



FOR VISUAL HISTORY
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USC SHOAH FOUNDATION INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES LOCAL TEACHER Sandy Rubenstein Receives Certification as Specialist in Testimony-Based Education

Los Angeles, California—September 2, 2011—Sandy Rubenstein, a teacher at Horace Mann School in Bronx, New York, attended a three-day, follow-up workshop at the USC Shoah Foundation Institute in July; the workshop was the next step in its Master Teacher Program. The Institute, which maintains an archive of nearly 52,000 video testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, designed the program to empower U.S. secondary school educators to use the testimonies as a resource for Holocaust and tolerance education, and the development of literacies for the 21st century.

The centerpiece of the Master Teacher Program is the weeklong “Teaching with Testimony” Workshop, which takes place at the Institute each summer. Rubenstein, one of 18 highly experienced educators who attended the 2010 workshop, returned in July for a three-day workshop to complete the requirements for the Master Teacher certificate.

“Teachers who complete the program become agents of change within their communities who are able to demonstrate the value of testimony in their schools,” Stephen D. Smith, USC Shoah Foundation Institute Executive Director, said. “Education is about learning, but also about change. These teachers are better equipped to change the world.”

The workshop provided a congenial, peer-to-peer setting for participants to discuss the program; present the testimony-based projects they developed during the year, as well as the impact of those projects on students’ learning; consider strategies for making use of iWitness, the Institute’s new online application (dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/education/iwitness); and receive information about opportunities for members of the Master Teacher Program. In addition to the certificate, each participant earned 12 graduate-level continuing education units from the USC Rossier School of Education.

“We are pleased and proud to be a partner with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute in the development of teachers who want to master the skills affiliated with using multimedia to enhance their students’ ability to grasp the concepts of tolerance,” said Colleen Dietz, Director of Professional Development Programs at the USC Rossier School of Education. “The rigorous program, combined with the Institute’s resources and archive, is enabling teachers from across the country to create powerful and meaningful learning experiences for their students. More importantly, the teachers are sharing their lessons with their fellow teachers, thereby multiplying the impact.”

The Master Teacher Program is the cornerstone of the Institute’s Teacher Innovation Network, which is made possible through generous funding by the Leichtag Family Foundation.

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About the Teacher Innovation Network and the Master Teacher Program



The Institute initiated the Teacher Innovation Network in 2009 to advance the use of testimony to develop media literacy, global awareness, and other 21st-century skills. The Network comprises middle and high school educators of subjects including English/language arts, history/social studies, Holocaust and genocide studies, psychology, sociology, religious studies, civics, and character education, and is also open to media and technology specialists. It is designed to empower educators to use the Institute's testimonies to engage students in the examination of pressing contemporary issues of prejudice, racism, and personal responsibility.

Some members of the Network apply to become USC Shoah Foundation Institute Master Teachers. Master Teachers are committed to learning the Institute's methodology for integrating testimony into classroom projects, creating their own testimony-based lessons, and sharing these resources with their colleagues. Master Teachers must complete the Teaching with Testimony workshop.

For more information, visit dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/education/teachernetwork.

About the USC Shoah Foundation Institute

Established in 1994 by Steven Spielberg to collect and preserve the testimonies of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust, the USC Shoah Foundation Institute maintains one of the largest video digital libraries in the world: nearly 52,000 video testimonies in 32 languages and from 56 countries. The Institute is part of the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California; its mission is to overcome prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry—and the suffering they cause—through the educational use of the Institute's visual history testimonies.

The Institute works within the University and with partners around the world to advance scholarship and research, to provide resources and online tools for educators, and to disseminate the testimonies for educational purposes. In addition to preserving the testimonies in its archive, the Institute is working with partner organizations to help document the stories of survivors and other witnesses of other genocides.

For more information, visit the Institute's website, dornsife.usc.edu/vhi.