

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY GRANT

May 2006 Evaluation Report

Submitted by
DRW Consultants

Introduction

The Teaching American History (TAH) project is funded by the United States Department of Education's Teaching American History Grant program to support social studies teachers in the fourteen local education agencies (LEAs) served by the Louisiana Region 2 Education Service Center. The project objectives are:

- Enhance teachers' knowledge of traditional American history,
- Assist with certification and qualification credentials of teachers,
- Improve student academic achievement, and
- Fortify local education agencies' partnership with entities possessing extensive content expertise and to develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative cohesive models of professional development.

Eligible participants are elementary, middle, or high school teachers with some or primary teaching responsibility for American or Louisiana history. Special education teachers providing services to students in American History, Louisiana Studies, American Studies, American History, or American History specific electives are also eligible.

As in the first project year, the TAH project activities for school year 2005-2006 will include Saturday workshops, summer institutes and course offerings which address eras, topics, themes, and concepts in American and Louisiana history. Major support is provided by Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) Department of History and Political Science (HIPS) and Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LBP) in partnership with State Archives, State Library of Louisiana, State Museum, and the State Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Additional project support is provided by the TAH Project Director, Academic Coordinator, Instructional Coordinator and Region 2 Education Service Center Director. Tangipahoa Parish Schools serves as the fiscal agent while the Region 2 Superintendents Council serves in an advisory capacity the TAH project.

The primary purpose of the May 2006 Evaluation Report is to provide information collected by means of the Teacher Response Form at the fourth Teaching American History Workshop. *The Port Hudson Battlefield Experience*, held on May 6 was the first Saturday workshop offered as a field trip experience.

The lecture and tour of the battlefield sites focused on broadening participants understanding about:

- How confederate soldiers endured the longest siege of the civil war;*
- The union's bold experiment with African-American troops of the native guard; and*
- How to take their own students on a field trip to Port Hudson.*

The field trip and accompanying lecture was presented by Southeastern military historian, Dr. Harry Laver. The teacher participants were awarded 6 hours of continuing learning units and a \$65.00 stipend.

The evaluation report is designed to inform the U.S. Department of Education, the project staff, key stakeholders, and the Region 2 District Superintendents whose teachers are served by the TAH grant.

Demographic Data From The Port Hudson Battlefield Experience Field Trip

The workshop was attended by a total of 24 teachers. Based on demographic information collected in Section A of the Reviewer Response Form, 9 of the 24 participants (38%) were elementary school teachers, 11 (46%) were middle school teachers, and 4 (17%) were high school teachers. Six school districts and 22 schools were represented. The majority of the participants were from Tangipahoa and East Baton Rouge school districts. Most of the participants (12 out of 24) indicated that they taught in a suburban geographic location. Six of the 24 participants taught in small town/rural locations and 6 participants taught in urban locations. American History was the subject that the majority of the participants taught, followed by teachers who taught all subjects, Social Studies, Louisiana History, English, and Civics/Free Enterprise. A sample of the Teacher Response Form is available in Appendix A.

Teacher Response Data

After attending the Saturday Teachers Workshop for Women's History, the teachers were asked to rate the statements of Section B in the Teacher Response Form on a scale of 1-4 where "1" equals "strongly disagree" and "4" equals "strongly agree." Table 1 summarizes the Section B viewer responses.

Table 1: Section B Teacher Response Ratings

N=24	1	2	3	4
Statement 1: Participation in this professional development activity provided context rich history instruction for teachers.	0%	0%	4%	96%
Statement 2: Participation in this professional development activity provided opportunity to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding related to the State Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations (GLE) for history instruction.	0%	0%	4%	96%
Statement 3: Participation in this professional development activity provided teachers access to new curricula and innovative teaching strategies designed to increase student performance.	0%	0%	12%	88%
Statement 4: Participation in this professional development activity will enable teachers to plan to meet the needs of all student populations, resulting in improved student achievement.	0%	0%	8%	92%

- All of the teachers (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the workshop provided context rich history instruction.
- Additionally, all of the teachers (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop provided an opportunity to improve teachers' knowledge and understand better the state content standards, benchmarks, and GLE's related to history instruction.
- This workshop provided access to new curricula and innovative teaching strategies according to 100% of the participants.
- All of the teachers (100%) agreed that participation in this activity will enable teachers to meet the needs of all student populations and will result in improved student achievement.

In Section C of the Teacher Response Form, participants were asked to provide answers to a set of five open-ended questions. The following provides a summary of the questions and responses.

When asked about the types of workshop activities found to be most informative and appealing, the following responses were most frequently listed:

- Field experience (being there and having story told so well);
- Tour of historic battle sites, experiencing the interpretive walk;
- Extensive lecture information provided by Dr. Harry Laver; and
- Touring the battlefield museum.

The participants gave specific examples how they will use the knowledge and skills gained through the workshop. The responses most frequently listed were as follows:

- To plan field trips with students;
- Will share with teacher colleagues;
- Will use the lesson plan provided; and
- Will research diaries and other primary sources.

The participants were asked how they would share information with colleagues. The responses most frequently listed were as follows:

- Plan a student field trip to the park with colleagues;
- Share information with faculty study groups, colleagues;
- Share websites, lesson plans, and handouts with colleagues; and
- Tell colleagues that TAH leaders are an informative and fun group.

Additional activities and/or materials the participants most frequently reported would be useful are listed as follows:

- Internet resources, websites;
- Titles of books about Port Hudson;
- DVDs or virtual tour capabilities; and
- Picture and/or posters of Port Hudson.

In Section D, the participants were asked to rate four specific areas relating to the workshop. The descriptors provided for their rating were “poor”, “average”, and “excellent.” A space was also provided for any additional comments. Table 2 summarizes the responses of the participants.

Table 2: Section D Teacher Response Ratings

N=24	Poor	Average	Excellent
Program/Presenters	0%	0%	100%
Suitability of workshop format/site: onsite/remote	0%	0%	100%
Refreshment service/lunch	0%	0%	100%
The Workshop overall	0%	0%	100%

Some of the overall complimentary comments about the workshops are as follows:

- “Well organized; excellent presentation.”
- “Very informative”
- “You always have great workshops!”
- “I will attend every workshop I possibly can!”

Summary

Given the overall responses on all sections of the Teacher Response Form, it is considered that the workshop was a success. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. It was evident that participants planned to share the information from the seminar with colleagues and would encourage them to attend future TAH workshops. There were many positive comments made about the field trip format including the extensive knowledge of the presenter and the relevance of being physically present at the historical site. Based on the responses given by the participants, it is determined that a major project objective, enhancing teachers’ knowledge of Louisiana’s role in traditional American history, was achieved. A second objective, assisting with teacher qualification credentials, continuing learning units (CLUs), was accomplished. Teachers were awarded 6 hours of units for participation in the Saturday workshop.

Recommendations

Consideration should be given when planning future workshops to the responses given to the fourth question in Section C of the Teacher Response form which asked the participants to indicate what additional activities and/or materials would be useful to them. Given the positive comments regarding the field trip format, it is recommended that project leadership incorporate more field experiences in the upcoming Saturday workshops.

Appendix A



**THE ROLE OF LOUISIANA IN
TRADITIONAL AMERICAN HISTORY**

**THE PORT HUDSON BATTLEFIELD EXPERIENCE!
SATURDAY WORKSHOP & FIELD TRIP
MAY 6, 2006**

**Presented By
Southeastern Louisiana University
Department of History and Political Science**

**Funded by
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United States Department of Education**

TEACHER RESPONSE FORM

Name: _____ Last 4 digits SS#: _____

SECTION A:

Explain the primary purpose for participating in the Saturday Workshop/Field Trip: _____

School District: _____

School Name: _____

Indicate the grade level(s) you teach: _____

Indicate the core course(s) you teach: _____

Indicate the geographic location of school:

- Urban
- Suburban
- Small Town/Rural

In what ways will you share information from the TAH workshop/field trip with your colleagues at your school?

What additional activities and/or materials would be useful to you?

SECTION D:

Please rate the following features of the Teaching American History Workshop/Field Trip.

	Poor	Average	Excellent	Comments:
Program/ Presenters				
Suitability of workshop/ field trip format/site:				
Refreshment service/lunch				
The Workshop/Field Trip overall				

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