset about it. They were probably thinking, "Oh, cool! I got deported."

Person 1: I know Elise was concerned because we had some kids deported that were maybe Hispanic and she said something to me about maybe they shouldn't have been deported but

Person 3: And again one of mine was and my concern was that it was her parents that just came up from Mexico and I was a little concerned but when I asked her about why she got deported she said, "I don't know – something about my passport, but that is okay."

Person 1: I think that is something that we will iron out as we go.

Person 3: I think it's not so much the nationality maybe but as the kid. Because I have some other Hispanic kids that...

Person 6: Most of them wouldn't pay any attention (to the mark) if we just put it on the back or something.

Person 3: Or we wrote the names on the back. Maybe the ones that could be deported we could underline their names or something.

Person 6: I have one to this day who is still mad at me to this day for being deported because his passport said that he was from Ireland, no he was from Ireland but he put on their India so his passport was, didn't match and it is my fault because I wrote it up on the overhead and I wrote both India and Ireland and he got the wrong one down so to this day his mom and I laughed at conference about it and she went home and tried to explain, but no, "It's [teacher's name] fault, I wrote the right one."

Person 4: I kind of bribed my kids ahead of time like you don't want to be stuck in here with me it is not going to be fun. But if you pay attention to all the activities we do you will know what it took to be a good immigrant and then you won't get deported. That helped – they were saying, "We don't want to pack too much. We better not bring all these games. They'll deport us for sure." So they had to stop and think, "Well, what did all those people take with them?"

Person 2: I think that is where the time came in too because I felt like some of those later activities maybe I didn't spend as much time doing what the activity said but trying to get the kids to understand what the kids were going to be doing in the immigration activity. Trying to make them understand that they weren't going to be this person from Washington, IA in the USA they were going to be their ancestor from whatever country and they were coming over to do that job. I spent a lot of time talking to my kids to make sure they did have a clue what they were doing that day.

Evaluator: I know this might be a difficult question since some of you didn't teach last year. How was teaching this history unit different from teaching your other history unit?

Person 1: A lot easier. [Agreement from several others.] The activities weren't so time consuming. I just felt like if the kids weren't so involved, one activity I really could have done in an hour. But in the environment unit it seems like one activity takes me three days.

Person 2: The map part takes a long time but it's really worth it.

Person 5: The books were better suited to the unit. I just remember being more excited about this unit and thinking it is going to be a little easier, less stressful to teach.

Evaluator: How does that affect your planning and thinking about teaching the environmental unit this spring?

Person 2: It's a little easier and we can help people who haven't done it.

Person 1: I think the environment unit just has a lot of stuff. A lot of goals, a lot of content to cover and part of it I think it with the immigration unit we touched on immigration already as a 2nd grade and so it fit very nicely and we were able to expand what we already do. The environment I think goes a little bit farther into the air, land, water, and we touched on it but then

it gets into the clean air act and some of the politics and the people that were involved and it's a little bit above them. [Some agreement.]

Evaluator: I know you talked to them [Jim and Elise] about the Rachel Carson stuff. That was kind of the hardest?

Person 2: Yes, even the other things – you can talk about the environmentalist and their importance but the activities that went with that were like – the kids didn't really get it. It was the one with the National Park Service and Muir and Roosevelt

Person 1: Yes, that's way....

Evaluator: How much have you talked with Jim and Elise with suggestions for this next spring.

Person 1: Not much.

Person 2: I haven't come up with a good alternative yet. I am thinking about it but I haven't yet.

Evaluator: So basically the immigration unit -- you believe that the things were more at their level, shorter activities so they were easier to fit - is that what you are saying

Person 1: I felt it took longer because the kids were so into it. I think the activities were a good length, age appropriate. The reason why I think it took us so long is because the kids were so involved and interested and the books were good and as far as the planning and looking at the activities they were good. They were easy.

Person 2: They were interesting at the kid's level too. I think we all learned a lot too.

Evaluator: Anything else you can add on that. They'll be interested to hear that because they want the whole curriculum to work

Person 3: To me it was easier to do although I am coming from the first grade unit just because the kids, when you said history they knew what we were talking about. So that made the whole thing easier for me too.

Evaluator: And that was a later question that I will jump to because you anticipated so nicely. You are all teaching children who have had history now at least one time – what kinds of things did you see in your students because they had already learned some history?

Person 4: Mine remembered timelines from last year

Person 1: The baggy books was the big one in my room

Person 5: Not a lot of my kids knew what I was talking about when I asked them about it I don't know why.

Person 3: The baggies. And see they are used to seeing you guys coming in and out so it is not, it is still a big thing when Jim comes because he brought us our big map and every time somebody is coming – is Jim coming? It is nice because with people coming in and out of the room they won't stop what they are doing because they know its Jim and Julie and Elise and they are coming to see what we are doing. I think I had their attention better when we started just because it was you remember when we did our baggy books this is history this is what we are going to study this year.

Evaluator: You have the same kids even so you remember specific examples of what they learned.

Person 3: They were pretty excited about doing it

Evaluator: Did you see them showing any other skills (in addition to the timeline) in thinking about history?

Person 4: They might have but I wouldn't have known since I wasn't there last year.

Evaluator: I actually noticed that in the first grade class the student teacher was teaching and she wasn't picking up all the things that they learned from kindergarten because she didn't know that if they said history was about toys, that – click! – that is what they talked about.

Person 1: When we were talking about our big map I did have kids say, like the kindergarteners did with where they were born because we have kindergarten buddies and so we are down there in that hallway and some of the kids remembered seeing a big map outside the kindergarten rooms so I did have a couple make that connection which I think is neat that we did that activity and the kindergarten activity go hand in hand.

Evaluator: So, it wasn't something they had learned themselves, it was something that they saw in the building. That is interesting how it affects the whole climate.

Evaluator: One of the things that is unique about BHH is the use of the primary source documents, even at this age. What did you think about this unit in using primary resource documents, what kind of documents did you use, especially those that were of particular interest to them.

Person 2: We used the ships manifest and they were just like, "Why did they take those?"

Evaluator: Did they think it was interesting?

Person 2: It was interesting but they didn't know what they'd say instead. I can't remember what it was that was so odd but it was a big issue why they needed them.

Person 1: We got looking into professions or occupations of the ship's manifest. Like the nailer, someone was a nailer. I didn't know what it was.

Person 2: What is a nailer?

Person 1: It's someone who works with wood and does like a carpenter. I love when you get into the black and white discussion of the photos and we do the KWL. They say it is old and I say, "Why do you think it's old?" and they say because it's black and white. I just happened to be walking around the room that day and I had a picture of Addison in the paper and so, I said, "So you mean that means that this is old?" Well no. I love that black and white discussion I love when you get them going about how do you know it's old. I like the photos. I wish we had more of them. They printed off a bunch of stuff from the internet but I would love to get some more pictures or photos.

Person 2: I would like some bigger pictures too to see all the details. Our overheads didn't copy well enough to get all the details.

Evaluator: So mostly it was the pictures and the ship's manifest those are the main primary sources that you used. Were there others?

Person 2: There were diaries and letters and stuff like that.

Person 4: The kids just kind of read them.

Person 3: Yeah, mine just read them, too.

Person 4: Those didn't go over very well.

Person 3: Well it was hard for them to read and understand. That's why I read a couple to them and summarized them.

Evaluator: Did you have any original passports or anything like that?

Person 4: I did have one student bring in something his great-great-grandfather had filled out when he moved here to Iowa and he brought a copy of it.

Evaluator: Were they interested in that?

Person 4: Yeah.

Evaluator: Having taught a history unit before, how did that experience inform you in any way on how you taught this one?

Person 2: Well it wasn't as stressful the second time which is kind of easier to deal with if you realize you had a problem you could do alterations and make it fit.

Person 1: I knew that I could be flexible, I didn't do the timeline and I didn't worry about it. I didn't stress that I didn't do it the way it was written. I knew that Jim and Elise are flexible and they allow us to be flexible and so I knew that if it wasn't working, I had leeway myself.

Evaluator: How about the way that you observed your kids. Thinking about history the first time. Did that have any affect on how you taught it the second time?

Person 1: It is hard to tell because you didn't have the same kids but I think they got it probably better with the immigration unit than with the environment. Now it will be interesting for you to ask me that question in May when we are done with the environment but I think this was personal. The kids that brought the tiles and you could tell the ones that really discussed it with their parents. It affects them it is personal.

Evaluator: That is interesting. That is what the K-1s are based on – that it needs to be personal for them developmentally to get it

Person 3: What I thought was funny about this unit was the kids that I thought wouldn't bring theirs back, they were the ones that had theirs back within the first week that we sent them home. It was some of the other kids that once we started putting them up and then they noticed that theirs weren't up it was like oh maybe I should do this and then they would finally get it back. It wasn't always the kids that you thought should have them back first that had the most parental involvement.

Person 4: I went to the website where you typed in the immigrants name and the year they came over and find the actual manifest.

Evaluator: Was that the Ellis Island thing?

Person 4: I don't know it was on one of the papers and I just typed it in some day and it was like passengers name and it would show their name and it would show like a picture of their boat and that was the most exciting thing to see. I had one girl who saw the boat run back to her desk and 10 minutes later she had drawn the boat. That got kids to start bringing them in because they wanted to look it up.

Person 2: It couldn't have been from Ellis Island for all of them because it only goes to 1920.

Person 4: I explained it for some of them. One brought in her grandpa was from Colorado.

Person 2: I had one whose mother wanted to say the ancestors were from New York and the kid said you can't say that that's in this country. It was one of my kids that I just thought wouldn't even care.

Person 6: I had one from Brighton. She came in late and did you have any ideas, did you and your mom talk at all or anything. "Well I am from Brighton." [laughter]

Person 5: I feel like I should say that this unit is much more interesting, it is to me. With both units I felt like I needed to do a little self learning before I could teach it but this one was more interesting to me and I think it is more interesting to children. The other one affects people but this is about their lives and that movie again helped them to see how it really affected people.

Because it was more interesting it was a lot more fun to teach. I will look forward to teaching it again.

Person 3: There were lots of things that you could take from the movie.

Person 2: Maybe we need a keystone movie for the environmental thing. I can't think of any right now that would work because we do the environment unit the whole time its just science kinds of things so it was kind of nice to bring in the history. There again it is somebody not related to you.

Person 1: Well for them it is hard to think long range. If you don't do this, this is going to happen.

Evaluator: You talked about the different learning styles. Did you have to make any adaptations to accommodate learning styles or was it good for different styles?

Person 4: Until we did the actual walk through there were some that weren't there. Then all of a sudden when we started getting ready for that it really got them up to it, it brought it home.

Person 2: I wondered whether instead of doing it as an ending activity, we could do it in the middle if you would have more interest for some of them than finding out about real ships. That's the place where I lost some of them but I really got some of them interested that weren't interested before so it is like a wash.

Evaluator: So you were suggesting doing the Ellis Island activity earlier?

Person 2: No, I just wondered that myself it was just a brainchild whether we should have the immigration activity in the middle because they, I had some kids who really weren't interested in the ships manifests and all that and some who were really into it but some who just glazed over that don't glaze over in other place. I just thought if they had an idea of what it was like to go through it then they would be more interested in somebody else going through it.

Evaluator: But as you went through it did you have to make any specific accommodations for kids who had trouble doing the things you were asking?

Person 1: I don't think in this one – no.

Person 3: This was a lot of stuff we did together but if they needed somebody with them I just partnered them up and we did it that way, but a lot of it was large group stuff

Evaluator: Was there a writing piece in this that you were particularly happy with?

Person 2: The only writing piece was the info sheet on the day of the Ellis Island activity. There wasn't really any other writing thing. I put in some journal writing where it was reaction to readings and stuff like that and what they thought about it and it was the only writing they had

and I would just do the accommodations for that. Some people only have to write a sentence where as.

Evaluator: But you had a lot of reading aloud

People: Yes

Evaluator: And some independent reading books too or no?

Person 1: I was able to use some of the books in guided reading with my high kids. There were some that we had multiple copies of the short chapter books I was able to use a couple of those in guided reading.

Person 2: That is the one that there is 15 or so copies of and I used that with my kids that don't go to specials I have fifteen that stay during one half hour period and that is what we did then. Everybody who didn't go could read that book.

Evaluator: That is pretty much all that I have if you have anything else I really appreciate hearing from you

Person 1: The only other thing I was going to add is I think we are very fortunate with the technology that we have here at Washington and at Stewart. I know we checked out the I-books several times and went into a lot of immigration sites and the kids loved that tour through Ellis Island, I mean loved it. That is not something you could put into the curriculum because not everybody is fortunate enough to have that but I think I feel fortunate that we have the technology that we do and we are able to do that.

Person 3 : Yes, that was really neat. We saw all those pictures on that website and then when we were looking at something else the kids were like – oh that's the picture we saw. So they were remember all the things they saw on there and all the different – I read a lot of the stuff to them about the doctors waiting at the top of the stairs. They really liked that.

Evaluator: Are these things you are highlighting at all when you give feedback directly to Jim and Elise about the curriculum other than through me?

People: We haven't met with them

Evaluator: I know some of you are working on the mentoring thing so. I thought you might have. Anything else?

Spring 2004 Third Grade Teacher Focus Group Transcript

Evaluator: What were some of the highlights for you of teaching the industrialization unit?

Person 1: I think the assembly line and making our notepads were a real highlight. The kids really loved it. I think really helped them to understand the concepts for students by themselves and then the assembly line – the time and the amount really surprised them. You know the amount that we could make as an assembly line versus each of them in the same amount of time. That really was an eye opener for them and just the experience.

Evaluator: Did you do that as a culmination activity at the end or you did it in the middle of the unit?

Person 1: In the middle.

Person 2: I also being able to sell the notepads at our family night is awesome. They really got the idea then of how they were business owners and how they could make money off that. I also think the highlight was I wasn't sure they could actually grasp the concepts that were in the unit and I think they did a really good job of that.

Evaluator: Which concepts did you think they'd have trouble with?

Person 2: Just understanding what a corporation was versus an individual owner and partnerships, stocks – what all these things were. I ended up doing mine so they did a whole class thing and made it so they did and individual one at their own desks made a booklet out of it and they are finished so they actually had their own to do too. I think that also helped more than just doing it in the whole group because when they had to do it on their own they had to actually glue them on and figure out where everything needed to go and write it.

Evaluator: So they found out it was a little bit easier with a couple people.

Person: Yes

Person 3: We went over the partnership and corporation type thing and I felt quite thoroughly but I gave a test at the end of that and they did not do well and I don't know if part of it is that they are not used to taking tests like that. I had multiple choice answers, true and false, and we did a lot of vocabulary which I thought was good and I don't think they knew it as well as I thought they knew it. Again, like I said, they are not used to taking tests and such but I may have to take a little different approach.

Person 5: I think they learned a lot and I learned a lot but I still don't think -- I don't feel very comfortable teaching it yet. I need another year under my belt. It just seemed I didn't know a lot about it and I don't remember learning a lot about it so it kind of threw me for a loop too, so we learned together, so that was good.

Person 6: I think with the timeline too we all kind of talked about it and I know that when I talked with Jim about it he said the idea was to have it “long, long ago”, “long ago” and “present” so that the kids weren’t so hung up on time on the actual date but they really were. They wanted to know where is this going to go and they had this big expanse of paper and so I think we kind of talked about our timeline next time we will have a date on it and have some years on it

Evaluator: And are they getting some understanding of time?

Person 3: I think so. It is good to use as a reference as we go throughout the year because now we are talking about when Addy lived in the book as opposed to when Martin Luther King lived and you can see there is a 100 year time spread and in between time all these new inventions had come about.

Person 4: The timeline is a challenge. Mainly to keep them together. We have to have a more systematic way of doing the pictures. Like even number the pictures and on the paper put the number of that period of history so that they know that number 7 goes on that paper. Try somehow to make it not as arduous and difficult. It seemed to about drive me crazy.

Evaluator: Were they doing individual timelines?

Person 6: Yes, it was individual with me telling them this is the picture that we are going to put on this particular spot. Well as you can imagine it was really difficult so we decided that there has got to be a more systematic way of doing this. I thought it was great, they loved it. They enjoyed having this long thing...

Person 3: Yeah but it was pretty crazy having things spread out and they are on the floor and they got these little pictures and they are cutting them up... and glue.

Person 5: And then I am not sure that the picture really went with what I wanted it to go with. If it was the first airplane it showed a jet.

Person: We need a Wright Brothers picture.

Person: We need to get some pictures that are more accurate.

Evaluator: We’ve already touched on a few problems, but what were some of the other weaknesses or barriers to success in implementing this curriculum? And if you maybe already said a problem, you can still talk about a positive if you have one.

Person 2: We were talking about assessment and giving them a test. I didn’t necessarily give them a test but they wanted to in writing – write about the industrial revolution when we were finished. So I thought o.k. we can try that. You could really pick out the men from the boys who could do it without any help and who couldn’t. We hung up absolutely everything they had done around the room and they could use anything they wanted. It did not have to be everything they had learned -- they could pick out a certain aspect. A lot of them wrote about the factory

they were in. They were really into wanting to know how come those kids were treated that way and why there were laws against that and they totally wanted to know more about that part so a lot of them wrote about that. What they wrote about then is the conditions and some chose to write it as a non-fiction type of story where they wrote a paragraph about it and some of them wrote pages and made a fictional story of like The Magic Tree House where Jack and Annie go back in time and they wrote they had the notebook and get it out and write down facts about the child labor laws. I think that was a really good way to assess if they had the overall concept even if it wasn't the entire unit they could pick out one that they really had a handle on and write about that.

Evaluator: And you felt like what you saw was a pretty good reflection of what they had learned?

Person 2: I do and there were still some kids who had a hard time grasping all the concepts and that showed in their stories but there were a lot of kids that I was amazed at the detail of what they did put into it and I thought they had a really good understanding of it too. Which happens no matter what you teach there is always kids who understand and there are kids that have a pretty good understanding of it and those going to be some that don't necessarily catch everything you wish they would.

Person 3: I thought the unit was pretty long at least for me it seemed to drag out and I was getting to the point where -- I have to finish this because I have to teach other things this year. Especially because it was new. The slavery unit, we kind of combine it with some things we had already done. This seemed to be pretty much new/different and I didn't have the background and after a while I just wanted to tie up the bow and put it away.

Person 4: I thought the books that were provided were great especially Bobbin Girl. They really related to that.

Person 5: I have to disagree. I didn't like Bobbin Girl at all. I thought it was too difficult for my kids to understand. I didn't really get the whole gist of it. It was like revolution kind of thing. I wanted something more of a child working. Like My America or aren't there a series of books that might have something more about that. I felt I didn't have enough. Kind of like the Addy books tell about the experiences she went through and they can really relate to that. If we can get the kind of book that has more of a point of view from a child working in one of those factories and what their life was like that might mean more to them because the Bobbin Girl she didn't look so bad off. She was in a boarding house, she had nice clothes, and I don't think some of those pictures that we had of those little girls in the factory would... it just made a big contrast

Person 2 : There's a book Kids at Work. I found it when I was looking at something my daughter. It's a non-fiction story so it is not necessarily like the Bobbin Girl -- it had real photographs of kids who worked in all kinds of factories. I'll try to read it to see whether or not it would be good. But it is a higher level of a story than Bobbin Girl is too.

Person 4: We sure did a lot of talking about it. They just thought it was very awful that they didn't have any windows for fresh air and it was very warm at school. They could relate.

Person 1: That was one thing, the time of year because they could somewhat relate and we even had windows. That made an impression on them.

Person 2: In part, it might be we were talking about having all of our stuff to do at the beginning of the year is crazy. It is a crazy time to do the unit too, but it fit in so well with the Amish and what we were learning about them that I don't see moving it to another time. I think that it's just a lot.

Person 5: It also all worked in well to our family night. That was really a big success.

Person: That would be the highlight is that.

Person: The craftsmen. [General agreement.]

Person 3: You had told me the problems that you had of the housing...

Person 1: Yeah I probably won't do that one again. The activity where the Venn diagram of comparing the different classes of people. That was very uncomfortable in my room because you could see the kids that were relating to it and that is one personally that I will not do again.

Person 3: Did you do the book, If You Lived 100 Years Ago?

Person 1: No.

Person 3: I did that pretty much instead of it. It explains it much better and it really was a much better comparison and contrast and I don't think the kids would have those feelings like that.

Person: Is that one we have now?

[General discussion of where book is, how many.]

Person 3: I had copies of my own. It is just how life was 100 years ago and it related to the class of people.

Evaluator: Did other people have problems with it in their classes?

Person 4: I didn't feel uncomfortable with it because I think it is so real. They know. Just like they know who is a reader and who isn't so it is like when they are going to get it? Without it being blatant.

Person 1: But to me it another one of those things that is beyond the child's control whether the family comes from money or not and it is just so out of their power.

Person 3: What I liked about that book is that it was 100 years ago and it is not like now. Now if you are rich you have an SUV or you drive a Pontiac.

Person 5: But it didn't relate to right now it related to that period of history.

Person 1: I just felt for my particular group, I could just see some of the kids....

Person 2: I didn't do it because I felt with the class I have this year too it would hit to close to home.

Person 4: When do you do the blatant reality then?

Person 5: Well I think I did the Venn diagram. I did do that with the pictures and I didn't feel the pictures were much of a contrast sometimes. I wanted more.

Person 4: Shacks and mansions and a Sears catalog house right in the middle.

Evaluator: So, the segregation unit fit into what you already do... Are there other ways that you think teaching the industrial unit as a history unit was different for you than teaching segregation -- for you and the kids receiving it as history instruction?

Person 2: This is the first time I taught segregation unit

Evaluator: But if you compare it ...were there two different experiences of teaching history?

Person 2: It is more of a concept much more than it is... I mean saving our earth in second grade is an idea that we instill upon them now and things that happened over time brought us to that. The industrialization was the inventions, the factories. Many of those things. Does that make sense or no?

Person 6: Well and it is also ongoing and it is complicated. You could stand on the corner like Jay Leno does and ask adults about corporations and partnerships and they wouldn't know.

Person 5: They aren't going to get it. So I think we are exposing them to some really complex information here.

Person 2: Segregation is such a feeling kind of unit too. It is really based upon how people were treated.

Person 4: It is all greedy -- it is part of history.

Evaluator: During the industrialization unit how did your students use primary sources?

Person: We analyzed photos.

Person 2: We put the timeline together with the photos, we had some primary sources as looking on the computer when we were looking up some inventions for one of the activities to

try and find what they looked like long ago versus now but those pictures weren't always easy to find.

Person 6: I don't know about written documents, do we have very many written documents? It would be kind of fun if we could get some copies of patents or something.

Evaluator: Do you look at partnership agreements or anything like that?

Person 5: Yeah, partnership or a contracts.

Person 3: I think those things are a little beyond me I don't know if I would be comfortable with them.

Person 5: But just to look at them...

Evaluator: So they liked the photos. A big part of BHH is primary source documents, so if you have any ideas of other things...

Person: Well yeah.

Person 2: The graphs – looking at cities and population and how cities changed over time because of the industrialization. They liked that. Looking at the Sears catalog that was brought in was awesome because there was one book that had the first catalog in there.

Evaluator: So it was an old one?

Person 5: It is a copy of a 1902 or '03.

Person 4 : But one of them was they ordered a mail order house and then their family put this house together and it came out of a catalog. Then for them to actually see the real catalog from 1902, they really thought that was cool

Evaluator: How did teaching your other history, in this case the segregation unit, how did it change how you taught this one, how did it change how you approached it.

Person 5: I followed the industrialization one more closely – what you had written in the lesson plan than I did the segregation one because I felt more comfortable with that one and knowing how it could fit and I read what the plans were and yes I could fit that in but I wasn't comfortable doing that yet with the industrialization one as far as that was a whole new thing and I had to follow that one pretty much to the T.

Person 1: Me too.

Person 6: Yeah it was really like inserting something entirely new I thought.

Evaluator: When you think about what the students are taking from the unit, the industrialization unit, they have all had history once before did you see things in them that you didn't see the first time, like skills, maybe content they mentioned

Person 2: Mine wanted to know if they were the same factories that the kids were working in were the ones that polluted in those stories that we read in our environmental unit which I thought was really good connection. I have the advantage of knowing what they did last year. Also the land forms. They connect that so much even if it wasn't the industrialization unit they talk about how different areas in the United States are. They have never done that until we did the maps.

Evaluator: Did anyone else notice anything?

Person 2: Presidents was the other thing. They wanted to know what president made the laws about the factories and helped kids not have those labor laws and Teddy Roosevelt is the president they talk about making the first national parks and so they wanted, we have a president poster, so they were trying to figure out which time period after doing that timeline they were going over there trying to figure out which presidents would have been in office when this was going on.

Evaluator: Then you had talked about Teddy Roosevelt in specific and then you would look at that time period?

Person 2: Well, they were trying to figure out if it was him or a different one. They were trying, the dates are underneath the pictures so then they could go and see from the timeline this invention or this thing was made while this president was in office. That's the other thing. It is not necessarily a connection to the industrialization unit but it is still...giving them an eye for history.

Person 4: Making a connection.

Evaluator: I talked to the second grade teachers last week and they said it was a little easier having the same curriculum and having the same students. The more you do it the more you will hear about.

Person 1: The only thing I am thinking about now is how my group reacts now when they see a timeline. I don't know that is a carryover from last year at all but I do think that like the kids that had that fire, now when they are doing fire prevention... and so I think the concept of history I think that is helping more. Now whether it is anything from last year or not, but I do think the timeline made a big impression.

Person 2: There is a timeline in that second grade.

Person 1: I was wondering if there was and now they have seen so many and made one.

Person 2: It was farm machinery how it changed over time, coal mining and how that changed over time, and logging industry and how that had changed over time. We talked about fire extinguishers and how those have changed.

Evaluator: Is there a timeline in segregation at all?

Person 4: There is not. I am going to write it in there.

Person 5: We could add to the one we have.

Person 4: And we do have a paper that has all the things that took place in the US with all the dates and all the events.

Evaluator: I see we are about out of time. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Evaluator: Did you have good attendance at your family night?

People: Oh yeah, yeah.

Person: How much did we make?

Person: We made almost three hundred dollars.

Person: For little tablets!

Person 1: We had so many positive responses from the people that attended. Hopefully if we do that next year people even more will come from hearing about it.

Person 2: We even had craftsman as they were going out the door saying when you do this again let me know and I will come back.

Evaluator: I think that is one of the things that they are really happy with and that I am seeing is the community involvement in the history project.

2003-2004 Kindergarten Classroom Observation Summary

The “History of Me” unit introduces children to the idea of history as stories and familiarizes them with some of the ideas and vocabulary of history. The unit was written as ten activities, most of which are related to different aspects of the students’ own histories; physical change over time, photo documents, letters, toys, food, and beds and transportation. Most of the kindergarten teachers chose to combine all of these activities into one activity which they related to the timeline activity and to discuss one child’s personal history each day that they worked on the unit. The children do an “interview” with one of their parents or guardian about their history from the time before they remember, collect a shoebox (changed in this rendition to a Ziploc Baggie) filled with their own historical artifacts such as toys, baby clothes, pictures, and letters, and then they discuss their histories with the class. The unit also includes mapping and timeline activities.

During the 2003-04 school year, evaluators made visits to four kindergarten classrooms. It was difficult to schedule kindergarten observations since often the activities last only 10 minutes or less and typically take place whenever a teacher has time to fit the unit into their school day. Two of the six kindergarten teachers made more of an attempt to schedule observations and all four observations took place in their rooms. These observations occurred during November – approximately 10-13 weeks into the school year. Observations will be discussed in terms of four basic overlapping dimensions: the structure and nature of activities, teacher actions, student actions, and primary source use.

Activities

In the classrooms observed, activities were almost exclusively large group (entire class) activities with the teacher leading the activity. In all cases, most or all of the students were initially sitting on the floor listening to the teacher talk to the whole class or to the teacher talk with one student in the front of the classroom about their interview or artifacts. Students were allowed to ask questions in all cases and raised their hands to do so.

On three visits, students were presenting their personal histories. The first part of the presentation was the discussion of the child’s interview with their parent or guardian. The questions included, “Where were you born? “Why were you given the name you have?” How many siblings do you have?” and other questions about the child. The child would hand the teacher the interview and the teacher would ask them the interview questions and if they forgot the answer the teacher would read the answer to the student and ask them to comment on it. Students would also show their artifacts (e.g. baby clothes, toys from when they were younger, photos, letters) to the class and when they were finished, the teacher would help them set up, often in chronological order by what age in the child’s life that they were from, in an observation place either on the chalk rail timeline or at a common table. The other children would walk past the chalk rail in a “gallery walk” – hands behind back, just looking –and were allowed to look at the items again later in the day.

During two observations children listened to the teacher read books, Me on the Map and The Family Book and during another observation the children were mapping (with teacher assistance) their birthplace on a large map in the hallway. On one visit the teacher used a flip chart to record student-generated ideas about where you can learn about history. All activities

were part of the written curriculum and in most cases students were able to do what the teacher asked of them alone or with varying degrees of scaffolding.

Teachers

Both of the teachers appeared to be comfortable with the curriculum. Since it centers around developing and discussing personal histories, the content was not new, but the idea of presenting the content to students was. Teachers appeared to be genuinely interested in hearing their students' histories, often asking students questions about their artifacts and encouraging other students to listen well enough to the presenting child's history that they could answer the question, "What did we learn about Jim's history?" This served as an informal assessment of the students' understanding since the children often said things like, "We learned that Jim liked snowmen because there were snowmen on his baby pajamas" showing that they were starting to use information present in photos to make inferences. Informal assessment also took place when the teacher asked students to place things along their timeline or to tell how old they thought they were when a picture was taken or when they had a particular toy which demonstrated a students' awareness of ideas such as physical change over time and a sense of chronology. The use of timelines as part of student presentations helped children begin to build a sense of chronological understanding and teachers emphasized before and after relationships and left to right sequencing.

When students had trouble remembering the items from their interviews, both teachers started off by helping the students and then gradually asking students to take on more of the story telling. This technique of providing scaffolding that was gradually removed served as a subtle way of adapting the format of the curriculum to different ability levels.

The teachers often gave the children feedback when they answered appropriately or when they made assertions about how old they may have been when different events happened in their lives. When one child showed a portrait of herself seated on a large number "2", the teacher asked with a wink, "How old do you think Kaitlyn was in this picture?", many of the children shouted, "Two!" but Kaitlyn said, "I think I was three." The teacher said, "Well, we really don't know just by looking at you, but we've been talking about using the other things in the picture to help us figure things out. So since you are with that big #2, there's a pretty good chance that you were two."

During observations, teachers presented lessons primarily both visually and aurally by looking at artifacts and talking about them and by reading a book and showing the pictures, but during the mapping activity children physically placed a pin in the map and followed a string from it to their picture.

One teacher connected the history unit to another subject by asking the students to help her sound out some of the words when writing a list of the ways you can learn about history. For example she said the word "history" and they chimed, "ha, ha" for the "h" sound and also signed the letter "H" with their hands. Teachers read and referred to other books they had read about the things in the history unit. One teacher, in telling about her own history, talked about different places in the country and another demonstrated several different ways of mapping the world by showing different maps and globes.

This history unit was particularly well-suited to helping students make connections with their own experiences and their knowledge of the real world – by design each child's history related to their own world. One teacher shared her history through a scrap album she had created

modeling the idea that creating a history is something that a lot of people do and that it is a really fun thing to be able to look back and study your history.

There were very few classroom management issues during class observations. One teacher indicated to the evaluator present that the class was “having a bad day” and she interrupted the lesson a couple times to settle the children down by having them “zip their mouths” or having them “point to the person who is supposed to be talking and the person who is supposed to be listening.” That day more than one child was telling their personal history and it appeared that the children’s attention spans were not really ready for more than one history although when the first one was done, they begged the teacher for someone else to do another one. On a subsequent visit, the same class is able to sit much longer and listen to the teacher’s description of her scrapbook, work on a flipchart about the places one can learn about history and hear a child’s personal history. The teacher on this day only used one classroom management technique – asking children to “share three warm fuzzies” which involved milling around the room giving three people hugs or telling them “I like you.” In the other classes, the teacher had no problems – the students appeared completely engaged with the lesson.

Students

The students appeared to be nearly unanimously interested in the history lessons. Students listened attentively when other students presented their histories and seemed particularly pleased to have the opportunity to present their own. They also leaned forward to listen and see the pictures when teachers read to them or talked about their own histories, and they were very excited to go into the hall to map their birthplaces and stood proudly next to their photos when it was their turn to go to the map. On several occasions students asked if they could “Do another history” when one child had finished. When there were opportunities to ask questions of the history teller or to tell what they had learned about the child’s history, there were many hands raised and the responses were completely relevant. No child seemed to be left out of the lessons. In other conversations, the teachers had told me that some children never brought things to school from home, but they were able to substitute drawings and digital pictures taken at school in some cases. As discussed above, children who were less able to read or remember things from their family interview, received deft scaffolding from the teacher so that all children could present their histories.

The children’s personal histories provided a low stress way for children to make a class presentation. None of the students observed appeared to be nervous speaking in front of a group while gaining practice at an important academic skill. During all observations children were given opportunities to ask questions, to respond to questions, to talk and to interact with each other and the teacher. One interesting interaction between a student and teacher related well to the content matter of the lesson. The child showed a sepia toned picture of his extended family dressed in old time clothes.

Teacher: “Was this picture taken in the olden days?”

Student: “Yes.”

Teacher: “Well, from *your* olden days because you were little then, but not from the olden days where people dressed like that.”

Student: “*We* dressed like that.”

Teacher: “Where did you have the picture taken?”

Student: “In Arkansas. They had clothes that you could wear.”

Teacher: “Yes, sometimes they have places where you can get your picture taken and wear old clothes and then they make the picture look brown like this so that it looks old.”

Children also seem to enjoy and learn about physical change over time from looking at their old clothes. In one observation the teacher asked the child to hold his baby sleepers up to his body and said, “Look how little these are – it’s hard to believe he was ever so small! Would this fit him now?” The class burst out laughing and shouted, “No!” In another class a boy tried to put his baby hat on his head – again to uproarious laughter.

Children appeared to be attaining a sense of chronological thinking as they placed their historical artifacts along a timeline in most classes observed. Children were able (sometimes with teacher help) to place their items correctly along the timeline and seemed to be particularly aware of the before and after relationship and how that is represented in left to right sequencing.

There were no small group collaborative activities during the observations. Students did not do any writing or drawing during observations, but one teacher asked the students to help sound out words and watched the teacher writing words. Student drawings of maps of their homes that they had drawn as part of the history unit were displayed in one classroom.

Students had also worked together as a class to create a mind map about history that they referred back to during one of the observations. The mind map had the word “history” in the center with the words, “family”, “long ago”, “baby rattles”, “us”, “we talk about it” surrounding it.

The students were able to get up and move around during several of the observations. They did the “gallery walk” after the student presentations and they went to the hall to map their birthplaces.

Primary sources

The students’ artifacts were the primary resources used in the kindergarten classes. They brought toys, photos, letters or cards, and clothes. Teachers also used primary sources from their histories such as art, journals, and scrapbooks. Classes also used maps and globes.

2003-2004 First Grade Classroom Observation Summary

The “My History at School” unit continues the kindergarten theme of history as a story. The children focus on their lives at school and construct stories of their school life through the use of baggie books with separate baggies containing timelines, written documents relevant to school, maps of their school, photos taken at school, and mind maps that bring all the pieces of their school history together. They supplement those activities with activities about other things that may change over time in their lives and be different between children, such as clothes, games, and the foods they eat. The personal connection to the children’s lives is again the focus of the unit.

During the 2003-04 school year, evaluators observed all six first grade teachers teaching BHH units on 14 different occasions. Four of the six teachers were trying a new schedule for implementing the curriculum than they had used the previous year. Instead of doing it for a short time each day for a couple weeks, they worked on the history curriculum all day for the two and half days preceding their Thanksgiving break. The other two teachers began their unit in mid-November and completed it in December or early January. Observations will be discussed in terms of four basic overlapping dimensions: the structure and nature of activities, teacher actions, student actions, and primary source use.

Activities

A wide variety of grouping formats were observed in use for the implementation of the “My History at School” unit. Some observations consisted primarily of teacher-led whole class activities, but students also worked individually, in partners, and in small groups.

Whole classroom activities most often consisted of the teacher talking to the students while students listened and had ample opportunities for student questions and frequent asking of responses from them. On several occasions the teacher read a book to the students, again allowing time and flexibility for questions and reactions. Teachers often modeled a process that students would be doing themselves later or created a group product, such as using a KWL format to create a list of definitions of history (or what they “Know” about history) or where one can learn about history.

Group and partner situations were typically short in duration and consisted of asking students to discuss an idea together and then come back to the large group to relate the groups’ discussion to the class. In one class, small groups did a collaborative assignment of creating timelines of their school day and students were required to figure out who was going to take responsibility for each part of the assignment and then carry out their assignment. In another class where they were learning about document analysis, the teacher first asked the students to look at a document in small groups and then to break down into partners to discuss it further. A different teacher used a “Think-Pair-Share” method by asking students to find a partner to give them one response to a book the teacher was reading to them. The instructions to the students were, “Whisper to a partner something that is the same for you as it is for Brian” (a character in a book about families). Partners then reported back to the whole class on what they had said. Student groups and partners during these observations appeared to be convenience groups and appeared to be heterogeneous as to ability level.

Individual work usually consisted of writing and drawing tasks. Students were typically seated at their desks during individual work time, however, in one class students moved around

the room freely to consult the teacher, an example on the wall, or other students' work. Students were allowed to talk quietly with their neighbors during their group time and this talk was almost exclusively about what they were doing.

All of the activities observed in the first grade classrooms were part or slight modifications of the written BHH curriculum. Activities included photo analysis, document analysis, creating timelines, mapping, doing KWLs, and discussing alternative views of the same event in history.

Teachers

There was very little difference between teachers in their apparent engagement and comfort with teaching the BHH unit. Almost all of the teachers appeared to be completely comfortable with the content and the methods used for teaching and were quite obviously enjoying teaching it. Two teachers seemed slightly less comfortable with using some of the books in the unit, one saying that "This book is kind of long", another saying that an experience described in the book was "probably not like any of you" seemingly missing the point of the book, that all families are different. Five of the six teachers looked to be completely satisfied with the unit and the one that seemed to be finding it more difficult was working with a class in which there were sometimes difficult classroom management issues.

The teachers used multiple methods to deliver the material. They led large group discussion, read books to the students, modeled processes, acted as facilitators during individual and small group activities, solicited student responses, and answered students' questions. Since this first grade unit centers on the school life of the children, in a sense they are clearly content experts, however, teachers also appeared skillful at relating the content that concerned how people learn about history and ways to organize their knowledge using timelines, journals, maps, and mind maps.

Assessment during the observed classes was entirely informal in nature with teachers asking questions of the students as part of the discussion. One teacher asked the students to self-assess their learning. The teacher first asked the students to work on a KWL together about what "they thought they knew about what history is" telling them that they could be right or wrong. When they had built a list, the teacher asked, "Now that you've heard what other people think, how many of you think that your definition is still right? – thumbs up or thumbs down." After that the teacher quizzed them by asking whether certain things were "history" or not. The teacher asked them again to respond with "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" to a list of items, such as, recess (they had just returned from recess), last night's football game, vacations, what you'll have for breakfast tomorrow, and what we're learning right now.

Teachers did not appear to have to do much to adapt the curriculum for different styles of learners or different ability levels, but their sensitivity to differences was apparent. The open-ended nature of much of the unit allows for students to participate at their own level. There were several times where students were able to choose whether their contribution was written or pictorial. In one class, for example students were allowed to decide whether they would write or draw on the timeline. In another class, there was a student for whom English was not his first language. It happened that the teacher was reading a book that had both Spanish and English translations and she read most of the entries in both "because that made it more fun" without singling out the English language learned specifically. In another class, the students were writing books about something that had happened to them in their personal history. The students

were expected to write the story, but each story also had pictures and the students were able to use both modes of communication.

Teachers provided feedback to students both during discussions, by reinforcing correct answers to questions (while still allowing students to speculate) and during individual work, by circulating through the room making constructive comments to students on their work. One teacher also gently used student comments that were not on task to redefine terms and redirect attention to the relevant topic. For example, while listening to the teacher read a book a child raised his hand and said “One time I went to my friend Tim’s house and ...” and the teacher stopped him and said, “That will be a story that you can tell later about Tim and your history together.” Later in the same class when the book had a passage about a child bumping his head, a boy raised his hand and said, “When I bump my head my grandpa says, ‘Did you see birds?’” and the teacher kindly said, “You guys are having a lot of good memories that are part of the stories you will tell.” While this was an example of good classroom management, the teacher also turned it into instructional reinforcement.

Teachers alternated modes of delivery primarily aural and visual – writing, reading, talking, watching a video, looking at photos – but also employing kinesthetic and spatial awareness by having students walk through the hallways of the school while looking at maps of the school. Students would go to different spots in the school and then found and marked their position on the maps. Spatial abilities were also tapped with other map tasks and use of timelines as graphic organizers. Teachers helped students build chronological thinking by modeling timeline construction emphasizing before and after relationships and left to right sequencing.

Some teachers helped the children structure their learning by providing them with pre-organizers before a lesson. For example, one teacher had asked a guest speaker to come to the classroom to tell the children about an event that both the speaker and the teacher had attended, although not together. The teacher was demonstrating to the children that viewpoint can influence what you tell about an event in history and that both may be correct, but still be different in some way. Before the guest speaker entered the room, the teacher reminded the students about what he had talked about. Then he said that the guest speaker was going to tell her story about the same event and asked them if they thought her story would be the same as his or different. The children said “different”, but the teacher followed up by asking whether they thought some parts might be the same. After they agreed that some parts might be the same, he asked them to be listening for things that were the same and things that were different. After she left, he asked them to list those things for him. They had a short discussion of how eyewitness accounts of the same event may vary.

Teachers were able to make connections to other school subjects during observations of the BHH curriculum implementation. In one classroom, teachers added clocks to the timeline of their school day saying that they would be soon learning to tell time and that they would leave the timeline up so that they could use those clocks to help them learn. In another classroom, links to languages arts were clear as students wrote stories about an event in their history and the teacher told the students to make sure that the stories, “Have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Use both lower case and capital letters. Capitals are just for at the beginning of the sentences or names or places. Put spaces between your words. Use punctuation. Use pictures. I had photographs in my story, but do you need photographs or could you just tell your history with words, or with drawings?”

This unit has built-in connections to the real world through the idea of telling the story of their day at school and sharing of stories from their personal and family histories. Teachers maximized that potential by offering engaging stories from their own lives and by building other connections. For example, one teacher said read the book My Family to the class and talked about how the author had drawn beautiful, detailed photos of some of the things from her family history in the book. After reading the book, the teacher asked the students to draw something from their own family history. Several children drew pictures of things similar to those in the book, fairs, contests, hunting scenes, and holiday scenes and they were very delighted to be drawing things from their own history.

There were very few classroom management problems during the observations of the BHH classrooms. The teachers appeared to have an arsenal of things to make the classrooms run smoothly and they did. Several are mentioned in the paragraphs above. Another one of note was the use by one of the teachers of a Koosh ball to designate whose turn it was to speak during large group discussion. The subtle tossing of the ball from the teacher to the student whose turn it was to talk virtually eliminated sidebar conversation and served as an additional reward for class participation. The students' inherent interest in the topics and the teachers' seamless classroom management made all of the classrooms pleasant places to learn.

Students

Student interest in and motivation to learn history through the BHH unit was apparent in the first grade classrooms. Students eagerly asked questions and answered questions posed to them by their teachers. When student participation was solicited, there were times when nearly all the hands in the room were raised. All students were invited to be included in all activities and most students were able to fully participate. In one class there were one or two students who seemed to have trouble staying on-task during independent work and roamed around the room, sometimes distracting other students.

Students were called upon to use critical thinking skills to identify relevant information in written documents and photographs and to make inferences based on their analysis of the documents. They also began to do simple analyses of different accounts of the same historical event. In one classroom after hearing two people tell their story of attending the same event (in this case the Orange Bowl football game), they were asked to brainstorm differences and similarities in the two accounts and then understand that both accounts were true, but varied because of the viewpoints of the eyewitnesses. Students in the same class also took part in a brief pretend interview of one of the football coaches who was at the game, too.

A large part of the classroom observations consisted of students working to produce a timeline showing the events of their school day. Students often demonstrated a clear sense of chronological thinking while working on their timelines placing depictions of the segments of their school day in correct order. In most classrooms students' timelines allowed them to produce text detailing their day, draw pictures or choose pictures from magazines illustrating the events in their day, work on left to right sequencing, determine before and after relationships, and cut and paste words and pictures in their correct places. Students extended their understanding of the timeline concept in some classrooms by making individual timelines of a weekend day or Thanksgiving Day at their house.

The BHH curriculum involves multiple opportunities for students to talk – responding to questions in small group and whole classroom situations, telling stories about photographs they had brought from home, simulating an interview, discussing documents and photographs, and

responding to books the teacher read to them in class. In one classroom, a volunteer asked each student to tell him what their address was and to help him locate their house on a city or county map by talking with the volunteer about whether they walked or took the bus to school and how long it took them to get to school.

Students wrote and illustrated stories based on photographs they brought from home. Teachers provided the students with feedback on their drafts and then students made a final draft and shared their stories with the class. In most classes, groups collaborated on some of the timeline activities, working together to allocate tasks.

Several of the classes took walks around the school to coordinate their physical knowledge of the building with their map usage. They also moved around the room to work on timelines and refer back to models and ask questions of teachers and other students. A couple classes stopped in at the school office and saw how their report cards, which they had examined as written documents, were stored and used.

Primary Sources

The first grade curriculum involved the use of many primary sources. They included: scrapbooks, photographs, boarding passes, name tags, postcards, maps, vacation videos, souvenirs (e.g., sand, seashells, teddy bears, name tags, charm bracelet charms), event programs, tickets, newspaper articles, guest speakers, journals, invitations, report cards, school lunch menus, and interviews and/or guest speakers.

2003-2004 Second Grade Classroom Observation Summary

The “Environmental History” unit introduces children to the history of environmental protection in the U.S. Beginning with three types of environment -- mountain, grass plain and forest -- the lessons explore some of the natural resources that are found in these environments and the processes, both historic and modern, used to extract those resources. The students next learn about how environments are damaged by natural resource extraction and factory pollution. The unit concludes with a lesson that environmentally destructive practices can be reduced or changed. Four historic figures illustrate how individuals can encourage the government to protect environments, and the children learn that they too have a role in taking care of the earth.

The second grade observations of the Environmental History unit are based on eight separate classroom visits occurring in five different classrooms over the course of a four-week period in 2004, from March 29-April 23. These classroom observations may be analyzed along four somewhat overlapping dimensions: teacher performance, student reaction, the structure and nature of classroom activities, and the primary sources used.

Teacher performance in delivering the Environmental History unit varied in a number of aspects: teacher interest, assessment of student understanding, provision of feedback, mode of delivery, connection to other subjects, connection to student experience, and classroom management. The interest, excitement and engagement of individual teachers ranged from a perfunctory and relatively dry rendering of the lessons to enthusiastic, sincere and creative performances. On average, second grade teachers appeared to be more subdued than enthusiastic; at the same time, a few of these seemingly subdued teachers were also very attentive to their students, indicating a certain level of interest in the unit.

The use of student assessments varied, as well. For the most part, assessments appeared to be informal, consisting primarily of question and answer sessions between teacher and students. Teachers appeared to gauge student understanding mostly by posing questions over the content. Some of these content questions were extremely relevant to the goals of the unit (in fact, taken directly from questions recommended in the curriculum); others appeared to be quite disconnected or only peripherally related (for example, when reading the book *The Everglades*, the only questions posed by one teacher were “What is a kaleidoscope?” and “What is a conquistador?”). Other forms of assessment included worksheets (one of which covered material directly relevant to the process/content goals of the unit, the other a better example of “busy work”) and performance assessment—for example, asking students to demonstrate on a map of the United States where various landforms and natural resources may be found.

The teachers also varied in the extent to which they provided students feedback, ranging from activities and lessons in which the teacher provided little to no feedback on student performance, to activities and lessons in which teachers continuously communicated with students about the appropriateness (if not necessarily the quality) of their responses and performance. For the most part, however, teachers seemed to be conscientious in providing students with even informal, casual feedback or positive reinforcement (e.g. “You’re right.” “That’s good.” “You guys are really good at this!).

For the most part, teachers’ modes of delivery were quite varied, ranging from aural and visual (reading aloud from a book while holding up the illustrations; examining photographs of different types of habitats) to kinesthetic (cutting out individual states and coloring them

according to particular geographic landforms of the region; constructing paper bag puppets). As such, this unit seemed especially suited to offer a variety of opportunities for all types of learners to profit from instruction.

The extent to which teachers were able to demonstrate connections between new material and material encountered previously, as well as connections between to-be-learned content and the students' own experiences, varied widely. Student experiences were incorporated in one classroom in the form of their breakfast menus: students were asked to describe what they had eaten for breakfast, after which the teacher helped them to trace the origins of those foods to their raw ingredients. Another way in which teachers attempted to activate prior student knowledge was by appealing to their sense of state identity—focusing on the state of Iowa and particular natural resources and raw products their state has to offer. Other teachers attempted to connect the Environmental History unit to other units encountered previously. One teacher related logging and farming methods of the past to the westward expansion of European immigrants. Another teacher brought in the scientific concept of “habitat” to stimulate student ideas about the definition of the Environment.

Finally, teachers varied in their approaches to classroom management and student behavioral problems. It sometimes appeared that teachers had difficulty retaining students' attention and focus. The teachers who appeared most successful in classroom management were able to command student attention with fun and engaging activities; for these teachers, disruptions rarely arose. Teachers for whom student behavior appeared to be a barrier to implementation of the unit seemed to draw fewer connections to the overarching content and performance goals of the unit (less able or less willing, for example, to answer the question “why are we doing this?”); seemed to approach activities perfunctorily and without much enthusiasm; and seemed to approach the learning process as a passive, rather than constructivist or social, endeavor (typified by lessons in which the teacher “talked at” the students or read books without reflecting).

Student reactions to the unit also varied in a number of aspects, including interest, evidence of understanding, and boredom. Student engagement ranged from high levels of interest in classrooms with well-delivered instruction and activities to some distraction and boredom in classrooms in which students were not as involved. Boredom and distraction were exhibited by only a small proportion of students, evidenced by off-task talking during instruction or inattention to the teacher. On the other hand, many students appeared to be extremely engaged in the unit, talking and laughing excitedly during independent work and discussions, enthusiastically raising their hands to volunteer responses and ideas. They appeared to enjoy watching the video on logging methods of the past, evidenced by their quiet listening and the way they leaned forward in their seats.

There is a distinct absence of student questions in the second grade observations. It is unclear whether this is because students understand the content or whether students are simply not interacting with it. In one instance of student questioning, students ask what “food processing” means during an activity in which groups are conducting research on the major agricultural products of different states. On the other hand, there are plenty of opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding by answering questions posed by the teachers. For the most part, students exhibit great facility in answering the questions related to the process and content goals of the unit.

The structure and nature of classroom activities varied as well. In some classrooms, activities were delivered exactly as described in the curriculum. In other classrooms, teachers

made minor adjustments and modifications to the unit, while still remaining at least somewhat faithful to the content goals of the unit. In at least one classroom, the teacher merely went through the motions of the activities—for example, reading the recommended books, but failing completely to establish and reinforce the understandings students should take away from the books. One concrete example of this is when a teacher read the books *The Everglades* and *Vis for Vanishing* as prescribed in the curriculum, but did not introduce and discuss the idea that human beings have harmed the environment, thereby leading to the loss of species described in the books. In addition, the class did not examine photographs of environmental destruction resulting from processes such as strip mining and logging. Afterwards, students were instructed to construct their paper bag puppets of endangered species, but were unable to complete the activity for two reasons: the teacher was unable to locate her art materials and since there was only one copy of a book illustrating different types of endangered animals, many students were at a loss designing their puppets, unsure what animal to choose and even more unsure what the animal looked like. Given the disjointed nature of these activities and the teacher's failure to articulate the relationship between the classroom activities and the content/process goals of the overall unit, it is unclear whether the students were able to take away significant understandings about the environment.

Observations documented very successful implementations of Activity 1: Mapping the American Landscape, Activity 2: Where do These Things Come From?, and Activity 3: Gathering Natural Resources. Also documented was a slightly modified Activity 4: Timeline of Farming, in which the class engaged in guided reading of *The Ag Times* and simply discussed how farming methods have changed over time. In this activity, students looked at a timeline of farming instead of constructing one of their own from photographs. Student collaboration varied across classrooms. It appears that small group work was utilized more frequently by some teachers than by others. The student collaboration that was observed appeared to enhance students' enjoyment of the activities, without taking anything away from their focus.

Finally, primary sources used in the classroom were not well documented by available classroom observations. The only primary sources observed were photographs of landforms and various United States maps—relief maps, maps depicting natural resources, etc.

2003-2004 Third Grade Classroom Observation Summary

The “Segregation” unit introduces children to the history of segregation, from the end of the Civil War in 1865 through the 1940’s. Its content bridges the period between slavery and the peak of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and ‘60s.

The third grade observations consist of fifteen separate classroom visits conducted in five different classrooms over the course of four weeks, from January 20-February 12, 2004. These observations may be analyzed along four somewhat overlapping dimensions: teacher performance, student reaction, structure and nature of classroom activities, and primary sources used. Teacher performance varied across classrooms in a number of aspects: engagement/interest, assessment of student learning, provision of student feedback, mode of delivery, connection to other subjects, and connection to student experience. Teacher engagement and interest in the unit ranged from a relatively dispassionate, subdued rendering of the material to a sincerely enthusiastic endorsement of the unit. Three of the five teachers observed took a rather restrained approach to implementation; on the other hand, two teachers appeared to take substantial ownership of the unit, displaying an obvious outward enthusiasm for the material.

The extent to which teachers utilized student assessment also varied. For the most part, teachers appeared to utilize informal student assessment in the form of questions over the content. All five of the teachers observed seemed to gauge student understanding by posing questions. Furthermore, most of these questions were directly relevant to and supportive of the process/content goals of the unit. In addition to questions, teachers also utilized other measures of student understanding. Two teachers used writing assignments to measure student understanding or identify potential student misunderstandings. Another teacher frequently relied on small research projects, student presentations, and active student participation in classroom discussions to gauge student understanding.

Classroom observations did not document much teacher feedback on student performance, with the exception of two teachers, who provided continuous, informal feedback to their students. These teachers conducted several loosely-structured discussions and question-answer sessions, in which student responses were almost always reinforced or gently corrected through encouragement and feedback. In addition, these teachers appeared to go out of their way to incorporate and value all student contributions to the discussion.

Modes of delivery varied, and included aural, visual and kinesthetic activities. Aural activities such as reading aloud were utilized in all five of the classrooms observed. Visual activities, such as examining photographs and looking at picture books as a group were also quite common. Kinesthetic activities, such as coloring and cutting out pictures or working with manipulatives, were perhaps less widely used, although in one particular classroom, they featured prominently in the instruction.

The extent to which teachers were able to make connections between the Segregation unit and material previously encountered varied substantially. For a few of the teachers, this was limited to making references to the *Addy* book series. One teacher was observed making frequent allusions to the previous BHH unit on Industrialization, drawing on the idea of westward expansion and the Gold Rush. This teacher was also particularly adept at weaving a cohesive historical narrative within the Segregation unit, tying together cause and effect relationships between slavery, segregation, prejudice and the Civil Rights movement. Another

teacher actively strove to weave together a cohesive and lucid narrative, but frequently this thread was disjointed and confusing. Below is an example of this teacher's attempt at establishing the sequence of historical events leading from the founding of this country to the end of slavery:

So, let's get back to the north and south. The north and south are divided, ok? We have this war, and then Abraham Lincoln said, "There's not going to be anymore slavery in this country." Well, before any of this could happen, they had to establish the Constitution of the United States, so then the pilgrims came over from England. They came over and they had to establish a country, ok? So they decided that they would make a constitution. How many of you have ever heard the word constitution? Ok, say the word.

This teacher conducted frequent question-and-answer sessions with her students, which were typified by series of questions that did not make immediately apparent how different historical eras and events were related and interconnected.

There was ample evidence of teachers relating the unit to student experiences, whether that connection was a scripted part of the curriculum or not. In one example, a teacher implementing the Declaration of Human Rights activity with her class called on her students to come up with their own ideas for student rights based on their personal experiences at school and on the playground. This seemed to make the activity more directly relevant for the students. Another example of connecting to students' experiences represented a significant modification to the original unit—two teachers added a Blue Eyes-Brown Eyes simulation to the unit as a way of having students experience firsthand prejudice and segregation in the classroom. In this simulation, students with blue eyes were separated from students with brown eyes, and teachers took turns giving each group special privileges over the other group. The students' own insights and emotions arising out of the experiment were later called on during debriefing sessions as a way to relate the activity to the concepts of prejudice and segregation.

Student reaction to the unit was generally quite positive. The interest/engagement level of the students varied across all classrooms, but tended to be very high. At its best, almost all students in a single classroom were able to participate and contribute actively in classroom discussion and projects. In other classrooms, engagement was less striking, with a small percentage of the students seeming to disconnect from the content and activities, evidenced by their inattention to the teacher or preoccupation with other classroom objects and events. Across all classrooms, disruptions were rare and most students appeared to be at least attentive to, if not actively engaged with, the material presented. Similarly, student motivation seemed overall to be relatively high. In each classroom, a small subset of the class seemed particularly highly motivated to answer questions, volunteer responses, and simply interact with the material. These students tended to dominate discussions, unless the teacher made a conscious effort to balance student contributions.

Overall, evidence of student understanding was encouraging. The most obvious evidence of understanding was the students' great facility in answering teacher questions about the content, though this ability varied across classrooms. Particular classrooms were simply better at providing meaningful responses to questions than others. In addition to answering their teachers' questions, third graders also asked questions of their own, sometimes exhibiting impressive insight and understanding in their remarks. For example, one student asked his teacher how

slavery could have existed in the 1800s when the Constitution, guaranteeing freedom to all, was written in the 1700s. Another student asked his teacher whether a present-day maid was considered to be a slave or not. Another student asked whether people living in the south during the Civil War who did not agree with slavery could fight for the north. In addition, as part of completing a number of KWL exercises, one classroom became quite adept at generating questions about primary source documents. Furthermore, these students were frequently challenged to come up with information sources they could use to find the answers to their own questions. In one class period, a student asked the teacher how old the United States was. Rather than simply giving the student the answer, the teacher asked the class how they could find the answer for themselves. Students broke up into groups to consult their encyclopedias and collectively, the class was able to construct an answer by working together.

The extent to which particular students were left out of or bored by the unit varied extensively. In one especially effective classroom, almost all students were able to participate and contribute. In other classrooms, particular students may have been disaffected from the unit. In a few classes, students remaining at their seats during story time, when the rest of the class was seated around the teacher on the floor, seemed not to pay attention or be involved in the story. In another classroom, during a discussion in which students and teacher had seated themselves around a small table, a group of boys seated in the very back did not participate, did not interact with the material, and generally were unresponsive to attempts to include them. One observation documented a possible unanticipated outcome of the unit—alienation of one African-American student. In this classroom, a single African-American student was isolated from the other students during a discussion, pressed for comments on the topic of segregation and his personal opinion on race relations in front of his classmates, and made to work up front with the teacher. The evaluator noted this student's reticence to participate in certain activities. In another classroom, students became bored during an independent writing assignment, evidenced by their off-task talking, wandering attention, shuffling in their seats, and inability to complete [or even begin, in some cases] the assignment.

The structure and nature of classroom activities varied widely across classrooms. Generally, teachers seemed to move more slowly through the curriculum than prescribed in the written lesson plans, sequencing activities over the course of several days rather than attempting to fit everything into a single lesson. Observations documented quite thorough implementations of Activity 2: The 13th Amendment, Activity 4: The Former Slave States, Activity 5: Prejudice against African-Americans, Activity 6: African-Americans who Resisted Segregation, and Activity 8: Review and Conclusion. In addition, observations documented a few interesting additions to the unit, such as a Jeopardy trivia game used in one classroom. Other teachers substituted outside books and videos for those prescribed in the curriculum, including *Goin' Someplace Special*, *We the Kids*, *White Socks Only*, *Black Snowman*, *Secret Signs along the Underground Railroad*, a Schoolhouse Rock video, and a Charlie Brown movie entitled "This is America."

In addition, teachers' choice of classroom activities may have revealed a lack of coherence in the overall unit implementation. On a few occasions, some teachers preferred activities other than those recommended in the curriculum. For example, on a day in which the evaluator had been notified in advance that the teacher would be talking about prejudice, the class engaged in a short discussion of what stereotypes are and then read one of the books from the *Addy* series. These activities do not appear to be strongly supportive of the curriculum. In addition to leaving out some of the curriculum activities, a few teachers combined activities

related to segregation with those related to slavery, making it understandable that the differences between slavery and segregation were not always understood by students. In short, the implementation of activities demonstrated that the teachers themselves sometimes failed to make clear distinctions between slavery's place in American history and the era of segregation.

The types of classroom activities used varied widely among teachers. Particular teachers tended to rely on particular types of activities more heavily. One teacher tended to favor large classroom discussions. Another teacher seemed to favor guided reading in a large group. One teacher incorporated a number of different types of activities, ranging from discussions to independent or group research projects, creative art projects, student presentations and small group work. This group work appeared to be incredibly successful with students, allowing them to consult one another and achieve some degree of creative and intellectual autonomy from the teacher. In this way, evaluators were able to see students thinking for themselves. Other teachers tended to orchestrate activities as a large group or with students working individually.

Finally, primary source use was not well documented through classroom observations. A single teacher appeared to utilize primary sources frequently, mostly in the form of photo analysis with her students. For other teachers, this may have been limited to examining the text of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

2003-2004 Fourth Grade Classroom Observation Summary

This unit introduces students to the Great Depression era. The unit encourages students to understand some of the causes of and responses to the Great Depression and to develop empathy for people who lived through hard times. The unit also focuses on building historical learning processes through document, video, and photo analyses. Students also use maps, graphs, graphic organizers, and mind maps to help make meaning of their knowledge.

During the 2003-04 school year, evaluators observed the fourth grade classroom twelve times. Because the school is departmentalized, there was only one teacher teaching the BHH curriculum during the students' social studies hour. The teacher teaches five different classes and observations were done during most, if not all, of the five classes. Observations will be discussed in terms of four basic overlapping dimensions: the structure and nature of activities, teacher actions, student actions, and primary source use.

Activities

Students in the fourth grade BHH classrooms worked during class time on individual work, in several small group situations, and as a whole class. Small groups were sometimes self-chosen and sometimes chosen by the teacher. Collaborative learning was primarily used for carrying out group projects and playing a game.

The types of activities varied greatly. Students watched videos, listened to books read aloud by the teacher, read aloud together as a class, read silently, participated in group discussion, reviewed previously discussed content, wrote independently, worked on group projects, examined graphs, documents, and photographs, and played a game. Activities were all part of the written BHH curriculum with the exception of the Great Depression game which is a modification written by one of the project staff.

Small groups were used in two situations – playing the game and creating and performing final projects. During the game, students worked with a partner within a small group. Partners were told to decide together how to spend the tokens they receive each round of the game, representing a year or two of the depression. Partners were often observed in intensive discussion on how to spend their tokens and partners who were finished with their own decisions, often gave advice to other partners on how they think they should spend the money. Students used content knowledge to drive their decisions. For example, one partnership decided that in their role as “Iowa Farmers,” they did not need to spend many tokens on groceries since they had food on their farm. The teacher assigned the partners for this activity and it appeared that each partnership had at least one student with the ability to do the task independently and help the less able student.

Cooperative learning was also used in the fourth grade for working on final presentations. Most groups worked on skits. The teacher reminded the students several times that the skits needed to show what they had learned about the Depression. He warned that last year some students had worried too much about being funny and not enough about how to demonstrate what they had learned. At one observation, the groups had already prepared scripts for their presentations and were supposed to be practicing and working on sets and props. Groups were enjoying what they were doing, but were on task most of the time. One group was observed working on a skit about living in a “Hooverville.” Another group was creating a book about the Depression. Each page had a written segment and a drawing. They were delegating

responsibilities for each part and had created a table of contents that showed the contributions of each student.

This class spent a relatively large amount of time working on individual writing assignments. Children were writing during part or all of the class during one-fourth of the observations. In each case the students were writing about a topic they had covered earlier in the period or the day before. For example, one day the students were asked to write “everything they could tell about The Dust Bowl.” The teacher told the students that they would be graded on their writing, not on spelling and punctuation, but on content and on how much they can remember. While the students were writing, they were almost completely quiet. Even after students have been writing for a half hour, most students are on task. Most students wrote more than one page during the period. On the day of the dust bowl writing, as students are finishing up and putting their writing in their history folders, one student says, “I got both sides all filled up!” Another says, “I got three pages.” The first student responds, “That’s because you write big.” Another student says, “I wrote a ton!” The teacher asks one student, “How’d you do?” and the student responds, “I wrote a lot.” The teacher says, “Did you buddy? You know why? ‘Cause you’re cool!”

Whole classrooms activities usually involved a discussion led by the teacher. Students typically raised their hands if they wanted to participate. During the discussions students appeared attentive and most students raised their hand at one time or another. One discussion centered on constructing a Venn diagram to compare two primary source documents – two letters written during the depression to Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Hoover asking for help. Students were invited to construct their own knowledge by completing the diagram which one student defined as being useful for “comparing and contrasting two different things.” After the class had completed the diagram, the teacher asked them to think about whether or not they thought either of the first ladies had sent the articles requested to the letter writers and if not, why not, extending their thinking a step farther.

Teacher

Since all observations were of the same fourth grade teacher, some general statements can be made about his teaching style. This teacher used an extremely hands-on approach. He walked around the room patting people on the back, ruffling hair and setting a hand on an arm or shoulder. He called students “buddy” and “friend”. He was extremely enthusiastic about the history curriculum using words to describe it like “cool”, “exciting”, and “wild.” His naturally caring personality extended the empathy intentionally built into the curriculum. When the class viewed a video segment where a woman talked about the thrill of going to get ice cream, he stopped the video to ask them why this would be so exciting for her. After a student said because she didn’t have much money for things like ice cream, he said, “Yeah, and the people felt so glad to be working again. Not just for money, but for the satisfaction of being able to do a job.” On another occasion he sent the children down the hall to lunch telling them to stop and touch a brick near the plaque at the entrance to the school that tells that the WPA built their school. He said, “You can touch that or touch the bricks down there in the old part of the building and think that someone was really glad to be laying that brick because they were so glad to have work.” He also encouraged the students to think about what it might have been like to live back then. When introducing the slides of photographs taken during the Depression by Dorothea Lange, he told them to think of a movie where you really empathized with a character.

He amused the students by telling how he felt like a kid in the movie The Sandlot and said they should try to really feel what it must have been like to be that poor and have so little.

During the observations the teacher seemed comfortable with both the content he was teaching and the methods used to teach. He often asked students to review their learning or to process verbally something they have seen or read about. After watching a video (which he paused frequently to make comments or get reactions), he asked the students to list some things they learned from the movie. He sometimes erred on the side of leading students to the answers to questions more than he may have needed to, but usually gave them room to contribute important information. He appeared to be very interested in the content matter himself. He often said things indicating he had just learned something new about the depression and that he “thinks its cool.”

The teacher used frequent oral and written review as informal assessment for the unit. During one observation he gave students questions to answer about a book, A New Deal for Roger, that they have read together as a class. He asked the students to write their own answers to five questions that require students to relate the major problem in the story, describe a scene, and tell why the main character liked President Roosevelt. When the students finished writing, they go over the questions together as a class.

On several other occasions, students wrote for longer periods of time and these essays were placed in a history folder to serve as a more formal assessment. One day the teacher asked them to write everything they could think of about the dust bowl. During the first 10 minutes of the writing time, he continually encouraged them by saying things like, “The other day when we were doing a writing, a kid told me, ‘I can’t do this.’ Then he wrote three pages! One kid brought one page up and said, ‘I can’t do this anymore.’ But then he sat down and wrote another page. He probably got his grade moved up from a C to a B or even an A.” In addition to encouragement, he also provides stimuli to help students think about what to write about. For example, he said, “These are just some ideas of what you might write about. What caused it? Was it something they could have done something about or not? What was it like to live there? What was it like in your house? Outside? Did kids have to do more during the Dust Bowl? Why? What states did it happen in? Did farmers stay where they were or move? If they moved, why did they move? Where did they go? When they got there, was it what they expected? What was it like?”

During discussion the teacher offered informal feedback to the students on their responses by agreeing, adding more information to a partial response, and by providing other ideas when responses were not accurate or relevant. When the students were playing the Great Depression Game, he had students tell how they’ve chosen to spend their tokens. He said things like, “Seems pretty good to me – that’s probably what I would have done” and on another one, “They bought some treats because they had some food on their farm already. But I’m kind of worried because they didn’t spend any money on equipment to run their farm.”

The teacher created a few links with languages arts through reading and writing assignments although his practice of ignoring punctuation and spelling errors and emphasizing quantity may have undermined the writing process to some extent since he did not give them time to review and revise. His use of unemployment figure graphs provided a connection with mathematics. On several occasions he provided real world connections – for example, he related his own memories of hoboes from when he was young and reminded them about something they learned about labor unions when they studied the progressive era. The curriculum addressed the idea that the good times of the 1920’s was a result of the boom economy created by the end of

WWI and the teacher added to that by explaining to the class that the WWII production boom helped end the depression. The teacher emphasized the sequential cause and effect relationships between events.

There were few incidences of classroom management problems in this class. The students almost always listened intently when the teacher speaks. During group work when things get noisy the teacher seemed to have several sayings that the students were accustomed to hearing that quieted them down pretty quickly. For example during the game students often were talking in their small groups and he said, “If you’re done distributing your tokens, you’re muted.” And another time he said, “You know the best way to listen is to have that thing below your nose shut.” For the most part, students’ interest in the topic and activities seemed to act as the motivation for keeping the class running smoothly.

Students

Students in this class seemed to be very interested in history and motivated to learn. When students were asked to respond to questions from the teacher, often more than half of the class raised their hands. When they were doing written work, they were mostly bent over their desks writing and traded boasts about the length of their work as they turned it in. They were vigorously involved in the Great Depression game – debating the merits of making difficult budget decisions and agonizing over their fate when things got rough. They also were quite involved in their final presentations. Most students worked on skits and appear to enjoy the rehearsing in class and set building. One student created a graphic/comic book about the Depression. He said that he really liked drawing and was glad he got to do that instead of being in a skit or writing a report.

Students appeared to be able to participate and learn from this curriculum across ability levels and learning styles. The variety of activities and groupings allowed students to participate in different ways and to learn from their classmates as well as the teacher. Students were able to demonstrate their knowledge in various ways, writing, drawing, acting in a play, and responding verbally.

The varying formats of the class activities allowed for quite a bit of student interaction in different ways. Students responded to teacher questions, had a chance to ask their own questions, and worked in small group and partners. Students used problem solving skills through the Depression game and in discussions. During the game, they needed to think about what kinds of factors would affect their ability to provide food, clothing and shelter for themselves and their families. When discussing the letters to the first ladies, students were asked to think about why Mrs. Hoover and Mrs. Roosevelt, might or might not send the requested items to the letter writers. Most of the writing assignments seemed to be confined to recalling information they had learned rather than applying it in new ways. As part of one assignment and discussion, students were called upon to speculate whether anything could have been done to prevent the Dust Bowl – what if farmers had not over planted wheat, stripping the topsoil when cultivating the soil? However, during observed classes, these kinds of discussions were brief and perfunctory.

In groups, students appeared engaged and able to communicate. During the game, when the teacher had seemingly partnered students of varying abilities together, there was free collaboration between partners. Student presentations also seemed to foster good relationships between students and collaboration by students in the ways that they felt most able. One group was making a book about the Depression and one student was drawing the pictures, another was

writing, and a third was building a table of contents. Students also took leadership roles during work on the presentation. In one group, one student held the script they had written, and while also playing a role in the skit, the child reminded the others of their lines and where they were supposed to be on the “stage”.

Students displayed empathy toward the people of the depression era through their skits and discussion of the times. For example, students rehearsed a skit in which the children were telling their parents, “I’m hungry. I don’t have anything to do.”

The curriculum addressed the idea that the roaring 20’s arose out of a boom economy in the post-war time and the teacher explained to the students that WWII helped end the depression which helped the students to place the Great Depression in a historical context. Students appeared to think chronologically and to understand cause and effect relationships in history.

Primary Sources

The primary sources used by the fourth grade were two letters from school girls to Mrs. Hoover and Mrs. Roosevelt and the photographs of people in the Dust Bowl taken by Dorothea Lange. Parts of the video also used movie footage and audio clips from Depression era radio shows as primary sources.

2003-2004 Fifth Grade Classroom Observation Summary

This unit introduces students to the US World War II Home Front. Students learn about the economic impact of the war, how citizens participated at home, how citizens faced the threat of invasion, and about Japanese internment camps. Students developed analytical skills to make use of newspapers, posters, and photographs of the time as primary sources. Students presented the results of their studies through a final project demonstrating their learning.

During the 2003-04 school year, evaluators observed the fifth grade classroom eight times. Because the school is departmentalized, there was only one teacher teaching the BHH curriculum during the students' social studies hour. The teacher teaches five different classes and observations were done during most, if not all, of the five classes. Observations will be discussed in terms of four basic overlapping dimensions: the structure and nature of activities, teacher actions, student actions, and primary source use. This summary is limited to what was actually seen during the observation and does not include evidence from student work or conversations with teachers or student focus groups.

Activities

During observed classes, students in the fifth grade classes worked primarily in a whole class, large group setting but also had several opportunities to work in small groups and as individuals. Students worked in small groups on their final projects and on several photo and poster analyses tasks and worked alone on poster analysis. Groups were self-selected or convenience groupings. Activities were all part of the written BHH curriculum.

The most common activity during these observations consisted of the teacher standing at the front of the room leading discussion in a somewhat traditional lecture and limited discussion format. Students viewed several videos and the teacher paused the video on many occasions to emphasize a point and to reinforce student understanding. The students also learned how to identify major themes in a documentary and to organize their notes and thoughts about the movie. They also examined charts showing employment and migration patterns during WWII. Students learned to look critically at WWII posters to determine messages and photographs to see what inferences they can draw about the time and place that the photographs were taken.

During teacher led discussions, sometimes the teacher asked the students to respond to questions about a particular point just covered in a video or reading, but students also often were asked about "bigger questions" such as,

- What is meant by "widening horizons for women?"
- What is discrimination?
- Why would more women have to work during the '30s as opposed to during the '20s?
- What does "shortage of labor" mean?
- Why would there be a shortage of labor during the war?
- What does the author mean when she says that work was "liberating for women?"
- What does it mean that "women's employment undermined traditional marriage and family?"
- What is racism?
- What does segregation mean?
- In the article, racism in the U.S. is being compared to what event occurring in another part of the world?

Students worked as individuals only once during the observed classes. They worked alone on poster analysis and then got back together with the group to discuss their answers. Students also presented projects to the class either as individuals or as groups. Only one person presented during observations and he presented his own report based on an interview with his grandfather who was alive during WWII.

Teachers

Since all observations were of the same fifth grade teacher, some general statements can be made about his teaching style. This teacher primarily used a lecture and large group discussion format with his class. He maintained good control of his classroom without having to make much visible effort. Students appeared to listen and respect the teacher and participated freely in class discussions. Although the teacher's delivery was somewhat dry, he seemed interested in the content and expressed his interest and enthusiasm. During class discussion, he typically asked students engaging questions that required them to think and indicated that he expected quality answers in return.

The teacher seemed very comfortable with the content that he taught and with the historical processes he was teaching. He was familiar with the resources used – videos, photos, posters, and newspaper archives, as well as the photo and poster analysis work sheets. Although the lessons were content rich, when he worked with the students on the movie impressions work sheets, he also made it clear that the students were working on something that required them to learn about the process as well as the content.

He often modeled the behaviors he wanted the students to learn by walking the classes through photo and poster analyses and movie note taking. During the class on movie note taking, he explained that the notes you take must be short enough to be efficient, but comprehensive enough that you know what you meant later. For example, when recounting some of the important things they learned in the movie, one child suggested, "Lipstick factories turning into ammunition factories." The teacher said that was too long, so they could write, "Lipstick to ammo." He added, "If someone had not seen the video, they wouldn't know what that meant, but we know." The teacher then helped the students design a system for organizing their notes by categorizing things they learned. He also reminded them briefly how to create different kinds of graphic organizers so that students who had different learning styles might be able to choose one that worked for them. The teacher encouraged chronological thinking by asking students to place in order photographs of Japanese American people at various times in their internment camp experiences and through discussion of how different events in the war had an impact on the people at the home front as the war went on.

During discussions, many students raised their hands and the teacher appeared to call on everyone who had their hands raised, but did not ask people to participate who did not have their hands up. In one class period when the class was viewing a video, two students were seated near the back of the room with an associate between them. The students appeared to have difficulty paying attention and at one point the associate sent one of the students to the back of the room in a place where she could not see the movie. Later during that class, when the teacher asked the students to break into groups to begin work on their final projects, the two students did not work with other people and did not initiate group work together. During that observation, neither the associate nor the teacher made any attempts to facilitate their working on the project.

There was little evidence of the teacher assessing students' understanding or providing students with feedback on their performance. Occasionally he asked a review question, for

example, about whether something was a primary or secondary source, or he paused the videos to make sure students were picking up the major points, but these were the exception, not the rule. He indicated that their final projects would serve as their chance to show him what they had learned during the unit and would be graded.

The teacher used a lesson on urban migration during the WWII industrial boom as a bridge to using mathematics skills. Students hypothesized the reasons for different migrations and calculated the changes in population in different parts of the country. On another occasion, the teacher reminded students about what they had already learned about President Roosevelt however few links to other subject areas or students' prior knowledge were observed.

The teacher seemed to have few classroom management problems. Students were usually attentive and when there were momentary problems, the teacher was able to stop them by saying, "Lincoln!" in a stern voice or by stopping the lesson, but this only was required a couple times. For the most part, students appeared to be engaged by the lessons.

Students

Students displayed interest and enthusiasm for the lessons during most of the observations. When the teacher was talking, they were attentive and responsive to questions. They asked predominantly relevant questions both about the content and about the new skills they were learning in note taking and photo and document analyses.

There were several times where a few students seemed to be bored and did not seem to feel part of the discussion. As described above, in one class a student was removed from the class in a way that made it impossible for her to learn and two students who appeared to be higher need, did not seem to be included in the lesson. During another observation, some students' attention seemed to wander during particular kinds of tasks, for example, listening to the teacher read aloud.

Although students were usually active participants in whole group discussion, because the lesson format was most often lecture and discussion, the opportunities to interact with other students were limited. On several occasions, students worked in small groups on photo or document analyses and the groups appeared to be productive collaborative experiences. Students were enthusiastic about taking part in group projects, in particular, preparing for the final projects. Observations occurred on only one day of the final project work, so it is difficult to gauge the success or nature of these collaborations from the observations.

Opportunities for writing were also limited. The only writing that was observed was for an assignment where students were asked to place photographs of the Japanese American internees in order and then write a narrative about what was happening in the picture series. The narratives were perfunctory and were more descriptive than inferential.

Student empathy for what it must have been like for the people at the US WWII home front was developed several ways – through class discussions of the sacrifices people made and how hard people worked to support the war effort and also more directly through encouraging students to interview grandparents or others who were alive during WWII. However, one evaluator observed students' referring to the Japanese Americans as "Japs" while working on an assignment. Although the newspaper accounts that the students read about the internment camps referred to the Japanese Americans in that way, the teacher probably could discourage students from using the term "Japs" unless they were trying to make a point and clearly indicated that they understood it was a derogatory term.

Problem solving opportunities were available to students through photo and document analyses and through designing and executing their final projects.

Primary sources

Primary sources were used extensively throughout this unit. The sources used were: segments of WWII newsreels, cartoons, maps, posters, photographs, and extensive use of newspaper archives. Students also included primary sources in some of the final projects by interviewing people who were alive during WWII.

2003-2004 Sixth Grade Classroom Observation Summary

This unit focuses primarily on high-profile women in U.S. history. Until recent decades, women were underrepresented in history studies. One of our primary goals for this unit is to create student awareness of this neglect. As they learn about various women of the past, students may gain understanding of women's integral contributions to the country's development, and the power that women have exercised through social action, politics, creative expression or by simply insisting on women's equality of opportunity to develop and fulfill their talents. Students will explore histories of U.S. women through research projects, both individual and collective. The collective project will focus on the U.S. women's suffrage movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Individually, students will create a biography. In constructing a biography, students will learn to identify and research a topic, write a thesis statement, create an outline, design and create a project that reflects their research, and cite the sources they consulted. By offering students control over the format by which they express their knowledge, the project encourages students to take ownership of their topics and engages various learning styles.

The sixth grade observations are based on visits to fifteen separate class periods, occurring in a single classroom over the course of three weeks, from March 9-April 2, 2004. These observations may be analyzed along three somewhat overlapping dimensions: teacher performance, student reaction, and the structure and nature of classroom activities. The teacher appeared to be moderately interested and engaged in the unit, although not overly enthusiastic. In order to assess student understanding and prior knowledge, the teacher administered a pre-test covering several prominent women in American History; in addition, the teacher also posed questions over the content to students during class. The final project of the unit consisted of a research project to be completed individually or in pairs. Periodically during the unit, the teacher visited with students to learn about their progress in the research project, answering questions and making suggestions. The only observed connection drawn between the Women's History unit and previously encountered material was during the first day of the unit, when the teacher brought up the notion of Nazi propaganda to make a point about potential bias in sources.

Classroom management issues seemed to pose a significant barrier to the implementation of this unit. The severity of disruptive behavior varied across different time periods, but in all sixth grade classes, disruptions were more frequent than in any of the other grades observed. Class periods were characterized by almost constant off-task talking among students, inattention to the teacher, moving around the classroom, rifling through binders, and, in the worst cases, even throwing objects across the room at one another. For the most part, the teacher appeared to ignore this behavior, rarely acknowledging disruptions or only issuing ineffective admonitions to quiet down. There is evidence that this behavior interfered with other students' ability to profit from the unit; a few times while watching a movie in class, disruptions in the back were shushed by students in the front of the room, who complained that they could not hear the movie.

Student reactions to the unit varied slightly. For the most part, student interest in and engagement with the unit appeared to be moderate to somewhat low. This minimal interest was evidenced in the extent of disruptive behavior among students in most class periods. When they weren't being actively disruptive, some students rested their heads on their desks or expressed through other body language that they were not interacting with the material. On the other hand, during the library research segment of the unit, students appeared to be mostly on task and enjoying what they were doing. A small percentage of students in each class appeared to be

consistently attentive and interested in the content. These students were most likely to volunteer responses to the teacher's questions or volunteer to read aloud during guided reading. Evidence of student understanding was difficult to find. For the most part, the teacher was able to elicit satisfactory answers to her in-class questions. In addition, a few students ventured questions of their own: How are students expected to learn about women if historians don't document their lives? Were women allowed to be soldiers during the American Revolution? Where is the original Declaration of Sentiments stored? However, during one of the media center research days, one of the students was overheard to tell his partner, "The Internet is never wrong," indicating a very naïve grasp of scholarly research. Moreover, it is difficult to estimate how much content students actually absorbed from one another's final research presentations, given how quickly and quietly student presenters spoke.

Most of the observations documented either activities conducted as a whole class or group research activities. The success of collaborative activities varied across different activities—in-class activities featuring group work were likely to lead to disruptive and off-task behavior. However, the small group research activities taking place in the media center appeared to be relatively productive for most students. Observations documented faithful implementation of Activity 3: Women's History, Activity 4: Reading for Background Knowledge, Activity 8: Mapping and Activity 11: Final Projects. Other segments were implemented to varying degrees. For example, *Ballot Box Battle* was read in class, but without the accompanying discussion of different historical perspectives. Activity 3 was turned into a game, in which student teams were given quotations from either the Declaration of Independence or the Declaration of Sentiments, and then asked to guess which document they came from. A few classes turned their final research papers into magazine articles that the teacher planned to combine and laminate. Media center research was stretched out to encompass several days. In addition, students were given in-class time to type their magazine articles (although this time was actually used to surf the Internet by almost all students). Additions to the unit included the movie "The American Women: Portraits of Courage," as well as the books *Women of Grit* and *They Led the Way*.

Generally, students seemed capable of completing the activities in the unit, although a few of the disruptive and disaffected students received special assistance from the teacher in order to complete certain activities. Notably, students seemed adept at navigating the Internet during their media center research sessions. The most frequently used search engines included Ask Jeeves, Google, and Dogpile. Students also utilized Electric Library, an electronic database licensed by the media center. For the most part, student Internet searches were unmediated by either the librarian or the teacher. It was unclear whether students had complete freedom to roam online (i.e., whether media center machines were filtered) or were restricted to certain informational sites. Most search strings were relatively simple, using few limiters, and the primary criterion for selecting resources was their perceived relevance, rather than their credibility, accuracy, or timeliness. Students downloaded whatever they found on the Internet, failing to make distinctions between sources that were useful and those that were not. In short, students seemed to feel confident in their own savvy, but through comments such as the one described above ("The Internet is never wrong"), the simplicity of their search strings, and their uncritical acceptance of all Internet sources equally, it appears their grasp of Internet research may be more tenuous.

Spring 2004 Third Grade Student Focus Groups Summary

In early March 2004, six separate focus groups were conducted with third grade students at the Stewart Elementary school in Washington, IA. Each group was composed of four to five students of varying ability levels. Focus groups were conducted in empty classrooms and observations were taped.

In general, students were enthusiastic about participating in the focus groups. An attempt was made by the evaluator to have students take turns speaking and responding to questions, although students frequently interrupted one another and spoke out of turn. Most students were extremely loquacious about their classroom experiences, both positive and negative. Generally, students said they enjoyed the curriculum, especially the books they read, the movies they watched, and some of the activities. All six focus groups were able to provide examples of things they had learned about segregation; a few students brought up other parts of the curriculum, such as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Frequently, questions intended to elicit student responses on the topic of segregation stimulated observations about slavery instead. Indeed, several students appeared to have a somewhat fuzzy conception of how slavery and segregation are related and the ways in which they are different. Almost all student participants expressed an interest in learning more history; many still had questions about segregation and slavery, and a few students generated other historical topics and time periods in which they were interested.

If there was some way that you could choose between living now, living any time in the future or living any time in the past, when would you want to live?

Most students responding to this question did not identify a specific time period in which they wanted to live, only whether they preferred the past, present or future. Many students said they wanted to live in the future, because they were interested in the technological innovations of the future, such as “hover cars” and “motorized skateboards.” Several students said they wanted to live in the present, because they were happy with their lives and thought that to live in the past meant one had to work very hard, and people living in the past did not have as many luxuries (for example, televisions) as we have today. One student responded that she wanted to live in the present, because in the past there was slavery, and there wasn’t slavery anymore. Another said he wanted to live in the present because “a lot of bad things happened in the past.” A few students expressed an interest in living in the past during slavery times, according to one student, “so I could try stopping it... I’d try getting elected for president and stop slavery and if people disobey, get them arrested.” One group of students identified specific historical time periods they wanted to live in; these included the 1960s (“because there was a lot of football games on the Cowboys”), the 1970s (“because hippies, I like how they dress”), and pioneer times (“because I really like how they lived. I really like horses and farms, and they didn’t have cars, all they rode was horses and I’d like to do that and dress the way they dressed”).

In your own words, what do you think history is?

Most students responded by saying that history means things that happened in the past or “in the old days.” A few qualified this by adding that history relates to important names and dates. One student responded that history means things that happened in the past compared to

things that happen today. Students in several groups emphasized that events that happened a few minutes or seconds ago could be considered history, just as events from hundreds or thousands of years ago are considered history. One student responded that to her, history meant learning about what life was like when her parents lived. Another student said, “When you talk about history, it is like the past and what has happened over the years. Like we talked about slavery which happened a long time ago, so segregation and that stuff.” A few students remarked that learning about history was important because we could learn about the mistakes that people made, like slavery, and try not to make them again. One student observed, “Because it was really important like when Abraham Lincoln stopped slavery. We need to remember that because slavery could still be going on right now and that’s history.” One student took a broader view of history, defining it this way: “I think history is the time of slavery and before we were born. When Adam and Eve were alive, a long time ago, and dinosaurs were history, a long, long time ago, and slavery and segregation and industrialization and child abuse, like child labor, and that’s history and men and women don’t get the same rights because men get paid more than the woman.” Another student in the same group said, “It’s when something happens like when Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first plane. That was so important because the only way to get across oceans was by boat and history – it is so important that you should remember it.”

Tell me some of the things that you learned about history in your classroom in the last few weeks?

There was a lot of variation in the responses to this question. The majority of students in each group mentioned slavery and segregation. A few students talked about the previous unit on Industrialization. One student brought up the Bill of Rights, saying, “It’s about law type things, the first signature was wrote by hand and it’s in a museum but they have it typed.” Most of the responses about slavery related to the cruelty of slave owners and the harsh consequences for people who tried to escape slavery. Many students mentioned Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. One student said they had been made aware of gender inequalities. Others mentioned specific Amendments to the Constitution, including the Amendment prohibiting slavery and the one that granted women the right to vote. A few of the students appeared not to fully understand the sequence of events and causal relationships between the end of slavery and the beginning of segregation. For example, when asked what he remembered about segregation, one student said, “About how Harriet Tubman freed all the slaves and how it ended and stuff.” When pressed to explain why segregation started, the student responded, “Because a whole bunch of slaves started to run away, so then the people from the south said not to let them get them away so they started segregation.” Most of the students, when asked to explain the concept of prejudice, responded that prejudice was not being seen for what you are, or being judged unfairly on the basis of some trivial characteristic, such as skin or eye color. One student, when asked to recall something she had learned about segregation, responded, “Rosa Parks – she sat at the front of the bus and she is black and she is supposed to sit at the back of the bus.” When asked to explain or provide a definition of the Jim Crow laws, many students from each group gave examples, including the following:

- “The Jim Crow laws said black people have to stand in the back of the bus and Martin Luther King Jr. was standing up against the Jim Crow laws and the white people.”
- “I learned that Rosa Parks wouldn’t give up her seat for a white person and so she

- got arrested, and the 15th commandment was that there would be no more slavery.”
- “Jim Crow laws – like black people had kind of a bad fountain and white people had a better one than the blacks.”
 - “Dr. Martin Luther King, he told all the black people to stop riding the buses and they had to walk to work instead and he marched with black people singing a song and he got shot by a white person.”
 - “That blacks weren’t allowed to go in white stores. That was after Lincoln died, because he stopped slavery, but he couldn’t stop segregation because someone killed him.”
 - “I learned that segregation, like black people didn’t get treated like white people, white people got treated better, but there was white only restaurants and black only restaurants and the white ones were nicer.”
 - “There were bathrooms that they couldn’t go in, and stores and stuff.”
 - “Black men that wanted to vote had to take a really hard test, and most African-Americans couldn’t read.”
 - “They [African-Americans] got paid less.”
 - “African-Americans weren’t allowed to vote. When some passed [the test], and they could have voted, white police officers would burn down their houses and churches, and no one could do anything about it because only white people could be police officers.”

Additional comments about de-segregation:

- “The first black girl to go to a white person school was Ruby Bridges.”
- “When we learned about Rudy Bridges, the first time when she went to school thousands of people were there at her school and they said bad things to her and they took their kids out of the school because she went there so she was the only one in the whole school.”

One group, in particular, seemed to equate slavery with segregation. Given several opportunities by the interviewer to make distinctions between slavery and segregation, these students declined to illustrate the differences. The following exchange between interviewer and student provides an example:

Interviewer: Did you learn about any people who lived during segregation times? You talked about Harriet Tubman in slavery times – how about segregation times?

Student: I think it’s interesting because, I’d have to say, it’s mostly the thing that interested me but I didn’t think was right, but women didn’t have the same rights.

Interviewer: Was that in segregation?

Student: Yes, in slavery probably that the masters would be that hard on them if they ran away because masters were hard on them all the time.

However, this same group later recalled school desegregation in Alabama, and was able to identify examples of Jim Crow laws, such as separate restaurants, restrooms and bus seats, and the fact that African-American men who wished to vote were made to take a test. When

prompted further, and asked how African-Americans responded to segregation and the Jim Crow laws, several students in one group, without actually naming the Civil Rights movement, were able to identify non-violent forms of protest, such as marching, carrying picket signs, and conducting sit-ins at luncheons. Moreover, at least one student appeared to appreciate the possible consequences of protesting during the Civil Rights movement, remarking, “Some really bad things happened when African-Americans protested, because police officers would shoot them and stuff like that.” When asked a question about what happened to change segregation, students responded that they thought Martin Luther King, Jr. and a lot of other people had something to do with it, but that they felt unsure about it. However, another group of students, when asked to explain why segregation ended, did not seem to make the connection between the Civil Rights movement and the end of segregation. One student responded that segregation ended “when George Washington was elected president and he came up with a constitution.”

Let’s talk about some of the ways that you learned about history. Do you remember some of the things that you did in class to learn about history?

Students mentioned playing a jeopardy game, reading books, watching movies, doing a KWL activity and constructing a timeline. One student described a group research report on Biddy Mason. One group of students explained that they did independent research projects on famous African-Americans, like Jesse Owens and Colin Powell. Books mentioned by name include titles from the Addy series, *Aunt Harriet and the Underground Railroad*, *Going Somewhere Special*, *Through My Eyes*, *White Socks Only*, *Martin’s Big Words*, *Betsy Coleman*, and *The Other Side*. Students relayed in detail the plots of their favorite stories. Movies mentioned included one about Harriet Tubman (which some students thought was scary) and one called “Brother Future.” Two different groups mentioned that their class had done an activity called “Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes.” Students became extremely animated when discussing this activity.

- “I didn’t think it was fair that [name] had to work by herself because everybody else in the group was blue eyed and I didn’t think it was fair that [name] had to work by herself.”
- “I was the only blue eyed person in my group so I had to do stations by myself and it was hard.”
- “Because the blue eyes would be treated better, because the teacher would call on them, or say, I knew I could depend on the white person, I mean, blue-eyed person, and the blue eyed would make fun of the brown eyed.”
- “We read the Addy books, and that kind of made us feel that we were in segregation, and our teacher actually segregated us by our eye color, and it wasn’t really fun.”
- “If we had to do it like that for the rest of the year... I would get out of school and never come back, because I do not feel like being treated like that.”

Did you do any writing when you learned about history, either by yourself or in groups?

Several students mentioned that they were asked to write a letter to President Johnson, asking him why African-American men were required to take a test before they could vote. Some students remembered that they had written letters to President Johnson, but could not recall the purpose of the letter. One group of students said their class had divided into groups and written reports about the lives of famous African-American people who had contributed to

the advancement of their race. One student related that he was writing a book about slavery and segregation for Writer's Workshop, including chapters on the Civil War, how slaves were treated, how slaves were brought to America, and the Constitutional Amendments.

What things did you like best about studying history?

Several students mentioned watching movies and reading books. A few students said their favorite activity was writing a letter to President Johnson. Three students described a KWL activity on prejudice and segregation, in which students were told to write things they knew and needed to learn about some photographs. One student responded that the best part was doing research on the Internet. Most students commented on how they enjoyed the unit more generally, explaining why they enjoyed learning about slavery/segregation.

- "I like to learn about it because, you know how slaves were treated, it's kind of sad. And you sometimes imagine if that was you, and you feel really sad, so you learn."
- "About happy moments and about how it wasn't fair and how it is fair today."

What things didn't you like about studying history?

Many students mentioned that they did not enjoy hearing about how slaves were mistreated. One group mentioned doing a lot of paperwork and writing. One student said they didn't "get" a lot of the segregation books read by the teacher. Two groups brought up the Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes activity, saying it was their least favorite segment of the unit. When asked why they thought their teacher had done the Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes activity, one student reflected, "So you could figure out what the people back then felt." When the interviewer asked students how they felt to be a part of the privileged group, one student remarked, "I couldn't play with my friends at all. Most of the time though [the teacher] said we couldn't talk to each other, but at recess when blue eyes could play on the equipment but the brown eyes couldn't, we would sit and watch them play basketball and cheer for them and then that's what the blue eyes did to the brown eyes when they could play."

Are there things you would like to learn more about that you feel you didn't learn enough about in your class, that you still have questions about or maybe you are just curious to learn more about?

A few students mentioned that they were interested in what schools were like in the past and what kinds of jobs people had. Another student said she wished their teacher had told them more about what kinds of questions were on the test given to African-American men if they wanted to vote. A few students mentioned that he wanted to know more about why the Southern states seceded and the Civil War. Several students said they would like to learn more about Harriet Tubman and what happened to her after slavery was ended. A few students said they wanted to learn more about slavery, segregation, and prejudice in general. One student mentioned learning more about the Bill of Rights. Another student said he wanted to learn about other important African-American leaders, similar to Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King, Jr. One group agreed that they all wanted to learn more about laws that existed in the past, and how they are different from the laws of today. Students from two different groups wanted to

know why slavery ever existed. One group came up with other historical dates and geographic regions they wanted to learn about, such as ancient Egypt and China, and about medieval times.

What can people do if they disagree with a law?

Answers on this question varied considerably, but generally, students suggested going to the lawmakers and asking them to change the law, voting the law down, going to the president and asking him to change the law, getting a lot of people to sign papers against the law (referendum), making speeches against the law, and going on strike. Another student suggested going to court to try and convince people that the law should be changed.

Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Student Focus Groups Summary

In May of 2004, two evaluators conducted four focus groups during two separate fifth grade class periods at Lincoln School, Washington Community School District. Because Lincoln School has only one social studies teacher at each grade level, all focus groups had received classroom instruction on the BHH units from the same teacher. The evaluators provided the teacher with a list of the students who had completed informed consent forms from each class and asked the teacher to select groups of heterogeneous ability levels for each group. Focus groups all consisted of five students with both boys and girls in each group. Focus groups were conducted in a classroom across the hall from the students' room while that class was out of the room. It was somewhat distracting because two focus groups were held simultaneously in the classroom, although in both cases, the distraction seemed to lessen almost immediately. The groups were held about one to two weeks after the students had completed work on the *WWII—The Home Front Unit* and more than six months after the students had completed the *Native American Unit*.

The first part of the focus groups consisted of a performance task similar to one that students had done during the *WWII—The Home Front Unit*. Students were shown color copies of posters used during WWII. The posters were similar to the ones they had used for poster analysis in class, but were posters that they had not seen or at least had not worked with as a class. Evaluators asked students some of the questions from the NARA poster analysis worksheets, including:

- When do you think this poster was made?
- What is the message of this poster?
- What is the purpose of the poster?
- What symbols (if any) are used in the poster?
- Are the messages in the poster more visual or verbal?
- Who do you think is the intended audience for the picture?
- What does the poster hope that the audience will do?
- Is this an effective poster?

Students' answers to the questions tended to show that the students had retained quite a bit of knowledge about WWII – The Home Front, understood the questions asked, and were able to make sense of the graphics and written text to interpret the posters. Students used the content knowledge they had learned as part of unit to talk about the posters, but some students did not seem to limit their interpretation of the poster to elements actually in the poster.



Figure 1. WWII poster

For the poster in Figure 1, most students were able to say (perhaps not in so many words) that the poster's message was to motivate people to work hard to manufacture items that could be used to support the soldiers in the war. However, many students thought that the poster also included messages concerning buying war bonds, recruiting more soldiers, women at work, and praying – topics that spoke more to their knowledge of the topic in general than to actual analysis of the features actually present in the poster. Some student responses were:

- “Support the soldiers and pray”
- “Now you have to do things on your own because the men in war are mostly men and so that means that women have

to step up too.”

- “Make more weapons”
- “War bonds”
- “Give more stuff to the army like metal and plastic and they will make it into stuff.”

When students were queried about the messages that did not seem to be actually present in their poster, most dropped the ideas in favor of discussion of something that was supported by evidence in the poster.

Students had few doubts that the posters were from WWII. Only one student suggested that a poster could have been from a time other than before, during, or after WWII. The student said that he thought that the soldier’s helmet did not look like pictures of WWII soldiers that he had seen and speculated that it might be from WWI.

The second poster that the students looked at had several messages that were identified by students. The poster in Figure 2, depicts a woman dressed in work clothes working at a factory. Students said that:

- Women at the time did not typically work, particularly not with machinery
- Women did not dress in work clothes
- The war effort needed women to work to fill the jobs that the soldiers left behind and meet the demand
- Women were able to do the jobs as well as the men

Several students thought the woman depicted was “Rosie the Riveter” and were able to explain that “Rosie” was an imaginary woman who worked hard to help out the war effort and represented the strength that women showed in rising to the occasion to aide in the war effort.



Figure 2. WWII Poster 2

Students were also asked to indicate whether they felt that the posters had more visual or verbal impact and whether they thought the posters were effective. In the classroom, the students had experienced only black and white posters, so they appeared to be swayed by the color of the posters used saying that the more colorful ones were more effective than the less colorful ones, for example saying that the poster in Figure 2 was more effective than the one in Figure 1 because it was “brighter.”

In several cases, the poster analyses indicated the depth of the students’ knowledge regarding some of the aspects of the WWII home front. For example, when viewing the poster of the woman overloaded with canned produce shown in Figure 3, the students expressed that the woman was “patriotic” because she was trying to not use up her ration points, understood that by canning she would



Figure 3. WWII
Poster 3

be able to save her ration points, and that perhaps she had a victory garden in which to grow the fruits and vegetables. They also said that of course some people would not have been able to do this, if they didn't have a garden or a way to get vegetables to can.

Students were also asked to identify symbols used in the posters. In most cases students labeled everything visual in the poster as being a symbol, but were able to justify most of their answers by saying, for example, that the woman in Figure 2 was perhaps Rosie the Riveter and that it meant “women could do men’s work.”

When asked who they thought the posters’ intended audience was, students were able to name a group and defend their ideas. For the posters in Figures 2 and 3, they said that the posters were both aimed at women, either to encourage them to work in the factories or to encourage them to support the war effort through canning.

The students were shown a fourth poster (Figure 4) that was less similar to the ones they had worked with in class. The poster alludes to saving gas by not traveling on vacation, but most students did not always make the connection between saving gas and not traveling, but instead hypothesized that the man may have been a returned soldier after the war who just wanted to stay at home and relax. However, at least one student in two of the three focus groups who viewed the poster said that the man was saving gas or using fewer ration points by not traveling.



Figure 4 WWII Poster 4

Students pointed out that the photo of the soldier in this poster was a symbol for supporting the war effort and that the lemonade and the dog at the man’s feet were symbols for home and family.

In general, students seemed to be very comfortable both with their knowledge of the issues that the posters addressed concerning the WWII home front and with analyzing posters. Although they frequently went beyond the content that the poster addressed, the things they content about was accurate and seemed to fit into the big picture of what it must have been like to be in the US during the war.

During the second part of the focus groups, the evaluators asked the students to think about some of the content that they had learned about during the BHH Native American unit. Since a lot of time had elapsed since they had completed the unit, the evaluators started off by asking them if they could remember any of the policies that the US government had regarding the Native Americans. The students indicated, by groans and rubbing their heads, that it was difficult for them to remember very much about the Native American unit. In three of the four groups, the first thing mentioned by students was a government policy against selling guns and gunpowder to Native Americans. One student said that the Native Americans had to grow other crops along with their tobacco crops, and a couple of others also said there were policies forbidding gambling and drunkenness. They were not sure when these policies were in place, although most of the students said it was near the time that the white men first came to the Americas. One student responded that certain groups of Native Americans were taken away from their homes and moved to camps in special government areas. When the evaluator asked, “Why did they move them?” a student responded, “Because the Americans got greedy over the land and they wanted more.”

Although most students seemed to have trouble spontaneously remembering information they had learned about during the Native American unit, they were often able to recognize and expand upon information when prompted. In general, they understood that the European settlers had taken over the land and chased the Native Americans out of the land and that the policies that the US had adopted had been harmful to the Native Americans. Some of the things that they remembered after being prompted by saying things like, “What do you remember about reservations?” or “What was the removal policy?” were:

- The Trail of Tears – many people died, had to keep moving west
- Reservations – Students said, “They were guarded by the whites so that they couldn’t get out” and reservations were places where they “went when they were kicked off their land.” A couple of students said that reservations were in the west, specifically mentioning Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, and New Mexico, but several other students said they did not know where reservations were located or whether or not the reservation land was adequate or good farming or grazing land.

Students remembered very little about the Dawes Act or the assimilation policy. A few students put together a few ideas about the Native Americans being given land as individuals, but did not remember that the land often was not good farming land. They remembered more about boarding schools and that the children were taken from their families to live at boarding schools and were often taught information about white culture. During this discussion, several students said that the Native Americans were taught to be “civilized.” Another student said that the Native American children were sent to boarding schools, “So that they could be more proper and not do all this stuff, like being called savages, so they wanted them to be more everyday people like us.” Several students indicated that this was a problem for the Native Americans because they learned things that weren’t important when the children went back to live with their families who had not learned the same ways and that Native American children were separated from their families for a long time. One student remarked that sending the Native American children off to boarding school probably had a negative impact on them, “because of the heritage and all the traditions that the tribe had done would be forgotten and gotten rid of.” Another student said that the Native Americans were sent to the boarding schools to learn how to “live like a real person.” When the evaluator asked them, “Like a *what* person?” the student said, “Like a white person...that’s what they had to learn about. They had to learn to be civilized.”

While it appeared that the students were often echoing accurately what they had heard in terms of what the intent of the boarding schools was, in most cases, it was difficult for the evaluator to tell whether or not the students understood the problems inherent with calling the Native Americans “uncivilized.” This continued when the students were asked what they knew about contemporary Native American life. Very little of the information that the students provided about Native Americans today was accurate and they revealed some strong misconceptions. One student said, “They are civilized now” and another went on to add, “Some of them talk English and they don’t talk their own language, and they still have a little land and they live in houses and stuff like that.” In another group, one student said that now Native Americans are “treated just like us except they are more sheltered because they can’t go beyond the fence where their homes are...plus they have to make a fire to cook their food.”

In general, students appeared less confident of their knowledge concerning Native Americans, and in each focus group, participation was limited to only a couple of the students who were contributing anything at all, while the others shook their heads or said they didn’t remember anything. In contrast, nearly all students eagerly answered the WWII questions.

Evaluators asked the students what they liked about learning history. The most common response was that they liked doing the group projects. When they responded, they often went into great detail about the presentation that they worked on or one that someone else in their class had presented. Several students mentioned enjoying doing or watching interviews with their grandparents about WWII. Other things that students mentioned liking about learning history were: using I-books, timelines, reading a story about “what happened to the Indians,” doing the mind map on Native Americans, playing games on the computer and other quiz games, going on the field trip to Herbert Hoover museum, learning about things that “happened to your ancestors,” learning about “war stuff,” and learning about people and places that they didn’t know about. One student mentioned doing plays, skits and writing poems during the Native American unit.

Students were also asked if there were things that they didn’t like about learning history. A couple students said they liked learning about Native Americans but not WWII, and an approximately equal number said the opposite. A couple students said they did not like the poster analyses, but said they didn’t mind the ones used in the evaluation because it didn’t go on for as long. One student said they didn’t like the pretest about the WWII unit and one said she didn’t like doing the writing about what it would be like to be a Native American. Another student said they didn’t like “having to read all that.” Another complained that the project was too much work. One student said that history was boring and another that they didn’t like it because it was about the past and it had already happened and “no one cares about it anymore.”

In all the focus groups, time ran out before the evaluators had completed all the questions, but in three of the four groups, students talked briefly about Japanese Internment camps. Students were told a new piece of information that they had not learned in class that in 1992 the US government gave each Japanese American internee \$20,000. Students seemed very interested in learning that and for the most part they felt that the money was a good idea. One student explained, “...Japan bombed them and so they were really mad at Japan and so there were all the Japanese people that just came to America and they thought that there might be a father or wife or children that would contact Japan and tell them all of our secrets that we were going to do, so they took them into relocation camps and they were guarded by white people in tall towers and if they tried anything, they would shoot them.” One student seemed less sure that giving money to the Japanese Americans was fair, wondering why they should get the money, but one student said it was important so that people would remember that they shouldn’t do anything like that again. In all the groups, the students were clearly familiar with the details of the Japanese internment and it appeared that they could have discussed it in more detail if there had been more time.

In general, the students seemed excited to talk about the history units with the evaluator and had great confidence in most of their knowledge. Students seemed to have developed more of a sense of empathy for the people they studied in WWII—the home front unit—than with the Native Americans, although the timing of the interview definitely contributed to their lack of knowledge about the Native American unit and may have been a factor in some students’ apparent lack of empathy with the Native Americans. The nature of the task used to talk about most of the WWII unit (the familiar performance task of poster analysis) may have also contributed to the ability of students to generate more comprehensive responses.

Student Work Products

During the second and third years of the grant, the evaluation gathered ideas from teachers about potential student learning outcomes and began to collect student work products as evidence of the types of things that students learned about history. These took various shapes and forms depending on the age of the students and the nature of the units. The evaluation staff took photographs of many of these products and the students' experiences that helped shape these products. A sample of the photographs is included below. Student work products were also described in the Year Two Annual Report.

Kindergarten

One of the kindergarten units focuses on the child's own history. Students bring in artifacts from their first five years and create a museum display, draw representations of their homes, and find their birthplaces (with teacher help) on a map. Sample photographs of these three things are shown in Figure 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 1. Kindergarten student with their history artifacts



Figure 2. Kindergartners drawing of their home for history unit



Figure 3. Kindergarten student finding his birthplace on a map.



First Grade

For the My First Grade History unit, students create baggie books of their school year including timelines of their school day and maps of their schools. During the community history unit, students illustrate comparisons of their town “long, long ago”, “long ago” and now and create timelines to show how their town has changed. Some examples of these things are seen in Figures 4- 8.

Figure 4. Section from First Grade Timeline

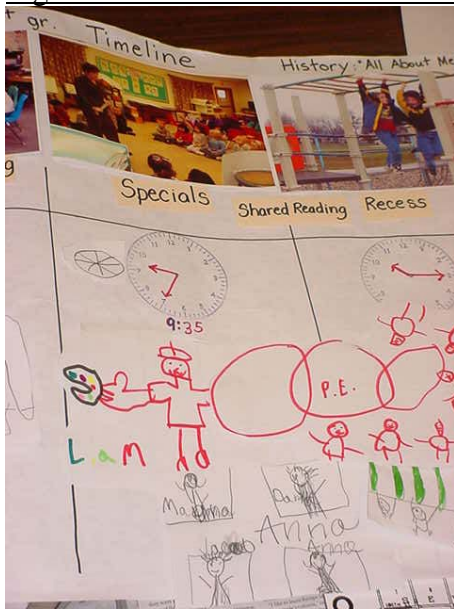


Figure 5. First Graders working on their maps during a tour of the school



Figure 6. Long ago and today community models built by first graders



Figure 7. Sections of First grade timelines from Long, long ago and Now!



Figure 8 Sample elements from long, long ago and now timelines



Second Grade

During the environmental unit, second grade students use KWL charts and draw pictures about how logging, mining, and farming have changed over time, create environmental superheroes and write narratives about the superhero, and draw maps and keys for the different types of ecosystems in the US. As part of the immigration unit, students do research on a country, take part in an Ellis Island simulation, make themselves passports, and in some classes write narratives about immigration. Images appear in Figures 9-14.

Figure 9. Second grade timeline sections on changes in logging practices

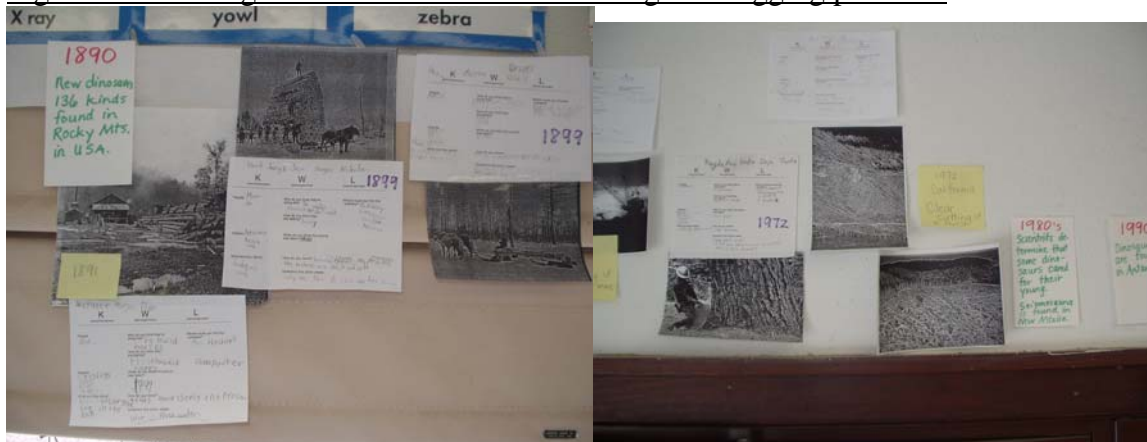


Figure 10 Second grade drawings of farming practices



Figure 11. Key for class map of the types of terrain in the US



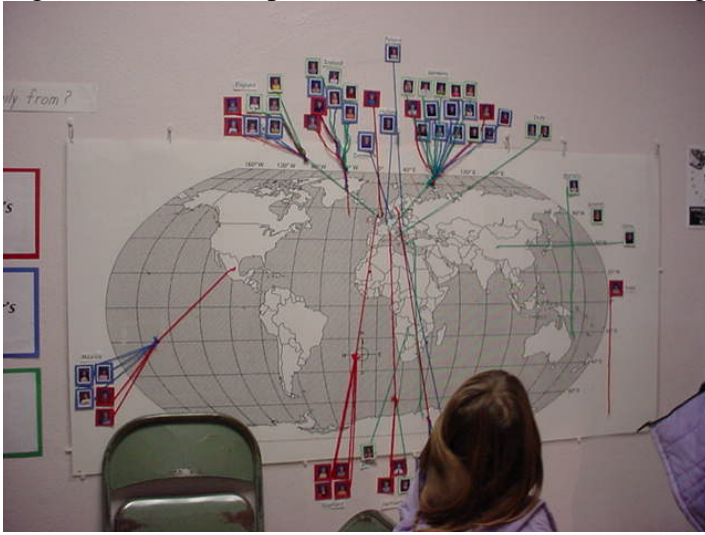
Figure 12 Second graders during the immigration unit Ellis Island simulation



Figure 13 Second graders display their stamped passports after the simulation



Figure 14. Class map of the students' countries of origin for simulation



Third grade

Some examples of third grade student work products include industrialization products made during a simulation of craftsman and assembly line processes, timelines of industrialization, and pictographs depicting different types of business ownership. During the segregation unit, third graders wrote about their photo analyses, researched and made posters about African American activists, and created a mind map about the things they had learned about segregation. Figures 15-22 show some examples of these products and activities.

Figure 15 Third Grade “Craftsmen” made note pads



Figure 16 Third graders with note pads they made in an assembly line



Figure 17. Students creating timelines of inventions



Figure 18. A student's pictograph describing a single owner business

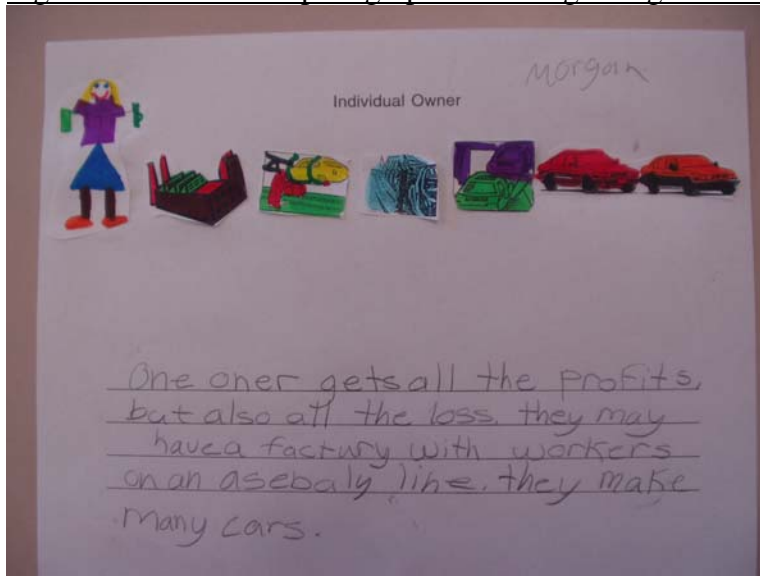


Figure 19. A group photo analysis using a KWL chart for the segregation unit

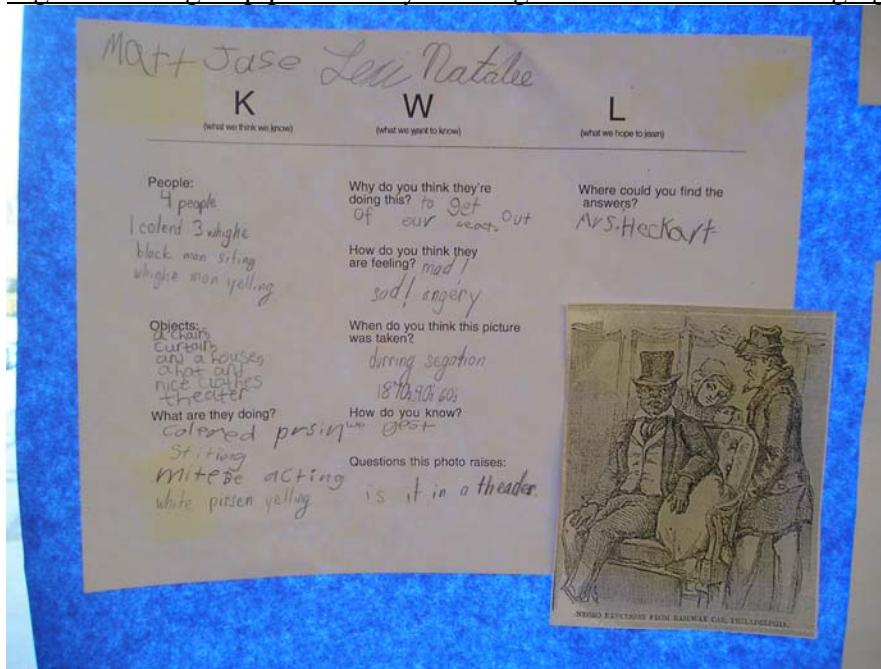


Figure 20. A student's poster about Rosa Parks

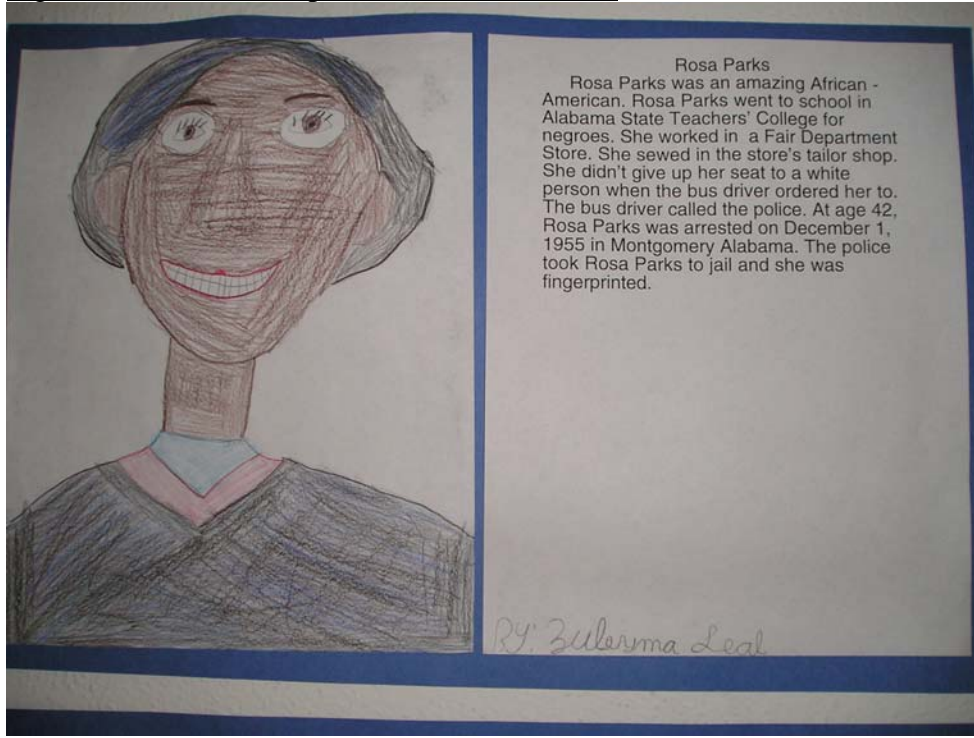


Figure 21. A student's poster about Maya Angelou

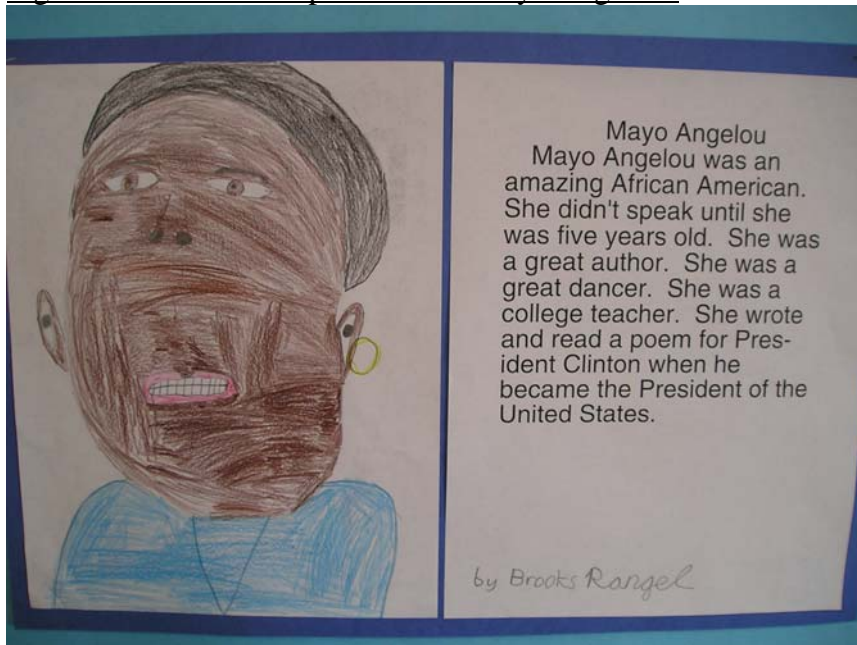


Figure 22. Six cards from a third grade mind map about segregation



Fourth Grade

Fourth graders did many writing assignments about the Great Depression. Their dust bowl essays are described in detail in the section on the evaluation of student outcomes. Some examples of another student product for the Progressive Era unit are the tenement posters shown in Figures 23-24.

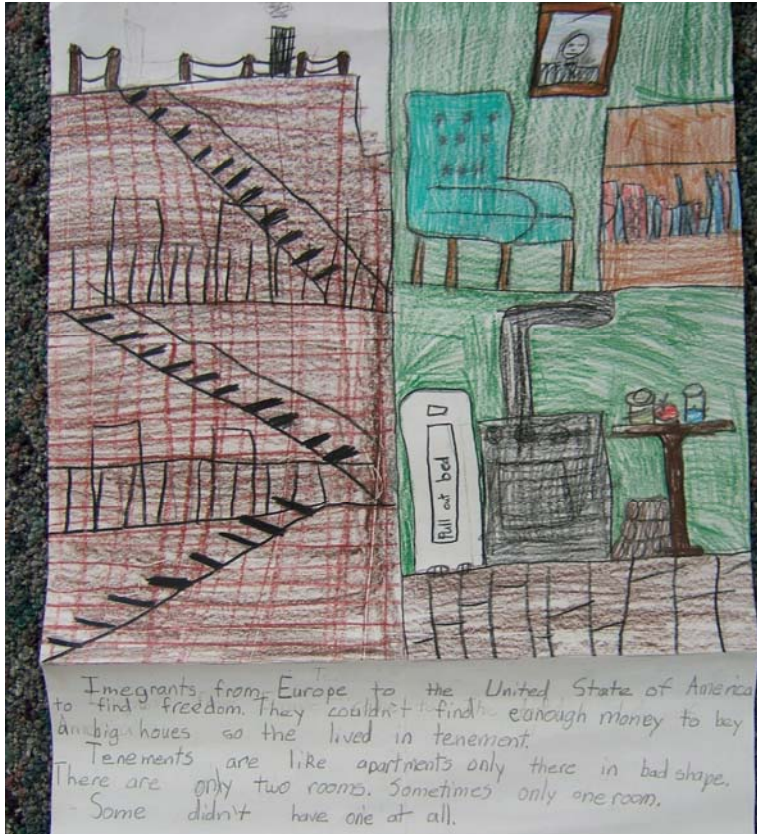


Figure 23. Fourth grade posters about progressive era tenements



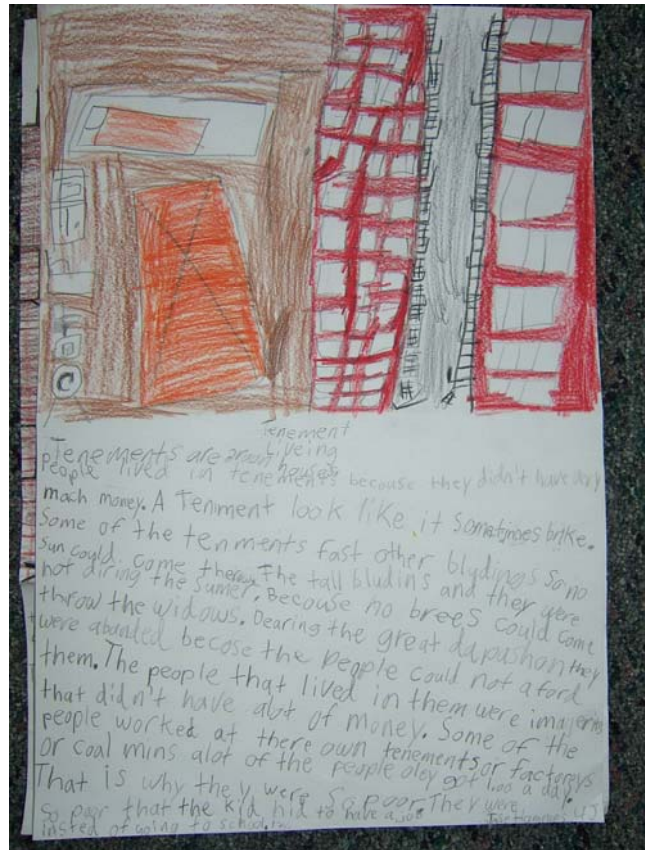
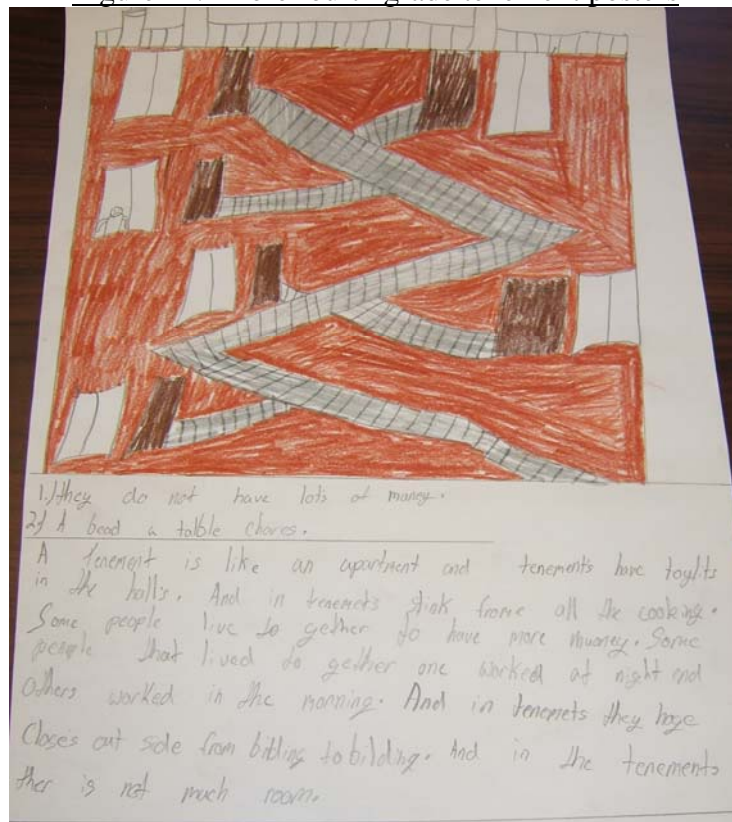


Figure 24. More fourth grade tenement posters



Fifth Grade

For fifth grade students, the main student work products for the WWII unit were their final projects. Students presented skits, videos, interviews, scrapbooks, and PowerPoint presentations. Some of the visuals used in their final projects are shown in Figures 25-27.

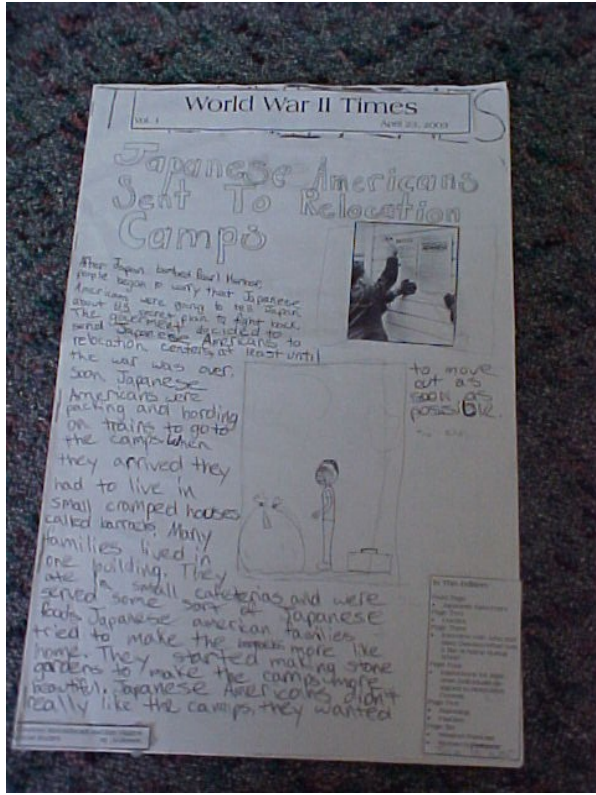


Figure 25. Fifth grade final project visuals

Because they were only allowed to bring two suitcases along with them, the Japanese had to abandon their pets, homes, and other belongings. The camps were of very low quality and many people were treated unhumanely. One man was actually shot for going too close to a fence. The Japanese brought photos from home to remind them of the lives they once had.

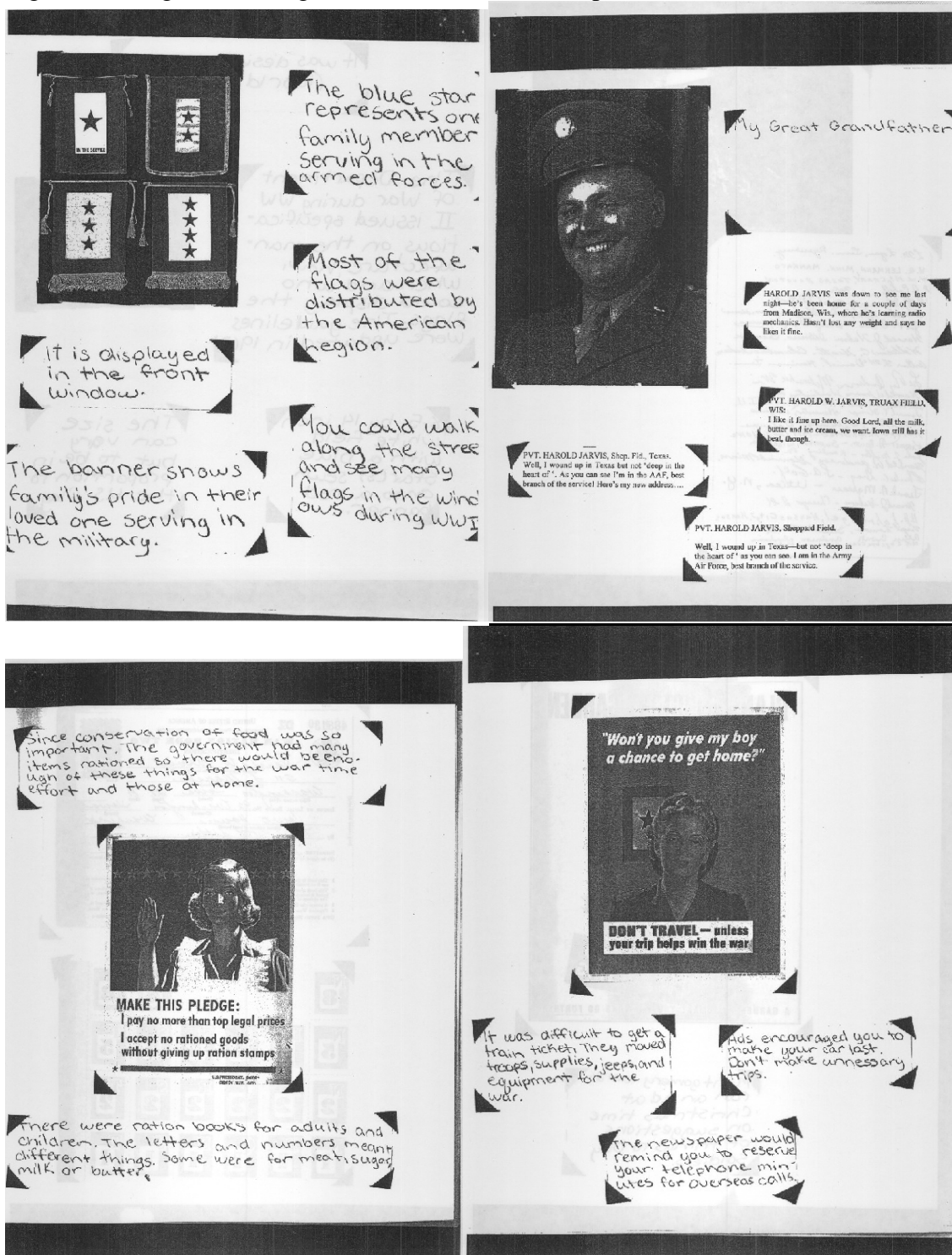
The war effort was in full force with almost every American contributing to the cause, in fact, ships were being built in days. They produced thousands of bullets every hour. As the end of the war approached many people mourned the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Luckily this misfortune didn't stop the production that was going on in the U.S.

Finally the war was over with the celebration of the victory in Europe as well as the victory over Japan. With the end of the war rationing stopped and the once held captives in the U.S. were released. Unfortunately, many jobs which had been created because of the need for military supplies, were lost and many people

Figure 26. More final report visuals



Figures 27. Pages from 5th grade student's WWII Scrapbook



Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students conducted research on important historical women for their American Women project (examples in Figures 28 and 29) and answered questions about the woman they researched (responses are analyzed in a previous section).



Figure 28. A sixth grade poster about Harriet Beecher Stowe

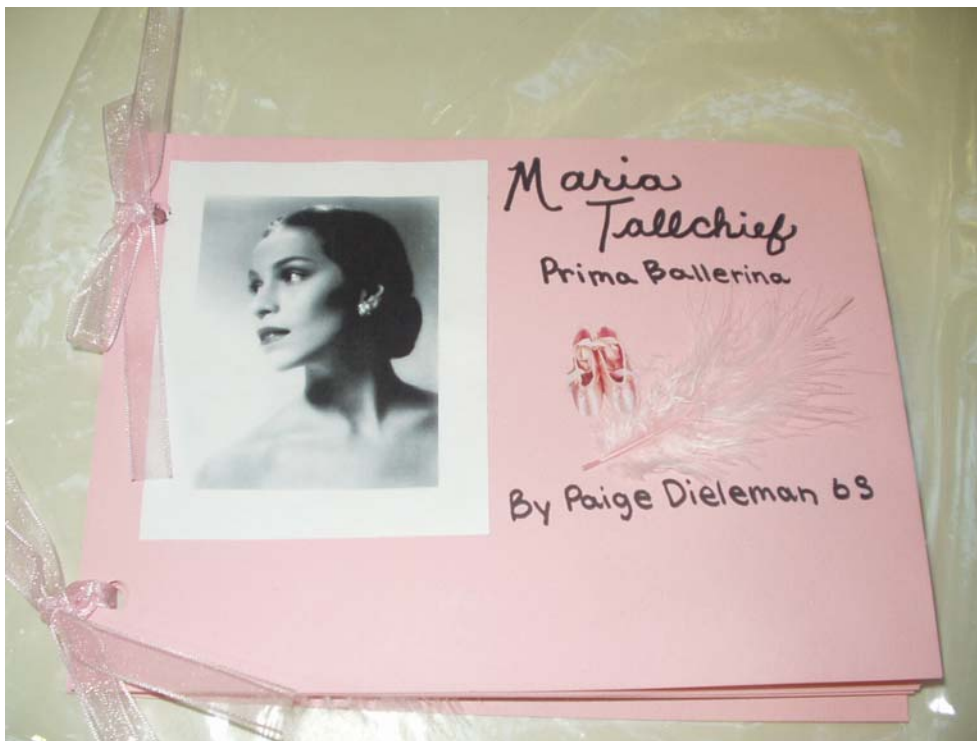


Figure 29. The cover of a report about Maria Tallchief

Spring 2004 Fourth Grade Student Writing Samples

A fourth grade teacher who was implementing the BHH curriculum often asked his students to write short essays on topics they had covered in a BHH lesson. For example, one time he asked the students to write everything they could think of about the dust bowl. The students wrote for almost the entire class period, about 35-40 minutes. While the students were writing, the teacher occasionally gave the students prompts to facilitate their writing. Some of the prompts were:

- What caused it?
- Was it something they could have done something about or not?
- What was it like to live there?
- In your house?
- Outside?
- What was it like?
- Did kids have to do more during the dust bowl? Why?
- What states did it happen in?
- Did farmers stay where they were or move?
- If they moved, why did they move?
- Where did they go?
- When they got there, was it what they expected?
- What was it like when they got there?

Students were told they did not need to pay attention to spelling or punctuation, but instead that they should concentrate on letting him know everything they knew about the Dust Bowl.

At the end of the class period, the teacher asked the students to put their papers into their history folders. We collected all the folders, randomly selected folders from each class period, and copied all of the contents of each folder. Each folder had some or all of the following contents:

- An illustrated cover depicting a scene from the Great Depression
- Short answers to questions the teacher had posed about a book called A New Deal for Roger
- Short answers to questions about depression era movies, radio, and Dorothea Lange's photographs as described in a video they viewed
- A brief statement about their role in the Great Depression Game
- Short essays about several topics (all written during the same class period on these topics: Hoover and Roosevelt, the stock market, hobos, dance marathons, Mrs. Hoover and Mrs. Roosevelt)
- Dust bowl essays.

Dust bowl essays varied in length from 40 to 402 words. The essays also varied greatly in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar, however since the teacher had told the students not to worry about these things, the essays were not examined for spelling, punctuation, or usage.

Two raters coded the essays for content. One person created codes based on the content found in the essays. Thirteen content codes emerged and were used by the second person to code

the essays. There was 93% agreement between the two raters in coding over all. The interrater agreement ranged from 75-100% with Code 5, “General negative statement about how bad it was” having the lowest level of agreement.

Content Codes	<u>Frequency</u> n=24	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Climate conditions [drought, hot, windy]	19.5†	81%
2. Loss of topsoil [people tried to grow too much, topsoil in air, dug up too many fields]	17.5	73%
3. What it was like to be outside [couldn't go outside, walking to school in dirt, couldn't see nose, darkness]	21	88%
4. What it was like in the homes [dust everywhere, had to cover windows, doors, deep dust around homes, couldn't live in homes, dust in dishes, no clean clothes]	19.5	81%
5. General negative statement about how bad it was	14	58%
6. Economics [Stores closing, no money/poor, Black Tuesday, Depression, losing homes, penny auctions, soup lines]	8	33%
7. Hunger, lack of food	4	16%
8. Health risks for people [people died, breathing problems]	8.5	35%
9. Animal problems [couldn't breathe]	10	42%
10. Location of dust bowl – [if accurate - TX, KS, OK, CO]	11	46%
11. Grasshoppers [also their effect on trains]	5	21%
12. Moving to California	16.5	69%
13. Conditions in California [people were not welcome, could not plant crops, low wages, expensive housing, personal danger, hard to get there]	14	58%

† Differences between raters in number of different content areas identified were settled by using the average of the two raters counts, therefore some frequencies are not whole numbers.

To examine the content that students included in their essays, we totaled all the codes used for each essay. The number of different content areas included in the essays of the students varied from 2 to 10.5. The mean number of content areas mentioned by students was 6.9 (median=7). The length of the passage (in words) and the number of content areas covered in the essay were correlated ($r=.76$). Students who did not produce much text, still were able to identify at least a couple important ideas about the Dust Bowl.

Several content areas were covered by most of the students. Twenty-one of the twenty-four students (88%) discussed what it was like to be outside during the dust bowl. Many students described what must have been a particularly vivid image of a man who, because of the dust, could not see his own hand even when he was touching his nose. Some students also spoke in more general terms about the darkness or having to walk backwards because of the dust

blowing into their faces. A student wrote, “If it was daytime it look like night-time because it was so durke (sic)*.”

Most students (81%) also discussed the extreme climatic conditions that led to the dust bowl – drought, heat and wind. One student wrote, “Then there was a drought. It lasted 8 years. So then the wheat died so there was just dirt. So now when the wind blew on the dirt it would make the dirt fly up in the air. Since there were so many feidls that were just dirt, so strong winds came and all the dirt went in the air and it turned black.” The same number of students also described what it was like to be in homes during the dust bowl, including details such as having to stuff towels in doors and windows to keep the dust out and how glasses and dishes were stored upside down to keep them from accumulating dust on the shelves even inside the house.

Quite a few students (73%) wrote about a human factor in the causes of the dust bowl. They said that farmers had plowed too many fields, so that the topsoil was more likely to blow away. One essay read, “How it happened was poeple heard that farming was a good job so they went and farmed. The first thing they did was rip out the grass witch held the dirt in place. So they planted corn, ect. It was a good harvest. But the second year was bad. Gradually the wind picked up and starting throwing dust, dirt, and rocks, ect.”

More than two-thirds of the students (68%) also wrote about the migration of people from the area affected by the dust bowl to California. Some students (58%) described not only the move to California, but also the problems that some people experienced once they got there. As one student told it, “It was so bad they dissided to mover to Californa they thought it would be great, but it was not. The California people didn’t want them there because they were afraid they would take the jobs. So they treated them really bad the made them live in little huts they were treated bad they were paid like a \$1.00 a DAY! They did not like there jobs eather they had to pick potatoes and oranges and apples, ect. It was not a very good life at all.”

About half of the students (46%) included accurate information about where the dust bowl occurred, about one-third addressed some of the secondary problems caused by the dust bowl, such as economic concerns (33%), human health concerns (36%), and animal care concerns (42%). Sixteen percent of the students mentioned hunger as a result of the dust bowl.

Another image that a few students (21%) wrote about was the problems with grasshoppers destroying seedlings and being so thick that they had an effect on train travel. One student wrote, “Then the grasshoppers came and when trains were on the tracks the grasshoppers were on there to. And they would get squished and the guts would gush out and the train wouldn’t go because it was so slippery on it. The grasshoppers ate the little plants that were left.”

In general, the students tended to write most often about the Dust Bowl content in personal and strong visual terms – what it was like to not be able to see your own hand, walking backwards to avoid the dust and dirt in your face, cleaning out the cow’s nostrils so that the cow could breathe. Although they had not been told to write in the form of a story of the dust bowl, many of the essays had the characteristics of a well-told tale about them. One child enthusiastically wrote,

“Some people had to do extra work because of the stupid drouit called the dust bowl. People even had to put towels in the crack of the door so dust (or dirt!) wouldn’t come in + they had to tip out their class to make no dust com in! And the gramas + grampas and the Black Storms. I’ll tell y’all who read this a story. There was a dust bowl a realllllllllllllllllllly bad drouit and during this drouit was the Black Storms. I’ll continue

later. Sorry. Kids had to walk to school backwards so dust would not hit them in the face! And when they got home they had to pick the nose of the farm animals such as cattle cows and chicken when they had to do house work they needed a peice of cloth to cover thier eyes!”

Spring 2004 Sixth Grade Student Writing Samples

In May 2004, 119 sixth-grade students from the Washington Community School District completed a writing assessment that attempted to obtain a rough snapshot of the content knowledge students learned during the BHH Women's History unit. The teacher was asked by the evaluators to ask the students to do the assignment on a day when 15-30 minutes were available for the students to work on it. She was also asked to give the assignment to all the students in the classes, regardless of ability level. The first question was:

Write a paragraph or two telling the story of the woman that you did your research on during the Women's History unit. Tell an interesting story about what it was that made this woman important, what her life was like, and the qualities she had that made you admire her. Then explain why it is important that people learn about women like her.

The students wrote about the following women (with the number of students choosing that woman in parentheses):

- Helen Keller (6)
- Rosa Parks (6)
- Eleanor Roosevelt (6)
- Amelia Earhart (5)
- Ruth Bader Ginsberg (5)
- Wilma Mankiller (5)
- Toni Morrison (5)
- Annie Oakley (5)
- Harriet Tubman (5)
- Jane Addams (4)
- Rachel Carson (4)
- Georgia O'Keefe (4)
- Sally Ride (4)
- Wilma Rudolph (4)
- Sacagawea (4)
- Babe Didrikson Zaharias (4)
- Elizabeth Blackwell (3)
- Ella Fitzgerald (3)
- Harriet Beecher Stowe (3)
- Oprah Winfrey (3)
- Susan B. Anthony (2)
- Joan Baez (2)
- Clara Barton (2)
- Shirley Chisholm (2)
- Mia Hamm (2)
- Billie Jean King (2)
- Maria Tallchief (2)
- Sojourner Truth (2)
- Barbara Walters (2)

- Abigail Adams (1)
- Lucille Ball (1)
- Diane Fosse (1)
- Laura Ingalls Wilder (1)
- Victoria Woodhall (1)
- No name was given (8).

Both the general literacy skills and content of the responses varied greatly. Each response was independently read by two evaluators and assigned to one of three general writing skills categories: high, average, or low—with “High” characterizing those writing samples that definitely appeared to be superior to the others (in terms of the criteria listed below), “Low” characterizing those writing samples that were clearly deficient, and “Average” comprising all the other samples. Sorting decisions were based on the following criteria, in order of importance:

1. The overall maturity and appearance of the printing
 - For example, in “Low” passages, the print appeared to be less well-developed than the others—larger, less well-formed, or did not follow straight lines across the page.
2. Length of the passage
 - Number of words.
3. Syntax
 - Sentences and wording followed standard English grammatical structure and conventions.
4. Spelling
 - “Low” passages often had misspelled common words, whereas “High” passages had few spelling errors and no spelling errors for simple words.
5. Vocabulary
 - Appropriate usage of difficult or unfamiliar words.

The content of the writing passages (accuracy of statements, importance or relevance of information) and neatness of handwriting were not taken into consideration in this initial sorting process.

After the first attempt at coding, evaluators were able to agree on 100 out of 119 student writing samples, with an agreement rate of 84%. In each case of disagreement, the difference in coding was no more than a single category above or below. Evaluators were subsequently able to reach consensus on the remaining nineteen writing passages, and those samples were placed in the agreed category for the purposes of further analysis. Out of 119 student writing samples, twenty-seven (23%) were coded as indicating low general writing ability, seventy-six (64%) were coded as displaying medium or average writing ability, and sixteen (13%) were coded as exhibiting high writing ability according to the five criteria listed above.

The writing samples were then examined for the content and the accuracy of content in each sample. Student writing described as exhibiting “Low” overall writing ability generally offered lower quality in the content reported than samples from higher ability groups. In particular, their responses were less comprehensive, offered fewer pieces of relevant and accurate information, and often failed to adequately answer all the questions. In general, low ability students tended to pad their responses with remarks like “I thought her life was very interesting.” One student actually wrote, “I cannot remember what I learned.” Several students

included historically inaccurate information, writing, for example, that Ruth Bader Ginsburg “was a woman that was congress.” One wildly inaccurate response described how Harriet Beecher Stowe “began World War II with a book called *Uncle Sam*.” (Several different web sites about Stowe report that when Abraham Lincoln met Stowe he said, “So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war”, so you can see some confused truth in this response.) Other students simply included true, but superficial observations, like “Helen Keller was blind” and of Eleanor Roosevelt, “she was the president’s wife.” Sojourner Truth was “a good person who did lots of stuff.” Notable exceptions to this category were the following student responses:

- Clara Barton founded the Red Cross and was its first president for 23 years.
- Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman doctor.
- Rachel Carson was a person who likes plants. She wrote books about plants and she got hired at lots of places, but after all that, she died of cancer and her books are really popular.
- Mia Hamm won 6 gold medals in a row. She was named MVP in 1997. She was the youngest girl to turn pro.

In general, students whose writing abilities were rated as “low” still reported the name of the woman that they had studied and were usually able to add one detail about the woman they studied.

Students described as exhibiting “Average” overall writing ability generally offered more content than low ability students, although there was a significant degree of variation in this large category. These responses tended to include more numerous and more accurate pieces of information. Students were generally able to identify the defining accomplishment of the woman they had studied, although students couldn’t always identify admirable qualities or explain satisfactorily why others should learn about that person. Students injected some filler into their responses; one typical student response is that people should learn about the woman because she was nice or “a good person.” They also tended to focus more frequently on superficial details, including the fact that Eleanor Roosevelt married her cousin or that “she was an ugly baby,” or that Sacagawea is featured on a \$1 coin. A few students in this category included historically inaccurate information, including one student’s remark that Abigail Adams was the first female doctor and another student comment that Ruth Bader Ginsberg was the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The writing samples from the “Average” group varied much more than the “Low” and “High” both in terms of general writing ability and in relating content, however in general, students whose writing abilities were rated as “Average” were also average in their ability to relate content. They nearly always told who they were reporting on and added several details about the person. Since the students were asked to “Tell an interesting story”, it is not surprising that students offered details about their woman that weren’t restricted to why she was important. However, students in this category were more likely to offer these details without adding in the details about the woman’s accomplishments.

Students described as exhibiting “High” overall writing ability generally offered comprehensive and elaborate responses, full of relevant and interesting information. These responses typically comprised at least a single paragraph. Writing was cohesive and eloquent, with students commonly addressing each individual facet of the question in turn. Students in this category easily identified the defining accomplishment of the woman they had studied,

supporting this fact with other, highly relevant details. Their narratives came closer to “telling a story” than did students in the other groups. Students in this group tended to include a short story or a synopsis of the person’s life and career. The following student response, written about Lucille Ball, is exemplary of the other contributions in this category:

She was the first comedian woman, and the first woman to run her own production company by herself! She was born and raised in Jamestown, NY. When she was 17, she went to N.Y.C. to be in a modeling school. She got her big hit when she appeared in a poster where the public noticed her beauty. She made a movie with costar Desi Arnaz, and they married and had 2 kids. I Love Lucy was a #1 hit of a show that features Lucy and Desi's real life situations. There are still reruns of her today!

Students in this category rarely relied on filler although a few somewhat generic observations can be found in these responses, including, “People should learn about people like her because she is very important in our history” and “It is important that people learn about her because she was first in a lot of things, and it’s special to be first.” Generally, however, these responses stand out in comparison to the caliber of responses found in the other two categories. They are more likely to include the woman’s name, her accomplishments, and some other interesting details about the life of the woman that make their narratives a true story about the woman.

The following student responses are examples of writing from different ability levels directed towards the same subject:

Rachel Carson:

- (High) I had fun researching Rachel Carson, because she let women know that other women could do things. Also, she had a wildlife refugee named after her and she helped the animals. She wrote 5 books during her life. She also died of cancer. She had an adopted son called Roger that was her niece's son. If you learn about her, you could be able to do things you would want to
- (Medium) She was a nature writer. She loved plants and wanted to see the sea. When she was 9, she sold a story to St. Nicholas magazine. She wrote *Silent Spring*.
- (Low) Rachel Carson was a person who likes plants. She wrote books about plants and she got hired at lots of places, but after all that, she died of cancer and her books are really popular.

Ella Fitzgerald:

- (High) She is famous for bringing jazz to life. She was first "discovered" when she went to a performance and she was supposed to dance, but had stage fright and sang a song she knew by heart. She was introduced to Chick Webb, who was a music director. When he died, he left his band to her and she became the first woman "bandleader".
- (Medium) She was a singer, she was first woman of jazz, she was an orphan. She was a very good singer. So they get the history.
- (Low) She was a singer. She was the best singer of jazz. Her singing, busy her great jazz singing and dancing. Because it is important to learn about women and what they did in history

Ruth Bader Ginsburg:

- (High) She was an important woman in history. She was one of the first female Supreme Court judges. What makes her special is she had three strikes against her: 1) she was a girl; 2) she had kids; 3) she was Jewish. People should learn about people like her because she is very important in our history
- (Medium) She was very important because she was one of the first judges. She first went to Harvard, then went to law school. Then Bill Clinton nominated her to be a judge for the U.S.
- (Low) She went to college. She graduated in the top of her class. Then she went to law school to become a lawyer. She is still alive

Rosa Parks:

- (High) She was an African-American and back then life wasn't easy for them. Whites hated them. The drinking fountains and bathrooms were very crappy, but the whites' were good. Whites also made black people sit on the back of the bus, and Rosa Parks sat up front and got arrested and changed that rule. I admire her for her determination of trying to get equal without fighting with the whites
- (Medium) She helped stop segregation. She was famous for starting the boycott. She worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. She got arrested for not moving to the back of the bus
- (Low) Rosa Parks walked in a bus and sat in the front where she is not supposed to sit and she got arrested because she sat in the front

Sally Ride:

- (High) She was the first American woman in space and was the first woman in a space shuttle. I think it is important to learn about women like Sally because they have shown that men aren't the only shapers of our culture and world.
- (Medium) She was the first woman in space and she went to Stanford and trained at Houston and Miami. People should learn about her because she was a part of history.
- (Low) She was the first girl astronaut. Her life was good.

The second question on the assignment was:

If you wanted to learn more about another woman in history, how would you go about doing it? Make a list of the types of resources you would use. Where might you find each source? What would you hope to learn from each source? Indicate whether each source is a primary or a secondary source.

Only a few students opted to respond to each discrete part of this question. Almost all students, however, were able to provide at least one information source they would use, and most students provided more than one resource. Several students created comprehensive lists of information sources, including as many as seven or eight diverse information resources. 111 students (93% of all students) responded that they would use the computer or Internet to search for information. Eleven of these students specifically named Electric Library as a resource they would use. A few additional students identified specific websites they thought were valuable, including dogpile.com, askjeeves.com, and google.com. Eighty-two students (almost 69% of all students) identified books as a good source of biographical information. Sixty students

(approximately half of all students) responded that they would use an encyclopedia to find information. Thirty students (25% of all students) wrote that they would search for information in their school library or a local public library. Fourteen students (almost 12% of all students) wrote that they would use autobiographies to obtain information about a historical figure. Eleven students (9% of all students) said they would interview the person, or “ask someone” in order to find information. Another eleven students identified biographies as a good information source. Other responses included personal journals, dictionaries, letters, magazines, movies, speeches, newspapers, television, an almanac, and asking the teacher.

Fifty-nine students (approximately 49% of all students) chose to address the question about primary and secondary sources, although the response rate varied within different ability groups. Within the high ability group, twelve out of sixteen students (75% of high ability group) wrote about primary and secondary sources. Within the average or medium ability group, forty-one out of seventy-six students (54% of average ability group) addressed primary and secondary sources. Within the low ability group, six out of twenty-seven students (22% of low ability group) said anything about primary or secondary sources. Of the fifty-nine students who wrote about primary and secondary sources, thirty-five (approximately 51%) students were able to demonstrate any understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources. Most (92%) of high ability respondents and about half of the average and low ability respondents were able to provide at least one satisfactory example of a primary or secondary source. Sources that were correctly identified as primary sources included: autobiographies, an interview, a personal journal, a speech, and a letter. The most frequently mentioned secondary source was an encyclopedia. A few students correctly recognized that books and Internet sources can be considered either primary or secondary, depending on their authorship. Even within this subset of students who were able to demonstrate some knowledge of primary and secondary sources, there were many students who believed the Internet or books could be exclusively considered a primary or secondary source, but not both. A few students wrote incorrect statements, such as identifying an autobiography as a secondary source and a biography as a primary source.

In short, it appears as though even the lowest ability students are capable of conducting independent research, although less than half the students surveyed were able to demonstrate their understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources. Further, the staggering number of students who identified the Internet as the first and best information source is sobering, given the vast number of students who were then incapable of vouching for the credibility of the information they found there.

One possible factor confounding the quality of these responses is the formatting of the survey as it was administered to students. The second question was written as a short paragraph, composed of three separate questions and two additional directional sentences. Given the length and complexity of the question’s wording, it is possible that students were unable to provide a comprehensive answer simply because they were confused. Illustrative of this is one student’s comment: “You ask too many questions in this survey!”

Directions: Use the following words to tell a story about something that happened in the past. Try to show in your story that you know what the words mean.

Slavery
The Constitution
Amendment
13th Amendment
Segregation
Prejudice
Jim Crow Laws

Directions: Use the following words to tell a story about something that happened in the past. Try to show in your story that you know what the words mean.

Craftsman
Single owners
Partnerships
Age of Inventions
Corporations
Factory Conditions

Spring 2005 Third Grade Student Pilot Assessments

In January and February of 2005, the evaluation staff asked a third grade teacher in the Washington Community School District to conduct student pre- and post-tests using an historical narrative format concerning the two BHH units on Industrialization and Segregation. Although these tests were primarily intended to be used as pilot tests to look at the feasibility and validity of using this type of narrative construction to assess student learning outcomes during the grant period of the BHH II Project, the pilot assessments were analyzed for content and provide information about content knowledge acquisition.

There were 19 students in the class. The teacher was asked to collect data from all students in the class. The teacher was also asked to give an estimate of each student's general ability as a proxy for the ITBS scores that will be collected for students in BHH II. The teacher rated each student as demonstrating high, medium or low general ability level.

The evaluation team worked with a different third grade teacher in choosing the prompts for each unit narrative. The prompts reflect ideas or concepts that the teacher felt students should know about the units and that she thought were well represented in curriculum and instruction. The prompts used for the industrialization unit were: craftsman, single owner, partnership, age of inventions, corporation, and factory conditions. The prompts used for the segregation unit were: slavery, the Constitution, amendment, 13th Amendment, segregation, prejudice, and Jim Crow Laws.

Narratives were scored for the number of terms that were used correctly by the student. Scores for the industrialization unit could range from 0-6 and for the segregation unit from 0-7. Two raters scored each narrative and then compared ratings. The percent of exact agreement between raters was 94% for the segregation unit terms and 93% for the industrialization unit terms. The number of terms used correctly on the pre-test was subtracted from the number of the terms used correctly on the post-test to get a difference score.

The pre-test scores for the segregation unit were all 0's or 1's indicating that the material tested was not something that students already knew. As seen in Table 1 below, the pre-test scores for the industrialization unit also ranged from 0-1, except for one student who used three terms correctly. Scores for the segregation post-test ranged from 0-5 and scores on the industrialization posttest ranged from 1-6. (The student who scored a 0 on the posttest did not complete a pre-test so that score is not included in the difference scores.) Scores on the segregation test are somewhat lower in part because one term, "amendment" was used correctly by only one student. Three terms on the industrialization test (single owner, partnership, and corporation) are more related to each other than are the terms on the segregation test and students who knew one of the three, may have found it easier to define the other two.

All students across ability levels demonstrated an increase in performance on the post-test as compared to the pre-test. Difference scores ranged from 1-5 on both unit tests, with a mean gain of 2.2 on the segregation test and a mean gain of 3.4 on the industrialization test. Because of absences, not all students took both a pre-test and a post-test so a gain score cannot be calculated for students who only took one test, but all pre- and post test scores can be used to look at content knowledge levels at the beginning and end of the unit.

Using the scores of all students on pre- and post tests, regardless of whether they were present for both tests, the means of the pretests were 0.77 and 0.54 for the segregation and industrialization tests, respectively, and the means for the posttests were 2.83 and 3.93, respectively.

Table 1. Ranges, means, and difference scores on pilot BHH industrialization and segregation narrative tests

BHH Unit	Range of Pretest scores	Pretest Mean	Range of Posttest scores	Posttest Mean	Difference Score Mean*
Industrialization	(n=13)		(n=14)		(n=12)
	0-3	0.54	1-6	3.93	3.4
Segregation	(n=13)		(n=18)		(n=13)
	0-1	0.77	0**-5	2.83	2.2

*Difference scores were calculated only for students who took both tests.

** The student who did not use any terms correctly on the post-test did not take the pre-test.

In further work with narrative assessments for BHH II, the evaluation will look more closely at the nature of the responses to the narrative prompts and at the general quality of the narratives as well as doing analysis of growth in content knowledge as a function of general ability level.

Evaluator-led Brainstorming Session Results

BHH Workshop June 2003

Activity One – Brainstorming

Topic I: Everything you can think of (both do's and don'ts) to tell a group of other teachers like yourselves (but just starting out) about how to teach the BHH curriculum that you taught this spring. [This is your combined wisdom about how to do this, not necessarily how you did it, but how you would do it!]

Kindergarten Do's:

- send letter out early
- share own History
- Reward kids who bring back
- make Birth Certificates as kids return stuff
- introduce timeline earlier
- get plastic tubs early
- use Ziplocs if no boxes
- use calculator tape for Timeline
- Incorporate vocabulary into other topics
- add return date for when you will return artifacts to parents
- add a date for when to have artif. due at school
- add a # of items for kids to bring
- add ✓ list for parents
- Move gallery walk to end of unit
- have gallery walk at open house
- add to note, “don't send things you care about losing”
- document w/ photos all activities
- relate things to current sub (Time line → # line)
- get parents more involved
- mapping house and bedroom
- take video of parent/child going through selection process
- continue using Historical Books
- keep searching for photos in local and area papers
- dress up clothes from long ago
- use video websites
- watch History channel
- use Marco Polo
- go through personal pictures and bring them
- collect artifacts from long ago
- adding support personnel to map of where we were born
- have guest relative come speak
- have guest relative bring artifacts
- use guest relative as S & T
- have guest bring vehicle (old)
- send list of vocabulary to parents
- take field trips

- Conger House
- Log Cabin
- Old Threshers
- Schoolhouse in IC
- bring Mike Zahs in for presentat
- Have a TL mural on playground
- Repaint US on playground
- Have kids stand on state born
- Use state/US authors or where born
- use match box cars of the era
- Have kids host seniors

1st Grade Do's:

- joint planning time
- written out lesson plans
- adjust plans as needed
- accessible books/materials
- video someone teaching
- let lessons go as long as they need
- flexible lesson times
- let kids dictate depth of lesson
- keep things moving
- more books
- more videos
- review materials before teaching modeling/examples
- entire class in classroom
- large blocks of time
- use large blocks of time to do many lessons, rather than doing lessons on day at a time.
- KWL chart to begin
- web about history
- abstract – plan ahead
- improvise if lesson doesn't seem to be going well
- be flexible

2nd Grade Do's:

- Have fun
- Be flexible
- Take 1 activity at a time
- Skip something
- Go back and re-visit
- Scream
- Read all books before you teach
- Get multiples when possible
- Invest in Lynn Cherry
- Think about how to tell kids Rachel Carson died

- Be prepared – map activity is LONG
- Start Map in Fall when start Habitat
- Habitat unit good time to start
- Have aide cut
- Have kids cut paper
- Regulate the tape
- Borrow map from Curt Jensen
- Use rubber cement on map
- Need more coal mining books
- Need more logging books
- Need videos
- Need more real photos
- Enlarge photos
- Color copy is Good
- Need copy of map done shows everything
- Want overhead trans. that matches map
- Map pieces cut for me
- Template for desert
- Realistic landforms
- Extra classroom
- Storage for map
- Edible map
- Table map
- 3D map
- Super heroes was wonderful
- Do reports w. superheroes
- Stories w. superheroes were AWESOME
- Video tape s.h. presentation
- Time line is hard
- Take field trips
- Farm equipment – (Jane Cuddeback)
- Give homework for Act. 2
- Guest speakers
- Make key for map
- Make then/now pics.
- V is for Vanishing – more copies for kids
- Big Books?
- Use web sites
- Pictures are projectable on TV
- Get good conn. for TV
- Add Lorax to Unit
- Add Wump World
- Talk to June about Lorax project
- Need more air pollution
- Throw in station ideas
- Build rain forest in classroom

- Interject prairie into
- Make Save the Earth Posters
- Research Endangered animals on I-Books
- Make endangered animals posters
- Objects to recycle – categorize
- Pick up recycling at school
- Make act. a part of hands on stations
- Poems
- Connect it to citizenship
- Planted trees
- Planted flowers
- School wide recycling
- Go further w/ recycling
- Report Card – Love the Earth – Homework
- Jungle Journals
- Brainstorm pollution
- Noise pollution
- Air /land /water pollution
- Weekly readers
- National Geo. Mag for kids
- Time line of pollution
- Earth Day time line in Weekly Reader was Good
- Fascinated that people live in the rain forest
- Things that come from rainforest – med.
- Great Kapock Tree – book
- Long Live the Earth book – Kids like

3rd Grade Do's:

- learn as you go
- make changes without guilt
- know your students / change with them
- communicate amongst peers
- use others ideas – beg, borrow, steal
- use books – kids love them
- challenge the kids
- know your subject
- use what you know
- don't think they won't understand / feel
- have high expectations
- find resources in you community – storytellers, historians, museums, etc...

4th – 6th Grade Do's:

- Pick a month without interruptions
- Change things as you go along
- Try everything, see what works or doesn't

- Keep a daily log of activities
- Preview material
- Restructure or use other materials that are grade level appropriate
- Be flexible
- Tell students in your own words, adapt to the age of the students
- Do the project along with students
- Do activities as a large group before small or individual projects
- Be open minded
- If material doesn't work for you change and adapt it
- Water down certain materials
- Change wording or worksheets if needed
- Make a folder for each student
- Locate information available beforehand

Kindergarten Don'ts:

- be afraid to get started
- wait to get all back-jump in and start

1st Grade Don'ts:

- don't be afraid to be foolish
- don't put off till last minute

2nd Grade Don'ts:

- Don't stress
- Silent Spring – yuck!
- Don't forget Mexico
- Don't forget Canada

3rd Grade Don'ts:

- don't worry – jump right in

4th – 6th Grade Don'ts:

- Don't be afraid to try something new

Topic II: All the worries, concerns, and impediments to implementing this curriculum that you experienced, however trite, trivial, or important, including any concerns with implementation as well as any concerns about the costs and lost opportunities from implementation. You can also list things that were missing that would have made implementation easier or better.

Kindergarten Concerns:

- losing items
- breaking items
- participation
- long term cost-boxes
- storage
- obtaining reliable information
- uncomfortable with non-traditional families perception of units
- child who lived with grandparents – no history artifacts
- foster care & adopted – some difficulty knowing info
- fire destroyed artifacts
- what do you do with students that don't bring things
- need documented photos
- student unable to share info about photos
- time
- holding interest if multiple students shared
- organization
- depends on make-up of class
- disciplining during sharing
- new students moving in
- vocabulary

1st Grade Concerns:

- books
- videos
- time!!
- more age appropriate written documents
- collect more interesting documents – field trips, swim note
- when implemented in fall, use 1st grade year, rather than about kindergarten
- digital cameras – not enough
- kids that don't bring pictures
- very abstract to start with

2nd Grade Concerns:

- Couldn't keep up
- TIME
- TIME
- Silent Spring was hard
- Time line is hard
- Lack of know. about coal mining

- Lack of know. about logging
- Lack of know. about exact locations of desert
- Lack of know. about exact locations of forest
- Lack of know. about exact locations of countries
- Lots of internet time learning myself
- Key is needed for this ↑
- Do things throughout year
- Need map done before unit
- Organize
- Hard to do map w other 8 lessons
- The Map
- Key for map is helpful – pigs, water
- Kids understand?
- Nervous
- Anticipation
- Paid to teach – want to do best
- Observation
- Lesson like envisioned
- Missing things
- Copy pictures – COLOR
- Actual pieces to go on MAP
- Templates
- Things that went with each state
- Go to Farm Bureau for Iowa help
- TIME
- Use web for state info
- Get website from Tami
- Find easy reader books
- Write own easy reader books about
 - coal mining
 - logging
 - land forms
 - Nat. resources
- Wish would have had them write more stories
- Writer's. Workshop – Superheroes
- Worried about video quality
- Think kids will hate video
- Stop during video
- Evaluation – write books
- TIME
- Time Mag. good article
- Nat. Geo. good article
- Muir (more info)
- Pinchott (more info)

3rd Grade Concerns:

- time
- fitting it in with what we already did
- some materials lacking
- time line
- not knowing what would/wouldn't work
- how the students would react
- being evaluated – was I doing what I was supposed to be doing
- worried about materials at their level
- personal knowledge
- field trip to safe house in our area
- speakers
- more Addy materials
- Jr. high / drama presentation / 6th grade?
- leave out some stuff I used to do
- do they / will they remember and apply late in life
- are we giving them ideas about how to discriminate
- enthusiasm
- common area / availability of material we have

4th – 6th Grade Concerns:

- Finding web sites to supplement what is taught
- Ignorance of topic taught
- Unfamiliar with someone else's lesson plans
- Figuring out what they want you to do
- Finding the time to teach it
- Is the project too difficult?
- Students want to take the shortest route possible (make questions more specific)
- Can we keep the enthusiasm going for a month?
- How will special ed students be able to do this?
- Understanding terminology
- Is reading level appropriate for certain students?
- Finding the time to prepare to teach a new unit
- Single person social studies dept. – no one to bounce ideas off of
- Finding supplementary materials to go with unit
- Finding original source document
- Only had one document when asked to compare two

Topic III: All the possible or actual benefits for you and the children as well as you and their accomplishments as a result of this curriculum and its implementation. List typical school learning as well as out-of-the box ideas about possible benefits to you or the kids.

Kindergarten benefits:

- new vocab
- starting earlier
- starts discus. at home
- History Chan – more interest
- others sim or diff beginnings
- heightens awareness
- name origins
- adult interest kindled
- historical documents – newly defined
- historical in positive light
- learned more of your family – closer feelings to past
- children closer feelings to their future – their families
- future historians being formed
- politicians being formed
- other occupations kindled by look at past people
- relatives (genealogy) focuses student
- it was fun
- enhances math
- enhances spatial
- enhances awareness in self portrait
- they realize they have a “past”
- Good character because of past

1st Grade benefits:

Kids:

- high interest level
- learn about teacher as person
- increased enthusiasm
- good cooperation
- could relate to some aspect
- made it more relevant
- understand importance of history

Teacher:

- know kids better
- more relaxed – different kind of interaction
- look at history differently
- more free of standards
- fun to be on ground floor of new activity

2nd Grade benefits:

- know states very well

- Green paper = plains
- land forms
- Sand paper = dessert
- Pigs = pigs
- Purple paper = mountains
- blue paper = water
- Mexico/Canada border
- Know oceans
- Know Native American tribes lived in what areas
- know that corn products are in our food
- Popsicle sticks are made from wood
- Chalk is rock
- Ice cream made from rock
- Dinosaur fossils – know where they come from
- Each know a product from each state
- Now know act is now a law – endangered species, clean air/water
- Know what endangered means
- Know what extinct means
- DDT – know is chemical – Rachel Carson
- Rachel Carson died from Breast Cancer
- farming compares – past to present
- Draw pictures – machinery then/now
- What land looked like then/now
- Now know what 3R's mean
- Know causes/prevents land pol.
- Know causes/prevents air pol.
- Know causes/prevents water pol.
- Know about endangered ani. – facts
- Know how Not to make them endangered
- People are in charge – cause extinction
- Know dif. between dump/landfill
- Iowa used to be a rainforest
- Tied in field trip to unit
- Learned about Iowa
- Learned about backyard
- Learned about Teddy Roosevelt – listened to environmentalists
- Learned about logging
- Learned about mining
- Learned about farming
- Learned about Indians
- Everglades – Nat. American connections
- Special needs kids made connections
- plastic maps – liked them
- Recess – map on playground – 2nd grader
- Need map on playground repainted
- Kids liked globes/maps

3rd Grade benefits:

- went with character programs
- deeper understanding of our past
- interesting
- kids were enthused
- checked out more books
- boys were interested in Addy books
- kids asked questions
- map work
- people have different ideas
- life long interest of history
- learning of peoples' differences
- appreciation of differences
- got familiar with new books

4th – 6th Grade benefits:

- New teaching styles
- More organized
- Posters, photos, written documents, diaries, videos were great
- Motivation to learn more about the unit by seeking out individuals to talk to about the era
- Seeing the students excited about history
- Teacher excited about topics taught
- Teacher willing to change own teaching style, or topics taught
- Challenging students to new ideas and projects
- Improve student research skills
- Teachers learning about different topics instead of being stagnant
- Improve students' higher order thinking skills
- Using technology
- Working with Elise, Jim, Julie and Don who have very positive attitudes