

Models for Scholars for the Purpose of Adding Effective Teaching/Learning Activities to Their Content-Based Articles

When *World History Connected* was founded in 2003, it was hoped one of the ways that the journal's and the World History Association's joint mission of promoting both research and the scholarship of teaching in our discipline could be served by literally taking a research article published in the *Journal of World History* and addressing the article's content so as add to its pedagogical usefulness. Copyright issues prohibited this, and alternatives were developed over time that serve that purpose by other means: most WHC articles sharing archival research include references to related teaching approaches and materials.

This article returns to the journal's original desire by referencing a previous WHC research article that is worthy of expansive treatment in terms of the use of its archivally-based content in classroom. It is worth noting that this author and the editor of WHC, Marc Jason Gilbert, have together had some success using this approach in conducting numerous world history workshops, nationally and internationally. However, most recently, a workshop participant said that the idea of applying the content of academic articles to classroom teaching to aid in the development of sophisticated, disciplinary specific thinking skills was "just sophistry!" This author and WHC hopes that teachers will find the work offered here useful, and also welcomes reader responses at the address provided at the end of the article in this author's brief biography. We also encourage scholars developing their own research articles to consider pursuing this methodology and thus join us in this effort.

Selected Article

The February 2021 edition of *World History Connected* (18 .1), a free, open-sourced e-journal, contained an article by historian and anthropologist Alyssa M. Sperry entitled “Eating Jamaica: How Food is Used as a Tool to Create and Reinforce Cultural Identity.”¹ This article is a well-researched study of Jamaican food in its cultural context, and well worth a reading as it offers interesting perspectives and insights, such as jerk meat and salt, as seen through Jamaican eyes. Although the article’s focus is on the Caribbean Island’s cuisine, it also directly addresses the cross-regional nature of Jamaican food. It is employed here with thanks for permission provided by the author.

Goals for Teaching any Article in World History

One of the primary goals for teaching our subject is developing in our students a comprehensive understanding of world history data because the global history knowledge base can serve as the foundation for all later disciplinary cognitive skill development. Thinking skill competence is a second primary objective of well-constructed world history instruction. Students need to master certain thinking activities in order to comprehend and appreciate our subject in depth. It is also anticipated that many of these competencies will greatly enhance students’ understanding of contemporary events through a well-developed global perspective.

The most important types of these cognitive skills are 1) the relationship between theme and example, 2) constructed knowledge, 3) recognition of multiple causation (and the related fallacy of monocausality), 4) an understanding of multiple perspectives, and 5) recognition of events that can be linked across time and place, and thus 6) the value of comparative approaches to world history. For those not familiar with these cognitive skills as they apply to world history, they are briefly defined and exemplified in this paper in a novel way—through their application to an academic article on food in world history that previously appeared in *World History Connected* mentioned above.

Teaching Models

Theme/Example

This learning activity is designed to foster a student’s ability to connect newly learned world history data with already understood global themes. The ideas to be amplified in this activity are: flora diffusion, cultural synthesis, imperialism, forced migration, integration of cross-regional processes, fauna diffusion, self-determination and technological diffusion. For demonstration purposes, it should be assumed by the reader that all of these mental

constructs have been introduced and developed for the students over a long period of class time and therefore, the students are quite familiar with the meaning of each one.

Steps:

1. Teacher breaks class into eight smaller groups.
2. Teacher assigns one theme per group and article paragraphs to read as follows:
 - a. Group 1- Flora Diffusion- para. 2
 - b. Group 2- Cultural Synthesis- para. 5
 - c. Group 3- Imperialism- para. 5 and para. 6
 - d. Group 4- Forced Migration- para. 6
 - e. Group 5- Integration of Cross- Regional Processes- para. 2
 - f. Group 6- Fauna Diffusion- para. 10 and para. 15
 - g. Group 7- Self Determination- para. 13 and para. 16
 - h. Group 8- Technological Diffusion- para. 6
3. Students read assigned paragraphs outside of class and discuss on zoom the relationship between the Jamaican data from the article and the assigned concept.
4. Students are encouraged to find more Jamaican examples of assigned theme on .edu websites.
5. Students are given three days to complete tasks in steps 3 and 4 outside of class.
6. On fourth day, each group delivers a five-minute presentation to entire class in which they specifically connect the Jamaican data from the article and the assigned idea.
7. As groups are presenting, teacher identifies the mental construct being discussed on a large poster of world history concepts which is permanently on the wall.

Multiple Causation

Many students are visual learners, and this set of learning activities employs a graphic organizer developed by the author for the purpose of fostering the cognitive skill of recognizing multiple causation. Readers are encouraged to design their own visual organizers to address their teaching goals.

Steps:

1. Teacher breaks class into nine smaller groups.
2. Each group is assigned one topic related to the Jamaican dish of jerk meat as follows:
 - a. Group 1- Salt
 - b. Group 2- Scotch Bonnet
 - c. Group 3- Pimento Allspice- most important spice
 - d. Group 4- Maroons
 - e. Group 5- Wild Hogs
 - f. Group 6- Plantains

- g. Group 7- Scallions
 - h. Group 8- English in Jamaica
 - i. Group 9- Cinnamon- not essential to the recipe
3. Each group is assigned the same task- How did your topic get to Jamaica? Is it indigenous to the island or does it come from outside the Caribbean? Research data must be cited from an .edu source.

Students copy this blank visual organizer into their notebooks from the teacher’s model on the white board. Since this graphic organizer has been employed by the educator all year long, students are quite familiar with it and its relationship to multiple causation. The visual organizer communicates that causation in world history is multiple—political, economic, cultural, and biological factors. It also indicates that in many situations, causation is a combination of internal (inner rectangle) and cross-regional dynamics (outer rectangle).

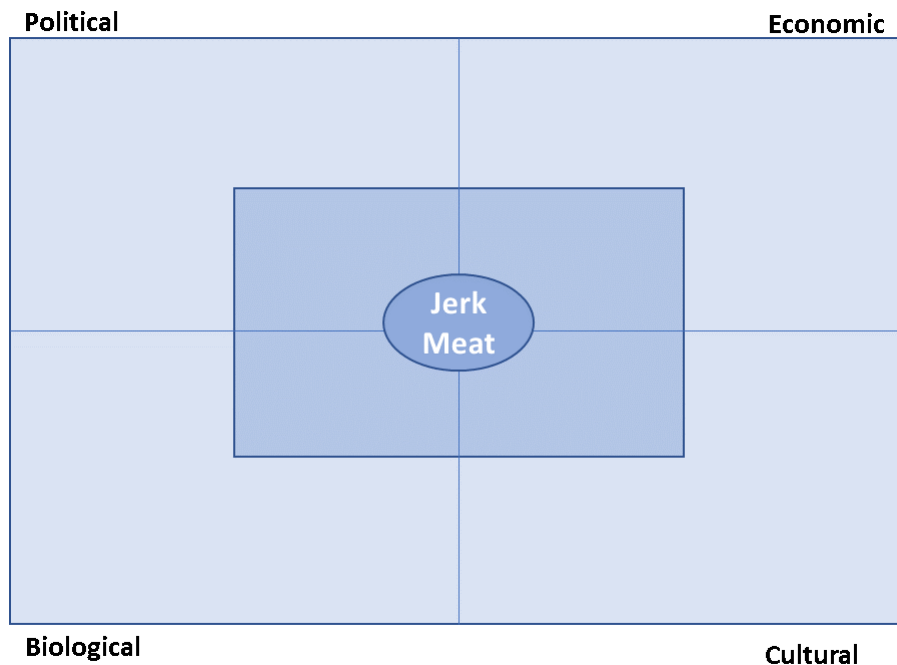


Image 1: Graphic Visual Organizer 1 (Graphic created by the author)

4. The organization of this visual organizer communicates that cultural and biological factors can also become, in many situations, a combination of internal (inner rectangle) and cross-regional dynamics (outer rectangle).

- 4. Students are given three days to do their research, share the results online and prepare a five-minute presentation to the entire class on their findings.

- As students make their presentation, the teacher places their information on the model visual organizer which students use to complete their personal graphic organizer in their notepads etc. The finished visual organizer will look as follows:

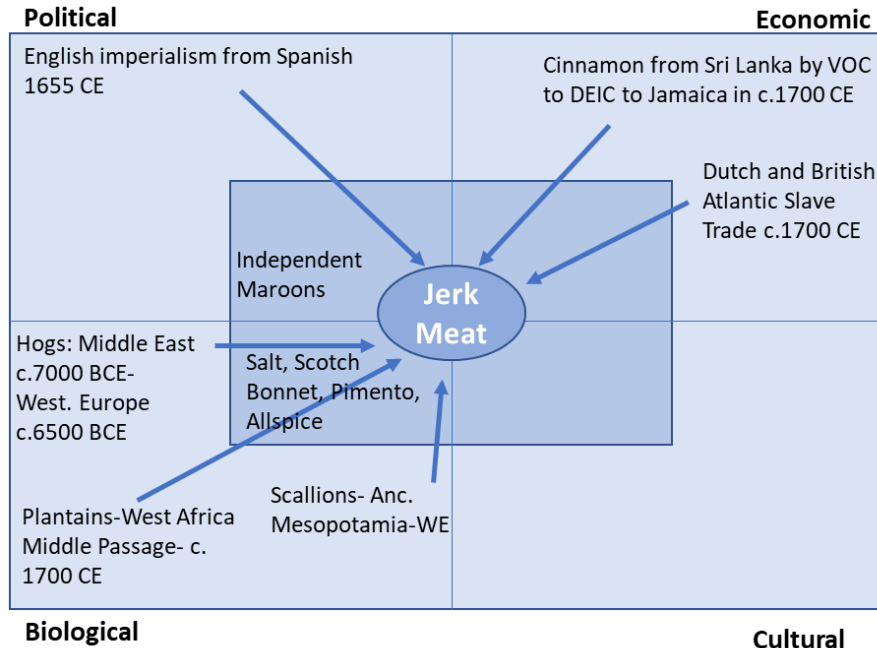


Image 2: Graphic Visual Organizer 2 (Graphic created by the author)

Teacher breaks class into discussion pairs, which is a learning activity that they are quite familiar with and gives the pairs the following task: Can you match up each one of these previously learned world history concepts with a data example of it from above chart- fauna diffusion, imperialism, self-determination, long distance trade, forced migration, flora diffusion. Student pairs are given some time to “do” world history learning and then teacher leads a discussion of the themes and examples - constructed knowledge.

- (Constructed Learning).
- Teacher summarizes the set of learning activities by identifying the data on the graphic organizer as an example of the thinking competency of multiple causation. Educator is careful to emphasize that the development of Jamaican jerk meat does not have one cause, but it is the result of many partial causes working together. The important point that causation in world history usually is a function of the interplay of internal and external reasons is also stressed. Finally, the instructor communicates that the creation of jerk meat in Jamaica did not have to work out as it did. The Spanish did not have to come to the island in 1494 CE and bring wild Eurasian hogs with them.

Multiple Perspectives

This thinking skill is very important for studying world history because of the many different cultures involved in the gradually evolving globalization project since c. 1000 CE. However, it is also a crucial mental competency in citizenship training in the United States given the developing multi-cultural population of the country.

Steps:

1. Teacher places a picture of the Jamaican iguana on the screen.
2. Teacher places this visual organizer on the white board, which students copy into the notebooks:

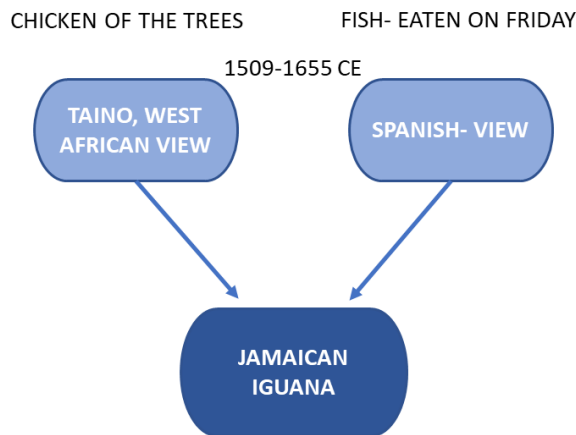


Image 3: Graphic Visual Organizer 3 (Graphic created by the author)

3. Teacher describes the view of the iguana held by the indigenous Taino and the enslaved West Africans, which was that the iguana was a large reptile that was good eating.
4. Teacher describes the view of the animal held by the Spanish from 1509 CE on, which was influenced by the fact that there are no iguanas in Spain. The Spaniards saw the iguana as a fish that they could eat on Catholic “meatless” Fridays.
5. Teacher articulates the following data about the Taino- Jamaica name is based on Taino name Xaymaca- land of wood and water, Taino migrated to Jamaica from South American Orinoco-Amazon basin in c. 500 BCE and had 2000 years living with iguanas by 1500 CE.
6. Teacher articulates the following data about Early Modern Spanish- Spanish Catholics fought a c.500 year war against Muslims for control of Spain, which they won in 1492 CE when the last Muslim State of Granada surrendered to the army of the Spanish Catholic royals of Ferdinand and Isabella. From this time on, Spanish national identity was directly connected to Roman Catholic identity.

7. Teacher articulates the following data about the West Africans- Their presence in Jamaica was a function of the Portuguese- West African Slave trade c. 1500 CE on. They were captured by West Africans from different ethnic groups, sold to Portuguese slave traders on the coast and transported to Jamaica on Portuguese ships where they were put to work on Spanish sugar plantations. They were primarily animists, and some were Muslims but none of them were Roman Catholics when they arrived in the West Indies. As a consequence, they knew nothing about the long-standing Catholic tradition of meatless Fridays.
8. Class is broken up into discussant pairs and the students discuss this question- Why were the views of the iguana so different among the Taino, West Africans and Spanish?
9. Teacher leads a large class discussion on the reasons for the different views of the iguana held by the Taino, West Africans and Spanish.
10. Teacher summarizes the learning activity by emphasizing the importance of recognizing multiple perspectives on a certain issue in studying world history and in the present concerning controversial topics. Students also learn that the origin of different views on the same issue are usually based on the cultural background of the groups of people involved in an activity.

Relationship of Events Over Time and Place

Many students see world history as a set of unconnected facts that they somehow need to assimilate and remember. No wonder history is not a favorite subject with many young people. That negative view can change when students are helped to see that many times events are linked in a partially causative relationship. Case in point would be the influence of the United States Civil War on the rise of Pittsburgh as an industrial center. In the case of world history, this type of thinking can be very interesting because the events under consideration could be separated by hundreds maybe thousands of miles of territory. Witness the influence of da Gama's successful trade route to India in 1498 CE and the claiming of Brazil by Cabral for Portugal in 1500 CE.

Steps:

1. Teacher breaks the class into nine smaller groups.
2. Each group is assigned a specific topic as follows:
 - a. Group 1- Where is the place of origin of cinnamon, which is a sometimes ingredient in the recipe for jerk meat in Jamaica?
 - b. Group 2- What is the importance of the voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1498 CE?
 - c. Group 3- What did the Portuguese do in Ceylon in 1505 CE?
 - d. Group 4- Why did the Dutch VOC take over control of Ceylon in 1656 CE?
 - e. Group 5- When did the English take over control of Jamaica from the Spanish?
 - f. Group 6- What was the purpose of Port Royal, Jamaica in 1665 CE?

- g. Group 7- How powerful was the British Royal Navy in c. 1750 CE?
- h. Group 8- How did Robert Clive's victory in India 1757 CE influence the introduction of cinnamon to Jamaica?
- i. Group 9- Who was Admiral George Rodney and what connection did he have to the introduction of cinnamon to Jamaica?

All groups must include map references using the large global map on the classroom wall in their reports.

- 3. Students have three days to do their online research outside of class and through zoom discussions. Sources must be handed in to teacher and include edu. sites.
- 4. On the fourth day, teacher places this graphic organizer on the white board and students copy it into their tablet notebooks:

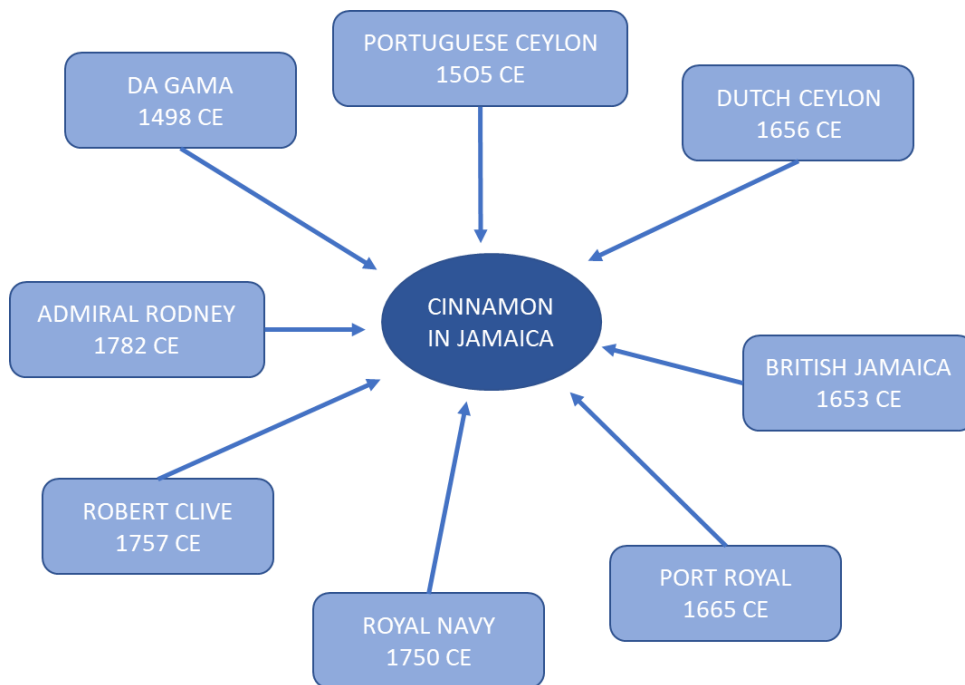


Image 4: Graphic Visual Organizer 4 (Graphic created by the author)

- 5. Groups of students make their presentations on their research topics including map references. As groups are reporting, the educator places the important information on white board graphic organizer and all students copy the data on their visual organizers.

6. The completed visual organizer would appear as follows:

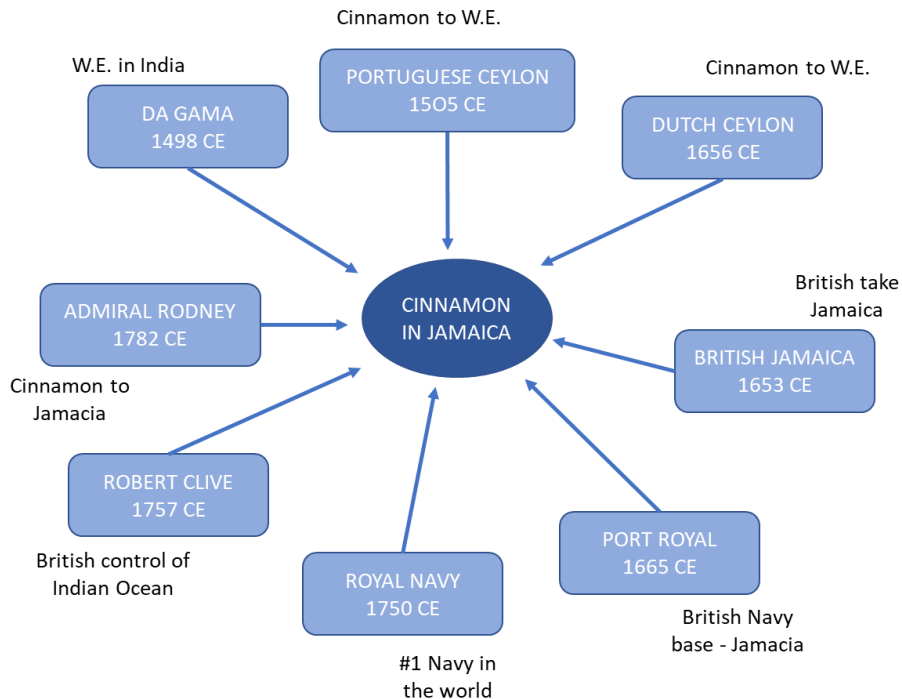


Image 5: Graphic Visual Organizer 5: Graphic Organizer Code: W.E. = Western Europe (Graphic created by the author).

Teacher emphasizes that each event on the graphic organizer had partial influence on the introduction of cinnamon to Jamaica and its subsequent use in some jerk meat recipes. Educator also emphasizes that many of these events are separated by many years and large distances. For example, the Portuguese takeover of Ceylon occurred 257 years before and over 10,000 miles away from the introduction of cinnamon to Jamaica in 1782 CE.

Comparative Word History

This type of world history cognitive activity is foundational to our discipline. If developed properly, students will be able to discern the similarities and differences among world history developments. The contrasts are quite important because they are the results of human agency in the human past.

Steps:

1. Teacher breaks the class up into 12 smaller groups of 2–3 students each.
2. Teacher assigns groups 1–6 to research the Maroons in Jamaican History and groups 7–12 are assigned to research the Maroons in Brazilian History.

3. Assignments for groups 1–6 are as follows:
 - a. Group 1- Who were the Maroons in Jamaican History?
 - b. Group 2- Where was the Maroon territory in Jamaican History?
 - c. Group 3- When was the period in Jamaican History when the Maroons were an important factor in the narrative?
 - d. Group 4- What was the population size of the Jamaican Maroon community?
 - e. Group 5- What warfare tactics did the Jamaican Maroons employ?
 - f. Group 6- What defenses did the Jamaican Maroons use in their towns?
4. Assignments for groups 7–12 are as follows:
 - a. Group 7- Who were the Maroons in Brazilian History?
 - b. Group 8- Where was the Maroon territory in Brazilian History?
 - c. Group 9- When was the period in Brazilian history when the Maroons were an important factor in the narrative?
 - d. Group 10- What was the population size of the Brazilian Maroon community?
 - e. Group 11- What warfare tactics did the Brazilian Maroon community employ?
 - f. Group 12- What defenses did the Brazilian Maroons use in their towns?
5. Groups have three days to do their research, communicate and plan their presentation. All of this work to be done outside of class.
6. On the fourth day, all groups report to class as a whole and give the educator their list of consulted edu. sources.
7. As groups report, the teacher places their research data on this chart which students copy in their notebooks:

Jamaican Maroons		Brazilian Maroons	
Who		Escaped slaves	
Where		Interior mountains	
When	1493-1740 CE		1605-1694 CE
Size of Town	664-1,288 people		11,000 people
War Tactics		Guerilla warfare	
Defense of Town		stockades	

Image 6: Visual Organizer 6: N.B.- If aspects of the two Maroon groups are different, they go under their respective names but if aspects are similar, they go in the middle of the visual organizer. Graphic created the author.

- Class is broken up into discussion pairs that consider the following question: Were the Jamaican Maroons and the Brazilian Maroons more similar or different?
8. Teacher-led class discussion on the above question with educator emphasizing the need to support historical claims with evidence.

9. Students are given a homework assignment that asks them to write an essay outline for their argument relative to the compare/contrast of Jamaican and Brazilian Maroons.
10. In next class, students exchange their outlines with partners, who will evaluate the structure of the essay outline and suggest improvements.
11. For homework the next evening, students write their essay argument following the improved outline from their partners
12. In closure, educator emphasizes that comparative history is fundamental to the discipline of world history. Teacher also stresses that comparative history further develops a thematic approach to the human past by identifying the nuanced similarities and differences of certain human behaviors that might be lost if the thinking approach taken just remains at the general, factual level.

Conclusion

Articles published in *World History Connected* have long contributed the knowledge base of our discipline, both in terms of field-based or archival research, and pedagogy. This article seeks to contribute to journal's on-going efforts to offer content that combines both. First, it demonstrates how teachers can employ the content of Sperry's research, when supported by effective models. Second, it seeks to encourage world history researchers to add value to their work in terms of building a world history community by including effective teaching ideas in their articles. There is much at stake here in terms of foundational approaches to world history content and the critical thinking that underpins such work.

A careful consideration of Sperry's article will reveal evidence of the influence of many of the first generation of true world history scholars such as Philip Curtin, Jerry Bentley, Alfred Crosby, and William H. McNeill, all of whom held that cross-regional connections have been very significant change agents in the human narrative. However, the most important goal of a general world history education is to develop a set of discipline specific thinking techniques in our students central to the understanding of such complex processes. Without them, factual learning can lead to data overload and student frustration. Historical data serves as the beginning of learning not an end in itself. New world history information, such as scholarly research, when used properly, can be the vehicle for developing a nuanced, sophisticated understanding of our discipline which the founders of our field envisioned.

The choices of the five world history thinking skills to address that need is the author's alone. Obviously, there are others thinking skills emphasized by scholars in our field, but these five illustrate the chief cognitive approaches employed in world history literature over the past forty years.

The specific classroom teaching/learning activities discussed here are based on the following pedagogical principles: they all require students to do world history research and

to employ their research findings in class presentations and they all privilege active learning and group cooperation which will result in increased student interest in and ownership of their work. If educators set the development of these disciplinary specific cognitive skills as a top priority, their students will receive an excellent introduction to the life of the mind, as well as more easily gain an understanding of world history.

Appendix

The most important of world history cogitative skills is *Constructed knowledge*. The definition of this term is that students lend meaning to newly learned world history facts by connecting this novel data to previously learned and understood global concepts. An example of this process would be a student initially learning about the creation of French Indochina in c. 1890 CE and immediately linking this French activity with the mental construct of imperialism. This thinking technique is crucial in young peoples' world history education because it works against the issue of overwhelming data overload. It also has solid transfer value to students' adult lives in that the global history conceptual base learned in class can be applied to make sense of current events. Case in point would be Russia's recent incursion into eastern Ukraine, which would be categorized as imperialism.

The second important cognitive skill is the *recognition of multiple causation* of events. This cerebral competence works against one of the major faults of much popular history which is the fallacy of monocausality. Multiple causation of world history events is dualistic because it addresses external and internal roots of human behavior. Sometimes internal causes get ignored in the grand sweep of a world history survey course. They shouldn't be passed over because they center indigenous agency in the overall narrative.

Developing the ability to recognize and appreciate *multiple perspectives* in a certain world history event is the third thinking technique that requires attention. These varying views on a specific world history occurrence may be held by various involved agents in a past event but they also may be held by contemporary historians studying the same historical circumstance. Once students master this cognitive competence, they can see a much more nuanced view of past human behavior. There is transfer value for this technique in that the application of this skill by adults to controversial contemporary issues will assist them in understanding the relationship between sub-cultural values and political positions.

One of the truly interesting aspects of studying world history is the recognition that *events can be linked across time and place*. For example, an event that occurred in Central Asia in the 13th century CE could have some influence on an African event from the 14th century CE. A clear example of this phenomenon is the Counter Reformation in Western Europe during the 16th century CE leading to the creation of the Jesuits in 1534 CE and the missionary work of the Society of Jesus in China during the mid-17th century CE. Educators must be careful in cultivating this competence because it could lead students believing

in monocausality. Consequently, these relationships between events should be framed by the phrase “event A had partial influence on event B”. The transfer value of this thinking technique is obvious in terms of adults understanding current events. For instance, if a person knows that Sevastopol in the Crimea became the base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in 1783 CE then the seizure of Crimea from Ukraine by Russia in 2014 CE makes sense in its historical context.

The final cognitive skill to be addressed in this article is *comparative world history*. This type of thinking has been a core aspect of the “new world history” movement since the 1980’s CE and one can access seminal writing of this nature in the scholarship of Philip Curtin.² Local agency can really be studied well through this technique. If students focus on the contemporary indigenous responses to the same cross-regional process in two very different parts of the world, they will develop a clear picture of the complexity in the human narrative. For example, there certainly are similarities in the Filipino response to Spanish long-distance trade in 1571 CE and the Chinese reaction to the Portuguese commercial enterprise in Macao of 1557 CE. However, the local agency of the 16th century CE Filipinos and Chinese respectively in the face of Iberian economic trade activities in their region will be accurately identified through an emphasis on the different responses of the two Asian groups.

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NOTES

¹ Alyssa J. Sperry, “Eating Jamaica: How Food is Used as a Tool to Create and Reinforce Cultural Identity,” *World History Connected* 18, no.1 (February 2021), https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiillinois.edu/18.1/pdfs/06_WHC_18_1_Sperry.pdf. Alyssa J. Sperry received her master’s degree from the Department of Global Studies at the University of Oregon. Her research interests include food studies, identity formation, the African diaspora, Jamaican culture, cultural belonging, gendering of food, sexuality, and women studies. Ms. Sperry has received numerous awards and grants for her research and gave the plenary speech at the Second International Congress on the Anthropology of Salt, Los Cabos, Mexico. Alyssa is also a contributor to Ashley Dumas and Paul Eubanks, eds., *Salt in Eastern North America and the Caribbean* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2021) and Candice Goucher, ed., *Women Who Changed the World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2021). She can be contacted at sperry.a@outlook.com.

² For a precise definition of this process, see Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), ix.