

GOODMAN RESEARCH GROUP, INC.
Program Evaluation • Consultation • Market Research

**THE HISTORYMAKERS DIGITAL
ARCHIVE**

**YEAR ONE EVALUATION
REPORT: EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG), an evaluation research firm in Cambridge, MA that specializes in the evaluation of educational programs, materials, and services, is working with The HistoryMakers to conduct a case study evaluation of The HistoryMakers Digital Archive (*Digital Archive*), the online repository for the HistoryMakers interviews, currently 1,016 interviews are transcribed. The HistoryMakers, with funding from the PwC Foundation, will continue to transcribe and process the interviews that are not yet accessible to the public. The goal is to increase access for students and teachers in public and charter schools to the resources and lesson plans afforded through these primary source materials. The new content that will be available for use in the classroom, for social studies, the arts, STEM, and reading, writing, and literacy initiatives, is intended to provide a broadened view of African American achievement to both minority and non-minority youth.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the ultimately fully populated *Digital Archive*, The HistoryMakers contracted with GRG to conduct evaluation in two case study schools: Tyner Academy in Chattanooga, TN and Southwest Guilford High School in High Point, NC. The schools were selected based on their prior and ongoing use of the *Digital Archive* with students. In each, at least one teacher has used the *Digital Archive* in the past, and intended to use it again during the current and subsequent school years.

METHODS

In Year 1, GRG conducted both telephone and in-person interviews with educators and administrators familiar with the *Digital Archive* to learn about their use and experiences with the resource, observed three classrooms of students as they used the resource independently, and developed and pilot-tested pre- and post-student surveys in the two case study schools. The piloted surveys were intended to provide preliminary information about student response to the resource and to determine potential effectiveness of the pre-post method for use in Years 2 and 3 of the evaluation.

FINDINGS

- The two case study schools differed in size and demographic characteristics. Tyner Academy has 570 students, 87% of whom were Black or African American. Southwest Guilford High School has 1,486 students, 33% of whom were Black or African American. The 12 students at SW Guilford who used the *Digital Archive* were African American boys. Graduation rates at the two schools were 88% (Tyner Academy) and 96% (SW Guilford High School).
- Teachers in both schools used the *Digital Archive* primarily as a supplemental tool, rather than building specific lessons

around the resource. In this manner, teachers believe, the tool can be used in any class throughout the course of the school year.

- Teachers perceived that their students were highly engaged when using the *Digital Archive*, made connections to their daily lives, and demonstrated higher level critical thinking skills in their assignments related to the resource.
- Case study students had access to technology in and out of school and were comfortable with going online for both school and outside interests. They were able, and preferred, to work independently with the *Digital Archive*. The resource engaged and sustained students' attention and concentration throughout full class periods.
- Case study teachers noted that other teachers must have the right mindset and must see and understand the value of using the *Digital Archive* in their classrooms. They believe the video segments align with curriculum requirements, and that the resource is easy to use and integrate into classroom work.
- Overall, both teachers and students were very enthusiastic about the value of the *Digital Archive*. They recognize and appreciate its unique qualities such as the vast collection first-hand experiences and the ease with which they can find a segment to watch, listen to, and read, that will answer their research question directly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The HistoryMakers should capitalize on the wealth of information included in the *Digital Archive* in promoting equally the value and the ease of use of the resource.
- Teachers and, where feasible, their students should be included in presentations and speaking opportunities to share their experiences and to describe the value of this resource in the classroom.
- Video footage collected from the luncheon for *Digital Archive* competition winners should be included in promotional pieces and in preparation materials disseminated for the upcoming BTS program in September 2015 and for other outreach strategies.
- In order to address misperceptions among educators who have not yet used the *Digital Archive* with students, the case study teachers, who are both early adopters and innovators should be involved in presentations to counter concerns about classroom implementation.

- After the annual BTS program, The HistoryMakers, and other educators, should follow up directly with BTS teachers throughout the year, providing tips, guidance, and support as they implement the *Digital Archive* in their classrooms.
- The HistoryMakers should develop and state explicitly their educational goals for use of the *Digital Archive*, knowing that teachers will likely integrate the resource throughout the curriculum, in different courses, throughout a school year. The goal for students to make connections to the present and to their own lives is one example of a concrete goal that cuts across subject areas and can be measured.
- Plans that are in place for The HistoryMakers website redesign should include both contextual information for users of the site, as well as aesthetic elements that will make it clear what is included, and where to find it.

This first year of qualitative case study expounds the benefits of the *Digital Archive* to teachers and students, and shows the ways in which it is possible and desirable to use the *Digital Archive* in a classroom setting. In the upcoming school year, GRG will continue to evaluate the impact of the *Digital Archive* through pre- and post- surveys, site visits and observations of use in the classroom, and ongoing discourse with educators.

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