



## CURRICULUM EVALUATION

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Teaching *The Levees* curriculum project has been fast paced and far reaching. From its inception, the project offered an opportunity to use Spike Lee's depiction of the catastrophic failures of governance in dealing with Hurricane Katrina to promote democratic dialogues about race and class, and raise the questions, "What kind of country are we? What kind of country do we want to be?" Implemented immediately following the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the curriculum, including educational materials, supporting website, and a copy of Spike Lee's HBO documentary "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts", has been distributed to approximately 30,000 individuals spread all across the United States.

The EdLab @ Teachers College, Columbia University has sought to provide an informative review of the project, conducting research to look at *who* received the curriculum, and investigating the *scope, use, and impact* of the curriculum. Presenting data gathered through numerous sources including population databases, interviews with curriculum users, and online surveys with subsets of this population, this report begins to answer these questions. Results indicate:

- The curriculum was received by 28,092 educators in every US state
- These individuals were predominantly based in the classroom (36% classroom teachers, 26% college professors) but also included administrators (24%), Librarians (8%) and community leaders (6%).
- 16,000 copies were requested online through *teachingthelevees.org*, the remainder were distributed by *TC Press*.
- Over half of those who received the curriculum actively used it
- Multiple aspects of the curriculum were used including specific learning modules, the TTL website and the accompanying HBO documentary.
- The curriculum was used to address a variety of topics ranging from social issues and history, to governance and geography.
- Over 90% of users indicated that the curriculum was effective in *enhancing participants' understanding of Katrina and the complex social issues it raised*, effective in *facilitating participant's ability to consider and appreciate multiple points of view* and effective in *enhancing participants' ability to articulate their position using evidence and information*.

This investigation paints an encouraging picture of the scope and impact of the TTL curriculum project thus far. The curriculum, and this project as a whole, has acted as an inspiration to many, supporting teachings of a diverse nature across the United States. The curriculum has allowed educators to address topics that are otherwise difficult to deal with promoting constructive dialogue and civic engagement along the way. Users have discussed how the curriculum has raised awareness of not only the events of Hurricane Katrina, but moreover that it has also helped raise the social consciousness of those touched by it, providing a unique perspective on the event and ultimately helping promote individual learning, social discourse and civic action. This projects unique approach of combining formal educational materials with documentary films through the lens of a current event has been highly praised, highlighting the call for future materials to use similar models and continue to build on these foundations.