

EXCELLENCE

Excellence in Crafting Energetic Learners Teaching American History Grant Program

Year 1 Evaluation Report

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Lead District: Ander School District One, South Carolina

Project Director: Cecelia Score, Ander School District One

Evaluator: Christy Derrick, MPH, The Evaluation Group

Contact information: Christy Derrick, Lead Evaluator
803-719-5100
christy@evaluationgroup.com

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Table of Contents

| Introduction | Page |
|---|--|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Executive Summary | iii |
| Section I | Background of the Evaluation |
| 1.1 | 1 |
| 1.2 | 1 |
| 1.3 | 2 |
| 1.3.1 | 2 |
| 1.3.2 | 3 |
| Section II | Methods |
| 2.1 | 6 |
| 2.2 | 6 |
| 2.2.1 | 6 |
| 2.2.2 | 7 |
| 2.3 | 7 |
| 2.4 | 9 |
| 2.4.1 | 9 |
| 2.4.2 | 9 |
| Section III | Evaluation Findings |
| 3.1 | 10 |
| 3.1.1 | 10 |
| 3.1.2 | 11 |
| 3.2 | 13 |
| 3.2.1 | 13 |
| 3.2.2 | 14 |
| 3.2.3 | 15 |
| 3.2.4 | 17 |
| 3.3 | 18 |
| 3.4 | 23 |
| 3.5 | 24 |
| Section IV | Conclusions and Recommendations |
| 4.1 | 25 |
| 4.2 | 26 |
| References | 28 |
| Appendix A: Comments from the Spring Bi-annual Survey | 29 |

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Executive Summary

The *EXCELLENCE* program targets 4th and 5th grade teachers to empower them to become enthusiastic about helping students “excel” in American history. The program’s professional development focus aims to improve teachers’ knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of American history and transform existing instructional methods into instructional strategies of excellence to attain higher standards and raise student achievement. Project activities include school-year professional development workshops, on and off-site summer institutes, book study groups, peer support, hands-on training and coaching, designing American History Model Classrooms, and technology support.

The goal in evaluating the *EXCEL* program is to involve program stakeholders and decision makers in all aspects of the evaluation process. By adhering to a participatory approach to evaluation, it is believed that program stakeholders will gain a sense of ownership of the program and of the evaluation process itself. A mix of both qualitative and quantitative techniques has been used throughout the evaluation. Triangulation of the multiple data sources enhances the credibility and validity of the findings. Administrative records, teacher knowledge tests, surveys assessing behaviors and reactions, and student achievement data were used to evaluate the program.

The three project objectives are to:

- 1. Increase teacher knowledge of American history;*
- 2. Increase the number of fourth and fifth grade teachers receiving professional development and instructional support in American history;*
- 3. Increase the number of fourth and fifth grade students scoring at the proficiency level on state American history assessments.*

Sixty-four participants signed on to participate in the program and made up our “targeted teachers” group. Of the 64 targeted teachers, 10 did not participate in any professional development. Each participant was categorized into one of four levels of participation based upon the number of hours they participated in. Twenty-eight teachers participated in less than 40% of the professional development hours offered and were categorized in the “low participation” group. A small group of 6 were in the “medium” category and participated in between 40% and 69% of the professional development hours offered. Twenty participants in the “high” category participated in 70% or more of the professional development offered.

Monthly book studies were held throughout the year for a total of 7 meetings. All but 14 targeted teachers participated in the book studies to some extent. An additional 5 professional development sessions and two week-long summer institutes were offered. Of the 54 participants who took part in the professional development sessions, 32 participated in 6 hours or less, 16 participated in 7 to 12 hours, and 6 took part in 13 to 20 hours. Twenty-one teachers attended the off-site summer institute in Philadelphia, PA and 28 attended the one-week local summer institute that was held in the district.

Participants indicated how often they used technology to teach American history on the Fall and Spring bi-annual surveys. All teachers who had some level of participation in the professional development offered increased how often they used technology.

Participants were to be assigned to an American history teaching mentor. Mentors could be a school or district administrator, Instructional Coach or Facilitator, Curriculum Coach, a grant partner, or a veteran History teacher. On the Spring bi-annual survey, 49 (92%) of the 53 respondents could identify who their American history teaching mentor was. Twenty-six percent had met with their mentor 9 to 12 times over the school year. Forty-three percent rated the quality of their technical assistance from their mentor as “excellent.”

The *EXCELLENCE* website is maintained by the project director and includes participant photos, events, project partners, best practices, resources, and a calendar of events. Participants identified the three most useful areas of the website as those areas that provided examples of unique and creative lesson plans, related links about American history, and calendar of upcoming activities and events. Suggestions for improvement were also provided.

The professional self-assessment is a ten-question scale that asked participants to rate their perception of their content knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching American history, and their teaching skills. For all participants who completed both a pre-program assessment and a post-program assessment (54), there were statistically significant positive increases from pre- to post-program on 8 of the questions.

For assessing teacher knowledge, 55 participants took both the pretest and the posttest. Both were administered online. Those who participated the most in professional development had statistically significant higher posttest scores than pretest scores. Additionally, teachers who participated in both of the summer institutes had statistically significant higher scores at posttest than at pretest, whereas those who did not participate in the summer institutes did not have statistically significant higher posttest scores than pretest scores.

Our quasi-experimental design allows us to compare student achievement data on American history assessments of students taught by teachers in the *EXCELLENCE* program to students taught by teachers not in the *EXCELLENCE* program. During Year One, students took the new Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). Test data has not been released at the time this report was written.

Recommendations for the program are provided based upon the results of the evaluation, especially teacher comments on surveys.

Section I Background for the Evaluation

1.1 Introduction

The Evaluation Group, in cooperation with Ander School Districts One, Four, and Five, is under contract to conduct an evaluation of the Teaching American History (TAH) program. This Year One Evaluation Report documents program activities and outcomes that we are able to attribute to the program.

1.2 The *EXCELLENCE* Program

Ander School Districts One, Four, and Five in rural South Carolina has partnered with the History Department at Clemson University, American Institute for History Education, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and the South Carolina State Museum to transform the existing American history program into a program of excellence with high standards. The program called *EXCELLENCE (Excellence in Crafting Energetic Learners)*, targets teachers in grades 4 and 5 with the aim of empowering them to become enthusiastic about helping students “excel” in American history.

The program’s goal is to improve teachers’ knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of American history and transform existing instructional methods in American history into instructional strategies of excellence to attain higher standards and raise student achievement. Project activities include school-year professional development workshops, on and off-site summer institutes, book study groups, peer support, hands-on training and coaching, designing American History Model Classrooms, and technology support.

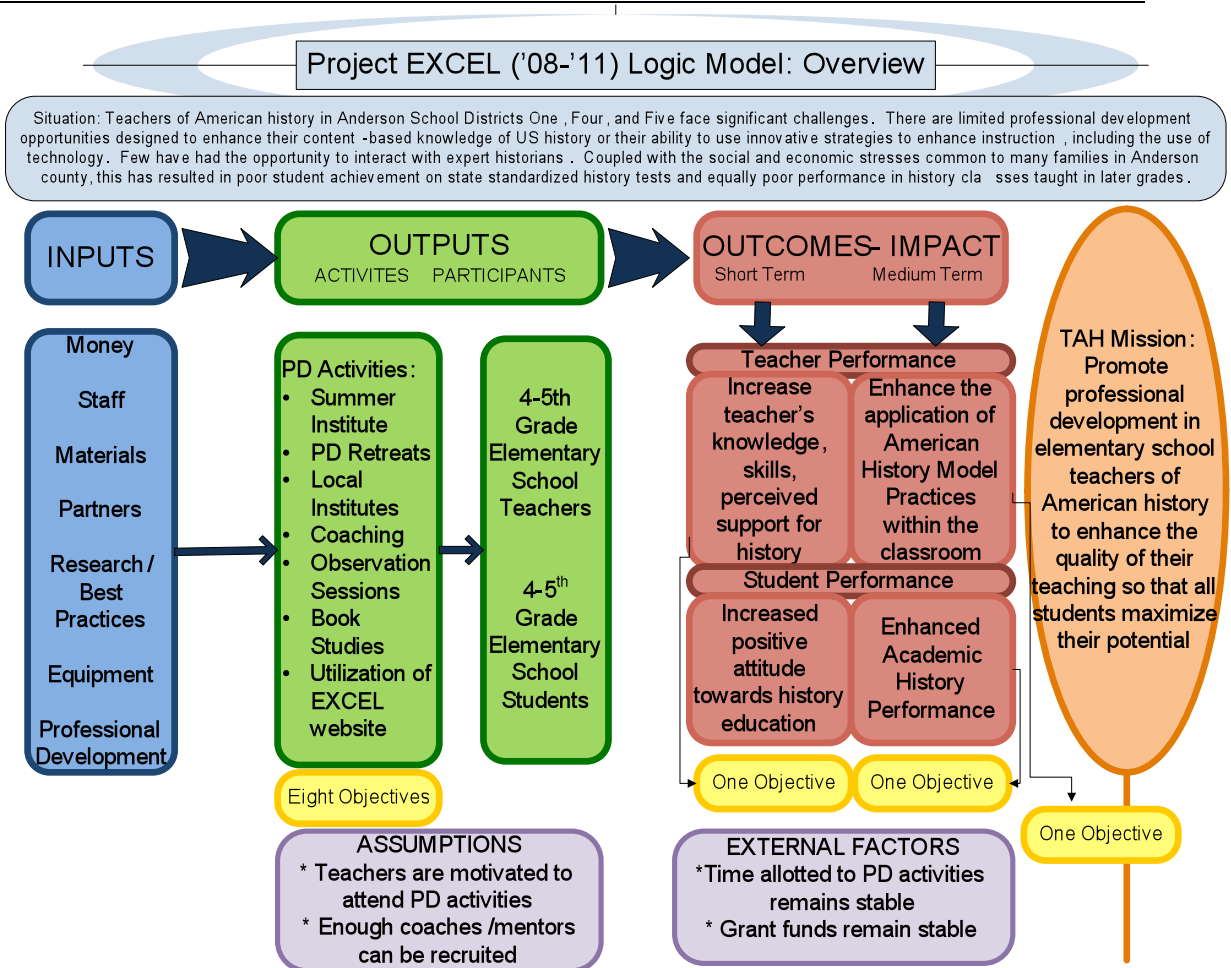
Project objectives are to:

1. Increase teacher knowledge of American history;
2. Increase the number of fourth and fifth grade teachers receiving professional development and instructional support in American history;
3. Increase the number of fourth and fifth grade students scoring at the proficiency level on state American history assessments.

Performance measures include a study of student achievement on statewide and district American history assessments, comprehensive knowledge tests to measure growth in teacher knowledge of American history, and Likert-type scales for assessing project effectiveness.

Figure 1.1 shows the *EXCELLENCE* logic model.

Figure 1.1



1.3 Evaluation Overview

1.3.1 Purpose

The goal in evaluating the *EXCELLENCE* program is to involve program stakeholders and decision makers in all aspects of the evaluation process. By adhering to a participatory approach to evaluation, it is believed that program stakeholders will gain a sense of ownership of the program and of the evaluation process itself. Specifically, the purpose is to:

- **Provide utilization-focused information for timely, informed decision making.**
This emphasis on timely feedback allows for the continuous improvement and enhancement of program activities and the program as a whole. Program

improvement is made possible with continuous feedback at every data collection time period.

1.3.2 Goals and Objectives

Performance objectives help map the progress toward accomplishing each goal. *EXCELLENCE'S* objectives are focused on improving teacher knowledge of American history, improving teacher instructional practices, and improving student achievement. The objectives linked to each overarching program goal are presented in Table 1.1 below.

| Table 1.1. EXCELLENCE Program Objectives and Evaluation Measures | |
|---|--|
| <i>Goal 1: Improve teachers' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of American history</i> | |
| Project Design Objectives and Benchmarks | Outcome Measures |
| Objective 1: 90% of targeted 4 th and 5 th grade teachers will participate in 5 professional development workshops during the school year for 3 years. Year One: 70% will participate. Year Two: 80% will participate. | Professional development participation documentation (manual or computer-based) collected during each session 5 times per year. |
| Objective 2: At least 8 "expert" teachers from each district and the Project Director (25 total) will participate in a one-week off-site institute during 3 summers. Year One: At least 15 will participate. Year Two: At least 20 will participate. | Professional development participation documentation collected during each summer institute once per year. |
| Objective 3: A minimum of 90% of targeted teachers will participate in monthly Book Study Groups for 3 years. Year One: 70% will participate. Year Two: 80% will participate. | Professional development participation documentation collected during each monthly session. |
| Objective 4: A minimum of 90% of targeted teachers will participate in a one-week local institute during 3 summers. Year One: 70% will participate. Year Two: 80% will participate. | Professional development participation documentation collected at each summer institute annually. |
| Objective 5: 100% of targeted teachers will demonstrate increased knowledge of American History by the end of the third year. Year One: 80% increase. Year Two: 90% increase (this will be defined in the APR as those who participate in the professional development). | Dr. Jim Jefferies from Clemson University will be creating this assessment annually and it will reflect the current focus of the professional development. |

| <i>Goal 2 – Transform existing instructional methods in American History</i> | |
|---|---|
| <p>Objective 6: A minimum of 90% of targeted teachers will receive one-on-one technical assistance at least 4 times per school year from the American History Mentor Team, including mentoring and coaching sessions. Year One: 70% will receive assistance. Year Two: 80% will receive assistance.</p> <p>***Team includes project director, professional development providers, Clemson University, SC Archives, SC State Museum, AIHE, Coaches, District and School Administrators.</p> | Bi-annual results of the Mentor Team confidential “check-in” survey for teachers. |
| <p>Objective 7: At least 90% of targeted teachers will provide feedback during peer classroom observation and observe the <i>American History Model Classroom</i> designed by the Project Director and a veteran “expert” history teacher a minimum of two times per school year. Year One: 70% will observe and provide feedback. Year Two: 80% will observe and provide feedback.</p> | Monthly teacher feedback instrument for use in various classroom observation project activities. Monthly documentation of teacher observation of the model classroom. |
| <p>Objective 8: A minimum of 90% of targeted teachers will utilize the <i>EXCELLENCE</i> website at least 10 times per year to promote the collaboration between teachers and history experts, develop of lesson plans, share of best practices, and study of current academic research articles. Year One: at least 6 times per year. Year Two: at least 8 times per year.</p> | Website log of number of teachers using the <i>EXCELLENCE</i> website. |
| <p>Objective 9: At least 90% of targeted teachers will utilize technology in teaching traditional American history at least once a week, including web-based historical resources, to give learners increased access to the raw materials of history so they have a more in-depth understanding of American history. Year One: 70% will utilize technology. Year Two: 80% will utilize technology.</p> | Monthly teacher observations and log of technology use. |
| <p>Objective 10: At least 90% of targeted teachers will indicate that they have adequate technical assistance and support to teach American history as a separate academic subject. Year One: 70% will indicate that they have adequate technical assistance and support. Year Two: 80% will indicate that they have adequate technical assistance and support.</p> | Teacher feedback and rating instrument that rates quality levels of technical assistance provided compared at the beginning and end of each school year. |

Goal 3 – Increase student achievement in American history

| Project Design Objectives and Benchmarks | Outcome Measures |
|--|---|
| Objective 11: The percentage of students scoring at the proficiency level on district and state US history assessments will increase by 15%. Year One: increase by 5%. Year Two: increase by 10%. | South Carolina's Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) achievement scores. District Unit Assessment scores. |

Section II Methods

2.1 Approach

A mix of both qualitative and quantitative techniques has been used throughout the evaluation. The evaluation takes a utilization-focused approach (Patton, 1997) and is designed to ensure that the information that is collected, analyzed, and reported will be used by key stakeholders to support and improve the program. Finally, triangulation of the multiple data sources enhances the credibility and validity of the findings.

2.2 Instruments and Techniques

2.2.1 Quantitative Techniques

Administrative Records

Program documentation provided by the project director contained actual participation hours for each participant and activity.

Professional Self-assessment

The professional self-assessment was administered online and consisted of 10 Likert-scale questions that asked participants to rate their perception of their content knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching American history, and their teaching skills. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the self-assessment scale is .886.

Bi-annual Surveys

The bi-annual survey was administered online and assessed behaviors and reactions, such as use of technology in the classroom, accessing the *EXCELLENCE* website, and perception of adequacy of technical support provided through the project.

Knowledge Pre- and Posttest

The knowledge test was 30-question multiple choice test developed by a partner in the history department at Clemson University and administered online by the evaluator. The test covered American exploration and the colonial and American Revolution eras, which was the focus of our professional development for this year. Those teachers who attended the summer off-site institute were administered the test at the conclusion of the week's activities in June.

Student Achievement Data

Student test data for students taught by *EXCELLENCE* participants will be analyzed. The Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) was administered statewide to 5th grade students during the baseline year. In Year One of the project, the new Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was administered. The two tests are very different. Proficiency levels were collapsed from 4 categories in the PACT to 3 in the

PASS. The cut-off scores are different between the 2 tests. PACT test levels are Below Basic, Basic, Proficiency, and Advanced. The PASS levels are Not Met, Met, and Exemplary.

2.2.2 Qualitative Techniques

Bi-annual Surveys

The bi-annual surveys gave participants the opportunity to comment on the professional development they had participated in, provide suggestions for how the program could improve the use of technology in the classroom, and provide any other comments about the program.

2.3 Data Collection Procedures and Schedule

Sixty-four participants signed on to participate in the program and made up our “targeted teachers.” Of the 64 targeted teachers, 10 did not participate in any professional development. Many participants cited not having enough time as the reason for not participating.

The project director maintained a spreadsheet of participant activities and attendance and this program documentation was used to report teacher participation in professional development. A total of 94 professional development hours were offered among the book studies, professional development sessions, and summer institutes. Each participant was categorized into one of four levels of participation based upon the number of hours they participated in. Those categories have been used where appropriate in the analysis of the survey and test data and are defined in table 2.1.

| Participation Category | Professional Development Hours | Number of Participants |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Zero | A targeted teacher that did not participate | 10 |
| Low | Participated in less than 40% of professional development hours | 28 |
| Medium | Participated in between 40% and 69% professional development hours | 6 |
| High | Participated in more than 70% of professional development hours | 20 |

Source: Program documentation

To assess teacher knowledge gain, behaviors and reactions to the program, participants completed four online evaluation assessments during the year. Table 2.2 outlines the assessment types and dates of administration.

| Table 2.2. Evaluation Instruments | |
|---|---------------|
| Assessment Type | Date |
| 30-question knowledge pretest with professional self-assessment | Oct. 2008 |
| Fall bi-annual survey | Dec. 2008 |
| Spring bi-annual survey with professional self-assessment | May 2009 |
| 30-question knowledge posttest | May/June 2009 |

2.4 Methods of Analysis

2.4.1 Quantitative analysis

The bi-annual survey and self-assessment were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Paired samples t-tests were used to analyze knowledge pre- and posttest and the self-assessment to identify significant differences in scores.

2.4.2 Qualitative analysis

Comments from the open-ended questions were categorized by theme and analyzed to assess the degree of consensus within the group.

Section III EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Participation and Behaviors

The project director maintained attendance records for all professional development sessions offered. That program documentation is used to report participation. This section of the report covers attendance at book studies and professional development sessions, and use of technology in the classroom. Each participant was categorized into one of four levels of participation as described in section 2.3. Ten targeted teachers did not participate in any professional development and are not included in the analysis.

3.1.1 Book Studies and Professional Development Sessions

Monthly book studies were held throughout the year. In the Fall, three books were available for teachers to select from: *Eyewitness to the Past*, *Mayflower*, and *Using Primary Sources in the Classroom*. In the Spring, two selections were available: *Eyewitness to the Past*, and *Paul Revere's Ride*. All but 14 targeted teachers participated in the book studies to some extent.

Table 3.1. Number of Book Studies Attended

| Number Attended | Low participation N=32 | Medium Participation N=5 | High Participation N=17 | All participants N= 54 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zero | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| One | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Two | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Three | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Four | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| Five | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| Six | 3 | 1 | 8 | 12 |
| Seven (All) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

Source: Program documentation

Some professional development sessions offered more professional development hours than others. The Interactive Notebooking session was 2 hours, whereas the South Carolina Archives trip and the South Carolina Museum trip were each 8 hours. The session on using primary resources and the presentation by the South Carolina Explorers were 1 hour each. A total of 20 hours was offered through these 5 sessions. The actual number of hours participated in is included in table 3.2 below.

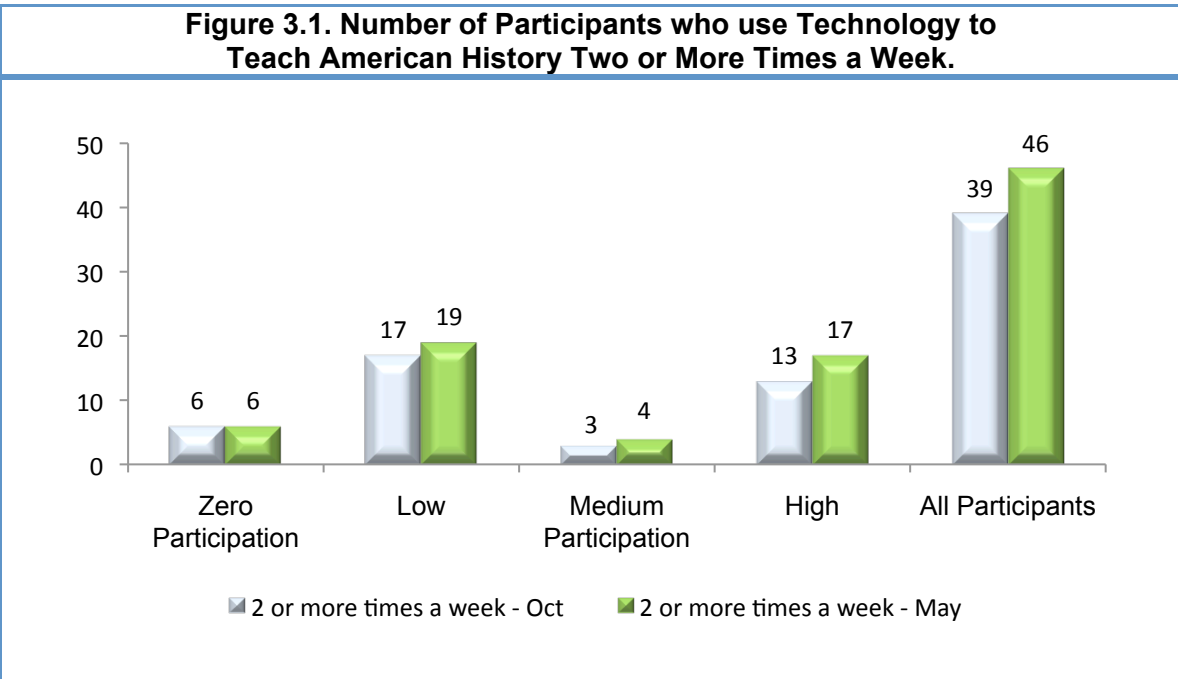
| Number of Hours | Low participation N=32 | Medium Participation N=5 | High Participation N=17 | All participants N= 54 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Six hours or less | 28 | 3 | 1 | 32 |
| Seven to twelve hours | 4 | 2 | 10 | 16 |
| Thirteen to twenty hours | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 |

Source: Program documentation

Two Summer Institutes were held and were very productive. The off-site institute was held in Philadelphia, PA at The American Institute for History Education for 30 hours of professional development with 21 American History teachers. Additionally, 28 teachers attended the one-week local summer institute that was held in the district. It was led by Jim Jeffries, the Clemson University History Department partner and consisted of lectures, readings, and activities for 30 hours of professional development.

3.1.2. Use of Technology in the Classroom

Participants indicated how often they used technology to teach American history on the Fall and Spring bi-annual surveys. As is illustrated in figure 3.1 below, all teachers who had some level of participation in the professional developed offered increased how often they used technology.



Source: Fall and Spring Bi-annual Surveys

Participants also indicated on the Spring bi-annual survey how often they used various technology and software that might be available to them. Their answers are in table 3.3.

| Table 3.3. Responses to Survey Question “Since January, how often have you used each of the following technologies in your classroom?” (N/A means not available) N=55 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|-----|------------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| | Almost daily | | 2-3 times a week | | Once a week | | N/A | | Weighted Score |
| The Internet | 35 | 64% | 13 | 24% | 4 | 7% | 1 | 2% | 0.98 |
| Multimedia CDs | 8 | 15% | 10 | 18% | 14 | 25% | 1 | 2% | 0.98 |
| PowerPoint | 13 | 24% | 14 | 25% | 13 | 24% | 1 | 2% | 0.98 |
| Educational DVDs | 1 | 2% | 3 | 5% | 9 | 16% | 1 | 2% | 0.98 |
| United Streaming | 8 | 15% | 21 | 38% | 14 | 25% | 1 | 2% | 0.98 |
| LCD projector | 44 | 80% | 3 | 5% | 1 | 2% | 4 | 7% | 0.93 |
| Webquests | 0 | 0% | 2 | 4% | 4 | 7% | 7 | 13% | 0.87 |
| Google Earth | 0 | 0% | 2 | 4% | 3 | 5% | 9 | 16% | 0.84 |
| Brain Pop website | 0 | 0% | 7 | 13% | 7 | 13% | 10 | 18% | 0.81 |
| SmartBoard | 34 | 62% | 2 | 4% | 1 | 2% | 12 | 22% | 0.78 |
| Elmo Projector | 12 | 22% | 2 | 4% | 5 | 9% | 22 | 40% | 0.60 |
| Timeline software | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% | 3 | 5% | 30 | 55% | 0.45 |
| Mapmaker software | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 4% | 33 | 60% | 0.40 |
| Senteo assessment | 1 | 2% | 3 | 5% | 4 | 7% | 36 | 65% | 0.33 |
| PhotoStory | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 37 | 67% | 0.30 |
| Airliner | 4 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 42 | 76% | 0.19 |
| Inspiration software | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 44 | 80% | 0.19 |
| Mapfolio | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 47 | 85% | 0.13 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

3.2 Reactions to Program Components

The bi-annual surveys gave participants the opportunity to provide their reactions to the program and suggestions for improvement. This section of the report will address reactions to the mentoring provided, the *EXCELLENCE* website, the professional development provided, and general comments about the program.

3.2.1 Reactions to Mentoring Provided

Participants were to be assigned to an American history teaching mentor. Mentors could be a school or district administrator, Instructional Coach or Facilitator, Curriculum Coach, a grant partner, or a veteran History teacher. On both bi-annual surveys, participants were asked if they had been assigned a mentor, who was providing the mentoring, the quality of support received from the mentor, and the number of times they had received one-on-one technical support from their mentor. Fifty-three participants completed both bi-annual surveys. On the Spring survey, 49 (92%) of the 53 respondents identified who their American history teaching mentor was and the responses are in table 3.4. Table 3.5 shows the number of times participants reported receiving technical assistance from their mentor and table 3.6 shows participant reactions to the quality of that technical assistance.

Table 3.4. Responses to Survey Question “Who provides your mentoring?”

| Mentor Type | Number Responding | Percent Responding |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| School Administrator | 11 | 21% |
| TAH Coach | 5 | 9% |
| Grant Partner | 8 | 15% |
| Veteran History Teacher | 9 | 17% |
| Other | 20 | 38% |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

Table 3.5. Responses to Survey Question “How many times have you received one-on-one assistance from your American history mentor?”
Number of times reported is for the entire year.

| Times | Number Responding | Percent Responding |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 - 4 | 18 | 34% |
| 5 - 8 | 21 | 40% |
| 9 - 12 | 14 | 26% |

Source: Fall and Spring Bi-annual Surveys

| Table 3.6. Responses to Survey Question “What is the quality of the technical support you’ve received from your American history mentor?” Average rating was 4.0 | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| Quality | Number Responding | Percent Responding |
| 1 (Could Improve) | 3 | 6% |
| 2 | 3 | 6% |
| 3 | 6 | 11% |
| 4 | 15 | 28% |
| 5 (Has been Excellent) | 23 | 43% |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

3.2.2 Reaction to the EXCELLENCE website

The EXCELLENCE website is maintained by the project director and includes participant photos, events, project partners, best practices, resources, and a calendar of events. On the bi-annual survey, participants answered questions about the website and their use of it.

| Table 3.7. Responses to Survey Question “What are the three most useful areas on the TAH website?” | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Area | Number Responding | Percent Responding | Weighted Rank |
| Examples of unique and creative lesson plans | 32 | 58% | 1 st |
| Related links about American history | 35 | 64% | 2 ^{nd*} |
| Calendar of upcoming activities and events | 29 | 53% | 3 rd |
| *Although more participants chose this option, the weighted score places the option as second most useful. | | | |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

| Topics | Number Responding | Percent Responding | Weighted Rank |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Examples of unique and creative lesson plans | 43 | 78% | 1 st |
| Related links about American history | 41 | 75% | 2 nd |
| Best Practices in teaching American history | 28 | 51% | 3 rd |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

Nine participants provided comments when asked what improvements could be made to the TAH website on the bi-annual survey. The comments were coded as below:

| Code | Frequency |
|---|------------------|
| <i>Resources (RES)</i> indicates a response that mentions resources that could be provided on the website, mostly lesson plans. | 4 |
| <i>Operation (OPR)</i> indicates a response that mentions improvements that can be made to how the website operates or functions. | 3 |
| <i>Positive (POS)</i> indicates a response that includes positive comments about the website. | 1 |
| <i>Not Clearly Specified (NCS)</i> indicates a response that does not fit into one of the response categories. | 1 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

3.2.3 Reactions to Professional Development Provided

Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which participation in book studies impacted their professional growth. Only the 41 participants who participated in book studies *and* completed the Spring bi-annual survey are included in the analysis.

| Impact | Attended one or two book studies N=13 | Attended three to five book studies N=15 | Attended six or seven book studies N=13 | All Participants N=41 |
|------------------------|--|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 – Not at all | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 2 – Slightly | 2 | 5 | 5 | 12 |
| 3 – Moderately | 2 | 6 | 4 | 12 |
| 4 – Greatly | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| No answer | 5 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Average score out of 4 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

On the bi-annual survey participants were given the opportunity to comment on the professional development they had participated in. Fifteen participants provided comments and they were coded as below:

| Code | Frequency |
|---|------------------|
| <i>Time (TME)</i> indicates a response that mentions that the time involved to participate was prohibitive. | 2 |
| <i>Book Studies (BKS)</i> indicates a response that includes suggestions for changes to the book studies. | 2 |
| <i>Positive (POS)</i> indicates a response that includes positive comments about the TAH program. | 10 |
| <i>Usefulness (USE)</i> indicates a response that mentions that the professional development was not geared toward respondent’s grade-level (5th) | 1 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

3.2.4 Suggestions and Comments for Program Improvement

On the bi-annual survey participants were asked how the program could improve their use of technology in the classroom. Twenty-four participants provided comments and they were coded as below:

| Table 3.12. Response Coding for Survey Question “Do you have suggestions for how the program could improve the use of technology in the classroom?” | |
|--|------------------|
| Code | Frequency |
| <i>Access (ACC)</i> indicates a response that mentions the need for access to technology, up-to-date software, or websites. | 14 |
| <i>Training (TRN)</i> indicates a response that mentions the need for technology training. | 4 |
| <i>Sharing (SHR)</i> indicates a response that mentions sharing of lesson plans using technology, or teacher sharing of ideas. | 4 |
| <i>Policy (POL)</i> indicates a response that mentions the need for change in policy about the use of technology, such as ipods. | 1 |
| <i>Positive (POS)</i> indicates a response that includes positive comments about the respondent’s use of technology. | 2 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

Participants were also asked to provide any general comments they had about the program. Twelve participants did so and the comments were coded as below:

| Table 3.13. Response Coding for Survey Question “Do you have other comments about the TAH program?” | |
|--|------------------|
| Code | Frequency |
| <i>Time (TME)</i> indicates a response that mentions that the time involved to participate was prohibitive. | 2 |
| <i>Book Studies (BKS)</i> indicates a response that mentions that the book studies were not helpful. | 1 |
| <i>Positive (POS)</i> indicates a response that includes positive comments about the TAH program. | 9 |

Source: Spring Bi-annual Survey

3.3 Self-Assessment

The following graphs include data from the 54 participants who completed the self-assessment at both time periods (October and May). The self-assessment question is on the left and the average out of 7 is shown for each participant level. A superscript number next to the May average indicates a statistically significant change from the October average. The t-test statistics can be found in table 3.15.

| Table 3.14: Self-Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|------|-------------------|--------|------|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|------------------|------|-------------------|
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), the depth of my understanding of American history is...</p> | <table border="1"> <caption>Data for 'depth of my understanding of American history'</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>3.45</td> <td>4.55¹</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>4.25</td> <td>4.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>3.79</td> <td>4.61²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>3.61</td> <td>4.57³</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 3.45 | 4.55 ¹ | Medium | 4.25 | 4.50 | High Participation | 3.79 | 4.61 ² | All Participants | 3.61 | 4.57 ³ |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 3.45 | 4.55 ¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 4.25 | 4.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 3.79 | 4.61 ² | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 3.61 | 4.57 ³ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my interest in American history is...</p> | <table border="1"> <caption>Data for 'my interest in American history'</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>5.18</td> <td>5.73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>5.00</td> <td>5.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>5.84</td> <td>6.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>5.44</td> <td>5.91⁴</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 5.18 | 5.73 | Medium | 5.00 | 5.50 | High Participation | 5.84 | 6.21 | All Participants | 5.44 | 5.91 ⁴ |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 5.18 | 5.73 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 5.00 | 5.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 5.84 | 6.21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 5.44 | 5.91 ⁴ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.14: Self-Assessment (continued)

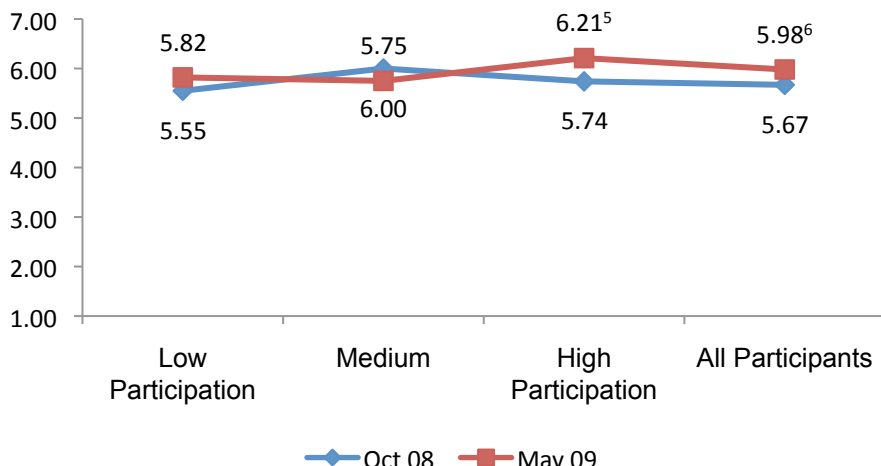
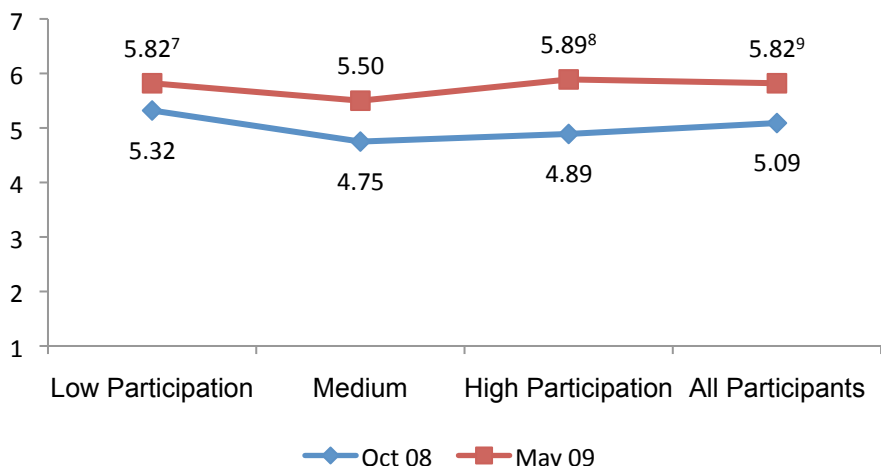
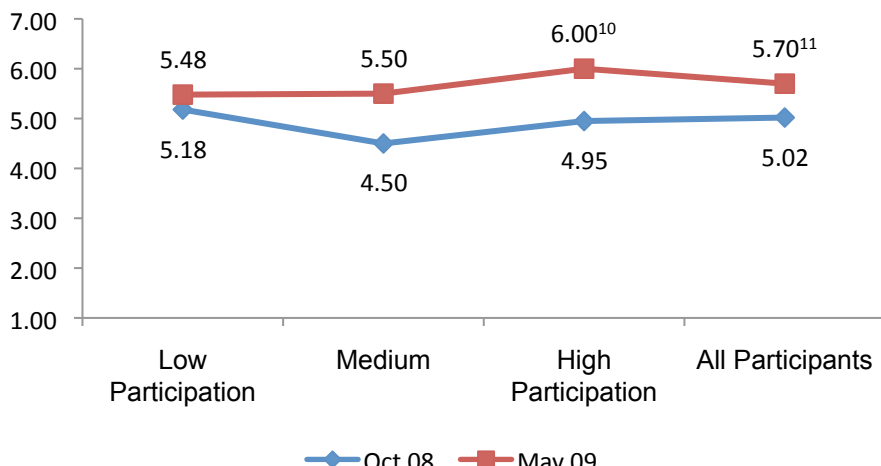
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my enthusiasm for teaching American history is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>5.55</td> <td>5.82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>6.00</td> <td>5.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>5.74</td> <td>6.21⁵</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>5.67</td> <td>5.98⁶</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 5.55 | 5.82 | Medium | 6.00 | 5.75 | High Participation | 5.74 | 6.21 ⁵ | All Participants | 5.67 | 5.98 ⁶ |
|--|--|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|------|-------------------|--------|------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 5.55 | 5.82 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 6.00 | 5.75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 5.74 | 6.21 ⁵ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 5.67 | 5.98 ⁶ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my ability to develop a separate dedicated lesson plan is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>5.32</td> <td>5.82⁷</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>4.75</td> <td>5.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>4.89</td> <td>5.89⁸</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>5.09</td> <td>5.82⁹</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 5.32 | 5.82 ⁷ | Medium | 4.75 | 5.50 | High Participation | 4.89 | 5.89 ⁸ | All Participants | 5.09 | 5.82 ⁹ |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 5.32 | 5.82 ⁷ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 4.75 | 5.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 4.89 | 5.89 ⁸ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 5.09 | 5.82 ⁹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my ability to use a variety of instructional methods to teach American history is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>5.18</td> <td>5.48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>4.50</td> <td>5.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>4.95</td> <td>6.00¹⁰</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>5.02</td> <td>5.70¹¹</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 5.18 | 5.48 | Medium | 4.50 | 5.50 | High Participation | 4.95 | 6.00 ¹⁰ | All Participants | 5.02 | 5.70 ¹¹ |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 5.18 | 5.48 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 4.50 | 5.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 4.95 | 6.00 ¹⁰ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 5.02 | 5.70 ¹¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.14: Self-Assessment (continued)

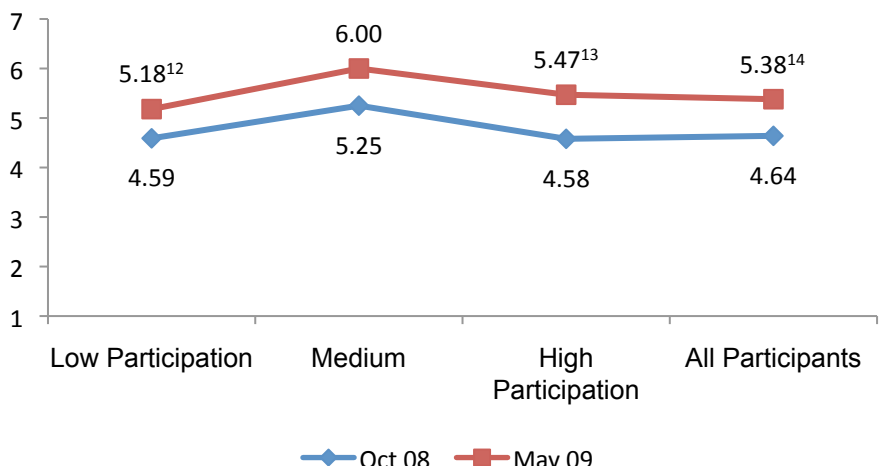
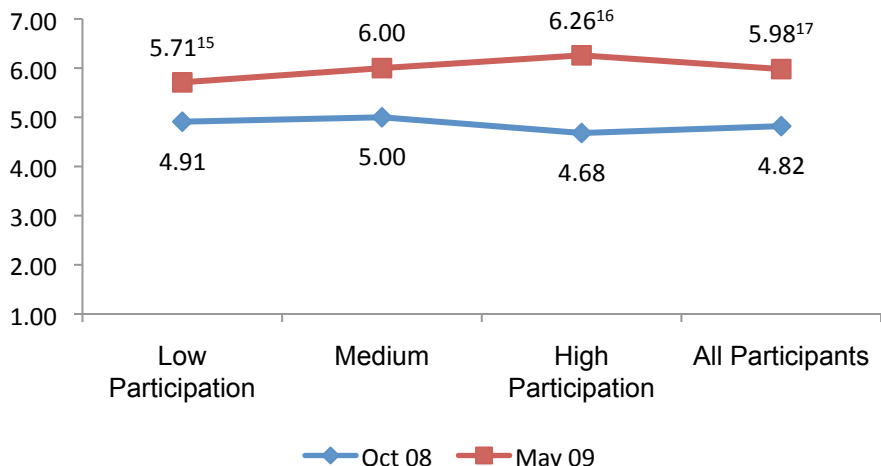
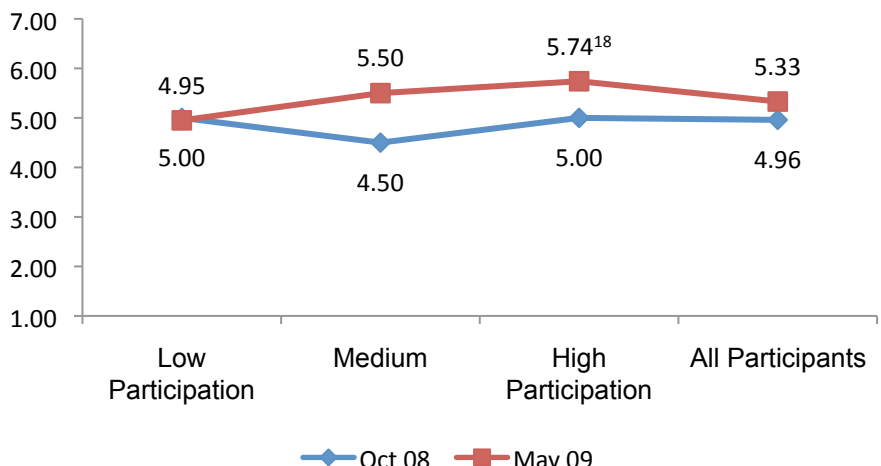
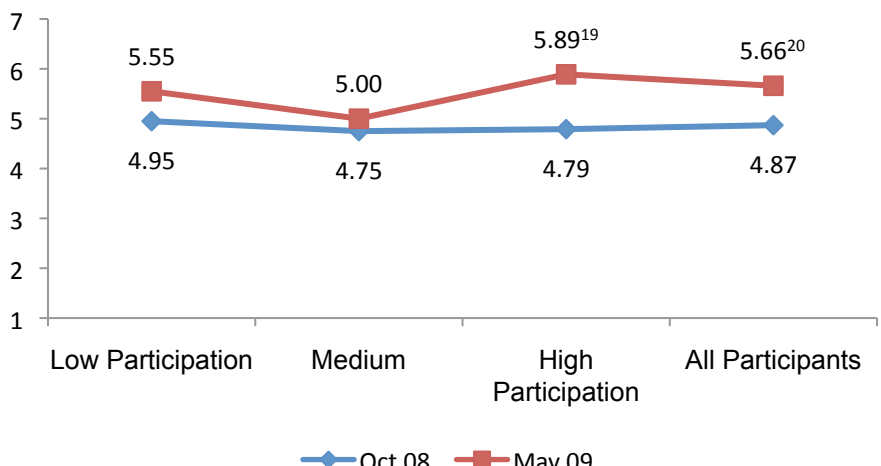
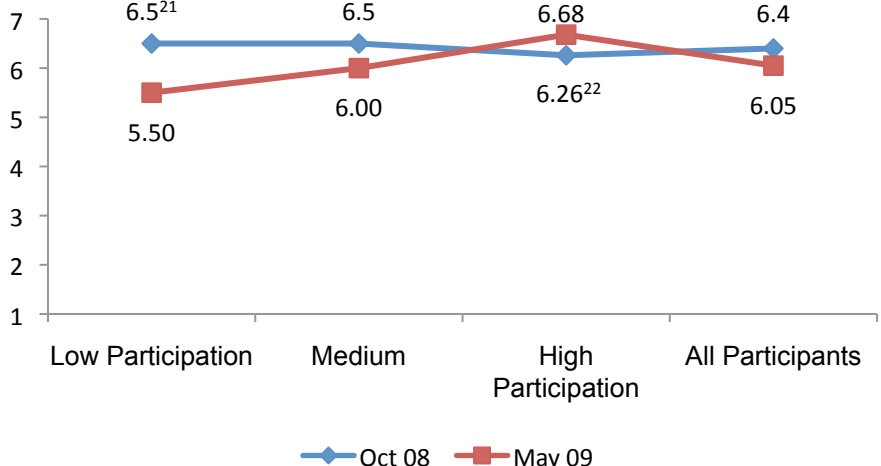
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my knowledge of the SC history standards for 4th and 5th graders is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>4.59</td> <td>5.18¹²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>5.25</td> <td>6.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>4.58</td> <td>5.47¹³</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>4.64</td> <td>5.38¹⁴</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 4.59 | 5.18 ¹² | Medium | 5.25 | 6.00 | High Participation | 4.58 | 5.47 ¹³ | All Participants | 4.64 | 5.38 ¹⁴ |
|--|---|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|------|--------------------|--------|------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 4.59 | 5.18 ¹² | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 5.25 | 6.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 4.58 | 5.47 ¹³ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 4.64 | 5.38 ¹⁴ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), my ability to integrate the SC history standards into my lesson plan is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>4.91</td> <td>5.71¹⁵</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>5.00</td> <td>6.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>4.68</td> <td>6.26¹⁶</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>4.82</td> <td>5.98¹⁷</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 4.91 | 5.71 ¹⁵ | Medium | 5.00 | 6.00 | High Participation | 4.68 | 6.26 ¹⁶ | All Participants | 4.82 | 5.98 ¹⁷ |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 4.91 | 5.71 ¹⁵ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 5.00 | 6.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 4.68 | 6.26 ¹⁶ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 4.82 | 5.98 ¹⁷ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), the support I receive from school and district administrators to help improve my ability to teach American history is.....</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>5.00</td> <td>4.95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>4.50</td> <td>5.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>5.00</td> <td>5.74¹⁸</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>4.96</td> <td>5.33</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 5.00 | 4.95 | Medium | 4.50 | 5.50 | High Participation | 5.00 | 5.74 ¹⁸ | All Participants | 4.96 | 5.33 |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 5.00 | 4.95 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 4.50 | 5.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 5.00 | 5.74 ¹⁸ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 4.96 | 5.33 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.14: Self-Assessment (continued)

| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), the support I receive from other teachers who teach American history is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>4.95</td> <td>5.55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>4.75</td> <td>5.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>4.79</td> <td>5.89¹⁹</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>4.87</td> <td>5.66²⁰</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 4.95 | 5.55 | Medium | 4.75 | 5.00 | High Participation | 4.79 | 5.89 ¹⁹ | All Participants | 4.87 | 5.66 ²⁰ |
|---|---|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|------|--------|------|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 4.95 | 5.55 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 4.75 | 5.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 4.79 | 5.89 ¹⁹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 4.87 | 5.66 ²⁰ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>On a scale of 1 (moderate) to 7 (very high), given the choice, the likelihood that I will choose to teach American history again next year is...</p> |  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participation Level</th> <th>Oct 08</th> <th>May 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low Participation</td> <td>6.5²¹</td> <td>5.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>6.5</td> <td>6.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Participation</td> <td>6.26²²</td> <td>6.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Participants</td> <td>6.4</td> <td>6.05</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | Low Participation | 6.5 ²¹ | 5.50 | Medium | 6.5 | 6.00 | High Participation | 6.26 ²² | 6.68 | All Participants | 6.4 | 6.05 |
| Participation Level | Oct 08 | May 09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low Participation | 6.5 ²¹ | 5.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medium | 6.5 | 6.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High Participation | 6.26 ²² | 6.68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Participants | 6.4 | 6.05 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Superscript Number | Number of Participants | Paired t-statistic | Degrees of freedom | p-value |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | 22 | -3.257 | 21 | .004 |
| 2 | 18 | -3.610 | 17 | .002 |
| 3 | 44 | -4.533 | 43 | .000 |
| 4 | 45 | -2.699 | 44 | .010 |
| 5 | 19 | -2.282 | 18 | .035 |
| 6 | 45 | -2.256 | 44 | .029 |
| 7 | 22 | -2.128 | 21 | .045 |
| 8 | 19 | -4.135 | 18 | .001 |
| 9 | 45 | -4.578 | 44 | .000 |
| 10 | 19 | -4.729 | 18 | .000 |
| 11 | 44 | -4.394 | 43 | .000 |
| 12 | 22 | -2.137 | 21 | .045 |
| 13 | 19 | -2.766 | 18 | .013 |
| 14 | 45 | -3.824 | 44 | .000 |
| 15 | 22 | -3.078 | 21 | .006 |
| 16 | 19 | -4.472 | 18 | .000 |
| 17 | 44 | -5.526 | 43 | .000 |
| 18 | 19 | -2.348 | 18 | .031 |
| 19 | 19 | -4.846 | 18 | .000 |
| 20 | 44 | -4.576 | 43 | .000 |
| 21 | 22 | 3.399 | 21 | .003 |
| 22 | 19 | -2.388 | 18 | .028 (Significant in the wrong direction) |

3.4 Teacher Knowledge

Fifty-five participants took both the pretest and the posttest. Both were administered online. Teachers who participated in the summer institute completed the posttest in a computer lab environment following the institute. Table 3.16 shows that those who participated the most in professional development had statistically significant higher posttest scores than pretest scores. Table 3.17 shows that those who participated in both of the summer institutes had statistically significant higher scores at posttest than at pretest, whereas those who did not participate in the summer institutes did not have statistically significant higher posttest scores than pretest scores.

| Participation level | Average Pretest Score | Average Posttest Score | Significant Increase? | Statistics |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zero | 31% | 33% | No | n=7; paired t= -.519; df=6, p=.662 |
| Low | 41% | 41% | No | n=24; paired t= .250; df=23, p=.805 |
| Medium | 41% | 57% | No | n=5; paired t= -2.674; df=4, p=.056 |
| High | 40% | 58% | Yes | n=20; paired t= -6.364; df=19; p=.000 |
| All who participated in professional development | 41% | 49% | Yes | n=49; paired t= -3.778; df=48, p=.000 |

| Institute Attendance | Average Pretest Score | Average Posttest Score | Significant Increase? | Statistics |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Attended both institutes | 40% | 58% | Yes | n=20; paired t= -.6.364; df=19, p=.000 |
| Did not attend both institutes | 39% | 41% | No | n=36; paired t= -.912; df=35, p=.368 |

3.5 Student Achievement

Our quasi-experimental design allows us to compare student achievement data on American history assessments of students taught by teachers in the *EXCELLENCE* program to students taught by teachers not in the *EXCELLENCE* program. During Year One, students took the new Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). Test data has not been released at the time this report was written.

Section IV Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Overview of Results

The project has made technical support and 94 hours of professional development available to 64 4th and 5th grade teachers in three schools districts. Additionally, a website has been created and is maintained to provide support and resources to American history teachers. One third of the targeted teachers participated in 70% or more of the professional development hours offered.

As would be expected, participants who were categorized as “high participaters” participated in more book studies and more professional development hours. When compared to the beginning of the school year, more professional development recipients report using technology in the classroom 2 or more times a week on the Spring Bi-annual survey. The more book studies a participant took part in, the greater impact the book studies had on the participant. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing “could improve” and 5 representing “has been excellent,” 71% rate the quality of technical support they’ve received from the mentor as a 4 or 5.

Participants believe the most important topics to have on the *EXCELLENCE* website are examples of unique and creative lesson plans, related links about American history, and best practices in teaching American history. Participants identified two of these (examples of unique and creative lesson plans and related links about American history) as the most useful areas of the current *EXCELLENCE* website. The calendar of upcoming events was also identified as useful.

The self-assessment taken prior to beginning the program and again at the end of the school year revealed statistically significant increases between the two time periods, mostly for high participators and the entire group as a whole. Table 3.18 shows the items that were significantly increased.

| Self-assessment item | Statistically Significant Increase for High Participators | Statistically Significant Increase for All Participants |
|--|--|--|
| Improvement in depth of understanding of American history | ✓ | ✓ |
| Interest in American history | | ✓ |
| Enthusiasm for teaching American history | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ability to develop a separate dedicated lesson plan | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ability to use a variety of instructional methods | ✓ | ✓ |
| Knowledge of SC history standards for 4 th and 5 th graders | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ability to integrate the SC history standards into lesson plans | ✓ | ✓ |
| Receives support from school and district administrators to help improve my ability to teach | ✓ | |
| Receives support from other teachers who teach American history | ✓ | ✓ |

Compared to “zero,” “low,” or “medium” participation-level teachers, those who were “high” participation-level teachers had statistically significant increases in their knowledge posttest scores from pretest. Additionally, as a group, there was a statistically significant increase from pretest to posttest. Attendance at the summer institutes seemed to impact knowledge test scores as well. Those who attended both institutes had statistically significant increases in their knowledge posttest scores from pretest, while those who did not attend both institutes only increased their posttest score 2 percentage points, not a significant increase.

4.2 Recommendations

Increase time devoted to lesson planning. Overwhelmingly, participants asked for more time devoted to planning lessons. They would like more “ready-to-use” lesson plans available on the website and more time devoted to collaborating with other teachers to develop lesson plans.

Consider changing the focus of the book studies. Many participants felt that the time required for the book studies was prohibitive. They also feel they would benefit from learning about children’s literature and desire to explore books they can use in the classroom with their students.

Increase lesson planning resources on the *EXCELLENCE* website. Participants request resources devoted to best practices in teaching American history and lesson plans that use technology.

Provide participants more resources to assist them in using technology in the classroom. Greater access to technology and software, training in using technology, and forums for teacher sharing of ideas and lesson plans could help participants increase their use of technology in the classroom.

Explore ways to reduce barriers to participation. The most-cited reason for not participating was the time involved. Altering the book studies to focus on children's literature might alleviate this complaint while still providing quality professional development and resources that teachers have requested.

References

Patton (1997). Utilization-focused Evaluation. Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A

Comments from the Spring Bi-annual Survey

Comments about the professional development participants have experienced in the TAH program:

I enjoyed hearing Jennifer White share her interactive notebooks. It was a great idea with lots of great information...my favorite by far!

I have not been able to participate as much as I had hoped to when I signed up for this program. The amount of reading required for the meetings was too much. There was no way I could keep up with everything we were asked to do. I was very disappointed in this program.

The professional development I attended was very informative and provided many hands-on activities to use in my classroom. I have already implemented several of them in my classroom.

Beneficial meetings and activities

I have loved the books and book studies.

I really enjoy the speakers and especially the ones that have taught history to elementary children and can give their ideas.

I think the professional development could be greatly increased by using strategies that can be truly used in the classroom. Instead of book studies focusing on small aspects of American History, I believe it would be more effective to discuss children's literature, lesson plans, etc.

It has been great! I love the free resources and practical classroom ideas!

The Interactive Notebooking workshop was excellent!

Being a part of the TAH program has provided a wealth of ideas and support material. I think this enhances my teaching and makes my lessons more interesting.

I think that instead of reading non-fiction books for adults, it would be useful to read books that we could read to our students and spend our time writing lesson plans to coordinate with those historical fiction novels.

It has been very helpful!! I have learned so much this year and do not know what I would have done without the help.

Majority of it is geared only towards fourth grade. Since I teach fifth grade, I have not been able to use much of the information in my classroom.

The professional development I've experienced has made me more cognizant about my teaching.

Comments about what improvements could be made to the TAH website:

Continuing to add more lesson plan ideas

I think the website is very comprehensive and a wonderful aid to teachers involved in the teaching of American History.

I wish that we had more lesson plans on the website.

Instead of the entire year being devoted to one particular grade level - alternate between the levels throughout the year. This way teachers from all grade levels would be able to use information all year long. (all 3 years)

More lessons and creative ideas!

More ready to use information for lessons

Not having to login to get to the site.

Really to add the historical links, even good streaming to match standards.

The blog link needs to be more user-friendly.

Suggestions for how the program could improve the use of technology in the classroom:

* various professional development activities- teachers share/have a "make and take" session

Allotting more money for CDs, purchasing Elmos for those districts that do not have one for participants to use...

Ensure equitable technology across the board ie: give me a Smartboard :)

Have up-to-date equipment in the classroom. Our student computers run on Windows 95 or 98

I am very comfortable using technology in my classroom and I use it daily.

I cannot use my smartboard appropriately because my projector is not mounted. If we were able to use part of the grant money to possibly mount projectors it would be great. Also, access to specific websites that provide interactive lessons.

I don't have access to some of the things on the previous page, such as the Senteos, Airliner, and Photo Story. Having these things might improve the use of technology in my classroom.

I need my LCD projector and smart board mounted. I also need more student computers preferably laptops. I only have 3 and they predict bigger classes next year, so I will need more. It wasn't enough this year or last year with 18 and 22 students. I'd also like to have a student response system and the small version of smart boards for my students or at least enough to use in small groups of 3-4. I'd also need some training with those items.

I think we could improve the use of technology by putting student computers in classrooms.

I think we have plenty.

I wish that I had more technology available to use in the classroom.

I would like to see more technology training, especially for photo story.

It would be great if all teachers had equal access to all hardware and software.

Make lesson plans and share

Make sure all teachers have the equipment needed (e.i. Smart Boards, Elmos, etc.)

More professional development sessions would help me tremendously. I just don't have the knowledge.

more training using whiteboard lessons. Using technology to teach primary sources.

New ideas for the teachers and making the equipment available.

Our district needs a policy for use of i-pods/podcast and being able to post them. I have created a few podcasts this school year with my students that involve history, but due to the fact the district has no policy on podcasts/i-pods then I cannot post it to my website or allow students to download it onto their i-pods as a study tool. I believe we need to be with the trend of the students. A lot of students have i-pods or MP3 players. The kids would love to have that opportunity to put things like that on their i-pods. I think it would get them excited because it is learning even with an i-pod!

Providing pre-developed sketches or outlines of technology-based classroom lessons or projects could help jumpstart history planning for teachers.

Senteos!

suggest other teacher suggested materials so that we purchase things that other state teachers have found correlate to our standards

use more technology for mapskills such as mapmaker

We do not have enough computers at our school. We have a lab of 3 computers for the whole school K-5 (4 classes of each grade) to share. My fifth graders love to research and create different presentations. I wish I could have a laptop for each table group (6) to use. I also would like to have 12 Small Wonders cameras for the children to use in their projects for both social studies and math.

Other comments about the TAH program:

I am enjoying everything I am learning!

I did not care for the book studies. I didn't feel that the content of most of the books helped me with elementary students. I think the books were good resources for middle and high school, but we have so little time to teach SS in elementary that I would rather focus on methods, strategies, lessons. While I do like to read, I have very little time to do this, so I found the books to be very time consuming. If we do continue with book studies, I would find it more useful for my classroom to focus on historical fiction novels, biographies, picture books, etc. on the elementary level that I could use to supplement the curriculum.

I have really enjoyed that past 3 years and will continue to participate.

I really like the TAH program this year.

I think those of you in charge do a fabulous job. We receive many e-mails to help keep us informed. I, honestly, would find it difficult to be a full participant while teaching full-time. I have many responsibilities as a pastor's wife and honestly, do not have time to read the extra books for the book studies during the school year. I think that might be something that would be more effective during the summer. I know several teachers who signed up to be full participants and were overwhelmed with everything that went with it. I know it is all wonderful, but I feel that I need to spend the majority of my time planning my lessons each week and then having time to really study those lessons so that my students will understand the standards. It takes so much time to do this.....role-playing, making games, etc. I change my strategies each year depending on the groups of students I teach. I am just being honest, and I hope that is okay. I truly appreciate all of the materials I have received this year and in years past through the grant. I don't know of a single district who has more resources than we do. Thank you so much for making all of this possible.

I wish this program would've been easier for a teacher to participate. I am a first year teacher and could've really benefitted from any help I could get in teaching history. I was very excited when I started this program, but very disappointed once I realized what was required.

I'm so glad that I'm a part of the TAH program. I know that I'm a better teacher because of my involvement.

I've really enjoyed it and learned a lot from the book studies, field trips etc. I'd like another chance to see the archives in Columbia. We could go to local or state battlegrounds. I'd love to go to a reenactment at King's Mountain or Cowpens.

productive year

Thanks for organizing and putting together. This is very beneficial.

The information that we get is amazing. I have enjoyed all of the trips and feel like they have really benefited my students.

This grant has allowed me to become excited about teaching history. As a participant for the 1st cycle and now the 2nd cycle, I have gained so much knowledge!

