

## U.S. History Media Project: Overview

**What is the project about?** The project will examine a [supplemental digital history curriculum](#) that includes a suite of **fun, interactive online games** designed as a free resource for middle- and high-school educators and students. The supplemental curriculum highlights transformative moments in U.S. history from the era of the American Revolution to World War II. In addition to the student games, the tool includes **curricular materials and supports** for teachers, including vocabulary quizzes, discussion questions, and document-based activities. The two games used in this project focus on immigration during the Progressive Era (~1910) and the Great Depression (~1929).

**Why use the supplemental curriculum?** The digital games and activities are designed to help students **develop core thinking skills** that are critical to understanding U.S. history. The games and curriculum motivate students and encourage them to see historical actors as actual people. The supplemental curriculum provides teachers with learning activities, quizzes, and discussion prompts that take 1-2 hours a week, save time in lesson planning, and provide new ways of engaging students.

**Why is the project important?** Although the supplemental curriculum has been widely used among teachers, there has not yet been a **rigorous research study to evaluate its impact on student outcomes**. With funding from the [Institute of Education Sciences](#), the [Education Development Center, Inc.](#) (EDC) will work with producer [WNET](#), as well as the [American Social History Project at CUNY](#) and [Electric Fun Stuff](#), to conduct an efficacy study to investigate the impact of the games and curriculum on students' history knowledge and skills.

**When is the project happening?** The project will take **three months** during the **2022-2023 school year**.

**Where is the project happening?** Teachers and students will participate as **part of their normal classroom experience**. All data collection will happen **virtually**, via digital surveys and at least one remote classroom observation.

**Who can participate?** We are enrolling **Grade 8, 9, and 10 history, civics, or social studies public school teachers**, along with their students. A [5-minute screener](#) will determine your eligibility. We plan to enroll two teachers per school, but if you are the only teacher in your school, it might still be possible for you to participate.

When?	How many teachers?	Where?
2022-2023 school year	70 (2 per school)	All activities are virtual

**What do teachers have to do?** Half of the teachers will be randomly assigned to use the supplemental digital history curriculum with their students during the project; the rest will continue to use their standard curriculum until after the project is over, when they will receive access to the professional development, games and curricular supports. All teachers will do the following activities.

Supplemental Curriculum Activities	Research Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend a <b>one-hour PD session</b> on using the supplemental curriculum and receive documentation of attendance</li> <li>Use two <b>interactive online games</b> focused on the Progressive Era and the Great Depression in the U.S.</li> <li>Use the <b>provided curriculum</b> materials and supports</li> <li>Facilitate <b>student assessments</b> at the beginning and end of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete one <b>demographic survey</b></li> <li>Participate in <b>random assignment</b></li> <li>Complete 5-minute <b>weekly practice logs</b></li> <li>Participate in at least one <b>classroom observation</b> via Zoom</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Schools receive \$500</b> for completing all research activities</p>

## U.S. History Media Project: Information Sheet

This information sheet provides an overview of research activities that will take place and all the procedures in place to protect the rights of the project participants.

**Project Purpose** The purpose of this project is to evaluate whether a supplemental digital history curriculum, including an online game for students, plus curricular supports and activities, helps students in Grades 8-10 to learn history and develop historical thinking skills.

**Data Collection** During the project, researchers will be collecting information about teachers' background and instructional practice, students' and teachers' use of the supplemental curriculum (if applicable), and students' history knowledge, related history skills, and interest in history. Data sharing agreements will be secured to obtain background information on students, including demographics, latest grades, and attendance during the project period. Students will complete assessments twice during regular instructional time, once at the beginning and once at the end of the project. Teachers will complete weekly 5-minute practice logs and a demographic survey. Teachers will also be observed virtually via Zoom during at least one class period; this session will be audio recorded for researchers' later reference. All audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

**Consent** We will obtain informed consent from all teachers. Parents/guardians will have the right to opt their children out of participating in the research activities, however, all students will continue to participate in their social studies classes as instructed by the teacher.

**Risks** We expect the risks associated with this project to be minimal, no greater than the risks associated with daily life; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the project activities. Participating in any research involves the risk that information participants share could become public, but researchers will do their best to keep all information confidential.

**Benefits** Teachers and students may not directly benefit from participation. By participating in this project, teachers and students will contribute to important research that has potential relevance for all middle and high school students and educators in the U.S.

**Compensation** If chosen for this opportunity, teachers will get one hour of professional development that may count towards their state's requirements. At the end of the project, schools will receive \$500 for participating in the research activities.

**Confidentiality** All data will be kept in secured files. No identifying information of any kind will appear in reports or in other public documents and all personally identifying private information will be removed from the project data. All project data, including access to audio recordings, will be restricted to project staff and will only be used for research purposes. These data will not be shared with anyone at participating schools and will not be used to evaluate teachers' or students' performance in any way.

**Future research** All personally identifying private information will be removed from the project data. The remaining project data could be used in future research or distributed to another researcher for future research without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

**Participation is voluntary** Teachers, parents, and students may refuse to participate or discontinue at any time, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

**Questions, Concerns, or Complaints** Education Development Center received [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) approval for this project. If participants have any questions about their rights or feel that any harm has been done during the project, they should contact EDC's Human Protections Administrator at 1-800-225-4276 ext. 2971 or [HumanProtections@edc.org](mailto:HumanProtections@edc.org). For questions about this project, participants should contact Joy Lorenzo Kennedy, Principal Investigator, at (212) 807-4233 or [jlkenedy@edc.org](mailto:jlkenedy@edc.org).

## Why use the supplemental digital curriculum?

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Teachers tell us that the supplemental curriculum is **easy to use** and **saves them time**...and **it's fun for students!**



### Evidence-based

Multiple research studies have shown that using this supplemental curriculum to teach history improves historical knowledge and skills, leads to deeper student engagement, and promotes richer classroom discussion.



### Collaboratively developed

The supplemental curriculum that will be used in the U.S. History Media Project was created by a team that includes historians, educators, and a team of advisors, to ensure the games and educator materials are guided by rigorous scholarship and that they involve members of the communities portrayed to ensure they are telling their own stories.



### Safe, ethical, and age-appropriate design

Developers of the supplemental digital curriculum used feedback from teachers, students, and an advisory board of experts in culturally responsive education, adolescent development, ethics, game design, and other relevant areas to help make our games safe, effective, and engaging. The games are constructed so that students explore the perspectives of historical characters, make decisions, and take risks, but maintain critical distance from the situations depicted.



### Enables inclusive social studies curriculum

The games and accompanying digital curriculum highlight the role of ordinary people in making history. It includes the experiences and perspectives of diverse Americans, especially those who have been ignored or marginalized by traditional accounts.



### Accessible and easy to use (in classroom and out)

The digital games and curriculum are designed for a wide range of learners and instructional settings and are available online for free. The games are accompanied by the variety of curricular supports including discussion prompts, writing assignments, vocabulary, and document-based activities.

## Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)

*Policy:* Research activities involving human subjects may not be conducted or supported by the Departments and Agencies adopting the Common Rule unless the activities are exempt from or approved in accordance with the Common Rule. The "pre-2018 Common Rule (or pre-2018 Requirements)" was originally promulgated in 1991 and amended on June 23, 2005 (70 FR 36325). The "2018 Common Rule (or 2018 Requirements)" was originally published on January 19, 2017 (82 FR 7149) and amended on January 22, 2018 (83 FR 2885) and June 19, 2018 (83 FR 28497). The categories of exempt research are provided in Section 101(b) of the pre-2018 Common Rule and Section 104(d) of the 2018 Common Rule.

The pre-2018 Common Rule requires institutions to certify that each application or proposal for research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Section 103(f)). The 2018 Common Rule requires institutions to certify that each proposed research study has been reviewed and approved by an IRB (Section 103(d)). Institutions must have an assurance of compliance that applies to the research to be conducted and should submit certification of IRB review and approval with each application or proposal, or proposed research study, unless otherwise advised by the Department or Agency.

1. Request Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> EXEMPTION	2. Type of Mechanism <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GRANT <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRACT <input type="checkbox"/> FELLOWSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____	3. Name of Federal Department or Agency and, if known, Application or Proposal Identification No. <b>Institute of Education Sciences (DED-IES)</b> <b>Proposal ID #: R305A210223</b>
4. Title of Application or Activity <b>U.S. History Through Young People's Eyes: An Efficacy Study of Mission US</b>		5. Name of Principal Investigator, Program Director, Fellow, or Other <b>Joy L Kennedy</b>

6. Assurance Status of this Project (*Respond to one of the following*)

- This Assurance, on file with Department of Health and Human Services, covers this activity:  
 Assurance Identification No. 00000038, the expiration date 01/03/2027 IRB Registration No. 00000865
- This Assurance, on file with (*agency/dept*) \_\_\_\_\_, covers this activity.  
 Assurance No. \_\_\_\_\_, the expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ IRB Registration/Identification No. \_\_\_\_\_ (*if applicable*)
- No assurance has been filed for this institution. This institution declares that it will provide an Assurance and Certification of IRB review and approval upon request.
- Exemption Status: Human subjects are involved, but this activity qualifies for exemption under the pre-2018 Common Rule, Section 101(b), paragraph \_\_\_\_\_
- Exemption Status: Human subjects are involved, but this activity qualifies for exemption under the 2018 Common Rule, Section 104(d), paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

7. Certification of IRB Review (*Respond to one of the following IF you have an Assurance on file*)

- This activity has been reviewed and approved by the IRB in accordance with the Common Rule and any other governing regulations.  
 by:  Full IRB Review on (date of IRB meeting) \_\_\_\_\_ or  Expedited Review on (date) October 4, 2021  
 If less than one year approval, provide expiration date \_\_\_\_\_
- This activity contains multiple projects, some of which have not been reviewed. The IRB has granted approval on condition that all projects covered by the Common Rule will be reviewed and approved before they are initiated and that appropriate further certification will be submitted.

8. Comments **This activity contains multiple components. The IRB initially approved preliminary focus groups to be conducted with teachers. Additional materials covering the pilot and RCT components have since been submitted through a series of amendments and have been approved.**

9. The official signing below certifies that the information provided above is correct and that, as required, future reviews will be performed until study closure and certification will be provided.	10. Name and Address of Institution <b>Education Development Center, 300 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2010, Waltham, MA 02451.</b>
11. Phone No. (with area code) <b>617 969 7100 x2971</b>	14. Title <b>Director, Human Protections Program</b>
12. Email: <a href="mailto:humanprotections@edc.org">humanprotections@edc.org</a>	
14. Name of Official: <b>Alan Stockdale</b>	15. Date <b>February 4, 2022</b>
15. Signature:	

## US Department of Education Protection of Human Subjects Clearance

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**From:** Rodamar, Jeffery <Jeffery.Rodamar@ed.gov>  
**Date:** Monday, April 4, 2022 at 1:38 PM  
**To:** Metz, Edward <Edward.Metz@ed.gov>  
**Cc:** IES Grants Team <IESGrantsTeam@ed.gov>, Kennedy, Joy L <JLKennedy@edc.org>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Protection of human subjects clearance: R305A210223 (EDC).

The study of "U.S. History Through Young People's Eyes: An Efficacy Study of Mission U.S." conducted by Dr. Joy Kennedy at Education Development Center, funded by U.S. Department of Education (ED) grant R305A210223 has ED protection of human subjects clearance. ED concurs with the grantee's determination that the research includes only research that falls under exemptions 1 and 2 of the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (34 CFR 97).

Keep a copy of this ED Protection of Human Subjects clearance in the official file for this grant.

### Jeffery W. Rodamar

Protection of Human Subjects in Research Coordinator  
US Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Office: 5A212  
Washington, DC 20202

**Phone:** 202-987-0066

**Email:** [Jeffery.Rodamar@ed.gov](mailto:Jeffery.Rodamar@ed.gov)

**Email for general queries:** [HumanSubjectsResearch@ED.gov](mailto:HumanSubjectsResearch@ED.gov)

**Resources** <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html>

**Training:** Department of Education: Implementing the Common Rule

For protection of human subjects in research (34 CFR 97)

<https://www2.ed.gov/rms.training/humansubjects-research/story.html>

**via US Postal Service:**

US Department of Education; LBJ Building, 400 Maryland Ave. SW; Washington, DC 20202-4331



**Responsibilities of Principal Investigators:** Please find below a list of responsibilities of Principal Investigators who have DOE IRB approval to conduct research in New York City public schools.

- Approval by this office does not guarantee access to any particular school, individual or data. You are responsible for making appropriate contacts and getting the required permissions and consents before initiating the study.
- Approval by this office does not constitute a determination of compliance with New York City Conflict of Interest Board rules, or other applicable City rules, regulations, policies, laws, or statutes. Researchers are responsible for ensuring compliance with all of the aforementioned.
- When requesting permission to conduct research, submit the Principal Informational letter approved with this protocol to the school Principal summarizing your research design and methodology along with this IRB Approval letter. Each Principal agreeing to participate must sign the Principal Informational letter. *A completed and signed letter for every school included in your research must be attached to your NYC DOE protocol by Amendment.* Principals may also ask you to show them the receipt issued by the NYC Department of Education at the time of your fingerprinting.
- You are responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in accordance with your research proposal as approved by the DOE IRB and for the actions of all co-investigators and research staff involved with the research.
- You are responsible for informing all participants (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, and students) that their participation is strictly voluntary and that there are no consequences for non-participation or withdrawal at any time during the study.
- You must use only the study materials associated with this protocol and bearing the IRBManager NYC DOE IRB approval stamp. Stamped documents are available in the Attachments section of this cleared protocol in IRBManager.
- You must provide all research subjects with copies of their signed consent forms; maintain signed consent forms in a secure place for a period of at least three years after study completion; and destroy the consent forms in accordance with the data disposal plan approved by the IRB.
- In the event that this research will involve non-English speaking subjects, you are required to translate all study materials to be used with this subject population and submit all translations to the NYC DOE IRB by protocol Amendment for review and clearance prior to use. All translations must be accompanied by attestations of translation accuracy from a qualified translator, or formal certificates of translation by a transcription service.
- You are required to ensure that CITI Human Subjects Research training remains valid for all research personnel designated in this protocol throughout the duration of the protocol clearance period. You must submit updated or renewed CITI training certificates by Amendment before they expire.
- In the event that contracts, external approvals, or other documents are pending at the time of this approval, they must be submitted for NYC DOE IRB review by Amendment once obtained.

**Mandatory Reporting to the IRB:** The Principal Investigator must report to the DOE IRB, within 24 hours, any serious problem, adverse effect, or outcome that occurs with frequency or degree of severity greater than that anticipated. In addition, the Principal Investigator must report any event or series of events that prompt the temporary or permanent suspension of a research project involving human subjects or any deviations from the approved protocol. All reports must be submitted using the IRBManager Protocol Violation, Deviation, Adverse Event, and/or Unanticipated Problem Report form.

**Amendments/Modifications:** All amendments/modification to this protocol require prospective IRB approval, except those involving the prevention of immediate harm to a subject, which must be reported within 24 hours to your IRB of record and to the NYC DOE IRB.

**Continuation of your research:** It is your responsibility to insure that an application for Continuing Review is submitted 90 days before the expiration date noted above. If you do not receive approval to continue research before the expiration date, all study activities, including, but not limited to, analysis of collected data, must stop until said approval is obtained.

**Research findings/Study Closures:** The NYC DOE IRB requires a copy of the report of findings from this research. Interim reports may also be requested for multi-year studies. Further, you are required to formally close this protocol by submitting a Study Closure form once all research procedures, including, but not limited to, all analysis of coded or identifiable data, have concluded.

**Data Request:** Note that approval of this research does not constitute confirmation of release of data requested in a Data Request form. All data requests are processed and approved by the Data Request Fulfillment Team. Please email [rpsgresearch@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:rpsgresearch@schools.nyc.gov) with any questions you may have regarding this matter.

If you have any questions, please contact [IRB@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:IRB@schools.nyc.gov).

Good luck with your research.

NYC Institutional Review Board



**Brian Carlin**

Social Studies Department  
[bcarlin@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:bcarlin@schools.nyc.gov)  
917-544-8131

**New York City Department  
of Education**

Room 113  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007  
212-323-7829

March 12, 2021

Dr. Joy Lorenzo Kennedy  
Education Development Center  
96 Morton St., 7th Fl.  
New York, NY 10014

Dear Dr. Kennedy,

I am the Director of Social Studies for the New York City Department of Education, where I oversee the development of curriculum resources and supervisor and professional development for teaching social studies for the over 1,800 NYC schools. We are excited about the possibility of working with you on your proposed efficacy study, *US History Through Young Peoples Eyes: An Efficacy Study of Mission US*, should it be funded by the IES. Specifically, we will support recruitment of a minimum of one, but no more than fifteen, schools in the NYC School system. We understand that schools must have at least two Grade 8 history classrooms, one of which will be randomly assigned to a treatment condition and one to a control condition. All classrooms will receive access to the study materials at the end of the study. We will also support data collection from teachers and students, including measures of fidelity of implementation.

We are enthusiastic about participating in this project because the skills supported by Mission US align well with the city's *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum and the NYS standards for 8th grade history. When integrated with our existing curriculum, Mission US can provide a critical tool for the development of critical thinking and historical perspective taking skills, increase students' motivation to study history, and better prepare our students both for high school and as engaged citizens.

I believe this project is a good fit for NYC and we look forward to working with you.

Brian Carlin

Senior Instructional Specialist  
Social Studies Department  
[bcarlin@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:bcarlin@schools.nyc.gov)



Institutional Review Board  
Protocol Number: 4200-NYC  
Approval Date: October 6, 2022  
Expiration Date: October 5, 2023

# Teacher Consent Form

**You are invited to participate in a study** conducted by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), a non-profit organization. The goal of this study is to find out more about curricular supports for middle school history and social studies. This research is funded by the US Department of Education.

## Research Purpose:

- The purpose of this project is to test an online history-learning tool for students. This includes curricular supports and activities for teachers.

## Study Overview:

- As part of this 4-5 month study during the 2022/23 school year, you might be randomly assigned to a group using an extra-curricular tool and supports. This will include videos and guides to help you integrate them into instruction. By the end of the study, all teachers will have access to all of the study materials.
- You will be asked to help us collect history and classroom performance-related assessments from your students both at the beginning and end of the study.
- You will be asked to complete weekly activity logs about your classroom practices.
- You will also be asked to join an online Professional Development workshop that will last approximately 90 minutes.
- You will also be asked to participate in a 20-minute one-on-one interview via video conference at the end of the study. This interview will be audio- and video-recorded.
- Researchers will conduct at least one remote classroom observation (for example, via Zoom) during one of your class periods and you may be audio-recorded. These observations are not an evaluation of your performance; we are seeing how well the tool works with your curriculum. If your school or district require us to do observations in person, we will follow all COVID safety protocols, including requiring vaccinations, masking, and social distancing.

**Risks, discomforts, and inconveniences:** We expect the risks associated with this study to be minimal, no greater than the risks associated with daily life; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study. Participating in any study involves the risk that information you share could become public, but researchers will do their best to keep your information confidential.

**Benefits:** **You may not directly benefit from participation in this study.** By participating in this study, you will contribute to important research which has potential relevance for all middle school students and educators in the U.S.

**Incentive:** Each classroom will **receive \$300** for participating in the study. It will be up to your superintendent as to how this incentive is delivered.

**Confidentiality:** All data will be kept in secured files and will be referred to by ID number. Everything you tell us is confidential—your name will not appear in research reports or in other public documents of any kind. All study data, including access to video and audio recordings, will be restricted to the researchers and will only be used for research purposes. These data will not be shared with anyone at your school and will not be used to evaluate your performance in any way.

**Future studies:** All personally identifying private information will be removed from the study data. The remaining study data could be used in future research or distributed to another investigator for future research without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

# Teacher Consent Form

**Participant's Rights:** If you have questions about this study, we will answer them clearly and to your satisfaction.

**Participation is Voluntary:** You may refuse to participate or discontinue at any time, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Questions, Concerns, or Complaints:** If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or feel that any harm has been done during the study, you can contact EDC's Human Protections Administrator at 1-800-225-4276 ext. 2971 or [HumanProtections@edc.org](mailto:HumanProtections@edc.org). You can ask questions about this research study by calling, Joy Kennedy, Research Scientist, at (212) 807- 4233.

Statement of Consent: I have read the summary above.

- Yes, I consent to participate in the study.
- No, I DO NOT consent and will not participate in the study.

Please enter the full name of the teacher signing below.

Please sign here.

## The History Media Study

**You are being informed and given the option to opt out** your child to take a part in a research study. The study is being run by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), a non-profit organization. Your child's school and social studies teacher have agreed to be part of the study. As part of that, your child may or may not be receiving access to curricular materials that are typically used in this school.

### **Research Goal:**

Your child's school wants to use an online history learning tool for students in some of its classes this year. We are studying if the tool helps students learn. The research is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Study Summary:**

The study will take place during normal class time for four to five months during the 2022/23 school year. During the study, researchers will gather information about students' interest in and understanding of history. Your child's school will be asked to give us background information for your child, including age, race, social studies grade, and attendance information during the study. We will ask your child to take surveys and tests twice – once at the beginning of the study and once at the end. Researchers will be doing remote classroom observations. at least once during the study. If your child's school or district require us to do observations in person, we will follow all COVID safety protocols, including requiring vaccinations, masking, and social distancing. We will be audio-recording the teacher and the audio recording may pick up your child's voice, but every effort will be made to only record the teacher. These recordings will be kept on researchers' secure laptops during the study and will be deleted after the study is done.

### **Participation is up to you:**

You or your child can decide not to take part in the study at any time. This will not affect your child's grades or any other status. Regardless of your decision, your child will continue to be in their normal social studies class, as taught by the teacher. We will ask your child for permission before they do any tests or fill out surveys. Your child has the right to say no, even if you say it's okay.

### **Risks:**

The risks for this study are very small, not more than the risks of daily life. One cost may be the time it takes to finish the study. Being part of any study means that information you share could become public, but researchers will do their best to keep your child's information private.

### **Benefits:**

Your child will not directly benefit from being part of this study. However, we hope to learn something that could help other middle school students in the future.



Institutional Review Board  
Protocol Number: 4200-NYC  
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Expiration Date: October 5, 2023

**Privacy:**

All private information that directly links to your child will be deleted from the study files. Other study information, without the private information, could be used in future studies or given to other researchers to use in their studies without asking again.

**Questions, Concerns, or Complaints:**

You may call Joy Kennedy, Research Scientist, at 212 807-4233 if you have any questions or concerns about this study.

If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or if you have a concern about this study, you may contact EDC's Human Protections Administrator at 1-800-225-4276 ext. 2971 or [HumanProtections@edc.org](mailto:HumanProtections@edc.org).

**If you want your child to be a part of this study, you do not have to do anything.**

If you DO NOT want researchers to get the information about your child and for your child to fill out surveys and tests, you may say NO.

Click [here](#) if you do not want your child to be part of this study.