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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the shortcomings of the area studies approach and the comprehensive chronological world history survey approach to teaching world history courses. The study notes the increasing interdependence of the world and its people and advocates a thematic world history approach. By teaching a few important themes in world history, students will develop a keener understanding of world historical processes and their interrelationships. In the process students will become more involved and interested in world history. The paper examines the research related to history instruction and students' knowledge about world history. A thematic approach to world history teaches for understanding and develops meaning for world events today. Themes identified for study include: (1) historiography; (2) patterns of human organization; (3) systems of faith; (4) revolution; and (5) technology. Contains 41 references and a 42-item annotated bibliography. (EH)

"Letting Go": Rethinking Teaching World History at the Secondary Level

A Plan for a One-Year Thematic World History Course

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Cars from Japan, portable stereos from Korea, running shoes from China, and shirts from Bolivia, or Israel, or Sri Lanka, these are the accoutrements of my students' lives. Far from a major metropolitan center, the ubiquitous Chinese restaurants now compete for patrons with Thai and Indian ones. It is impossible to escape the internationalization of communities across the United States. Added to all this, the headlines on the front page and the scenes which television brings into our living rooms continue to reinforce the global reality of late twentieth century life. If not exactly Huxley's "Brave New World," it is, nevertheless, a "new" world, and a new world which needs to be explained to and understood by today's high school students. This high degree of global integration necessitates "new imaginings" of longstanding historical assumptions (Geyer & Bright, 1995). As a high school history teacher, I struggle every day with how to accomplish this. Nonetheless, I adhere to three goals for my teaching: first, my students need to understand how their world came to be; secondly, they must recognize that change is inevitable and that they must confront unexpected change with openness and flexibility; and finally, they must become good world citizens.

That American schools must do more to prepare tomorrow's citizens to live in communities larger than the nation-state (Alder & Downey, 1985) is reflected both in the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Curriculum

Standards for Social Studies (1994) and in the report of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools (1988). Both stress that students need a global, multicultural perspective as a foundation for informed world citizenship. The challenge for those of us who teach world history today is to translate this objective into a meaningful and challenging curriculum. My own dissatisfaction both with world history's bad reputation among my students and with conventional curricular methods has led me to rethink how I teach world history.

The area studies approach (separate units on Asia, Africa, and Latin America) which I used for many years now seems repetitive; we followed the pattern of studying geography, ancient civilizations, "discovery" by the West, colonization, and independence for each discrete region without linking these worldwide historical processes. Furthermore, this approach captured only isolated snapshots of how the world was constantly changing. I also rejected a conventional and comprehensive chronological world history survey as a ceaseless march of people, places, and events. At this point, I want to teach thematic world history. Existing world history courses suffer from numerous problems: heavy reliance on the text, superficial or haphazard treatment of important historical issues, lecture or lecture/discussion as dominant mode of instruction, and general lack of student motivation and interest (Woyach and Remy, 1988). By teaching just a few important themes, I

believe that my students will develop a keener understanding of world historical processes and their interrelationships and will become more involved and interested in world history. Given all the concerns about history teaching at the high school level, I believe that a "less is more" thematic conceptualization is preferable for world history.

What's Wrong With Current World History Courses?

Within the last decade world history has become one of the fastest growing areas of teaching (Geyer & Bright, 1995). Increasingly, states and local school districts have mandated at least one year of world history or world studies for graduation from high school. This one year study is critical because frequently, it represents both the first time since middle school that students have learned anything about the world and the last world studies course they will ever take (Woyach & Remy, 1988). No matter how skillful the teacher, however, the traditional one year world history survey is usually among the least interesting and/or least valuable to high school students (Gross, 1982). So vast and amorphous is the history of the world that teaching it seems to inspire an assortment of teaching goals and topics; the result is that the world history course suffers from an identity crisis (Roselle, 1992). As curricular goals for global understanding keep multiplying, the world history

course has become "a mish-mash of conflicting goals and unrelated content" (Woyach, 1991).

High school curricula contain a generous sprinkling of courses labelled "World History", "World Cultures", "Global History," and "Global Studies." Frequently, however, courses that may be meant to be world history are, in fact, histories of western civilization or studies of regional cultures which are not history at all (Woyach & Remy, 1988). In some schools, a world history course may be called "Global History" to reflect a more comprehensive geographical reach. In most cases, however, history related to regions outside the West was simply piled onto western civilization. According to Gilbert Allardyce (1990), Global History is just a "modish, space age name for world history." While "world" and "global" may be interchangeable adjectives, the structure and content of these courses remain the same; human history is presented in lock step chronological order with emphasis given to the development of "the western world".

"World Cultures" and "Global Studies" have different approaches. In "World Cultures," an anthropologically oriented examination of factors contributing to the groups' distinctive cultures takes precedence over their history. In the long run, examining such a series of separate and parallel culture stories is not very stimulating to students; the pattern of the course is repetitive, and in the end the narratives go nowhere because little effort is

made to link events within these cultures to a broader framework of world historical significance (Dunn, 1989). With "Global Studies," history recedes even further into the background as this course tends toward an interdisciplinary treatment of contemporary world issues, such as population growth, resource depletion, global warming, etc. While "Global Studies" is an inherently relevant approach to global education, its emphasis on analysis of current issues provides only a shallow exposure to the historical roots of contemporary problems (Dunn, 1989). Today, there is broader world coverage in the high school curriculum than ever before, but there is considerable diversity in approaches and little agreement on content (Allardyce, 1990).

While all of these courses are valid and relevant, they not only fail to provide a coherent conception of the history of the world, but also they may unwittingly reinforce ethnocentrism, cross-cultural antagonisms, and stereotypical thinking. The escalating importance of non-Western nations and the widening worldwide gap between rich and poor demand that students gain a world historical ulticultural literacy (Banks, 1994). What understandings do tudents develop when they survey cultures and regions of e world as separate, "disconnected" entities, or when they udy Africans and Asians only as subordinate to Western ination? As a result of this type of study, in the

name of multicultural education we may inadvertently reinforce monocultural assumptions and perspectives (Banks, 1994).

To free students from their own confining cultural boundaries, we cannot continue to marginalize the history of non-Western peoples by presenting theirs as a history peripheral to the central story of the West; these other histories must become an integral part of a true world history. The failure to provide students with a genuine world historical perspective will perpetuate naive interpretations of history as stories of winners and victims.

In his book A Place Called School, John Goodlad (1984) reported that students actually believed that foreign governments and their ideas were dangerous to the American government. While in the mid-1980's students' fears were likely founded on the perceived military threat of the Soviet Union and the economic threat of a booming Japanese economy, today their fears would likely be attributed to China's increasing presence in world affairs and to anxieties about seemingly omnipresent Muslim terrorists. To see the erosion of Western dominance in the world in the twentieth century and the decline of American hegemony in the postWorld War II era in this light will not contribute constructively to efforts to globalize American education (Anderson, 1990).

Why Don't Students Know More About the World?

History teaching seems to be in a state of perpetual crisis (Evans, 1988). Within the last decade, the considerable hand-wringing about the state of history in the schools has been accompanied by calls for more history in the curriculum (Bradley Commission, 1988; Howard & Mendenhall, 1982; National Council for History in the Schools, 1994) even though Stephen J. Thornton (1990) has shown that the amount of history taught over the last one-hundred years has remained remarkably constant. While World History (along with United States History) remains one of the most frequently taken social studies courses (Downey, 1985), students continue to lack both factual and conceptual knowledge of history (Ravitch & Finn, 1988). Thornton (1990) points out, however, that simply requiring more history courses will not change what happens in the classroom and what children learn; it is the pattern of instruction that must also change. While current research provides considerable information on how history is taught, there is little research on how well history is taught. Students may respond with a correct answer on a test, but they soon forget much of the historical information they briefly acquired (Downey & Levstik, 1988). This confirms the widely held belief that much history teaching simply conveys superficial information which does not result in deep historical understanding (Thornton, 1990).

While concerns about the depth of student knowledge about history are legitimate, a shallow "Trivial Pursuit" approach will not help world history courses which are already rushed and superficial (Bradley Commission, 1988). If coverage is the bane of any history teacher's existence, it is all the more so for the world history teacher who has to cover 10,000 years of human history on six continents. Recent attempts to make world history as inclusive as possible have only complicated an already multifaceted and demanding course. As a result, most world history courses tend to be teacher-directed one-year surveys (Woyach & Remy, 1988). Considering that information is growing at an exponential rate, is "coverage" even an option for a history course today?

Not surprisingly courses which emphasize coverage and memorization do not stimulate student interest and involvement. Furthermore, such courses do little to contribute to the development of historical reasoning. By trying to do too much, they fail to provide an intelligible learning experience for most students and are especially difficult for students with little experience and understanding of the world (Woyach & Remy, 1988). The compulsion to teach everything in the text, just because it is there, renders coverage the greatest enemy of understanding (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994).

Barbara Tye (1990) writes of the "deep structure" of schooling, a set of cultural and social norms and

assumptions that underlie our notions of schooling and remain impervious to change. Similarly, it may be said that there is a "deep structure" of history teaching as well which perpetuates the chronological one year survey whose sole objective is coverage. Given the challenge of sustaining a chronological survey of all the world's history, teachers either move so rapidly or omit so much that students are left with only a pedantic recitation of too much data (Alder & Downey, 1985).

Given the persistence of the survey course pattern, researchers consistently find that students do not develop a deep understanding of history nor are they able to conceptualize it adequately. How students make sense of the historical information they receive from instruction contributes to these problems. For one thing, children do not learn about the past from daily, informal experiences. Instead, they rely on parents, teachers, books, and audio-visual media to acquire historical knowledge (Brophy, 1994). In addition, students tend to form their historical understandings according to the their own assorted models of historical significance (Seixas, 1994). Conceptualizing from a thin veneer of historical knowledge and understanding is nearly impossible.

While there is little research on how American high school students derive meaning from their history studies, Jere Brophy (1994) wrote of a Swedish study of secondary history classes which demonstrated that students tended to

explain historical events in terms of the people who were involved in them. Peter Seixas (1994) in his study of Canadian high school students found that students developed narrative explanations as accounts of historical significance. In addition, he reported that implicit in these students' responses was the assumption that today we are free from the errors of the past, and history is now "under control."

Such naive learning distorts understanding of general historical process. Students need to learn how to determine significance regarding historical events, and they must be prodded to inquire why they think a particular event, person, or development is important (Seixas, 1994). For students to derive any meaning at all from their study of history, it is imperative that history courses show how particular information fits into the larger domain of historical knowledge (Downey & Levstik, 1991) and thus can be considered significant to historical development.

Not only do students have difficulty understanding the historical significance of events, they also have difficulty making connections between past and present and between events in one part of the world and those in another. From my own experience teaching separate units on Asia, Africa, and Latin America, I find, for example, that students struggle to connect Spanish control of Latin America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with British interests in China and India or French interests in West Africa in the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While students know who controlled which territory and why, they have trouble developing an understanding of imperialism as an over-arching historical process that ebbs and flows across time and space.

Why Don't Students Like World History?

Considering students' lack of knowledge and inability to derive meaning from their history studies, it is no surprise that students find history monotonous, boring, and irrelevant (Evans, 1988; Thornton, 1990). The persistence of the survey course and traditional teaching methods such as lectures, whole class discussions, and conventional paper and pen quizzes and tests (Downey & Levstik, 1991) may reflect the fact that few teachers are prepared to teach world history. Given the important role of the teacher as curricular gatekeeper (Thornton, 1990), a teacher's own history education may result in a large gap between the official curriculum and the transmitted one.

Since a teacher's own disciplinary background is related to the way history is taught and thought of (Evans, 1988), how well history is taught depends on how well teachers know their subject (Downey & Levstik, 1991). Teachers cannot pass on to students what they themselves have not learned. This fact sets up a vicious cycle between inadequate training and the lack of progress in developing

world history at the high school and college levels (Allardyce, 1990). In most universities students put together a major from a department's cafeteria style offerings (Brooks, 1991), most of which are taught within the narrow confines of the nation-state tradition of historiography (Hunt, 1994). The discipline of history rewards specialization; as a result, many professional historians tend to see world history as too vague and too general for serious academic study (McNeill, 1986), and see teachers of world history as nothing more than dilettantes (Geyer & Bright, 1995). As long as professional historians continue to regard world history with skepticism and to approve of it only as an introduction to other historical studies (Grew, 1995), few history majors will emerge from colleges and universities prepared to teach a world history course which communicates a genuine world historical perspective.

Moreover, teachers with only a superficial knowledge of the subject matter demonstrate little flexibility in pedagogical preferences and choices. They engage in what Talbert, McLaughlin, & Rowan (1993) refer to as "pedagogical triage" and just teach the facts. Since their dominant role models are their own history teachers in high school and college (Woyrach & Remy, 1988), teachers convey basic historical information through lectures, the most common mode of history instruction. Given teacher-centered instructional methods that emphasize coverage and

memorization, students spend much of their time in history class listening passively (Goodlad, 1984) This lecture method kills student interest and involvement in history (Woyach & Remy, 1988). In addition, students perceive their disinterest as an inherent function of the subject and not as a function of the ways they are taught (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

In the absence of a generally accepted conceptualization of world history taught to them in the university, teachers will continue to rely on lectures and lecture/discussions as the most efficient means to transmit historical information (Woyach & Remy, 1988). With few teachers prepared to teach it, having a course on world history in the high school social studies curriculum is no guarantee that students will be exposed to anything more than the surface features of the subject (Downey & Levstik 1991). Instead, what students will likely gain from their study of world history is a feeling of passive indifference.

Why Thematic World History Is The Answer.

Since traditional one-year surveys appear to have no sustaining value (Gross, 1982), and attempts to broaden world history courses have only complicated already perplexing courses, it seems to be time to try a different approach. In the Preface to the 1925 edition of their History of the United States, the eminent historians Charles

and Mary Beard challenged existing methods of history instruction by suggesting a topical treatment of United States History and by acknowledging what they have deliberately left out of their text. In a belated response to the Beards' challenge, I propose a thematic curriculum as solution to many of the problems confronting high school world history courses. This course will not pretend to teach all of world history, but will instead focus on an in-depth, chronological examination of a few significant world historical themes. This course will look to what world historian Leften Stavrianos (1989) referred to as the "usable past," the past which enlightens the present. In this way, I believe that my students will gain a deeper understanding of the historical processes that have shaped our world than other approaches have provided. While this curriculum is designed for tenth grade students who are motivated, read on level, do their homework, and are college bound, it has broader applications. All students, not just high-achieving ones, benefit from thoughtful classes (Newman, 1990).

Thematic World History Teaches For Understanding.

A thematic curriculum addresses a number of concerns about history teaching, in general, and world history teaching, in particular. First of all, by examining world-wide themes from multiple perspectives and by focusing on

the shared attributes and shared heritage of mankind, this course is non-centric. Students' understanding of their diverse world will emerge from the study of historical processes which are not rooted in one region, but which echo and ricochet around the world. Embedded in this study is the variety of world cultures and their conflicts, not as discrete entities and problems but as part of the regular, interwoven fabric of world history. In this way, multiculturalism becomes an imperceptible part of the normal course of history (Graff, 1992). According to William H. McNeill (1986), students need an ecumenical world view so that they can examine, discuss, and debate world historical issues in a civil manner. This non-centric world history is likely to produce an understanding of diversity that McNeill and others believe is important in the world today.

Secondly, this thematic course will provide a richer context for learning history. By devoting sufficient time to individual topics, students will be able to search out, explain, and identify the critical problems and puzzles of world history. Downey & Levstik (1991) report on several research studies in England that investigated alternatives to traditional history survey courses which used a variety of instructional materials (primary sources, films, photographs) and which were based on "discontinuous" syllabi. These showed that even though students had less comprehensive factual knowledge, they had acquired a sharper awareness and deeper understanding of the past. In this way

Complementing constructivist theories of learning, thematic teaching makes the student responsible for developing an integrated understanding of concepts and for developing the ability to answer important questions (Brooks and Brooks, 1993). Thematic teaching serves the goals of global education by making connections between past and present and between what students are learning and their own lives (Perkins & Blythe, 1994; Tye, 1990).

According to Theodore R. Sizer, "school is about practicing to wrap one's mind around real and complex ideas" (Sizer, 1992). The habits of serious thought, respectful skepticism, and curiosity about what lies beyond are well served by a thematic approach to world history. History courses today must challenge students to think in new and creative ways (Sizer, 1992). Being firmly rooted in an "Information Age," students do not need more gratuitous information; what they need instead is to understand a few of the most important ideas very well. If American students are too accepting of conventional and uninspiring modes of teaching and learning, a thematic world history course will nudge them out of complacency to take responsibility for their own learning and to become more knowledgeable of how their world came to be.

Additional Goals of this Curriculum

Beyond understanding the major themes of world history there are two additional goals of this curriculum. One is to understand how historians work, and the other is to provide a space for students to discover and test out their own ways of knowing so that they can begin to see themselves as intellectual beings in the making (Griffin, 1995). To accomplish these goals, students must be able to place themselves in historical time, to develop the skill of historical understanding, and to acquire historical perspective. They must come to understand that there is no single truth in history, that evidence in history is selective, and that interpretation depends, in part, on the historian's own perspective (Downey & Levstik, 1991). While understanding is a universal human behavior, there are differences among us which develop from variations in the ways we confront and interpret our common human destiny (Roselle 1992).

The study of history is a powerful tool for deriving meaning from today's world and a practical means for reaching decisions which will shape tomorrow (Evans, 1988). When my students can read a newspaper article or watch a TV news report with a keen understanding of its implications, when they can engage in thoughtful discourse; when they can carefully form an opinion after gathering and weighing all appropriate evidence; and when they can relate what goes on in the classroom with real life, I will know that thematic world history works. It is my deeply held belief that these

skills are within the grasp of average high school students all across this country, if only they experienced richer and more meaningful history classes.

Themes For a One-Year High School World History Curriculum

The purpose of this curriculum is to help students grasp the historical roots of our contemporary global interdependence by clarifying some central geographic, cultural, social, political, and economic interactions which have given rise to critical themes of human history. Planning this curriculum requires me to let go of the idea that there is a fixed body of information that I must convey. I am making extremely difficult choices in choosing and organizing themes to emphasize; these choices are profoundly subjective, even idiosyncratic. As a result, this curriculum will be a "work in progress" as I grapple with the daily challenges of "bucking the history system." Ongoing classroom research (my own journal, tapes and recordings of classes, and regular student feedback) will lead me to fine-tune themes and exemplars and to compile a continually growing body of personal research on thematic history teaching.

There are several considerations which guided the selection and treatment of the themes that follow. First of all, this World History course is required of all tenth grade students at Lancaster Country Day School. It follows

two traditional history survey courses, an eighth grade history course on "The Making of the Western World" from the ancient period through the middle ages and a ninth grade course on "European History" from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. Therefore, the focus of this tenth grade course is the world outside the West. Secondly, there are four major themes, one for each of the four marking periods. While chronology is critical to an understanding of history, thematic teaching is not inherently chronological. Chronology will be respected by introducing each theme with a lecture to provide the appropriate historical context, and by presenting topics and exemplars in chronological order. At the end of each theme study students will create either comparative visual timelines or annotated and illustrated chronological descriptions highlighting important developments as a review of the theme's chronology. The five themes of geography (location, place, interaction, movement, and regions) will be implicit throughout. These history theme studies will be accompanied by extensive map work and by analysis of relevant factors of physical and cultural geography. There will be no textbook; instead, students will engage in their own independent and group research and will read from various primary and secondary source selections. The spirit of collaboration will permeate the classroom.

There were two important criteria used to identify the themes to be studied. First, the themes had to be open-ended enough so that students are free to construct their own

historical meaning from them. Secondly, they had to cover a large swath of world history and to affect a large number of the world's people in important ways and for long periods of time. The themes are not collections of discrete episodes under a main topic but are instead world-scale historical issues which resonate today. My hope is that my students, after engaging in a deep examination of these themes, will come to appreciate that the world is, indeed, round.

INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Essential Question: How do historians construct history?

Rationale: Since the goal of this curriculum is to have students see history from multiple perspectives, they will begin their study of world history with a brief examination of various theories of history. Students often assume that what they read is truth. To begin to understand the nature of the discipline, students will consider how historians go about their work; how many different types of history there are (social, political, economic, intellectual, family, women's, etc); and why theories of history have changed over time. The purpose in studying this theme is to develop the understanding that written history is shaped by the political, cultural, and social context of the historians writing it.

newspaper and rewrite it from different historiographic perspectives.

1) PATTERNS OF HUMAN ORGANIZATION

Essential Question: How have human societies organized themselves to deal with the challenges of settled community living?

Rationale: Since the beginning of human history, people have organized themselves into groups to get work done, to adjudicate differences, and to provide a feeling of community and well-being. From kin groups, tribes, and stateless societies to civilizations, nation-states, and supranational entities, systems of organization have developed in direct response to environmental/geographical and economic conditions.

Topics of Study: Students will read about and analyze aboriginal peoples and pastoral nomadic societies; early civilizations such as Zhou China, Axum and Kush in Africa, and the Maya; as well as later empires such as the Inca, Mali, and the Moghul; the "new" nation-states of the late nineteenth century, such as Japan; and contemporary multinational corporations as precursors to a new form of global organization.

Student Activities: This theme lends itself to a historical and chronological discussion of how early forms of organization evolved into ever more complex forms and how the earlier forms which persist today manage in the modern world. Students would bring their understanding of the importance of multiple perspectives from their prior study of historiography to this discussion.

Groups of students may prepare a packet for a museum-sponsored study tour of a group of their choice. This packet, which would be appropriate to the time period of the tour, would include student made maps, information on transportation, lists of necessary clothing and supplies, and a descriptive brochure on the group to be visited.

In another activity, students could research and analyze patterns of growth over time for a selection of world cities. Discussions of their findings would lead students toward an understanding of the historical factors which contributed to the growth and decline in importance of cities in different parts of the world at different periods of time.

2) SYSTEMS OF FAITH

Essential Question: How do world religions attempt to handle the central, perplexing questions of human life and death, suffering, conflict, etc.?

Rationale: Since the beginning of time humans have sought to understand themselves and their place in the universe. Questions of values and moral imperatives are deeply imbedded in the consciousness of all peoples. While systems of faith have enriched human relations and united people of diverse political and ethnic identities, they have also been sources of hostility, repression, and war.

Topics of Study: Students will examine the origins of animism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Daoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. In addition, they will discuss factors contributing to expansion beyond the lands of origin, the political and cultural effects of diaspora, and the emergence of sects. Students will also analyze data on the growth and decline of religions in different parts of the world. Building on their study of human organization, students will consider the impact of belief systems on the development of political, economic, social, and cultural structures by reviewing the role of religion in the peoples, civilizations, and nation-states previously studied.

Student Activities: This theme study would begin with an assessment of what students know about world religions as they brainstorm religion, religious practices, religious artifacts, and religious vocabulary. Students would examine maps which depict the location of various religious groups

in the world today and identify contemporary religious "issues."

Groups of students might read an assortment of Bible stories, religious classics, and folk tales and discuss what makes these stories "religious" or not. They might choose a religion and examine the development of religious law and its relationship to civil law.

As a way of bringing the study of world religions into the contemporary sphere, students may choose to research and report on the relationship between China and Tibet, India and Pakistan, Israel and the Palestinians, Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims.

3) REVOLUTION

Essential Question: Do revolutions deliver on their promise of improvements in the everyday lives of ordinary people?

Rationale: Revolutions have been a persistent feature of modern world history and occur in predictable ways. While revolution seeks to bring about fundamental change, in many cases revolutionaries retain old patterns of thought even when they are most eager to repudiate the old and embrace the new.

Topics for Study: The concept of political and social revolution emerged in the late eighteenth century with the American and French Revolutions. Students will consider how historians have defined revolution and then identify factors which led to these revolutions. An examination of the Haitian Revolution, the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Mexican Revolution, and the Iranian Revolution will guide students toward an understanding of the nature and legacy of revolutionary movements.

Student Activities: Students will discuss the meaning of the terms "revolution," "revolt," "rebellion," and "war," "coup d'état," and identify as many different "revolutions" in world history as they can think of. In addition, they will build on their prior studies of human organization and world religions to distinguish between evolutionary and revolutionary change, and to consider where and under what kinds of conditions revolutions are likely to occur.

After studying these political and social revolutions, students may delve further into the ideas of revolution by searching for examples of "revolutionary change" in the arts, sciences, mathematics, industry, and commerce. This research and subsequent discussion will help students try to determine whether or not there are connections between revolutions in politics and those in other fields.

To assess the current status of "revolution" in the world, students might create their own visual schema (maps, charts, drawings, etc.) to represent their perceptions of the future of revolutionary change in the world.

4) TECHNOLOGY

Essential Question: To what extent have technological changes exacerbated the problem of the "haves" and the "have-nots" in modern global development?

Rationale: Technology has always been an integral part of human history; not only has technology shaped history, but also history has shaped technology. Technological advances and resulting commercial expansion together with different views on what constitutes progress have led to political, economic, and cultural collisions in world history. Today, we ponder the cumulative effects of applying scientific principles to commerce and industry as we live in an era of rampant globalization.

Topics of Study: Students will review the history of technology beginning with fire and the wheel, will consider how technological innovations diffuse through a society and from one society to another, and determine the extent to which technological change has helped create the modern age in which we live. Students will analyze and discuss the human costs of technological advances. Since technology is

the last theme in this curriculum, students will reflect on how systems of human organization, world religions, and ideas about revolution have been affected by technological change.

Student Activities: This theme study could begin with a screening of the film "The Gods Must Be Crazy" (1984). Set in southern Africa, this film explores the consequences of the sudden collision between an isolated, pre-modern society and the contemporary world. Discussion of issues raised by this film could center on whether or not technology is a sudden, autonomous "force" that bursts into our lives from nowhere.

Groups of students could also research and report on a variety of advances in navigation which made the Columbian encounter possible; in railways which led to deeper colonial penetration in Africa and India; and in miniaturization which has redefined how we live today.

Another activity would have students examining pictures of technological artifacts at different periods of time, such as buildings, bridges, airplanes, and computers to see how these artifacts have changed over time. Students could then consider what historical values these changes reflect. They may also examine the impact of technology on "women's' work" in the world?

Conclusion

Widespread agreement exists among teachers that world history is a problematic area of the high school social studies curriculum. In the name of global, multicultural education, schools offer a variety of courses most of which remain overwhelmingly western-oriented. In addition, the demon of coverage renders most of these courses a ceaseless march of people, places, and events which provide superficial or haphazard treatment of major historical issues. For world history education to improve, students need to engage deeply and mindfully with critical historical questions in a curriculum that reflects the global reality they face daily. This thematic high school world history curriculum is an effort in that direction.

No doubt, numerous criticisms can be levelled against this curriculum plan: important topics and events are left out; themes are somewhat isolated from a broader historical context; chronology leaps across decades and centuries; and only thematic unity holds the entire year's study together. The jumbled assortment of world history courses presently in high school social studies curricula have their own problems: since they generally feature the history of the West, they are not true world history; their lock step chronological arrangement leaves students bored and indifferent to history; and their shallow approach provides little foundation on which to build an understanding of

historical significance and no opportunity to formulate a conceptualization of history.

However, what this world history curriculum does **not** do is, I believe, less important than what it **does** do. It provides a sustained study of a few of the most important world historical themes; it maximizes all that is currently known about effective teaching and learning; it provides a genuinely global examination of history from a variety of perspectives. Beginning with consideration of how historians construct history and followed by in-depth examinations of patterns of human organization, systems of faith, revolution, and technology, students will learn a great deal about a broad swath of world history. Powerful primary and secondary source readings complemented by student research and hands-on activities will more than make up for what is left out of this curriculum.

To those who nevertheless dismiss this thematic plan as narrow and unworkable, something more must be said. The research and reflection represented in this approach provide space for high school world history teachers to have important conversations, generally absent from social studies curriculum at this level, about content and pedagogy. Too few opportunities exist for teachers to talk about what they do, how they do it, and most importantly, why they do what they do. If this thematic curriculum plan can encourage conversations such as these, students will

gain a lifelong appreciation for history as process, creation, and discovery.

The global reality of late twentieth century life requires students to develop a global, multicultural perspective as a foundation for informed world citizenship. This thematic world history curriculum not only explains to students how their world came to be, but also challenges them to think in new and creative ways. In this manner, students are prepared for tomorrow's as yet unimagined changes. A world history curriculum today should do no less. Conventional and uninspired world history teaching has persisted for too long. It is time to give thematic world history a chance.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adas, Michael. (1989). Machines as the measure of men: Science, technology, and ideologies of western dominance. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Adas' book is an intriguing complement to Peter Stearns' work on the industrial revolution. While China, India, and the Islamic world made great scientific and technological advances in the pre-modern period, by the nineteenth century it was the Europeans who had overtaken them in scientific development. Adas maintains that the European sense of superiority in this period grew out of technological factors more than racial ones.

Allardyce, Gilbert. (1990). Toward world history: American historians and the coming world history course. Journal of World History, 1(1), 23 -76.

This article is an appeal to historians to provide a genuine global perspective in their world history courses by creating a new framework and overarching plan for organization. Allardyce believes that world historians have come a long way in providing "respect" for the subject, but more work remains to be done.

Banks, James A. (1994). An introduction to multicultural education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Reading Banks' work on multicultural education, one realizes that a genuine world history curriculum serves the goals of multicultural education. This work is useful in developing a persuasive argument in favor of true world history at the high school level.

Bentley, Jerry H. (1993). Old world encounters: Cross-cultural contacts and exchanges in pre-modern times. New York and Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Bentley explores the nature of the premodern expansion of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, and Islam from 800 to 1500 in Eurasia and Africa. His thesis is that cultural conversion was not forced but occurred when social, political, or economic factors favored it. He also maintains that conversion was always syncretic. Cross-cultural encounters are a significant theme in world history. Bentley's major work on the premodern global system is an important teacher resource.

Bentley, Jerry H. (1996). Cross-cultural interaction and periodization in world history. American Historical Review, 101, 749-782.

Bentley offers a new periodization scheme for world history which emerges from the cross-cultural interactions of mass migrations, empire-building, and long-distance trade.

Bower, Bert, Lobdell, Jim, and Sorenson, Lee. (1994). History alive: Engaging all learners in the diverse classroom. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

This book contains excellent imaginative suggestions for getting away from the teacher-centered classroom. Cooperative learning activities and engaging, practical strategies demonstrate how world history can be made more engaging for students.

Bradley Commission on History in the Schools.(1988). Building a history curriculum: Guidelines for teaching history in schools. Washington, D.C.: Educational Excellence Network.

This convenient pamphlet was produced by the first national group to consider the status of history in schools. It presents arguments for the study of history, a listing of history's habits of mind, and an explanation of the place of history in the curriculum. Of special note is the identification of six vital themes that inform the study of history and a suggestion of how these themes relate to major topics in world history.

Brooks, George, E. (1991). An undergraduate world history curriculum for the twenty-first century. Journal of World History, 2(1), 65 - 79.

Brooks offers a persuasive counter to those who decry the demise of Western Civilization courses. His point is simply that to understand the peoples of the world, history teaching should focus on shared processes and attributes not on differences. He presents four prototypes of one semester introductory college world history courses. It is possible to choose elements from each of Brooks' suggestions to create a one year thematic world history course for secondary students.

Brooks, Jacqueline Grennon, and Brooks, Martin G. (1993). The case for constructivist classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This book is an excellent "how to" resource for teachers interested in incorporating constructivist strategies in their classrooms.

Christian, David. (1991). The case for "big history." The Journal of World History, 2(2), 223 - 238.

This article attempts to answer the critical questions regarding what is the appropriate time period and scale for teaching world history. According to David Christian, historians should search back 10 - 20 billion years ago and begin with the "Big Bang." Christian offers a description of his own university courses to explain how this is done. While his approach includes important prehistory and paleontology, most world historians will continue to consider their teaching domain as beginning with the development of human history.

Crosby, Alfred W. (1994). Germs, seeds, and animals: Studies in ecological history. Armonk,NY: M.E. Sharpe.

This book is a collection of previously published material, and it brings together in one volume selections from all of Crosby's work in ecological imperialism in the Americas, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Australia. An understanding of his concept of the creation of "neo-Europes" through the introduction of plants, animals, and disease is critical to any definition of important world history themes.

DeFonzo, James. (1994). Revolutions and revolutionary movements. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

A study of several Marxist revolutions (Russia, China, Cuba, VietNam, etc.), DeFonzo's book lacks any unifying analytical framework but can provide some interesting insights and examples for the historical theme of revolution.

Downey, Matthew T. & Levsik, Linda S. (1988). Teaching and learning history: The research base. Social Education, 52, 336 - 342.

This article is a brief but comprehensive survey of trends in history teaching as of the late 1980's. Disdaining what they refer to as a "shallow cultural literacy

approach", the authors suggest that a nonsurvey approach which devotes time to particular topics and periods would encourage the development of habits of mind relevant to the domain of history. They conclude by saying that there has been very little research done on how history is taught and learned. The arguments in this paper support the idea for a thematic world history curriculum.

Downey, Matthew T. & Levstik, Linda S. (1991). Teaching and learning history. In James P. Shaver, (Ed.), Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning (pp. 400-410). New York: Macmillan.

This article is an excellent recap of what is known currently about teaching and learning history. Downey & Levstik conclude that the research base is "thin and uneven."

Evans, Ronald W. (1990). Teacher conceptions of history revisited: Ideology, curriculum, and student belief. Theory and Research in Social Education,18(2), 101-138.

This article describes and analyzes five styles of history teaching and their impact on student beliefs. It is thought provoking about which approach is most likely to create sustained interest and reflection in students.

Frank, Andre Gunder. (1991) A plea for world system history. Journal of World History, 2(1), 1-28.

Frank describes his view of "macro" history by identifying twenty important world history issues and themes and by urging his fellow historians to present a comprehensive view of the total human experience. Most thought-provoking is his suggestion that world system theory needs to be seen as a three-legged stool, combining political and cultural factors with economic ones.

Graff, Gerald. (1992). Beyond the culture wars: How teaching the conflicts can revitalize American education. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Graff believes that the most effective way to teach culture conflicts is to make them the organizing principle of a curriculum. Teaching the controversies in something history teachers must take seriously as they ponder the organizing principles of their curricula. His example of teaching Things Fall Apart and Heart of Darkness together to provide two perspectives on imperialism is particularly useful.

Green, William A. (1992). Periodization in European and world history. Journal of World history, 3(1), 13 - 54.

In this article, William Green argues for the abandonment of the old episodic historical periodization that divided the history of the world into ancient, medieval, and modern periods. He sees this as a very Eurocentric approach and urges world historians to establish periodization schemes that are more in keeping with the goals of the world history curriculum.

Headrick, Daniel R. (1981). The tools of empire: Technology and European imperialism in the nineteenth century. New York: Oxford University Press.

Headrick's description of how the power of industrial technology transformed imperialism provides a new perspective on an old historical concept. His work is important to the theme of the "new" imperialism and how it transformed the world.

Holt, Tom. (1990). Thinking historically: Narrative, imagination, and understanding. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Holt's thesis is that history is a narrative. The best way to teach history and to develop critical thinking skills in students is to have students do the work of historians. He shows how using primary source documents reinforces the multiple perspectives and open-endedness of historians' questions. This book is reassuring to the teacher who wishes to move away from textbook centered teaching. He is particularly supportive of using historical fiction.

Kammen, Michael,ed. (1980).The past before us: Contemporary historical writing in the United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kammen's book on opening the discipline of history to techniques borrowed from other disciplines is an important contribution to current views of historiography.

Kliebard, Herbert.(1995). The struggle for the American curriculum: 1893 - 1958.New York: Routledge.

Kliebard's history of the development of history and social studies curricula in the United States is extremely

useful as background information for understanding the how social studies curricula came to be in this century.

Kobrin, David. (1996). Beyond the textbook: Teaching history using documents and primary sources. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kobrin has a very constructivist approach to teaching history. His book is a very practical, "how-to" guide which is applicable to any history course. Like Holt, Kobrin endorses the student-as-historian method of learning.

Kramer, Lloyd, Reid Donald, & Barney, William, eds. (1994). Learning history in America: Schools, cultures, and politics. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

This volume grew out of a conference at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1991. As a collection of papers that deal with the nature of historical understanding in the USA, this book is an excellent resource in developing a rationale for thematic world history.

Mazlish, Bruce,& Buultjens, Ralph, eds. (1993). Conceptualizing global history. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

In this work, global history is a field distinct from world history. An investigation of themes with global significance, such as ecology, the world economy, and human rights, this book argues that global history is distinctive from world history in terms of scale and perspective. However, the arguments for interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and multinational perspectives complement a thematic transnational world history curriculum.

McNeill, William H.(1986). Mythistory and other essays. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This collection of essays provides insight into how McNeill's conception of world history grew out of prior historiogrpahy. This is a particularly interesting work.

McNeill, William H. (1991). The rise of the West: A history of the human community. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This most recent edition of what many historians believe to be the best and most comprehensive world history text in print is a basic resource for any work in world

history. McNeill is the father of the world history perspective in the USA.

National Standards for World History. (1994). Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, University of California.

The National Standards, though much vilified when they were released in the winter of 1994-95, remain a singularly valuable source from which to draw themes for a study of world history. The very comprehensiveness of the individual standards and the extensive examples of student achievements which follow each standard make this a prime source of world history suggestions.

Reilly, Kevin,ed. (1985). World history: Selected reading lists and course outlines from American colleges and universities. New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, Inc.

Kevin Reilly has compiled a comprehensive set of outlines from college courses in world history. Though this work is more than ten years old and does not reflect the more recent changes in the way world history is taught, Reilly's book is, nonetheless, quite helpful. The course syllabi range from traditional chronological world history surveys to global, comparative, and transregional histories. Embedded in some of these course outlines are elements of a thematic approach to world history. The texts and other sources listed in these syllabi are especially helpful resources. An updated edition of this work is to be published in spring, 1997.

Reilly, Kevin. (1995). Readings in world civilizations: The great traditions. New York: St. Martin's Press.

This first volume of Reilly's reader contains both primary and secondary source readings from the great world civilizations up to about 1500 C.E. These selections are planned for an introductory world history course in college. Nonetheless, most are also suitable for high ability high school students.

Reilly, Kevin. (1995). Readings in world civilizations: The development of the modern world. New York: St. Martin's Press.

This second volume of Reilly's reader continues the pattern of the first volume. These selections begin with the European Renaissance and continue to the present.

Roselle, David. (1992). The Study of World history: Triolets, Villanelles, and roaring in the pines. Phi Delta Kappan, 74(3), 248-252.

This article is helpful in directing thinking away from traditional views of world history and toward a more thematic one. World history is clearly a broad and nebulous subject. The author refers to it as "an endless flow of time." For students to get a handle on this tremendous mass of information, Roselle suggests that the principal theme of world history should be the "universality of basic human behavior." He uses the example of faith.

Saul, Wendy E., ed. (1994). Non-fiction for the classroom: Milton Meltzer on writing history and social responsibility. New York: Teachers College Press.

Meltzer, a prolific writer of social history for children and adolescents, has quite a bit to say on the matter of using the study of history for the development of a just society. His arguments may be useful in developing the rationale for a thematic world history curriculum.

Shaffer, Lynda. (1994). Southernization. Journal of World History, 5(1), 1-22.

Shaffer's "southernization" concept is meant to be seen as a complement to the more commonly known "westernization" concept. Her thesis is that an important historical process began in southern Asia in the 5th century C.E. which spread metallurgy, mathematics, technology, and new commodities of trade from India, to China, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region by about 1200. Shaffer sees this process as critical to world historical development at this time.

Stahl, Robert J. and Van Sickle, Ronald L., eds.(1992) Cooperative learning in the social studies classroom. Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

With practical suggestions for implementing cooperative learning in the classroom, this NCSS Bulletin also makes a good case for changes in social studies teaching.

Stavrianos, Leften. (1989). Lifelines from our past: A new world history. New York: Pantheon Books.

This preeminent world historian presents a new and interesting conceptual framework for 50,000 years of world

history. Stavrianos divides history into kinship, tributary, and capitalist societies and then discusses issues common to each such as ecology, gender, social relations, and war. This is a most thought-provoking work which puts themes of history in a new pattern.

Stearns, Peter H. (1993). The industrial revolution in world history. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

This book provides an excellent world history perspective on what Stearns sees as the slow and uneven process of industrialization from the 18th century to the present. Stearns divides the industrial revolution into three phases: 1) 1760 to 1880 when English, European, and American areas became industrialized; 2) 1880 to 1950 when industrialization spread internationally to places such as Russia, Japan, Mexico, and Egypt; and 3) 1950 to the present when industrialization spread to the Asian tigers and beyond. Stearns' work with the topic of the Industrial Revolution is an excellent model to apply to other world history topics.

Thornton, Stephen J. (1990). Should we be teaching more history? Theory and research in Social Education, 18(1), 53-60.

Thornton's article correctly points out that with the call for more history in the curriculum, focus remains on the content and not on the teaching methods. The point is that to arouse student interest in the discipline of history, teaching methods have to be more engaging and student centered.

Tye, Kenneth A. (1990). Global education: From thought to action. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

By giving some historical perspective on global education, this book is an excellent resource for those needing ammunition for making a strong claim for a global perspective in education.

Wallerstein, Immanuel, (1976). Rise of the modern world system. New York: Academic Press.

In tracing the development of a single economic and political world system since the Renaissance, Wallerstein's perspective on capitalism is important to add to a study of the impact of industrialization.

Wolf, Eric. (1982). Europe and the people without history. Berkeley: University of California Press.

This is an excellent work from which to draw in studying the global impact of European expansionism. Wolf's book provides multiple perspectives and crosses several disciplines.

Zevin, Jack. (1992). Social studies for the twenty-first century: materials and methods for teaching in middle and secondary schools. New York: Longman.

This book is an excellent general text for thinking about the design and implementation of a history curriculum. Its combination of explanation of the theoretical base and presentation of numerous practical examples makes this an important resource.

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