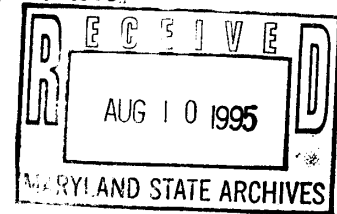




Stanley N. Katz
President

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Division of Education Programs
Elementary and Secondary Education in the Humanities
National Endowment for the Humanities
Washington, DC 20506

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Dear Mr. Robinson:

On Tuesday and Wednesday, July 18-19, I visited the Hall of Records in Annapolis, MD to conduct my site visit for the external evaluation of the Teachers' Institute, **Teaching with Original Sources**, at the Maryland State Archives. I was able to participate in the full day's activities each day, and at the close of activities on July 19 I held an hour-long session with the participants alone.

I have taught in and visited a great many summer teacher institutes, but I have never had a more positive impression of an institute than I had in Annapolis this summer. I came away with a very strong impression of the commitment of both staff and "students" to the work at hand, and of the intensity of the experience for all of the participants. If the critics of NEH could have visited this Institute, the open-minded among them would not doubt the utility and efficiency of this use of Endowment funding.

1. The intellectual quality of the project.

The quality was first-rate. I observed **presentations** by the co-director, Ed Papenfuse, and a guest lecture by Professor Peter Onuf of the History Department, University of Virginia. I am well acquainted with both of them, and also with guest lecturers James Merrell and Ira Berlin. They are all leaders in the field of American history, and Papenfuse (besides being a distinguished professional historian) is probably the outstanding state archivist in the United States. Onuf was quite informal, or perhaps I should say non-dogmatic, in his July 19 presentation on the elements of constitutionalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He encouraged comment and questions from the teachers, and made it quite clear that he felt the important questions were open to interpretation. He was witty and approachable, and the teachers clearly warmed to him. Papenfuse presented most of the day on the 18th, and for part of the afternoon on the 19th. He came across (as he is) as the leading authority on the early history of Maryland, which is the topic of the Institute. The teachers had clearly already established rapport with Papenfuse

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(everyone was on first-name basis), and his interchanges with them were relaxed and open, though there was no doubting their respect for his knowledge.

While the other co-director, Dr. Mercer Neale of the Boys Latin School in Baltimore, did not make a presentation, he was actively involved in the discussions. I felt that his bearing and the obvious respect Papenfuse has for him conveyed a very important message about the genuineness of collaboration between Papenfuse (and the State Archives) with the elementary and secondary schools of the state. I was also favorably impressed by the knowledge, commitment and efficiency of R.J. Rockefeller, the Education Officer at the Archives who served as **staff** to the Institute. This was clearly an effective and harmonious team at work. I mention Neale and Rockefeller in this section of the report, since it is important to recognize the intellectual contribution that staff has contributed to this Institute.

While I had time only for a few extended conversations with individual **teachers**, I was impressed by the fact that each of them participated in each of the sessions I attended. They were all experienced, and seemed intensely interested in the sessions. They also seemed to have remarkable computer literacy (an aspect of the Institute I will come back to). The group was intellectually well-balanced, although the single elementary school teacher told me that she regretted the lack of more K-5 teachers -- though Rockefeller told me that several elementary school acceptees had withdrawn for one reason or another. There was only one minority teacher, so far as I could tell, and in an ideal world, that is also too bad.

The **readings** were primarily the source packets of original historical materials prepared by Papenfuse and Neale for earlier institutes. The one used on July 18-19 ("Writing It All Down") was excellent. It contained almost entirely primary source materials on constitution-making in Maryland (especially) and the other original states, 1776 to 1833. The materials, mainly from the Hall of Records, were reproduced in facsimile, since Papenfuse feels strongly that this lends authenticity to their use, although some of them (because of small print or poorly reproduced handwriting). They were thoughtfully selected. But the outstanding feature of the Institute is that Papenfuse has digitized the materials, so that the teachers can access them by computer -- they are marked up in HTML so that they are hypertext-linked, and supplemented with schedules, outlines, bibliography and additional materials. The classroom has a u-shaped table, with eight monitors to serve the 13 participants.

Therefore much of the **discussion** takes the form of working through the problems and possibilities off using electronic texts on-screen. Papenfuse demonstrated how fonts could be adjusted to make small characters easier to read, how it is possible to move from one text to another, how to compare texts on-screen, and so forth. Even in the third week of the Institute, quite a lot of time was devoted to instruction in computer technique, although it was clear that all of the teachers were reasonably adept. This meant that more time was spent in working with the computers than would have been the case in a traditional institute, but in their private meeting the teachers made it clear that they thought the computer orientation of the Institute was its single most valuable aspect. It should be noted that Dr. Neale's school had purchased the computers, which otherwise would not have been available. It should also be noted that Dr. Papenfuse personally did much of the work in digitizing, marking up and updating the electronic files, working evenings and weekends. I follow developments in computer instruction closely, and I consider this Institute to be pathbreaking in the pedagogical application of the use of computers in teaching history. I will comment further on this aspect of the Institute at the end of this report.

2. The effectiveness and feasibility of the schedule.

The schedule was built around the subject matters of the source packets which constitute the intellectual core of the Institute. The subjects of the units were all interesting, and nicely distributed across historical periods, so that the teachers could acquire knowledge about all the important aspects of the narrative of Maryland history. The directors have also built in a number of field trips which seem importantly related to the historical materials. For instance, they were preparing for a visit to Cambridge, MD, the site of the H. Rap Brown speech which allegedly incited a civil rights riot in 1967, where they would meet participants in the event who are still living in the area. The participants were working a long day -- from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., though I gather the directors may have originally scheduled an additional hour which proved to be too demanding, since all of the participants were commuting from their homes around the state to Annapolis. For this reason, the hard-copy versions of the materials were crucial, since the teachers could take them home for study. My only comment on the schedule would be to say that I was struck by R.J. Rockefeller's concern that the teachers were being pushed too hard, and his willingness to reconsider the schedule in this light. Of course Papenfuse and the Hall of Records (along with Neale) are experienced managers of teacher institutes, and the benefit of that experience shows through clearly. The only thing that surprised me was the fact that Maryland's state archivist was managing to give such an incredible amount of time to the Institute -- so far as I could see, he was

doing all of his archival work after 3 p.m. (and, I assume, nights and weekends). This was an unusually committed and accomplished staff.

3. Administrative effectiveness; institutional resources and facilities.

I have already commented on these matters in passing, and I refer you back to sections 1 and 2. The Institute was very well-planned, and R.J. Rockefeller seemed a precise, careful and efficient project manager. He was clearly attentive to the teachers' needs, and always available to provide materials, put on lunch, transport guests, and answer questions.

The seminar sessions were held in an ideally-sized conference room in the new Hall of Records Building (which is admirably air-conditioned). The location of the project in the building permitted teachers to use the archives in developing their own projects. They worked with archival materials at lunchtime and after 3 p.m., and clearly felt quite comfortable working with such source materials (although I was unfortunately not able to see their own work product).

I want to mention again the computer aspect of the Institute. The hardware was, as I have indicated, provided off-budget. The same is true of technical support for computing, which was provided by Papenfuse and his colleagues at the Hall of Records. The "value" added by these indirects (not contemplated and therefore not listed in the original proposal) was remarkable, and should be noted by the Division of Education Programs.

4. Potential education impact of the project.

I think the educational potential of this Institute is extraordinary. From the perspectives of content, quality of presentations, and general quality of administration the Annapolis Institute is typical of many fine history teacher institutes I have seen. The techniques of the use of documents in the classroom are well-known, and Papenfuse and Neale are exemplary practitioners of the art. The most unusual aspect of their application of the technique is Papenfuse's use of facsimile copies of documents to achieve both a sense of doing actual research and a notion of the meanings hidden in the actual documentary record, but even here their work is more typical of the best history teaching techniques rather than truly innovative. I would be remiss, however, if I did not note that the documentary packets are particularly well-constructed, giving the teachers many opportunities for their own interpretations and applications in the classroom. And I suppose it is also worth noting that the venue of the Institute, in the actual working space of one of the finest archives in

the United States, also conveys to the teachers the excitement of real documents and actual research conditions.

The innovation in Annapolis is in the digitization of the documentary materials and in the Director's capacity to convey to the participants the potential for teaching from a database. The excitement of the teachers in working on-screen was tangible -- I do not believe I have ever seen a group of teacher institute participants so completely and consistently absorbed over a two day period. They made interesting suggestions for what could be done with the materials in what was at least at times a real dialogue with Papenfuse, who took the teachers seriously enough to discuss the technical aspects of digitization and retrieval with them. The result was that they were drawn into the conceptual problems of the electronic presentation of the materials in a way which connected to the problems of pedagogical presentation of the material. Only an examination of the lesson plans and work materials they produce will reveal the actual extent of that they learned, but I will be surprised if it is not substantial. I am sufficiently intrigued that I have asked to be invited to the follow up session in Baltimore next year at which the teachers will report on their progress in the classroom -- this, by the way, strikes me as a valuable aspect of the project design.

5. Criticisms

Nothing is perfect, and I believe that several aspects of the Institute are worth reexamination. Although the teachers had nothing but praise for Papenfuse, my own instinct is that he was too directive and insufficiently interactive in his own presentations, seldom pausing long enough for the teachers to come up with responses to his questions. He was very careful to respect their interventions, and encouraged dialogue, but he did not have sufficient strategies to elicit participation. There is always a trade-off, of course, between "covering the material" and encouraging participation, but I suspect that Papenfuse could afford to devote more time to interactivity.

Second (but this is the first time Papenfuse has attempted computer presentation of documents), not enough attention was paid to the relative merits of hard-copy and electronic documentation. It takes a lot of time (but without much intellectual reward) to drag new documents up onto the monitor, and it is not easy to open windows so that passages can be seen side-by-side. My guess is that more use should be made of hard copy (from the packets or by print-outs) when documentary comparison is at issue. We will all have to learn from experience what the proper balance is, and my hope is that the teachers' work in the classroom this fall will provide essential evidence.

I recognize that many of these problems of the presentation of electronic documentation could not have been worked out in advance, but I would urge Papenfuse and Neale (who will use the equipment and the material at Boys Latin this fall) to focus on the question of the relationship of pedagogical technique to technical presentation. They have certainly set me to thinking about the problem.

6. Closed session with the teachers.

I did my best to provoke the teachers into being critical of the Institute -- totally without success. I was impressed by the unanimity of their approval for everything they had experienced to that point in the Institute. As I have already said, the only criticism was the remark by the sole elementary school teacher that she would have liked to have more of her peers participating.

The group was particularly appreciative of the seriousness with which the Directors and presenters had taken them -- and their sense was certainly justified in the two days I witnessed personally. The one college level teacher (a grad student at the University of Maryland) commented on the high intellectual level of the elementary and secondary school teachers, and that too seemed to me on the mark.

They were particularly taken with the idea of using primary source materials, and were grateful for the skill of the staff in presenting the materials to them. They were overwhelmed by the quality of the documentary packages, and by the time and skill that they recognized had gone into their preparation.

The teachers had not known of the computer orientation of the Institute before their arrival, but they were unanimous in believing that this had been the most valuable aspect of the Institute. They clearly understood the computer simply as one educational technology among many (which seems to me crucial), and felt that the ratio of time spent on technological problems was nicely balanced with other intellectual and pedagogical concerns. They all felt that they would have the opportunity to use the techniques and the materials in their classrooms. They did raise the point that they would not have known how to use the electronic materials without the workshop, and they hoped that the Directors would produce a teachers' guide to the materials for the instruction of other teachers who are not lucky enough to have attended the Institute.

I suppose, come to think of it, that the one criticism that emerged was that they would have liked somewhat more time to talk amongst

themselves about pedagogical problems -- and they seem to think that there had not been enough explicit discussion of pedagogy by the presenters and staff. They certainly did not press the point or feel strongly about it, but it rang true for me. Most of all, they feel privileged to have been exposed to the new technology -- a point stressed by one young teacher, a 1988 college graduate who had never before used a computer.

As I have already indicated, they very much admire the documentary packages, though someone suggested that each document needs a short preface to make clear what the document is. They felt a need to know how to develop questions to ask about the documents (and this corresponds, I think, to their sense that they needed more systematic attention to pedagogy). They were especially excited to realize that the documentary units were in some sense college-level, and yet they feel competent to use them at the pre-collegiate level. I asked whether they believed they could put together documentary units of their own, and they all felt that they could, especially since Ed Papenfuse's discussions of his choice of documents gave them a valuable insight into how they might go about the task themselves.

Above all, they recognized the necessity of unpressured time and adequate facilities to learn how to use electronic documents. This, they all felt, they had gotten in a superb manner at the Hall of Records. Unmistakably, these teachers were very happy campers.

7. Conclusion

As I have already indicated, this was one of the very best teacher institutes I have visited over the past quarter century. It was carefully planned, sensitively administered, and well-conceived. It needs to be repeated so that greater attention can be paid to the pedagogical implications of the use of computer technology, although I imagine quite a lot will have been learned about that after the teachers gather again mid-way through the coming school year.

From my perspective, this was an exceedingly good use of a surprisingly small amount of federal government funding, and an excellent example of a federal, state, private-sector collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

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President, ACLS
(Senior Fellow, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University)

cc: Edward Papenfuse ✓
Mercer Neale