

# Oakland Unified School District Teaching American History Project

## Second Year Evaluation Report July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

Contacts:	Oakland Unified School District 314 East 10th Street Oakland, CA 94606	Center for Evaluation and Research, LLC 3200 Marlene Ave. Redding, CA 96002
Email	Stan.Pesick@ousd.k12.ca.us	research@snowcrest.net
Phone:	510.879.8497	530.224.7704
Fax:	510.879.0229	530.224.7706

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Program Implementation</b> .....	3
Program Context .....	3
Program Goals .....	4
<b>Evaluation Methods</b> .....	4
Selected Instruments .....	6
Evaluation Reporting .....	7
No Child Left Behind Statute .....	7
<b>Progress Toward Meeting Objectives</b> .....	8
Objective One .....	8
Objective Two .....	13
Objective Three .....	16
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	20
<b>Attachments</b>	
Standards Survey Final Results .....	A
Teacher Blue Books .....	B
Teacher Survey Results from 06-29-2006 .....	C

## **Executive Summary**

---

The Oakland Unified School District Teaching American History Project has successfully completed its second year of implementation. The purpose of the grant is to improve both teacher content knowledge and instruction in American History. The project served 56 teachers in grades 5, 8, and 11 during its second year.

During year 2 of the grant the project's historical content focus was on the U.S. Constitution. For the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers this theme focused on "The Road to the Constitution." For the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers this theme focused on "The Constitution: Interpretation and Conflict." The project's professional development program consisted of regular full and half-day meetings during the 2005-2006 school year and a one-week summer institute which took place during the last week in June of 2006. These sessions provided teachers the opportunity to focus on history content, pedagogy, and resources. During these sessions the project provided 16 different lectures by visiting historians.

Project teachers participated in collaboratively structured lesson planning and evaluation sessions using the Lesson Study methodology. Lesson Study is a structured process in which a group of teachers identify an instruction problem, plan a lesson using primary resources, teach the lesson, evaluate and revise the lesson and share the results with other teachers. Through collaboration and an emphasis on lesson revision, the insights of several teachers are brought to bear on the issues surrounding the effective teaching of history.

The project's evaluation consists of both process and impact components. The project's process evaluation component provided performance feedback to the project staff to assist in the examination of the effectiveness of the project's implementation.

The project has successfully implemented all of its components for the second straight year.

Professional Development - Objective 1 was achieved as determined by results garnered from the American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards, reflective journals by teachers, the Summer Institute Exit Survey, and focus group interviews. The findings from these data collection and analysis efforts underscore a consistent improvement by teachers in their history content knowledge and pedagogical approaches

Student Academic Achievement – Objectives 2 and 3 have been achieved. Eighth and eleventh grade students in participating teachers' classrooms scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than students in classrooms of non-participating teachers on this year's CST history and English subtests and on local writing samples.

## **Introduction**

---

The Oakland Unified School District's Teaching American History Grant (TAHG) has completed its second year of implementation. The project targeted fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade teachers of American history serving in Oakland's ethnically and linguistically diverse elementary, middle, and high schools. The project provided the following activities to promote both teacher content knowledge and quality instruction in American History.

1. Ongoing half and full-day professional development days: This included nine part and full-day workshops consisting of lectures by visiting scholars, readings, and activities dealing with history content and pedagogy with a special focus on the U.S. Constitution. The themes for this year's trainings were: The Road to the Constitution (5th grade) and The Constitution: Interpretation and Conflict (8th and 11th grades).
2. One-week summer institute: The summer institute continued the year two theme with five full-day workshops.
3. Project website: The project maintains a website that includes audio-tapes of historian lectures, instructional resources that support the translation of the lectures into classroom practice, participant resources, and links to online resources. The website is at: <http://www.teachingamericanhistory.us>.
4. Resources: The project provides teachers with professional and historical texts, and other teaching materials at each of the professional development sessions.
5. In-classroom support including lesson study: The project staff provided both one-to-one classroom supports when requested and facilitated lesson study groups among grade level peers. Using the lesson study process, teachers identified an instruction problem, planned a lesson using primary resources, taught the lesson, and then evaluated and revised the lesson. Lesson plans developed through the lesson study process can be accessed at the project website.

## **Program Implementation**

---

### Program Context

The project collaborated with the University of California Berkeley, Department of History, the University of California History-Social Science Project, the Oakland Museum of California, and professional historians from several universities with the goal of engaging 5th, 8th, and 11th grade teachers in intensive, content rich, staff development.

Oakland Unified School District serves over 40,000 students in over 100 ethnically-diverse, urban elementary, middle, and high schools. Fifty-six teachers from 41 of these schools participated in the project during its second year. Participating teachers included 25 fifth grade teachers, 16 eighth grade teachers, and 15 eleventh grade teachers.

### Program Goals

The project has the following five goals:

1. Measurable improvement in teacher knowledge and understanding of traditional American History
2. Measurable improvement in teacher knowledge and understanding of how to use historical inquiry and historical thinking to deepen student knowledge and understanding of traditional American History
3. Measurable improvement in teacher knowledge of how to integrate reading, writing, and history in lessons designed to improve student academic and historical literacy skills
4. Opportunities for teachers to develop and analyze lessons that translate increased content and pedagogical knowledge into effective classroom history instruction
5. Support the induction of new teachers, as they take on the responsibility of teaching American history.

The project has three principal objectives which were developed to measure the project's project toward meeting these five goals. A detailed analysis of each of these objectives begins on page 8.

### **Evaluation Methods**

---

The project's evaluation was a cooperative undertaking by project staff, district personnel, partner agencies, and an external evaluation group. The Oakland Unified School District contracted with the Center for Evaluation and Research LLC (C.E.R.) from the project's outset to facilitate the evaluation of the Teaching American History Project. C.E.R. coordinated local evaluation efforts to furnish process and summative information to the project staff with the goal of validating successful practices and providing for evidence-based decision-making.

A local evaluation plan was implemented and consisted of an outline of general evaluation activities that were to be accomplished each year. The plan served as a general guide that directed evaluation efforts. The project evaluation team developed the following logic model that provides a graphic representation between program activities and proposed outcomes:

**Table 1: Oakland Unified School District Teaching American History Project – Logic model**

Target Populations	Inputs – Project Activities			Intermediate Outcomes	Summative Outcomes
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Beginning Teachers	Varies according to grade level (see next three rows)			This standard requires new teachers to gain core academic content by attending at least four workshops connected to their subject matter per year.	Same as below
5 <sup>th</sup> grade history and social studies teachers (Target 25 teachers)	Biography: In-depth Examinations of Significant Men and Women in American History	The Road to the Constitution	Enhancing Content For Critical Reading of Historical Fiction	-Changes in teacher knowledge and behavior  -Continuing education units completed by participating teachers	-Increased understanding of American History by students in classrooms of project teachers as measured by performance on the California Standards test in American history
8 <sup>th</sup> grade history and social studies teachers (Target 10-12 teachers)  11 <sup>th</sup> grade history and social studies teachers (Target 10-13 teachers)	Biography: In-depth Examinations of Significant Men and Women in American History	The Constitution: Interpretation and Conflict	Foreign Policy: The History of America's Changing Role in World Affairs	-Participation of teachers in leadership activities  -Additional higher quality lesson studies	-Changes in 8 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students' ability to write about selected topics in American history (students demonstrate ability to engage in historical thinking)
5 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , and 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers – All participating teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-School year professional development program (ongoing)</li> <li>-“Research Lessons” support for teachers working collaboratively</li> <li>-Instructional resources (general)</li> <li>- The Oakland Museum of California instructional resources</li> <li>- University of California History-Social Studies Project (UCCHSSP) summer literacy institutes in 2005 and 2006 (twenty-five teachers each summer)</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased fidelity to the scope and sequence of state-mandated course of study (i.e.: 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers cover the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century)</li> <li>-Increased attention paid by teachers to the district's historical thinking strands (chronology, evidence, diversity, interpretation, and historical significance)</li> </ul>	

### Selected Instruments

The project evaluation utilized a variety of instruments to gather information on program processes and impacts. Data collection methods included surveys, workshop evaluation forms, telephone questionnaires, observation protocols, one-to-one interviews, and focus groups. Evaluators, project staff, and teachers collected the data.

The following is a brief description of the instruments/data sources used by the project for evaluation purposes:

- American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards: A locally developed instrument comprised of several items designed to measure teacher knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors related to history instruction was developed by local evaluators. The complete two-part survey was administered in November of 2004 with a follow-up administration in winter of 2005-2006.
- Teacher focus groups: The project evaluators performed focus group interviews during the 2006 Summer Institute. The findings from these interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and reported.
- Workshop evaluation form/Summer Institute Exit Survey: The evaluators provided analysis of teacher workshops throughout the implementation of the project. The information shared by these reports was discussed with staff.
- Teacher Writing Samples: Teachers were asked to do reflective writing throughout the year about their experiences related to the project. The four main topics that teachers wrote about included reflections on the lecturers and the material that was presented, the lesson study process, student writing, and the Summer Institute. The project evaluators did a content analysis of all of the writing and reported findings to project staff.
- Student writing samples from OUSD American History Assessment: the project collected writing assessments from students four times during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Teachers were asked to provide student writings from one-class for this assessment. The samples were of student writing to a history prompt that required students to read and consider a variety of primary source documents as they developed their responses. These student writings were read by at least two project staff, teachers, or evaluators. The project also collected class sets of student writing to this prompt from OUSD 11<sup>th</sup> grade American history that were not history grant project participants.

- Student standardized tests: California Standards History and English Subtests (CST) were used to measure the project's impact on eighth and eleventh-grade student achievement. Evaluation activities included a sampling of project and non-project students and between group comparisons using appropriate statistical analysis. The program evaluators also undertook an analysis of CST assessment results by cluster areas.

### Evaluation Reporting

The project stakeholders met regularly with evaluators to plan and discuss evaluation findings. The evaluators also maintained a comprehensive web presence with regular updates. The website includes the evaluation plan, reports, and surveys, and can be accessed at:

<http://californiaschools.net/americanhistory/index.html>

### No Child Left Behind Statute

The evaluation took seriously the changes in the federal legislation particularly in regards to the utilization of more rigorous "scientifically based research" methods. In response to this the project adopted a quasi-experimental approach to analyze student academic achievement. This approach met the definition of scientifically based research, as defined in Title IX of the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Specifically, the evaluation met all of the following six criteria:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation and experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated questions and provide a justification for the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements that are reliable and valid;
4. Utilizes a quasi-experimental design with appropriate controls; and
5. Activities are sufficiently detailed to be replicated.

## **Progress Toward Meeting Objectives**

The following is the progress made by the project during the second year in meeting the objectives.

*Objective 1. 90% of the teachers will demonstrate increases in professional knowledge and qualifications related to working in teaching history and social science as demonstrated by teacher changes in the American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards.*

Objective 1 has been achieved as determined by results garnered from the American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards, reflective journals by teachers, classroom observations, the Summer Institute Exit Survey, and focus group interviews. The findings from these data collection and analysis efforts underscore a consistent improvement by teachers in their history content knowledge and pedagogical approaches.

### American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards:

In November of 2004, the evaluators and staff developed a survey whose goal was to measure the project's impact on teacher self-assessment of content knowledge and instructional practice. The survey consists of three sections. The first section contains general questions about teaching history/social studies. The second section of the survey is designed to elicit information about teaching and student learning as it relates to specific state content standards. The third section asks teachers to list any major history/social studies units being taught that are not part of the standards for their grade level.

A baseline survey was administered to 32 of 46 (69.6%) year one teachers during the winter of 2004-2005 and a follow up survey was administered to 29 of 56 (51.8%) year two teachers in the winter of 2005-2006. Comparative results showed that all project teachers demonstrated at least some increases in professional knowledge in the types of instructional strategies they employed in their classrooms and in their coverage of state content standards. Data show that the percentage of teachers who rated their level of knowledge as good or expert increased a minimum of 17.4% in all four instructional strategies as demonstrated in the following table:

**Table 2: Percentage of project teachers who rated their knowledge level as good or expert by instructional strategy**

<b>Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>BASELINE N=32 FOLLOW UP N=29</b>	<b>Good or Expert</b>	<b>Increase/ Decrease</b>
My knowledge of the history/social studies standards for the grade level(s) I teach	BASELINE	56.3%	+26.5%
	FOLLOW UP	82.8%	
My knowledge of American history and social studies content for the grade level(s) I teach	BASELINE	68.8%	+17.4%
	FOLLOW UP	86.2%	
My knowledge of appropriate primary sources to use when I am teaching history and social studies	BASELINE	34.4%	+31.1%
	FOLLOW UP	65.5%	
My knowledge of curriculum and other instructional resources to assist my history/social studies instruction	BASELINE	43.7%	+21.8%
	FOLLOW UP	65.5%	

Comparative results showed that the percentage of teachers who rated their ability level as good or expert increased in seven of eight of the instructional strategies they used in their classrooms. The results are detailed in the table below:

**Table 3: Percentage of project teachers who rated their ability level as good or expert by instructional strategy**

<b>Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>BASELINE N=32 FOLLOW UP N=29</b>	<b>Good or Expert</b>	<b>Increase/ Decrease</b>
My ability to promote chronological/spatial thinking among students in my classroom	BASELINE	53.2%	+12.3%
	FOLLOW UP	65.5%	
My ability to engage students in the examination of evidence	BASELINE	59.4%	+23.0%
	FOLLOW UP	82.4%	
My ability to provide student diverse and multiple perspectives from the past to promote historical understanding	BASELINE	67.7%	+18.5%
	FOLLOW UP	86.2%	
My ability to promote student interpretation	BASELINE	62.5%	+20.2%
	FOLLOW UP	82.7%	
My ability to assist students in determining historical/geographical significance	BASELINE	62.6%	+16.7%
	FOLLOW UP	79.3%	
My ability to use biographies when teaching history/social studies	BASELINE	68.7%	-20.4%
	FOLLOW UP	48.3%	
My ability to use technology to teach history/social studies	BASELINE	35.5%	+5.9%
	FOLLOW UP	41.4%	
My ability to use multiple assessments, including writing projects and collaborative assessments related to history/social studies	BASELINE	56.3%	+5.7%
	FOLLOW UP	62.0%	

The percentage of teachers who self-rated their knowledge and ability levels as good or expert increased in 11 of the 12 instructional strategies measured by the survey. The results of the entire survey were provided by the evaluators to the project staff for program planning purposes and are included in the attachments (see Attachment A).

Teacher Writing Samples: Teachers were asked to do reflective writing throughout the year. The project evaluators did a content analysis of this writing. The four main topics that teachers wrote about included reflections on the lecturers and the material that was presented, the lesson study process, student writing, and the Summer Institute. All four topics received primarily favorable comments but also garnered constructive suggestions for improvement. The following is a sample of teacher responses that are representative of the general consensus that the project is having a beneficial impact on teacher content knowledge and instructional practice. The complete report that includes all the teacher reflections is included in the attachments (see Attachment B).

### Sample 1: Teacher reflective writing - 2005-2006

#### Teacher Writing Samples – 39 Teachers

- *Being a learner has stimulated me tremendously as a teacher. The lectures and discussions have been stellar.*
- *I really enjoyed collaborating with other teachers about the lesson study and how it could be improved, etc. I think it is extremely helpful to have input from other teachers to gain insight and perspective as to how students can begin to appreciate history through well thought out lessons and activities.*
- *My lesson study team is really great to work with – it was exciting to modify the lessons in our unit to try to create a successful activity for my class. The students are increasingly speaking about controversial issues and showing understanding of both sides.*
- *In order for children to become better students, it is essential that the teacher fine-tune his or her skills as an educator. For example, if students are to become better writers, they will need a focus question that clearly lays out what it is they need to address in an essay.*
- *Teaching writing – we need more support to do this if we use writing as a measure of success. We need to move through it differently. Perhaps we could do it earlier in the year – then refine it, and finally, using some strategies to teach an additional lesson.*
- *The presenters this week [Summer Institute] gave information and inspiration for their topics; how that translates into practice will depend on many factors but I know that it will influence me because it has changed the way I view the topics presented and the way I view my teaching*
- *... this project provides us with the intellectual stimulation that energizes our brains and drives our classrooms. This project has made us all better teachers, better at our craft!*
- *Pedagogically, this project allows me to prioritize US History in class, and helps me to develop methods which are more exciting and memorable than a straight forward use of textbooks as the foundation of a history program.*

Summer Institute Exit Survey: Project staff and evaluators developed an exit survey that was administered to teachers who attended the Summer Institute. Section I of the survey asked teachers to rate the quality of the 16 presentations offered during the year at the Inservices and at the Institute. The rating scale ranged from excellent, very good, good, fair, to poor. Table 4 contains an overview of their responses:

**Table 4: Quality ratings of the 2005-2006 Inservice and Summer Institute presentations**

<b>Presenter Date of Presentation</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>
<b>Caroline Cox</b> October 18, 2005	<i>"Original Meanings: Teaching the Ratification of the Constitution"</i>	N=24	11 45.8%	9 37.5%	4 16.7%	
<b>Robin Einhorn</b> November 8, 2005	<i>"The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Constitution"</i>	N=22	10 45.5%	10 45.5%	2 9.1%	
<b>Caroline Winterer</b> November 17, 2005	<i>"Freedom of Expression in 18th-Century America: The Case of Peter Zenger, 1735"</i>	N=17	11 64.7%	5 29.4%	1 5.9%	
<b>Waldo Martin</b> December 6, 2005	<i>"David Walker: American Patriot?"</i>	N=10	7 70.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	
<b>Mark Brilliant</b> December 6, 2005	<i>"Examining 'Asiatic Racialization' through Asian Naturalization Cases and the Legal Campaign Against the Alien Land Laws"</i>	N=8	3 37.5%	4 50.0%	1 12.5%	
<b>Alex Saragoza</b> February 21, 2006	<i>"Beyond Binary Interpretations: The Mexican War and Constitutional Issues"</i>	N=12	3 25.0%	8 66.7%	1 8.3%	
<b>Robin Einhorn</b> February 23, 2006	<i>"The Declaration of Independence"</i>	N=22	13 59.1%	8 36.4%	1 4.5%	
<b>Charles Postel</b> May 18, 2006	<i>"The Historiography of the Salem Witchcraft Trials"</i>	N=15	9 60.0%	5 33.3%	1 6.7%	
<b>Eric Foner</b> Date: May 20, 2006	<i>"American Freedom: Before and After 9/11"</i>	N=20	19 95.0%	1 5.0%		
<b>Robert Johnston</b> May 23, 2006	<i>"The Radical Middle Class in American History: John Brown, Martin Luther King and ...Harry Lane"</i>	N=11	1 9.1%	4 36.4%	3 27.3%	3 27.3%
<b>Robin Einhorn</b> June 26, 2006	<i>"What is Federalism?"</i>	N=29	19 65.5%	7 24.1%	2 6.9%	1 3.4%
<b>Chris Arriola</b> June 27, 2006	<i>"Mendez v. Westminster (1947): How Thurgood Marshall and Earl Warren Ended Segregation in California"</i>	N=12	5 41.7%	5 41.7%	2 16.7%	
<b>Caroline Winterer</b> June 27, 2006	<i>"The Trouble With Tea"</i>	N=16	13 81.3%	3 18.8%		
<b>Clarence Walker</b> June 28, 2006	<i>"Dred Scott and the Coming of the Civil War"</i>	N=29	8 27.6%	14 48.3%	6 20.7%	1 3.4%
<b>Kevin Adams</b> Date: June 29, 2006	<i>"The Fortunes of War: Presidential Authority During the Civil War and Reconstruction."</i>	N=14	3 21.4%	7 50.0%	4 28.6%	
<b>Jennifer Spear</b> June 29, 2006	<i>"Indians' Old and New Worlds"</i>	N=16	8 50.0%	5 31.3%	3 18.8%	

The results contained in the above table indicate that the overwhelming majority of presentations were rated as excellent, very good, or good and participants were satisfied with the quality and content of the workshops. Section II of the survey asked participants to rate the quality or usefulness (in terms of use in the classroom) of the instructional content, materials, and support offered by the project. The results are contained in Table 5 on the following page:

**Table 5: Project components rated by quality or usefulness**

	N=	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
The QUALITY of the visiting historian lectures	N=30	18 60.0%	12 40.0%		
The USEFULNESS of the content and materials provided by visiting historians	N=29	12 41.4%	12 41.4%	4 13.8%	1 3.4%
The QUALITY of the reading and instructional materials provided by the project staff	N=30	5 16.7%	19 63.3%	6 20.0%	
The USEFULNESS of the reading and instructional materials provided by the project staff	N=30	4 13.3%	15 50.0%	10 33.3%	1 3.3%
The USEFULNESS of the lesson study process in assisting you to improve your instructional program	N=30	14 46.7%	13 43.3%	2 6.7%	1 3.3%
The QUALITY of the staff support provided you this past year.	N=29	22 75.9%	6 20.7%	1 3.4%	

All respondents (100.0%) rated “the quality of the visiting historian lectures” as excellent or very good (the highest rated item) while 63.3% rated “the usefulness of the reading and instructional materials provided by project staff” as excellent or very good (the lowest rated). Overall, the majority of respondents rated each item offered by the project as excellent or very good in terms of usefulness in their classrooms.

Sections III and IV of the survey elicited written responses to two open-ended questions. The first question asked teachers to explain how the project’s activities have changed, if at all, their teaching of the U.S. Constitution. Respondents commented that their increased knowledge enables them to present the subject to their students with more depth, from multiple perspectives, and in the proper contexts. The second question asked for ideas that would make the project more useful. Ideas varied, but the most common themes included the lesson study process, the lectures from visiting historians, student writing strategies, and goal setting for different project activities. All the written responses from the Summer Institute Exit Survey are included in the complete report (see Attachment C).

Focus Groups: Complementing the surveys and the teacher writing samples, were focus group interviews held during the summer institute in June of 2006. Transcriptions of these interview showed that teachers consistently stated their appreciation of the project and attributed to the project changes they have made in their instructional programs. The following is a sample of actual quotes taken from the focus groups held and are used here as representative examples of teacher remarks addressing various project-related topics:

## Sample 2: Focus group findings - June 2006

### Focus Group Findings – 30 Teachers Participated

#### Overall thoughts of the project

- *"It is the best professionally development I have ever been involved with. It is fantastic, inspirational. It gets you together with other ambitious and intelligent educators who want to improve their practice and their knowledge base."*
- *"This is the first "professional" professional development I've done in 20 years of teaching. I've attended, probably hundreds, of so called professional development classes but this is the first one that I would consider professional."*

#### Lectures from the visiting historians

- *"The information provided by presenters was useful because of the depth of the coverage – makes me a better teacher because I know the material better. It fills in the gaps that exist in the class textbooks."*
- *"They motivate me, they make me see what is interesting and make me understand what historical thinking is...and thrill of learning and discovering and wondering."*

#### Materials from the visiting historians

- *"It is important to show the children primarily source documents, and it is important to show them the artifacts of history."*
- *"I don't think the lecturers are giving us handouts to use in our classroom necessarily. I think that's where we're more the student and the learner."*
- *"I was provided some background materials and my students were really able to delve into the information and really understand what the assignment was."*

#### Lesson study

- *"The end product is not the lesson; the end product is the time you spent together with other colleagues."*
- *"I would prefer to not have all the groups do the same lesson. I think it limits what we end up doing for the year. I would like to see us do four or five wonderful lessons that are different that I could use."*
- *"You're talking with other teachers about your craft. I think that is very important."*

#### Student writing

- *"This program makes you actively a writing teacher, and a thinking teacher as well as a reading teacher which really broadens the scope of what we do."*
- *"I think we need a year long set of prompts that target different types of historical thinking or language supports that give kids models and examples and ways of demonstrating historical thinking. Not just a cold assessment, but actually teach it and practice it."*

#### The Summer Institute

- *"This isn't a cattle call where you need make up days. It's a lovely environment with a lot of dignity."*
- *"I think it is invaluable. I think this is the kind of stuff that teachers should be exposed to and should have access to in order to elevate them to a higher level of teaching."*

In aggregate, the data from the American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards, teacher writing samples, the Summer Institute Exit Survey, and focus group interviews provide evidence that teachers are improving their content knowledge and are adopting quality instructional practices.

*Objective 2. Annually, project students who participated in a project classroom in previous years will demonstrate statistically significantly ( $p < .05$ ) higher scores in history and social science than non-participating school-age students as measured by the California Achievement Test (CST).*

This objective has been achieved both in 2005 and 2006 with separate cohorts of students in classrooms of participating students. Given the project's emphasis on writing and critical thinking, the project staff also was interested in the difference between groups in regards to the CST Language Arts subtest scores. Project students were compared to all the other students at their grade level in the district who had available CST data. Using a test of significance, eighth and eleventh grade students in project teacher classrooms scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than students in classrooms of non-participating teachers on both the California Standards Test's (CST) History and Language Arts subtests. The following table provides an overview of the student achievement data for 8th and 11th grade students.

**Table 6: 2006 8th and 11th grade group CST History and Language Arts subtest scale score results - comparison non-project vs. project students**

<b>Grade Level &amp; Subtest</b>	<b>Student Status</b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>Mean Scale Score</b>	<b>Difference Between Groups</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade History	Non-Project Students	1560	302.53	+2.98
	Project Students	1197	305.51	
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts	Non-Project Students	1579	313.15	+7.46
	Project Students	1198	320.61	
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade History	Non-Project Students	1163	294.85	+16.05
	Project Students	625	310.90	
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts	Non-Project Students	1218	292.90	+13.07
	Project Students	633	305.97	

Eighth grade students in project teachers' classrooms scored 2.98 scale score points higher, on average, and eleventh grade students scored 16.05 scale score points higher on the History Subtest than students of non-participating teachers. On the Language Arts Subtest, eighth grade students in project teachers' classrooms scored 7.46 scale score points higher and eleventh grade students scored 13.07 scale score points higher than students of non-participating teachers. The above scale score difference is reflected in the corresponding student performance levels. Table 7 on the following page provides the performance level results for project (treatment) and other district (control) 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Table 7: 2006 8th and 11th grade group CST History subtest performance level results – comparison non-project vs. project students**

Performance Level	Eighth Grade		Eleventh Grade		
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	
Far Below Basic	Count	466	319	394	158
	% within Treatment or Control	29.9%	26.6%	33.9%	25.3%
	% of Total	16.9%	11.6%	22.0%	8.8%
Below Basic	Count	364	308	296	131
	% within Treatment or Control	23.3%	25.7%	25.5%	21.0%
	% of Total	13.2%	11.2%	16.6%	7.3%
Basic	Count	492	356	323	198
	% within Treatment or Control	31.5%	29.7%	27.8%	31.7%
	% of Total	17.8%	12.9%	18.1%	11.1%
Proficient	Count	153	140	112	101
	% within Treatment or Control	9.8%	11.7%	9.6%	16.2%
	% of Total	5.5%	5.1%	6.3%	5.6%
Advanced	Count	85	74	38	37
	% within Treatment or Control	5.4%	6.2%	3.3%	5.9%
	% of Total	3.1%	2.7%	2.1%	2.1%
Total	Count	1560	1197	1163	625
	% within Treatment or Control	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	56.6%	43.4%	65.0%	35.0%

The data in the above table shows that eighth and eleventh grade students in the classes of project teachers were more likely to score proficient or above on the 2006 CST History Subtest than students in non-project classrooms located within the Oakland Unified School District. Specifically, 17.9% of the projects eighth grade students scored proficient or advance compared to 15.2% of the non-project eighth grade students. Similarly, 22.1% of the projects eleventh grade students scored proficient or advance compared to 12.9% of the non-project eleventh grade students.

The project was also interested in how students did on the 2006 CST by cluster areas – test items are clustered by areas of study. This is especially important for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade test because it assesses both world and U.S. history. The following is an overview of 8<sup>th</sup> grade student performance by CST cluster areas.

**Table 8: Eighth grade CST history assessment cluster scores**

Cluster Area	Number of Items in Cluster	Mean Number of Items Correct	Percentage Correct as a Group
U.S. Constitution and the Early Republic	22	9.67	43.95%
Civil War and its Aftermath	13	5.40	41.53%
World History and Geography Ancient Civilizations (GR6)	16	6.82	42.63%
Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (GR7)	14	6.22	44.43%
Renaissance Reformation (GR7)	10	3.99	39.90%

There appears to be only slight differences in 8<sup>th</sup> grade student performance by cluster areas. An overview of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students performance by CST cluster areas is provided in the analysis contained under objective 3.

In summary, students in participating teacher classrooms scored as a group significantly higher on both the CST history and English subtests that were administered at the end of the project's first and second years of implementation. It should be noted that the differences between groups may be the result of selection bias that is, those teachers who selected to participate in the project may have been teachers who used more effective instructional approaches prior to their participation in the project.

*Objective 3 - Annually, project students in 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who participated in a project classroom will demonstrate statistically significantly ( $p < .05$ ) higher scores on district writing assessments than non-participating students.*

This objective has been achieved both in 2005 and 2006 with separate cohorts of students in classrooms of participating teachers. The project collected writing samples from both 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. Eleventh grade students have submitted writing samples four times during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. The writing samples were evaluated with a writing rubric developed by project and district staff. Project evaluators reviewed and scored each paper a minimum of two times using the rubric and a Likert scale that ranged from 0 (low) to 4 (high). These papers were scored blindly – that is to say that evaluators did not know if the students were in project teacher classrooms or other teacher classrooms in the district. The scoring rubric measured student writing within each of the following five categories:

1. Thesis: a) addresses the prompt, b) provides a map of the argument to be made
2. Knowledge: a) use chronological/spatial thinking, b) connect knowledge to argument, c) define and clarify essential terms
3. Use of Documents: a) understand the meaning and perspective of author, b) show relationship to argument
4. Analysis: a) make plausible inferences, b) draw rational conclusions, c) identify and prioritize significance, d) address multiple perspectives
5. Organization and clarity: a) thesis, topic sentences, evidence, analysis, and conclusion

Table 9 shows the distribution of scores for the last three writing assessments (note: the fall 2004 assessment results were not included because it was a "trial run" for the assessment process).

**Table 9: Score distribution of district writing samples for 11th grade students**

Scores on Papers	Project Students Spring 2005	Project Students Winter 2006	Project Students Spring 2006
0	Not measured	18 (7.2%)	6 (2.3%)
1 – Below Basic	20 (12.5%)	65 (26.0%)	33 (12.5%)
2 – Basic	95 (59.4%)	101 (40.4%)	124 (47.1%)
3 – Proficient	33 (20.6%)	46 (18.4%)	64 (24.3%)
4 – Above Proficient	12 (7.5%)	20 (8.0%)	36 (13.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (100%)</b>	<b>250 (100%)</b>	<b>263 (100%)</b>

The above scores show a consistent movement of students toward higher results between writing samples. Table 10 compares the assessment scores between winter 2006 and spring 2006 in the five rubric categories and the overall scores:

**Table 10: Writing sample scores for 11th grade students by category**

Rubric Category	Assessment	Rubric Score				
		0	1	2	3	4
Thesis: A well developed thesis	Winter 2006	13.2%	10.8%	41.2%	23.2%	11.6%
	Spring 2006	3.4%	3.8%	42.6%	33.1%	17.1%
Knowledge: Supporting a thesis with relevant and substantial outside information	Winter 2006	7.6%	27.2%	27.2%	24.8%	13.2%
	Spring 2006	3.0%	11.0%	29.3%	36.5%	20.2%
Use of Docs: Effective use of documents	Winter 2006	2.0%	30.4%	35.2%	18.0%	14.4%
	Spring 2006	2.7%	28.5%	23.2%	20.5%	25.1%
Analysis: An effective analysis	Winter 2006	3.6%	26.8%	40.0%	21.6%	8.0%
	Spring 2006	1.9%	11.8%	33.1%	36.5%	16.7%
Organization and Clarity: A well organized essay	Winter 2006	9.6%	16.0%	37.6%	27.2%	9.6%
	Spring 2006	3.0%	7.2%	44.1%	33.1%	12.5%
Overall Reviewers' Scores	Winter 2006	7.2%	26.0%	40.4%	18.4%	8.0%
	Spring 2006	2.3%	12.5%	47.1%	24.3%	13.7%

For the spring 2006 assessment, the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who scored proficient or above increased in all five rubric categories when compared with scores from the winter 2006 assessment. Students scoring proficient or above in the "Thesis" category increased 15.4% from 34.8% to 50.2%; the "Knowledge" category increased 18.7% from 38.0% to 56.7%; the "Use of Docs" category increased 13.2% from 32.4% to 45.6%; the "Analysis" category increased 23.6% from 29.6% to 53.2%; and the "Organization and Clarity" category increased 8.8% from 36.8% to 45.6%. Overall, the percentage of

students scoring proficient or above increased 11.6% from 26.4% to 38.0% when averaged across all five categories.

Project staff were interested in exploring the relationship between how 11th grade students performed on the spring 2006 CST History and Language Arts assessments and how the same students performed on the spring 2006 district writing assessment. The correlational analysis shows that there does exist a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation (.583) for the 224 students who had both CST History subtest scores and district writing samples. That is to say those students who scored higher on the writing assessment were more likely to have scored higher on the CST History subtest and; conversely, students who scored lower on the writing assessment were more likely to not have scored as high on the CST History subtest. Similarly, there also exists a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation (.574) for the 217 students who had both CST Language Arts subtest scores and district writing samples. This means that those students who scored higher on the writing assessment were more likely to have scored higher on the CST Language Arts subtest and; conversely, students who scored lower on the writing assessment were more likely to not have scored as high on the CST Language Arts subtest.

Project staff were also interested in whether there exists a correlation between how 11th grade students performed on the spring 2006 CST's individual history assessment clusters and how students performed on their district writing assessments? The following is the rank order of correlations for each 11th grade CST cluster. The closer the number approaches 1 – then the higher the correlation. (N=224)

**Table 11: Eleventh grade CST history assessment cluster scores**

<b>Cluster Area</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Number of Items in Cluster</b>	<b>Mean Number of Items Correct</b>	<b>Percentage Correct as a Group</b>
Foundations of American Political and Social Thought	0.438**	10	4.27	42.70%
Industrialization and the U.S. as a World Power	0.496**	13	5.61	43.15%
United States Between the World Wars	0.513**	12	5.34	44.50%
World War II and Foreign Affairs	0.487**	12	4.56	38.00%
Post World War II Domestic Issues	0.446**	13	5.39	41.46%

The data in Table 11 shows that there exists a statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation (.583) for the 224 students who had both CST History subtest scores and district writing samples. That is to say those students who scored higher on the writing assessment were more likely to have scored higher

on the CST History subtest clusters and; conversely, students who scored lower on the writing assessment were more likely to not have scored as high on the CST History subtest clusters. There appears to be only slight differences in student performance by cluster areas.

In summary, students in participating teacher classrooms scored as a group significantly higher on the district writing sample that were administered at both the end of the project's first and second years of implementation.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

---

The project has successfully implemented all of its components and achieved all of its objectives. Objective 1 has been achieved each of the first two years as determined by results garnered from multiple data sources including the American History Teacher Survey: Teaching the California Content Standards, reflective journals by teachers, classroom observations, the Summer Institute Exit Survey, and focus group interviews. The findings provide a picture of ongoing improvement by teachers in their history content knowledge and pedagogical approaches.

Objective 2 has been achieved both in 2005 and 2006 with separate cohorts of students in classrooms of participating students. Project students were compared to all the other students at their grade level in the district who had available CST data. Using a test of significance, eighth and eleventh grade students in project teacher classrooms scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than students in classrooms of non-participating teachers on both the California Standards Test's (CST) History and Language Arts subtests.

Objective 3 has been achieved both in 2005 and 2006 with separate cohorts of students in classrooms of participating teachers. The project collected writing samples from both 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. Writing samples show a picture of increasingly higher student writing levels.

### **Recommendations and Next Steps**

The project staff successfully implemented some of the recommendations contained in last year's evaluation report. The project did provide data to demonstrate that there exists a strong relationship between how students did on district writing assessments and the 2006 CST tests. Similarly, the district was able to provide CST item results by cluster areas.

Project students are outperforming non-project students on both the CST History and English Subtests and on the district writing assessment. However, only 17.9% of the eighth grade and 22.1% of the eleventh grade students in the project scored proficient and above on the History CST. Similarly, only 38% of

the project's eleventh grade students scored a 3 (proficient) or above on the spring 2006 writing assessment. A further analysis of student writing demonstrates that eleventh grade students have trouble organizing their thoughts and providing analysis of primary sources. We have the following recommendations based on these issues surrounding student achievement:

1. The project staff may want to explore the extent to which history is covered in fifth grade. Is sufficient time set aside by fifth grade teachers to cover both the breadth and depth of the fifth grade curricula?

2. The project may want to encourage fifth grade teachers to use document based writing activities with their children. On a larger level, we would suggest that project staff explore with district curriculum specialists the possibility of using writing assessments at all grade levels during set times during the year. The writing activities would require a lot of scaffolding and writing support, but they will help build the foundation for later history and language arts courses.

2. The project staff may want to review with teachers each of the upcoming 2007 CST history released items for eighth and eleventh grades. Perhaps staff could group teachers and have them reflect on their own instructional programs and changes they will need to make in order to ensure that the content and historical thinking skills are grasped by their students.