

PRESERVING DIGITAL PUBLIC TELEVISION
Notes from Social Studies Teachers Focus Group

NDIIPP APPRAISAL FOCUS GROUP #2 @ WGBH

DATE: JUNE 14 2005, 4PM-5:45PM, 100 Windom Large Conference Room.

PARTICIPANTS:

Elizabeth Forman, Social Studies
Boston Latin High School

Anna Gomez, Social Studies,
Boston Latin High School

Rosalyn Grunman, Social Studies
Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School

Henry Massar, Science 6th grade and Social Studies
Bigelow Middle School

Evelyn Moore, Social Studies 7th grade
Bigelow Middle School

Yvonne Powell, Social Studies
Burke High School

Mark Taylor, Social Studies
Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School

Delynn Walker, Social Studies, 6th grade
Bigelow Middle School

1. Session context and brief production process profile by Mary Ide
2. Review of stock footage and original footage elements, showing of clips, more extensive review of elements and discussion questions by Leah Weisse

Participants' response summary.

OVERALL: One teacher noted that many classes are of a heterogeneous nature and that curricula materials sometimes has to be specifically tailored either for specific students or for the widest range of students. So students in same class may be reading different books on same subject, working on multiple projects and trying to find primary source materials for their projects. In short, one kind of archival resource, or access site to resources, may not work for all students.

More than once the LC American Memory project was noted not to be a friendly tool for students, especially in middle school.

Teachers recommended that we do Focus Group with school media specialists/librarians as they: buy media materials, create website clusters for teachers, evaluate and interface content for teachers.

Finally, teachers prefer “filtered” content i.e. content that has been previewed and pegged for certain age level and curricula levels.

AVAILABILITY – Overall responses regarding stock footage clips were how to get access to “this kind of material?” There was great interest in teachers and students having access to stock and original footage but with the caveat that packaging 4-5 minute segments is preferable and most viable. In short, while teachers can guide students to full interviews for access on their own time, in-class use would require short segments.

Teachers like to be able to download current events news and show clips in class, such as a speech by politician, etc.

Kids do not do well with talking heads UNLESS visuals are editing into the viewing experience. They want “real images,” art or graphics on screen. One teacher noted that she has use a WBUR FM audio segments without images but the audio was very “strong” and compelling. Conversely, images also draw students away from the audio message. Audio clips of Winston Churchill very hard to get students to listen to; while speech of Osama Bahma worked well.

PACKAGING/PRESENTATION – In contrast to the higher education faculty, teacher’s planning time (not extensive) and their class time (circ. 30 minutes) suggests that archival materials ideally should be available “pre-selected and packaged.” In short, teachers do not have a lot of time to do own searching for archival material and then editing and packaging for classroom use.

Several DVD/VHS/on-line type packages were mentioned including a Bay of Pigs for which there was not “real” historical footage use. Mention of Annenberg Channel’s Democracy in America course as a very helpful resource; presents excellent summary and then in-depth analysis.

DVDs program on particular subject, like Civil Rights, with archival footage cuts would be very useful.

ACCESS: Access via the school Internet connection is viable for teachers and students; this includes accessing streaming video.

Reminded several times that students have varying degrees of searching capabilities and easier the search tools, the better.

Streaming segments of fewer than 4 minutes is only viable option for classroom viewing.

EDITING: The issue of showing students how program material is edited; letting students see the choices editors/producers made from all content is of interest to some teachers. This kind of access is helpful for student to understand not only the documentary film making process but is also of use in teaching visual literacy units.

ELEMENTS: Logs could be helpful to teachers in looking for content on full programs, original or stock footage. Whatever eases access to specific content. Again, teachers do not have much time for searching for content.

FEES/COSTS: While free access to content is preferable, paying a small fee to access video content is reasonable. Again, speaking with media specialists/librarians would be a good idea. One of the problems now is that teachers/librarians will put together a curriculum package and place on the server only to find it disappears due to storage space needs. The teachers would advocate fee payments within schools to pay continuous access to content materials.