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ABSTRACT

As a result of an earlier project conducted by the Council of Chief State School Officer's Project on Humanities and the Schools, 76 programs in the humanities were identified for their efforts to improve the teaching of humanities between 1972 and 1983. From these projects, 20 exemplary projects were selected for inclusion in this catalog. The programs serve as examples of a variety of ways in which states can contribute to better humanities programs at different levels: elementary, middle, or secondary; urban, suburban, or rural; and/or gifted or general. Some programs concentrate on the development of one humanities discipline such as history or literature, while others pursue the links among various humanities subjects. The brief description of each project includes costs, sources of funding, personnel conducting the program, and numbers of students and faculty served. Outside support from parents, businesses, colleges, humanities councils, and community groups is also included. (LH)

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SELECTED EXEMPLARY PROJECTS

IN THE HUMANITIES

FEBRUARY 1984

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COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

SELECTED EXEMPLARY PROJECTS

IN THE HUMANITIES

FEBRUARY 1984

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

HILDA L. SMITH, DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

A central goal of the Council of Chief State School Officer's Project on the Humanities and Schools was to encourage the dissemination of information about what valuable thinking and stimulating planning had been done relating to the humanities in secondary and elementary education. This "exemplary catalog" of relevant humanities efforts is part of the attempt to suggest and to make easier and more productive other such efforts.

Much of the success of humanities teaching relates to basic realities that exist in all fields: well-trained and well-paid, dedicated teachers; textbooks well calculated to supply the information and stimulation that students need; and coherent curricular development that allows training in the humanities to be steady, cumulative, and probing. In part, because of the humanities focus on history and culture, there has been some emphasis on traditionalism in their teaching. At the same time, the nature of the humanities makes imagination and innovation in their presentation equally important. This catalog is intended simply to make more readily available information about some creative work to improve the teaching of the humanities. The ideas should be of interest and value to any group or school evaluating local humanities courses, thinking about ways to improve existing work, or considering the introduction of new humanities efforts.

This exemplary catalog is intended not to be exhaustive, but to provide educators with sufficient information to assess potential application to their needs. In many instances, the information received or available was insufficient to provide a complete description or evaluation. So far as possible, the brief description of the project includes costs, the sources for funding, the personnel conducting the program, and the numbers of students and faculty served. Outside support from parents, businesses, colleges, humanities councils or community groups is also included.

This catalog provides not a list of the "best" humanities programs, but rather examples of the variety of ways states can contribute to better humanities programs on different levels: elementary, middle or secondary; urban, suburban or rural; gifted or general. Some programs concentrate on the development of one humanities discipline, such as history or literature, while others pursue the links among various humanities subjects.

Procedures of Compilation

The Council of Chief State School Officer's Project on Humanities and the Schools gathered information concerning exemplary humanities programs from state education agencies as part of its survey of current state policies and activities regarding humanities instruction, completed near the end of 1983. State agencies forwarded curricular materials they had developed in the area of the humanities to suggest successful programs they had initiated or encouraged within their state, while officials designated by chief state school officers as humanities contact persons explained some of these exemplary programs more fully during subsequent telephone interviews. Other inquiries to the executive directors of state humanities councils, to members of the Council of State Social Studies Supervisors, and to committees of the National Council of Teachers of English, supplied further material. Finally, a survey of the catalogs of Educational Programs That Work, distributed by the National Diffusion Network of the U.S. Department of Education for projects in the humanities, suggested further options.

From this information, seventy-six programs in the humanities emerged for which there was sufficient information to judge their effectiveness. State education agencies and state humanities councils provided the data on most of these programs, suggesting the importance of continuing and improved cooperation between these groups in humanities education in the schools.

The seventy-six programs were of varying types. Over ten programs appeared in the following groups: writing and reading projects, local or state history efforts, and development of curricular materials. Other types of popular programs were teacher institutes and conferences, and a smaller number aimed primarily at students. From these projects, twenty have been selected for their effective representation of one of the types identified by project staff. The exemplary projects as a whole have been included to demonstrate the range of activities available for adoption by other states, and within the "Project Highlights" section of each description the special qualities for inclusion have been noted.

Title: Alabama Course of Study: Humanities K-12
State: Alabama SEA involved?: Yes
Type: General Curriculum Guide
Date initiated: 1978 Total years: 6
Cost: \$11,500 In progress?: No
Contact Person(s):

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General Description:

The Humanities Task Force was set up to determine the most effective means for improving instruction within the humanities in the State of Alabama and was comprised of elementary and secondary classroom teachers, supervisors of instruction, college faculty, and representatives from the State Department of Education. The major outcome of the effort was the Humanities Course of Study which set forth the objectives and characteristics of a desirable humanities program and outlined ways of integrating the humanities into existing curricula.

The perspective of the Task Force was outlined in its "Rationale for the Humanities," which stressed the need to ensure that schools in this technological age do not "overlook the worth and dignity of man." Lamenting the erosion of "appreciation for dedication to tasks of lasting value, or the development of talents requiring years to refine," the task force argued the strong relation of the humanities to crucial intangibles such as compassion, imagination and sensitivity to the needs of others that combat the fragmented learning of isolated facts. The humanities also give a framework which allows for self-understanding, careful choice, socially responsible action, and cultural interests that fuel a life long "quest for knowledge and understanding."

The task force also described some sample courses; for instance, a one-semester course stressed China, Greece or

the Renaissance and employed a chronological approach. A two-semester course focused on the peoples of the particular geographical, temporal, or socio-economic settings, such as the frontiersmen, the Puritans, or workers in the industrial revolution. Suggestions were also developed for thematic courses on topics such as the search for self or the individual and society. In all of these sample courses there was emphasis on the interrelationship among disciplines, the need to weigh evidence in a search for truths, and the importance of appreciation for the creative works of differing ages and cultures. A bibliography was constructed for use by those who wanted to alter their current humanities offerings.

Project Highlights:

The comprehensive nature of Alabama's course of study, providing schools with models to establish an integrated set of courses in the humanities, or to incorporate stronger humanities emphasis within existing history or literature courses, makes it a useful document. The general applicability of its course materials to most educational settings provides a model other jurisdictions might profitably consider. It also suggests procedures for states which have yet to evaluate their humanities curricula, partly because it involved no outside funding and little outside consultation.

Title: Creative Writing Program - Poetry '83

State: Arizona

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Reading/Writing project

Date initiated: 1982 (re-org.)

Total years: 2 (on-going)

Cost: \$2,500 (max.)

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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Poetry Contest Coordinator
Arizona Dept. of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
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State Dept. of Education
1535 West Jefferson
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General Description:

The Arizona Department of Education has conducted a poetry writing contest for the last two years. During 1982, the Department of Education, the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project and Arizona State University cooperated to encourage the writing of poetry. Schools--public, private and parochial, throughout Arizona designed poetry contests with the winners entering a state-level contest in which 800 poems were submitted for judging. Twenty-one were named winners by the state judges. In conjunction with the state contest, local jurisdictions honored their student poets by having them read their work at district board meetings or other school functions, having local newspapers print poems, or sponsoring the publication of local efforts.

Although individual districts plan their local contests, the State Department of Education provides guidelines which suggest that schools should provide teachers with reference works on the teaching of poetry and employ a poet from the community to work with students. The State Department accepts one poem from each district for grades 1-12, except for the largest districts which may submit two.

Poems are judged by representatives of the Arizona Teachers of English Association. This year, a board of twenty-four judges reviewed poems from each grade level and is announcing the winner and honorable mentions for each grade level in the late spring. Larger school districts

throughout the state have established their own guides for writing quality poetry. The focus of the context is strongly tied to the necessary integration of literature and writing, recognizing that students are apt to produce better poems if they frequently read good poetry within their language arts and English classes. Larger districts tie the teaching of poetry units to the the structure of the statewide poetry contest.

Project Highlights:

The project encouraged student writing, reading and appreciation of poetry, and gave recognition to especially deserving work. It gave students a chance to recite their poems before local school boards and other community groups, not simply giving recognition to their accomplishments but emphasizing quality writing as an integral part of the schools' goals. Finally, it used the process of a state poetry contest to encourage local education agencies to adopt guidelines and curriculum units on the literary quality and the writing of poetry.

Title: Humanists in the Schools

State: California

SEA involved?: No

Type: State Humanities Council Initiative

Date initiated: 1978

Total years: 5

Cost: \$5-10,000/school

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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General Description:

In 1978 the California Humanities Council began its Humanists in the Schools Program, a model subsequently adopted by other state councils. The purpose of the program is to link together "schools, communities, universities... for the enhancement of education." Programs are planned by and for the schools, and individual projects are organized by teams of teachers, visiting scholars, and local humanities people: artists, artisans and representatives of local cultural institutions. Humanities scholars, during their residency in a school, work with teachers to enhance or enrich the curriculum within existing courses.

Central goals of the program are to demonstrate the usefulness of humanities disciplines to contemporary social and community problems and to "reinstate the basic liberal arts into public education." The program has operated primarily in two- and three-year pilots in model districts throughout California. The residencies have lasted from 3 to 6 months and are followed by a several-day evaluation and planning session at the conclusion of the school year.

Humanists in the Schools projects have included scholars working with teachers to expand approaches to history, literature, foreign languages and related subjects; to introduce new methods and resources to teachers in particular fields; to lead seminars for teachers or community members; and to organize field trips

to museums and historical sites or to set up film festivals on humanities topics.

The National Endowment for the Humanities established a challenge grant providing an 85% match for funds generated from such sources as: Atlantic Richfield Foundation, Glendale Federal Savings & Loan, the Peninsula Community Foundation and the State of California.

To date, 16 schools and 23 scholars have participated in the Humanists in the Schools program, while 1,400 students have been directly affected. Projects are directed toward the average student with the purpose of acquainting the student with the central importance of the humanities to their lives. Participating scholars must have Ph.Ds or be candidates for the Ph.D in history, languages, philosophy, literature, or the history and criticism of the arts. School districts adopting the program assign one scholar to each participating high school to work with a core group of teachers representing the various divisions of the secondary curriculum. Scholars are directly involved with the core teachers' classes, and may also supervise independent study projects and lecture in other classes.

Humanists in the Schools projects have encouraged cross-disciplinary activities such as science teachers working with history and English instructors to help students understand the wide-ranging influence of, say, Darwin on Victorian culture. The program is concerned with reaching out to the community as well, involving parents in field trips to museums and bringing community and cultural leaders into the schools. The California Council for the Humanities, hoping the idea will be broadly adopted, has established model programs in rural, inner city and suburban districts which can easily be fitted to other districts wishing to adopt the program.

Project Highlights:

An important aspect of this project was the initiative taken by the California Council for the Humanities in 1978: to involve humanities scholars with secondary education. The challenge grant from NEH encouraging the donation of funds from state foundations, corporations, governments and community organizations much expanded the potential of the program, the direction of which has depended on the needs and initiative of individual schools.

Title: AD ASTRA

State: Connecticut

SEA involved?: No

Type: Teacher Training/Institute

Date initiated: 1983

Total years: 1

Cost: \$10,138

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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Bruce Frazer
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General Description:

The project focused on a "magnet program" in the classics for seventh graders at the Quirk School, located in one of the poorer areas of the Hartford Public School system. Its goal was to improve the curriculum through cooperation with academic experts at Trinity College. Fifteen teachers attended two week seminars and workshops with philosopher Drew Hyland and classicist James Bradley to refine and expand the current curriculum.

The Trinity scholars led discussions on the curriculum in summer seminars, funded in part by the Connecticut Humanities Council, with follow-up sessions in the academic year. The seminars grew out of the ongoing efforts of the Greater Hartford Program for Foreign Languages and International Studies which included the goals of academic excellence, the involvement of a racially balanced student body and the utilization of an urban environment for multi-cultural activities. The curriculum in the classics is based upon a two-year sequence which may start in the student's sophomore or junior year. Two important components of the program are students' involvement with the international and business communities of the city of Hartford and the active participation of local universities.

The classical program within the Magnet School was founded upon three basic tenets: introduce students to the ideas of the major thinkers of human culture, enable students to understand, evaluate and apply these ideas to

their daily lives, and stress "systematic, disciplined study, careful reading of texts, notetaking, dictation, memorization and drill, and systematic feedback and grading."

The Quirk program stresses grammar, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, astronomy, harmonics, and Latin. Unlike the foreign languages and international studies program, the magnet school in the classics is directed toward junior high students. Program objectives include providing academically challenging work to demonstrate that esoteric subjects such as harmonics and rhetoric can be taught at the junior high level, and creating a model school to attract mainstream, rather than "gifted" students throughout Hartford. In addition, a television station taped a classroom in operation for viewing on a local news program to illustrate classical instruction within an inner-city school.

Built upon the medieval Trivium and Quadrivium, the classical program stresses what the staff see as the two most important elements of education: "intellectual challenge and structure." They accept the medieval view of the universe as "fundamentally ordered, structured and unified," an idea they perceive as central to successful education.

Project Highlights:

This local humanities project involves a number of noteworthy elements: the introduction of the classics to a predominately poor, black and Hispanic student body at the seventh-grade level; the integration of rhetoric, logic and philosophy with instruction in Latin; and utilization of humanities scholars from local universities in helping to develop the Quirk School's classical curriculum. The stress on the medieval Trivium and Quadrivium for middle school students gives this humanities program an unusually rigorous ideology and structure.

Title: Teachers Institute on Connecticut History

State: Connecticut

SEA involved?: No

Type: Teacher Training Institute

Date initiated: 1980

Total years: 2

Cost: \$76,381 (2 years)

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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General Description:

The Teachers Institute on Connecticut History began in 1980 with cooperation from a number of professional groups within the state. It is in particular one of the most successful joint efforts of higher education and the public schools. The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute participated through which Yale faculty cooperate with school teachers to develop "new materials and teaching strategies." Other groups supporting the Teachers Institute on Connecticut History included the Connecticut Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, the Connecticut Council for Social Studies, the Connecticut Historical Commission, the New Haven Colony Historical Society, the Old State House Society, and the Association for the Study of Connecticut History.

The 1980 Institute involved a summer session where secondary teachers, with advice from faculty at Yale, Bridgeport and Connecticut University's, cooperated in establishing curriculum units on Connecticut history. Local school district officials attested the applicability of the materials to existing courses. As a result, thirteen curriculum units were developed pertaining to law and government, religious and ethnic diversity, industrial development, and periodization, and then printed for general distribution among teachers. In addition, Christopher and Bonnie B. Collier compiled a 1000 item bibliography and wrote "An Essay Toward a Bibliography of Connecticut History for Teachers" which outlined resources

on the history of Connecticut. A dissemination conference on the materials attracted 378 teachers when only 200 had been anticipated. A Connecticut Humanities staff report termed the conference "a resounding success."

Three ideas lay at the heart of the development of these local history materials: that teenagers can "gain greater control over their own destiny if they understand the[ir] historical and cultural roots"; that the proximity and availability of materials "enliven, dramatize, and make concrete classroom lessons"; and that Connecticut materials can make trends in American and often world history more generally relevant.

Project Highlights:

Much of the strength of this project came from having experienced teachers determine and satisfy their curricular needs, with some guidance from a group of college faculty drawn from diverse institutions. Local school officials assured the general usage of curricular materials by judging them for their suitability, and a successful teachers meeting helped to publicize them. The project created quality curricular materials and involved large numbers of organizations interested in history instruction. The support of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute was especially helpful.

Title: Summer Project in English

State: Idaho

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Reading/Writing project

Date initiated: 1982

Total years: 3

Cost: \$77,000 (3 years)

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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(208) 334-2113

Rudy Leverett
Humanities
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General Description:

During 1982, the Idaho State Department of Education received a grant of \$23,000 to conduct a summer project in English, which was renewed for 1983 and 1984. The project began with a two-week seminar for juniors, seniors and classroom teachers conducted by four master teachers: two outstanding English teachers in Idaho and two with national reputations in the teaching of writing. Fifty students and twenty teachers were selected as participants during the Summer of 1982.

The seventy participants were divided into four classes. Each class worked with all of the master teachers in a two-week immersion in writing, poetry, plays, and studies in literature generally. It allowed some of Idaho's best high school writers to go to class with their peers, and with a number of Idaho teachers most skilled in writing.

The project represented an unusual situation, one in which students and teachers studied and worked with each other under the supervision and instruction of master teachers. The project director noted some tension involved in the unusual situation but argued that the stress "produced creative energy and excitement and was not debilitating." Students and teachers, in a situation where distinctions based on status were blurred, effectively participated in such activities as editing, studying literature, and experimenting with new forms of writing.

The Fall 1982 issue of the Idaho English Journal published poems, essays and works of fiction by participants.

Project Highlights:

Project goals stressed that the twenty teachers would provide leadership in fostering excellent programs in English within their schools, while the students would serve as models for others. Along with the unusual combination of teachers and students in classrooms, the project was also distinguished by its funding from a private source, the Whittengurger Foundation, a local Idaho institution established by an educator. Such an organization suggested the type of private grantor most apt to fund such a project for a state education agency.

Title: Improving Writing in Illinois Secondary Schools

State: Illinois

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Reading/Writing project

Date initiated: 1982

Total years: 2

Cost \$197,180 (2 years, K-12)

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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(312) 341-3860

Robert Klaus
Executive Director
IL Humanities Council
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(312) 939-5212

General Description:

This program, coordinated by the Illinois Writing Project through the auspices of Roosevelt University, was designed to improve the writing skills of secondary students in 24 schools in Illinois. The program is divided into three stages: (1) a summer institute where instruction is given to classroom teachers for training other teachers to improve student writing, (2) a series of in-service workshops for 600 teachers, and (3) and the application of the techniques taught in the institutes and workshops by teachers across Illinois. This program affects 150,000 students.

The Illinois Writing Project was carried out for 3 1/2 years with ESEA Title IV-C funding, during which period the Project worked with 27 school districts throughout the state. Since 1982, the Project received support from the Illinois Humanities Council. The Illinois State Board of Education has approved the Writing Project, and has found in examinations of students of participating teachers, an improvement in their writing about twice as great as those taught by teachers not participating in the project.

The Writing Project, like the National Endowment for the Humanities, emphasizes writing as a central humanities discipline. The project relates the teaching of writing to the study of rhetoric, linguistics, literature and history, and the humanists involved in the project have broad and overlapping expertise in these disciplines. Important

humanities aspects of the program are to focus on writing as a tool of thinking, and the concern with varying styles of expression in differing disciplines.

Using ideas developed by the Bay Area Writing Project, the Illinois Project stresses reviews of recent theory and research on composition, close analysis of the participants' own writing, and the sharing of practical classroom activities. An Illinois Humanities Council evaluator, discussing the 1982 institutes, found the inservice element of the Project especially effective in improving classroom teaching.

Project Highlights:

Although SEAs support a number of writing projects at the state level, Illinois's has the distinction of involving an extraordinary number of teachers and students. For example, the current effort, involving summer institutes for 100 teachers at three Illinois colleges and universities, will affect 12,000 students. The Writing Project's ability to secure funding from the state's humanities council to continue its efforts is a precedent that could aid similar programs in other states which have been forced to reduce or end successful activities due to federal cutbacks.

Title: Children and the Classics

State: Indiana

SEA involved?: No

Type: Gifted and Talented

Date initiated: 1980

Total years: 1

Cost: 36,973.66

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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Kenneth Gladish
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General Description:

Children and the Classics was a project sponsored by the Gifted and Talented Programs, K-6 of the Gary Community Schools in 1980-1981. This project used the humanities to enable teachers, parents and young children to better understand human relationships, to teach values and to provide procedures for problem solving and decision making.

Aimed primarily at black and Spanish-speaking populations, the project began with a summer institute where three humanities scholars and three teachers developed a curriculum centered on existing courses for elementary school children: children's literature, Shakespeare for children, philosophy and logical thinking. Issues discussed in the program included the perpetual struggle between good and evil throughout history and in our daily lives; heroes/heroines; identity; friends; and decision making. In addition to discussing the material, children were involved in improvisational theater, puppet/hows, dramatic readings, related craft projects and field trips.

The project was divided into two phases: -phase one focused on staff and parental training and phase two involved program implementation. Humanists from the fields of history, philosophy and literature participated, using lectures, group discussion, role playing, media (video, film), drama, and music to achieve the scope of the program. Thus, children were able to begin to see life as continuum in which the many stages lead toward full development. They were encouraged to explore the depth of their comprehension of the themes and to relate them to

present life experiences. Of the 46 children involved in the summer program, a high average of 39 attended the 4 days-a-week sessions on any given day.

Project Highlights:

The program provided young children, many of them culturally disadvantaged, with participation in a program thoughtfully structured to their interests. A broader humanities focus was applied to materials already in use in schools, and suggests a possible approach to strengthening humanities programs.

Title: Humanities Project for Rural Secondary Schools

State: Maine

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Teacher Institute

Date initiated: 1981

Total years: 3

Cost: \$156,000 (3 years)

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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ME Dept of Educ. & Cultural Serv.
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Augusta, Maine 04333
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Jayne Sokolow
Div of Education Programs
Mail Stop 202
Nat Endwmt for Humanities
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(202) 786-0377

General Description:

The Maine Humanities Project, directed by the Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services and supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, involved programs at ten rural high schools throughout the state. The project's goals were to enhance the teaching of humanities by sponsoring summer institutes and follow-up efforts during the academic year. The State Department of Education served as the link between the college academic community and the high school. The three-year program included summer institutes for teachers; summer conferences for administrators; humanities curriculum efforts within each school throughout the year; and statewide curriculum meetings. Students from the ten selected schools participated in a two-week study of the humanities and brought their enhanced enthusiasm for those subjects back to their classrooms. Teachers attended statewide meetings throughout the academic year to share ideas and experiences and collectively develop techniques.

Each high school developed its own courses within the humanities. Some typical courses set up were an interdisciplinary look at ethics based on classical sources, a study of the French-Canadian experience in Maine, and a historical and literary analysis of the culture of the 1920s. At the end of the project, it is expected that each school will have generally improved its humanities curriculum.

Recently, Maine was awarded an additional two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to do a follow-up program in ten additional high schools. Bowdoin College will cooperate with the state education agency to demonstrate how SEAs can work with private institutions of higher education to improve the quality of teaching at the secondary level. During the first summer institute, sessions will be devoted to teachers working intensely with college faculty to make a close examination of specific texts. During the academic year, teams from individual schools will plan in-service training for their faculty. All programs involve teachers, administrators and Bowdoin faculty and set an important precedent by establishing lasting procedures to improve the knowledge of all educators concerning the quality of humanities teaching in these ten high schools.

Project Highlights:

This project brought about a long-term involvement of administrators, teachers and students in the study and teaching of the humanities. In addition, the focus on rural high schools brought students who commonly have less chance to visit cultural institutions or use libraries with substantial holdings, into contact with humanities instruction. The project's focus on experiment and reform of the curriculum within particular schools tied it to specific, measureable educational outcomes. In this way it did two things often hard to combine: it allowed for experiment with new programs and courses and yet insured a continued implementation independent of the intellectual interests of particular individuals.

Title: Folger Library Teachers' Workshops and Shakespeare Festivals

State: Maryland (& VA & D.C.) **SEA involved?:** No

Type: Local Cultural Institution

Date initiated: 1980 **Total years:** 3

Cost: \$14,450 per year **In progress?:** Yes

Contact Person(s):

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General Description:

In 1980 the Folger Shakespeare Library instituted its first Teachers' Workshop and Shakespeare Festival to aid elementary teachers in developing Shakespearian productions using abridged versions of the plays. During the three years since this initial effort, the project has focused on secondary as well as elementary students and involved a variety of activities for students and teachers, including teacher training through lectures and workshops on presentation of Shakespeare and Renaissance literature to grades 4-6 and 7-12, followed by dramatic presentations of Shakespeare by students.

The project is currently supported by the Maryland, District of Columbia and Virginia humanities councils to serve teachers and students in those jurisdictions. Ongoing administrative costs for the program are paid by the Folger Shakespeare Library, but special project costs are partially funded by the humanities councils. As a part of the project's activities in 1983, teachers from the Washington metropolitan area (including Maryland and Virginia schools) came to the Folger for day-long workshops on teaching Shakespeare and directing children in productions of his plays. The Shakespearian Festivals, which followed the workshops, allowed schools to prepare abridged versions of the plays (20 minutes for elementary schools, 30 minutes for secondary schools) which students then presented during the festivals. Originally, the productions were held in local schools and churches. Since

1982 they have been held in the Folger Theatre, a recreation of a Renaissance playhouse, thus adding another historical dimension to the activity for children.

Project Highlights:

This project was included as a model effort involving cooperation among state humanities councils to fund a project which serves school children in each of their jurisdictions. In addition, it utilized a unique cultural institution, the Folger Shakespeare Library, which had earlier established educational programs and was able to use its existing staff to provide the knowledge necessary to conduct a program involving teacher institutes, dramatic presentations, and public programs for parents and other interested adults. The program had a far-reaching dissemination effect as well, with notification reaching every public school in the area. It has been sufficiently successful to be repeated a number of times, each on an expanded basis.

Title: Minnesota Humanities Task Force and Heritage for Tomorrow Institutes

State: Minnesota

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: statewide assessment of humanities instruction

Date initiated: 1975

Total years: 3

Cost: \$93,081

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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(612) 696-6000

General Description:

During the mid-1970s, the State of Minnesota, responding to requests from teachers, established a Humanities Task Force. This Task Force accomplished a number of objectives: a listing of all humanities teachers in the state; a survey of Minnesota colleges and universities to determine which offered majors and minors in the humanities; an exploration of the feasibility of establishing a "Humanities Service Center" to collect and disseminate materials for teachers; annual in-service workshops; a survey of humanities teachers to determine their areas of greatest concern; and humanities guidelines for secondary schools. The guidelines formed the basis for a larger publication, Articulating the Ineffable: Approaches to the Teaching of the Humanities, edited by Ronald H. Ronning and Jeremiah Reedy and republished in 1982 by the University Press of America. The Task Force continues to meet on an informal basis.

One of the major efforts of the project was three summer conferences entitled, "Heritage for Tomorrow Institutes." The institutes were established because a number of teachers expressed the need for assistance in planning and articulation of humanities programs and for enhancement of their abilities in interdisciplinary teaching. The institutes focused on the humanities curriculum in secondary schools and provided sample interdisciplinary units. Over a period of three years, the institutes progressed from having teachers prepare a pilot version of an instructional unit, to revising and

publishing their model units, to basing second-year revisions on "what works and what doesn't", and finally to conducting eight regional workshops around the state to publicize successful materials produced at the institutes.

Articulating the Ineffable, a culmination of Task Force deliberations and Institute efforts, incorporates a number of topics and activities that can be pursued by state education agencies in improving humanities instruction. The work considers the problem of definition, includes a historical overview for humanities teaching, details the building of interdisciplinary humanities units, and presents a discussion of the worth of the humanities in teaching children values. The volume is based upon the view that humanities instruction should reflect the ties from western civilization to the Greco-Roman traditions.

Project Highlights:

The project involved an unusual degree of cooperation among state education agency personnel, higher education faculty, and teachers and administrators from local districts. In addition, it stimulated a wide-ranging effort to improve humanities instruction including: theoretical discussion of the changing perceptions of the term "humanities;" reproductions of specific unit and course outlines in literature, art, history, philosophy and poetry; and practical suggestions for establishing or enhancing humanities education within schools and school districts. The publication, Articulating the Ineffable: Approaches to the Teaching of Humanities, makes it possible for state education agencies and local districts to evaluate the utility of this model in meeting their own needs.

Title: Philosophy for Children

State: New Jersey

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Philosophy

Date initiated: 1974

Total years: 9

Cost: \$175,000/year

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

Matthew Lipman
Director, Inst. for the Advcmnt
of Philosophy for Children
Montclair State College
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043
(201) 893-4277

Ann Margaret Sharp
Associate Director
Inst. for Advcmnt of
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Montclair State College
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043
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General Description:

Matthew Lipman, Professor of Philosophy at Montclair State College, established the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy (IAPC) as a non-profit division of Montclair State College in 1974. The Institute has developed programs in three major areas: curriculum development, educational research and teacher education. Under curriculum development, IAPC has constructed textbooks in philosophy for children, manuals for teachers, and rationales for teaching philosophy in the schools directed towards teachers, administrators, philosophers, and undergraduate and graduate students.

The Institute both develops books (for teachers and students) and publishes a periodical, Thinking. IAPC also sponsors research activities to evaluate the academic impact of programs devised by the Institute, conducts workshops to aid teachers in working philosophy into the curriculum, and trains philosophers to conduct workshops for interested school districts.

The Institute is concerned with integrating philosophy, which it defines as "a wealth of ideas...and the discipline of logic" into the elementary classroom to sharpen the thinking skills of children, especially younger ones who are rarely exposed to the discipline. Institute officials argue that the usefulness of philosophy to the improvement of a student's intellectual achievement has been demonstrated through a study conducted by the Educational Testing Service among students in Newark, New

Jersey who had taken philosophy at the elementary level. These students showed dramatic improvement in reading, mathematics and creative reasoning. Students involved made a 36% gain in mathematics and a 66% jump in reading test scores over students who did not participate in the experiment.

Philosophy, those at IAPC contend, is a subject naturally of interest to children because it focuses on meanings rather than isolated facts, emphasizes thinking rather than memorization and handles issues that matter to the children themselves. Philosophy gives children a fresh look at the logic contained in everyday language and gives them a chance to talk about friendship, fairness, reality, truth, being a person, and goodness--all topics of great interest. The creation of a classroom dialog leads most effectively to the development of reasoning abilities and the articulation of concepts, in a setting where "children learn to reason together." The ultimate goal of the Institute's programs is to make students "more reflective and more reasonable." Much of the teaching is centered in a children's novel, Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, which raises issues of interest to young readers and presents topics in metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics and logic without labeling them as such.

The book is set in a classroom where children begin to think about what is involved in thinking and learn positive values of non-doctrinaire education. It is currently in use in thousands of classroom throughout the world and has been translated into a number of languages. Novels which supplement Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery probe the issues of forming consistent and reasonable moral and ethical standards, the problems in writing poetry and fiction, and the conflict between the demands of society and the rights of the individual.

Project Highlights:

The project has provided a clearly structured and effective way of introducing philosophy, a subject often deemed too difficult for young students, into elementary and middle schools. Its publications and the availability of Institute direction to aid those who would like to adopt its program for teaching philosophy in elementary and middle schools have proved successful.

Title: Project SEARCH: The Humanities Series

State: New York **SEA involved?:** Yes

Type: Model humanities district programs

Date initiated: 1972 **Total years:** 4

Cost: \$1,245,590 **In progress?:** No

Contact Person(s):

Charles J. Trupia, Director Division of General Education NY Dept of Education, Rm 679, EBA Albany, NY 12234 (518) 474-7810	Don Bragaw, Chief Bur. of Soc. Stud. State Dept. of Ed. Albany, NY 12234 (518) 474-5978
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General Description:

Project SEARCH was a pilot consortium of school districts organized to make fundamental improvements in education throughout New York. It was funded through the John D. Rockefeller, III Fund and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Ewald B. Nyquist, then President of the University of the State of New York, noted that the general goal of Project SEARCH was to develop an education which "teaches that all persons have dignity and worth [and] studies man's accomplishments, especially those that tend to enrich the quality of life." The program emphasized reasoning and methods of expression that would lead students to make intelligent, responsible decisions.

The SEARCH program published the Humanities Series, six booklets focused on the four educational goals of Project SEARCH: reasoning, the affective domain, interdisciplinary learning, and values. Individual publications in the Humanities Series stressed critical thinking and reasoning, developing instructional objectives for humanities programs, the aesthetics of film and television, designing interdisciplinary programs, values, and life-coping skills.

Published in 1976, these booklets continue to provide useful guidance for humanities instruction in general. The essay on thinking is a handbook aiding teachers in the presentation of units on critical thinking and fallacies, and includes sample questions and issues for students. The booklet on interdisciplinary studies focuses on the

benefits of interdisciplinary teaching and the structures and cooperation necessary for it to thrive. The guide to developing instructional objectives for humanities programs suggests ways of determining content, goals and methods in setting up courses with minimal friction.

Project Highlights:

The linkage among the districts of Project SEARCH (representing rural, urban, and suburban districts, public and private schools, and elementary and secondary levels), the state education agency, and New York institutions of higher education was unusually extensive, and the intellectual quality and scope of materials produced was impressive. The works which focus on philosophical issues are especially useful for schools where the subject is rarely taught. The breadth of the effort makes the materials worthy of consideration in developing comparable efforts. In addition, the cost and extent of the program make it difficult to replicate and indicate the wisdom of utilizing materials developed through project SEARCH rather than duplicating them elsewhere.

Title: North Carolina History Summer Institute

State: North Carolina

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Teacher Training Institute

Date initiated: 1983

Total years: 2

Cost: \$62,355

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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National Humanities Faculty
1735 Lowergate Drive
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(404) 329-5788

Brent Glass
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NC Humanities Council
112 Foust Building, UNC-G
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(919) 379-5325

General Description:

This project involved an intensive two-week National Humanities Faculty Summer Institute in Greensboro for eighth grade teachers to prepare them to teach a state-required course in North Carolina history. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the state's humanities committee identified the training of social studies teachers for the new course as an immediate instructional need. The 1983 Summer Institute was the initial activity in what is expected to be a three-year program involving the National Humanities Faculty, the North Carolina State Department of Education, public school teachers and faculty from state colleges and universities.

The long-term project, "North Carolina History in the Schools: A Past and a Future" involves funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation as well as the North Carolina Humanities Committee. The 1983 Summer Institute focused on the subject matter of North Carolina history, historical methods of scholarship, the newly-adopted textbook, North Carolina: The History of an American State, and techniques of working in relation to history. Some stress on aspects of North Carolina culture like music, art, and folk tales broadened the historical perspective.

Suggestions were also developed about preparing lectures and leading discussions in relation to the required state history textbook.

Members of the NHF faculty and professors from North Carolina colleges worked as peers with participating

teachers in plenary sessions, seminars, and small planning groups. The National Humanities Faculty has aided hundreds of schools and school districts over the last 15 years in improving the teaching of humanities subjects. Its faculty is made up of scholars from across the country, and its national Board of Trustees and staff create and coordinate NHF policies. NHF employs two basic methods in helping schools to improve teaching and learning in the humanities: in-service programs for teachers and administrators to enhance the quality of texts and other classroom materials, and summer or other out-of-term institutes which "provide intensive study and collaboration away from ...daily demands." The summer institutes allow time for "intensive study of issues, texts, curriculum, and teaching methods." Teachers from different schools can share their experiences and develop a collegial approach to intellectual endeavors and pedagogical techniques.

Project Highlights:

This project was a timely response to a newly-adopted state educational requirement which drew support from the National Humanities Faculty, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Humanities Committee. It gave practical aid in many directions to teachers who needed to prepare quickly and effectively for the introduction of the new course. Other noteworthy aspects of the project are the use of "necessity of the moment" to incorporate general humanities instruction and a longer-term activity.

Title: Phaedrus Grant Program

State: Pennsylvania

SEA involved?: No

Type: Competition/State Humanities Council Initiative

Date initiated: 1981

Total years: 3

Cost: \$100,000/year (approx.)

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

Craig Eisendrath
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Humanities Council
401 N. Broad Street, #818
Philadelphia, PA 19108
(215) 925-1005

General Description:

In response to the appeal of the Rockefeller Report, "The Humanities in American Life," for enhanced attention to humanities instruction at the elementary and secondary level, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council set up a special Phaedrus Grant program. The aim of this program was to elicit two types of proposals: those involving discussion of humanities instruction in the schools, and those creating and implementing humanities programs either in or outside of the school structure. The Council determined that school districts could not apply directly for funds "to prevent the program from becoming a simple supplement to state or district funding."

The types of projects funded under the Phaedrus Grant program were wide-ranging. Many involved methods of organizing humanities instruction within the classroom including a workshop on the need for better cooperation in external humanities teaching between projects and elementary and secondary schools. Other projects included an institute in urban public history which offered guidance in the compiling of a community history; a series of events involving field trips to local cultural institutions, for 250 children entitled "Making the Curriculum Real"; and additional projects focused on individual disciplines and topics. For example, a program for 15 Philadelphia schools on the history and nature of architecture; a four-week summer program on everyday life during the Victorian era; and a project on the history of the region's various religious faiths.

Variously structured, these projects included the development of individual curricular units, field trips, dramatic productions, teacher workshops, slide-tape presentations, workshops for students led by humanities scholars and cultural leaders, re-creations of a historical setting for elementary students, oral history projects, and lecture-demonstrations concerning native American culture.

Guidelines for applications under the Phaedrus Grant Program note that parent-teacher groups as well as ad hoc groups dedicated to improving humanities instruction in the schools are eligible to apply. Priority is given to demonstration projects "which have carefully planned methods of integration into the school system," and to programs which can demonstrate their efforts are innovative beyond the current school curriculum. Other than the focus on the schools, Pennsylvania's Phaedrus Grant Program employs the Council's standard requirements for a public humanities program for the out-of-school adult population.

Project Highlights:

This program is a model for state humanities councils, or state education agencies, to encourage and finance the ideas of local education agencies or private groups in developing humanities activities of special relevance to their schools and communities. It stimulated local and personal initiatives regarding humanities within the schools without significantly increasing expenditures of state education agencies. The guidelines developed by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council are helpful for other funding sources proposing similar activities.

Title: The Legacy of Roger Williams

State: Rhode Island

SEA involved?: No

Type: Competition

Date initiated: 1983

Total years: 1

Cost: \$70,000

In progress?: Yes

Contact Person(s):

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Project Directors
RI Committee for the Humanities
463 Broadway
Providence, Rhode Island 02909
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Thomas Roberts
Executive Director
RI Comm. for the Hum.
463 Broadway
Providence, RI 02909
(401) 273-2250

General Description:

This project commemorated the 300th anniversary of the death of Roger Williams, Rhode Island's founder. The program, scheduled for 1983-84, includes several components: a touring exhibit on Roger Williams; a Roger Williams Lecture featuring a nationally prominent humanist; a conference of humanities instructors from higher and secondary education; a touring "theater" involving actor/researchers who portray Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson in schools; a student essay contest; and an award to be granted by the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities for the outstanding secondary school humanities teacher of the year.

The touring exhibit and accompanying study guide on Roger Williams, The Roger Williams Lecture, similar to the Jefferson Lecture sponsored by NEH, will allow a prominent humanist to speak on a topic within his or her own field. The dramatic presentations on Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson will be followed by discussions of matters of conscience and will build upon the study guides distributed to students and teachers. The student essay contest, with cash prizes to the winners, provides Rhode Island students with an opportunity to explore the intellectual legacy of Roger Williams; students select topics from those pertinent to the concerns of Williams and his contemporaries. In 1984 the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities will inaugurate an annual award to a secondary school teacher in a humanities discipline. Local administrators and teachers

will nominate contestants, and the winner will receive a substantial cash sum.

Project Highlights:

The development of a major new commitment to humanities in the schools by the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities organized around the 300th anniversary of Roger Williams' death, is an innovative use of an important commemoration in the state's history. The competitive aspects of the project are especially impressive. Teachers and students seldom gain monetary rewards or public recognition for achievements in humanities areas. However, this effort rewards students for writing essays about major questions of values, and honors an outstanding teacher for sustained excellence in humanities instruction in ways that should bring significant attention to the humanities. The dramatic presentation in the schools should also stimulate discussion of important humanities questions.

Title: Japan: An Interdependent Nation

State: Utah

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Conference

Date initiated: 1982

Total years: 1

Cost: \$46,554.71

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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Ogden, Utah 84403
(801) 479-3754

Delmont Oswald
Executive Director
UT Endwmt for Humanities
10 W. Broadway, Suite 900
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 531-7868

General Description:

"Japan: An Interdependent Nation" was a two-day seminar on Japan using the perspectives of individual humanities disciplines. It preceded Japan Awareness week and provided valuable information for those teaching about Japan in the public schools. The seminar included lectures by noted scholars, small group discussions, and resources for a "hands on" use of humanities materials. The seminar, although open to the general public, was expressly intended for teachers K-12. The University of Utah awarded a quarter hour of graduate credit for teachers who attended, and the Utah State Office of Education offered travel scholarships to two teachers from each school district.

The seminar was sponsored by an impressive variety of institutions including the Consulate of Japan at San Francisco, the Institute for Studies in the Humanities, the Japanese American Citizens League, the Snowbird Institute for Arts and Humanities, Stanford University's Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education, the University of Utah, the Utah State Office of Education and the Utah Endowment for the Humanities. The program explored the religion, history and culture of Japan in sessions such as: "Buddhism, Christianity and Shintoism in Japan"; "Castle Towns: An Introduction to Tokugawa Japan"; and "The Rabbit in the Moon: Japanese Folktales." Other sessions were devoted to general pedagogical approaches to integrating aspects of the Japanese experience and geared to differing grade levels: "Activities on Japan for the Elementary Classroom"; "The Japanese-American Experience in

Utah"; and "Growing Up Japanese," a film and discussion for grades 6-12.

Special activities on Japanese art and culture included a tour of the Japanese Art Collection of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, and workshops on calligraphy, flower arrangement and Japanese musical instruments. Speakers at the seminar included the Japanese Consul for Cultural Affairs, Yasuaki Ono; Dr. David Grossman of Stanford University; Drs. Paul Hyer and Larry V. Shumway from Brigham Young University and Dr. Lennox Tierney of the University of Utah.

Project Highlights:

This project involved a large number of divergent institutions interested in promoting the study of Japan in schools, which led to substantial cash and in-kind contributions from the institutions, supplemented by a grant from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities. The project integrated a variety of disciplines, intellectual concerns and cultural materials. Program organizers were able to use the impetus of public concern over economic competition with Japan and the nature of its industrial structure, to move toward a broader understanding of the nation related to its secular and religious culture. A Utah Endowment for the Humanities staff member noted the strong humanities content of seminar presentations and praised the project's outstanding organization, terming it "one of our best."

Title: Problems Facing Humanities Education in Sec. Schools

State: Virginia

SEA involved?: No

Type: Conference

Date initiated: 1983

Total years: 1

Cost: \$26,717.27

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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18 West Range
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(804) 924-3296

Robert L. Entzminger
Associate Director
Ctr for Programs in Hum
VA Polytechnic Univ.
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(703) 961-5016

General Description:

This three-day conference held at Virginia Tech focused on three aspects of humanities instruction in Virginia's secondary schools: (1) what are specific challenges to humanities education in secondary schools? (2) what kinds of programs work best? (3) what possibilities exist for cooperation between secondary schools and institutions of higher education? It was organized by the Center for Programs in the Humanities of the College of Arts and Sciences and funded in part by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy.

Those in attendance included public and private secondary school teachers, administrators and school board members, and humanities scholars and university administrators. Panels on the program focused on special problems faced by teachers and administrators, exemplary humanities programs in Virginia schools, and cooperation between Virginia's secondary schools and its colleges and universities. Workshops, led by secondary and college faculty, focused on individual humanities subjects. The closing session concerned the role of the state humanities council in improving humanities instruction in Virginia.

The proceedings of this conference were printed as The Humanities in Virginia's Secondary Schools, and in their introduction, joint directors Robert L. Entzminger and Thomas C. Hunt noted its efforts to respond to the recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission and the more recent National Commission on Excellence in Education. The

conference allowed members of school boards to discuss the conflicting demands for areas of instruction, teachers to discuss local projects on Appalachian studies, philosophy in the secondary curriculum and History Day in Virginia schools. Following panels focusing on the importance of administrators in furthering the humanities and on individual projects, the conference concluded with workshops on the relationship of subject areas to the humanities generally.

The workshops dealt with topics of special reference to their disciplines: what element of the arts can be considered humanities scholarship? In what way is English "a skill discipline of life skills-- filling out an application...etc." and to what degree does it help students to "sense the aesthetic dimensions of their lives, and understand themselves and their place in the world"?; also, the ways in which foreign languages provide "sensitivity to the plurality of cultures within American society and the world." Conference proceedings included the issues raised in each of the subject area workshops.

Project Highlights:

Virginia's conference was included because it is a model for those states which have not yet held a statewide conference on the teaching of the humanities in the public schools. The features worthy of note were the broad involvement of teachers, local school board members, state and local administrators and college and university faculty; the attempt at definition both of humanities as a general concept and as separate subject areas; the reproduction of the conference's proceedings for the use of school personnel throughout the state; and current examples of cooperative efforts between higher education and secondary schools. The meeting was a timely response to "A Nation at Risk" noting that its "employing the language of national defense to express the urgency of the crisis in education" has "tended to concentrate attention on the need to improve the quality of instruction in mathematics and sciences." Its goal was thus to assure that the humanities were a "prominent item" in any attempt to assess the quality of secondary education.

Title: High School - Music in Humanities

State: Wisconsin

SEA involved?: No

Type: Music

Date initiated: 1967

Total years: 11

Cost: \$1200

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

John Sutte
W 220 N 6151 Townline Road
Hamilton High School
Sussex, WI 53089
(414) 246-6471

General Description:

This program, developed during the late 1960s, centered on music but encompassed English, art and social studies. The major goals of the program were to investigate the ways in which music was central to the human spirit. Students were asked to "experience the joy of music" as listener, creator and performer and to explore the various aspects of music and how they are shaped. They also studied the placement of music in its historical and cultural context. The study was divided among types of music (folk, popular, concert, ethnic), while historical periods formed its sequence: Ancient Orient, Classical Greece, Medieval Europe, Romantic Europe, Contemporary America, etc. These units were then divided into four activities including outlining the musical characteristics of a single period, singing or playing representative works from the period and researching the range and cultural origins of a period's music using library resources.

A typical unit, i.e., one on the Ancient Orient, divided instruction into the following topics: an introduction to non-Western music; The Indian raga and tala; Hindustani and Carnatic traditions; and an overview of Chinese opera. Films of a Chinese opera and Japanese Kabuki gave students a clearer sense of Asian musical forms.

Originally conceived as an enrichment activity for college-bound youth, the program expanded its focus to reach out to all students who have traditionally been omitted from the schools' musical mainstream of band,

chorus and orchestra. The program was not directed to the highly musical but to "the other 50 percent." Students who elected to take the humanities sequence could do so for three years, attending the class for a two-hour period each week during their sophomore, junior and senior years. Student demand was heavy during the time the humanities sequence was offered, and enrollment had to be limited to a "first come, first served" basis.

This program at Hamilton High School was selected as exemplary by the Wisconsin School Music Association, in part because of its effective integration with humanities disciplines. A visiting team from the School Music Association enthusiastically approved of learning about the improvisatory nature of Indian music and its 16 bar rhythmic groups and studying illustrations of the sitar, tabla and tamboura. The Association also praised the performances of students who normally did not take music or cultural classes: "it was encouraging to watch young people... read and listen to poetry without inhibition and sing and play without fear of censure but with the expectation of strong peer approval."

Project Highlights:

Unlike most courses intended for the musical, this program successfully combined the experience of music with a rich cultural understanding of its origins. It dealt forthrightly with the social roots of a nation's music and of those who perform and listen to it. This led to some controversy, but also to an unusually comprehensive and intellectually provocative treatment of past and current music.

Title: Humanities Education in Wyoming's Public Schools

State: Wyoming

SEA involved?: Yes

Type: Statewide assessment of humanities instruction

Date initiated: 1982

Total years: 1 1/2

Cost: \$11,492

In progress?: No

Contact Person(s):

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Hathaway Building
Cheyenne, WY 82002
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Phyllis Messer
Project Director
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Laramie, Wyoming 82070
(307) 742-2528

General Description:

The Wyoming Humanities Education Task Force began with a grant from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities to the Wyoming Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The Task Force was made up of twelve professionals from all education levels and included state and local representatives. Focusing on grades 6-12, the task force assessed the humanities curriculum, teacher preparation in the humanities, and incentives and impediments to improved instruction.

The Task Force accepted the definition of the humanities as a group of disciplines while recognizing the important capacities which are acquired primarily through these subjects. It recognized, as well, that the humanities are for all students and, indeed, found them most important for the student not planning to attend college, for whom secondary school "may provide the only supervised exposure to the humanities which they receive."

In carrying out their assessment of the humanities in Wyoming schools, Task Force members considered a range of materials, including the high school graduation requirements for Wyoming's local districts, course descriptions for humanities classes throughout the state, and the transcripts of teachers, grades 6-12, to determine the number of undergraduate and graduate humanities courses completed by the Wyoming teaching force generally. Numerous interviews with administrators, school board members, and humanities teachers were also conducted.

Although local graduation requirements reveal a growing emphasis on basic skills, teachers and school board members demonstrated a strong belief in the central importance of the humanities. Nearly three-quarters of the board members thought philosophy should be taught as an elective, while almost half thought foreign languages should be required. Yet interviews with student teachers from the University of Wyoming documented that 61% took neither philosophy nor foreign languages while 51% took no art appreciation. Current teachers averaged 50 undergraduate hours in the humanities, but graduate training in the area was "disappointingly low", even for humanities teachers.

Task Force recommendations stressed the need for parents and teachers to expect greater student achievement, to require students "to raise questions, to think and read critically, and to take greater responsibility for the conditions of their lives." The report urged teachers to enhance their own training in the humanities through additional courses and in-service training. Administrators were encouraged to develop improved instructional programs, provide released-time for teachers to attend humanities programs, and establish "district-wide seminars where teachers and administrators meet to discuss important texts and ideas." School board members were asked to increase the number of in-service days required of teachers and to insure the availability of high quality humanities in-service programs. Institutions of higher learning, including colleges of education, were advised to review their graduation requirements in light of the importance of the humanities. Finally, the state education agency was asked to "provide a vehicle for recognizing and disseminating information about exemplary humanities programs" and to encourage the State Board of Education to require a minimum number of humanities courses for all areas of teacher certification.

Project Highlights:

This Task Force gathered a unique range of information concerning the current status of humanities instruction in a single state. Its members gained a broad picture of the humanities as taught in Wyoming schools and the humanities education of the state's teachers.