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**Pedagogy of Teaching History:  
Comparing the Chronologic and Thematic Approaches**

By  
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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for Graduation from the  
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## Introduction

In *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, a monotone history teacher lectures in a room full of adolescents who show no interest at all in the topic. Unfortunately this is not an isolated instance of teaching history. History teachers are plagued with the stereotype of being dry and boring. While other contents adjust to accommodate students, the majority history tends to be taught in the typical fashion (Laufenberg, 2011, p. 1). A teacher lectures and students absorb information by taking notes. If students are really "lucky" there will be a break from lectures and instead will be able to enjoy a lengthy historical documentary. What can be done to change the ways that history can be taught? Perhaps the approach the teacher takes to teaching can impact the way students respond to the content. Classes typically taught with this lecture style tend to teach history as a timeline (Olson-Raymer, 2011). Teachers start with one event or date and move forward throughout history. An alternative approach further examined in this paper is a thematic approach where a teacher instead selects meaningful themes for students to explore in great detail. While other methods exist outside of these two approaches, the traditional chronological approach is contrasted to the thematic approach to determine if there are ways to alleviate the disinterest students have in history. Advantages, disadvantages and sample lesson plans are

used to dissect these approaches to determine their effectiveness for use in the history classroom.

### **Personal interest in the topic**

Since I was a young child I have always wanted to teach. I loved school and found it a very welcoming and great place. When I tell people that I want to teach social studies the first thing many say is “history is so boring.” I am curious to see if one reason history is so boring to people is because it is difficult to find different ways to teach the subject. The majority, if not all, of my history classes have been taught in a format where a timeline was presented at the beginning of the class of what would be covered. The class would then start at the first date and move forward highlighting many historical dates, places and people. I imagine others share this experience. I hope by learning the different approaches to teaching history including the thematic approach, the previously described chronological approach and other methods I may discover in my research process that I can spark an interest in my students that may not exist in the typical format.

This project will also help me determine what approaches I like and dislike when teaching history. I will aim to implement my preferred method when I eventually become a teacher. Another thing I find interesting about this topic and will take into consideration during my research is the phenomenon known as the

apprenticeship of observation. This phenomenon states that students in the field of education tend to hold onto preconceived notions of how to teach based on what they observed as students. I hope that by researching different approaches of teaching history, I can determine for myself what I believe will work best and then implement in my (eventual) classroom to enhance learning and motivation of my students.

### **Literature Review**

Nearly twenty-five years ago, in *The History and Social Science Teacher*, a concern was voiced about the way that history was taught and tested in schools in an article, *The Current State of History Teaching*. “History teachers have for too long been supplying the bricks of history, the ‘facts,’ to their students, but have failed in most cases to have them build any sort of structure with them” (Duthie, 1989, p. 137). This is not just a critique of the methods of teaching history but specifically the chronological approach. History at the high school level is often thought of as boring subject where information is regurgitated during exams (p. 138). The concern Duthie brought up has paved the way for a debate in teaching history determining the merits of using the old method focusing on chronology and the newer method of thematic teaching. Duthie stresses the need for reform of any kind. The teaching of history is difficult to justify. History teachers must now develop a strong reasoning for what is taught in order to prove to the public that it is a subject worthy of being taught. While Duthie backs arguments for

change up with facts, he over emphasizes the role of computers. A computer database of raw historical data, with good cross-referencing, would be of enormous value, giving students rapid access to data on the topics under study. This computer database is an example of how technology could be used to enrich a history course. Despite the stress on technology, many other scholars have expanded Duthie's argument for change.

Another critique of the chronological approach is that it is inadequate in going into depth and instead broadly covers more time periods but only by skimming over vocabulary and events. Robert L. Hampel (1985) spent a year observing history classrooms and noticed this inadequacy in different classrooms.

A significant topic, the Depression received superficial treatment because the teacher settled for magic phrases as complete explanations of a complicated set of issues. The repetition of the talismanic words promoted copying rather than reasoning skills as everyone dutifully filled notebooks (p. 364).

In another classroom, Hampel (1985) observed a teacher who too spent little time going in-depth into events. While observing one teacher for an hour, he watched as the teacher abruptly transitioned between topics quickly. These many transitions did not allow for depth of contents. By rushing through a time period or event, multiple opinions and accounts of an event are not acknowledged or covered. This caused generalizations that stopped rather than encouraged a higher level of learning in the classroom (p. 364). A comparison is

made between teaching history and finding oil in order to show the significance of diving deeper into an event or idea. "Instead of scurrying across a field scooping up handfuls of soil here and there, the successful prospector picks particular spots for deep drillings. Significant events and ideas of the past deserve similarly close inspection" (p. 364). The in-depth component Hampel mentions is often the backbone to supporters of the thematic method of teaching history. While Hampel is quick to bring to light flaws with the way teachers go about teaching history, his solution focuses more on collaboration amongst teachers of all disciplines and not on the actual methods of teaching history.

Rodney M. White (1995) in his article, "How thematic teaching can transform history instruction," both discredits those who believe in the "good ol' days" of the history subject and makes his case for the alternative thematic approach.

History teaching is too often textbook centered, with the teacher's only clear learning aim being to cover a certain amount of content. In fact, covering-the-content is equated with learning. Teachers present material in an encyclopedic fashion, and the student becomes a passive receiver of more information than one could ever hope to receive, analyze, commit to memory, or understand.  
(p. 1)

White does not leave this issue unresolved and instead provides an alternative to this approach. His technique is to eliminate the chronological approach to history curriculums. Thematic instruction allows for understanding by going more in-

depth. Teachers and students are forced to identify the fundamental ideas of a subject. In order to accomplish this the teacher must carefully select important ideas while simultaneously abandoning less important content (p. 1). White then goes on to give tangible examples of a curriculum centered on thematic elements including religion, national identity and diversity. One of the sources White cites in his article is Daniel Roselle.

Specifically in the context of world history, Daniel Roselle examines ways that thematic elements can be applied. Roselle (1992) is highly critical of the way world history is taught.

The course on the history of the world is formed out of an endless flow of time that historians have cut up and labeled dynasties, periods, and ages in an effort to regulate a past that will not be regulated (p. 248).

Roselle also addresses a concern many have with the subject of history, deciphering what is important to cover and what is not. "How can historians, teachers, and students handle the tremendous mass of historical events-lifeless until re-created by selection and organization-that swirl about our heads like leaves in a windstorm? How can we bring order out of chaos?" (p. 249). A solution of this issue focuses on themes that arise throughout history. However, his concept of a world history course might be considered too romanticized in the eyes of administrators. Roselle proposes that the subject of world history focus



on things that mankind for years has shared. This includes art, religion, and the struggle for freedom among other concepts.

In comparison with White's concept of a thematic curriculum, Roselle paints an idealist presentation of world history in the school setting. Roselle does however have a clear justification for moving away from the chronological approach of teaching history. If history is left in an unorganized or disorganized, facts will have less meaning. While the facts exist, out of context they will not be meaningful. While his solution may not be as applicable in a classroom setting, Roselle does an excellent job of defining the reasons for a change in the way history is taught. Others have gone more in-depth off of Roselle's thematic approach and have found ways to make it more applicable in the classroom setting.

It is one thing to say that change is needed in the subject of teaching history and another to do something about that change. That's what teacher Diana Laufenberg (2011) did with her class on American History. Instead of examining the vast history of America chronologically, Laufenberg chose a thematic approach to her classroom. "America has never excelled at knowing its own past. As I watched the school days pass, I observed that students participated and engaged, but still did not meaningfully retain the information. Something had to give. I ditched chronological teaching" (p. 1). Part of her

thematic curriculum is students working collaboratively to define definitions of concepts like war. Students begin by defining the word on their own, then pair up with a partner, the partners then become a group and the finally groups work together to find a class definition. Laufenberg is very pleased with the results seen by this change. The final product was not just a definition but students were given a sense of concept. Students created the definition in the process of simultaneously learning. While the success Laufenberg has had may seem like it would translate to all classes an important thing to note is that Laufenberg currently is teaching at the Science Leadership Academy in Philadelphia, PA where modern learning techniques are encouraged. Also her reasons for switching from the chronological technique are not clearly defined thus it is hard to say what issues she faced.

Those who are in support of the thematic approach can often make the debate less about chronological and thematic approaches and more about rote and meaningful learning.

Chronology is the single most important unifying factor of history. As used in this context, the term is intended to mean not lists of meaningless names, dates or events to be memorized, but the study of a framework for the period or subject under consideration in the classroom. (Baker, 1995, p. 26)

Another concern with the chronological approach that those advocating for thematic approaches have is that the chronological approach does not include

critical thinking. Baker (1995), instead argues the opposite of this is true. Studying events or people in isolation does not promote higher level thinking skills. History is more than just random facts and figure but instead is a series of events full of developed characters and transitions. Baker also argues that the chronological approach does indeed have clear learning objectives.

In examining the past and present, students should recognize that events and changes occur in a specific time and place; that historical change has both causes and effects; and that life is bounded by the constraints of place. Throughout this curriculum, the importance of the variables of time and place, when and where, history and geography, is stressed repeatedly (Baker, 1995, p. 25).

Others back up the issues that Baker brings up specifically in Great Britain where many have called a current switch to a thematic method of teaching history into question.

Not everyone is convinced that thematic teaching should replace the chronological model. In Great Britain for example reform has been made to change the way history is taught. Author Brian Viner (2012) wrote an opinion piece for The Guardian making his case for the chronological teaching of history. Viner is the father of two and has recently been concerned with the way that history is taught in the schools. His concerns caused him to phone his son's teacher in order to learn if dates were a focal point of the class.

My son's teacher confirmed that this is broadly true. The teaching of history in British schools is increasingly influenced by US methods of presenting the past thematically rather than chronologically.

Thus pupils might study crime and punishment, or kingship, and dip in and out of different centuries. Consequently, dates lose their value. So 1605, which for me means the Gunpowder Plot, for my son simply means that he is five minutes late for games. (p. 23)

In Viner's opinion, schools in Great Britain are doing a discredit to the students by teaching history by jumping around and only focusing on certain trends and themes. While Viner's article is merely opinion he does provide an interesting thought for those who back the thematic approach as the wave of the future. "But even if we leave out dates, aren't *facts* what history is all about? The rest, as they say, is sociology" (p. 23). Viner is not the only one in Great Britain who believes that history class reforms are depriving students of a history education and replacing it with sociology classes.

Although Brian Viner is quick to point out the issues with the thematic approach of history in English schools, he does not go as far as to suggest a solution. That's where Niall Ferguson, a Harvard professor, intervenes with the hope that schools in England will revert back to a curriculum that emphasizes the chronology.

He argues that there is far too much emphasis on teaching pupils about Nazi Germany and complains that pupils are asked to choose "a smorgasbord of unrelated topics". The form of selection, he adds, 'explains why, when I asked them recently, all three of my children had heard of the Reverend Martin Luther King, but none could tell me anything about Martin Luther.' (Asthana, 2010, p. 1)

While Ferguson certainly has the credentials to argue for a reform of the new thematic approach to history, he has been accused of being too conservative. Professor Colin Jones, president of the Royal Historical Society, approved of Ferguson's ideas including teaching history in lengthy, chronological sections. However, Jones believed that Ferguson's language was condescending and the argument ideological (Asthana, 2010). Ferguson has not been one to shy away from arguing and continues to argue that the history being taught in schools is nothing more than "junk history." Jones also believes that Ferguson's argument is not as fundamentally sound as he believes it is. "It is more ideological than he claims and the danger is it will be taught in a way in which the answer is known in advance and it is 'west is best'" (p. 1). Despite this, Ferguson's beliefs show that the chronologic approach to teaching history won't be replaced by the thematic approach without a fight.

A misconception may arise that the thematic approach represents innovation while the chronological approach represents stagnation. This is not true and those who support the chronological method also recognize the need for reform in the subject. One way that this is accomplished is a technique known as reverse chronology. The reverse chronology approach often includes connecting the past, present and future in unimaginable ways (Misco & Patterson, 2009). The reverse chronological approach involves starting from with

the present and working backwards. Teachers are able to use present life interests, experiences, and imaginations of the students and can use active inquiry strategies to engage students in the reverse chronological approach (Patterson, 2009). The justification for starting with the present and working backwards is to help students make connections to what they are learning. In order for something to have meaning, it must have a relationship to other things. Educator John Dewey (1916) argued that ideas and topics isolated from experience do not lead to real thinking. Reverse chronology has an advantage over the traditional chronological approach because by working backwards the applicableness to students is more readily visible than working from a distant date.

Despite the innovation of reverse chronology, it has not had the warmest reception in the classroom by administrators. A Lincoln, Nebraska teacher, Michael Baker was fired from his job as a high school teacher for showing a controversial film, Baghdad E.R. In an article explaining his termination, another event was uncovered. "Baker has clashed with administrators before. In 2005, they objected to his innovative approach to teaching history, which was to start at the present and work backwards, an approach he'd been using for four years" (Drum, 2007, pg, 1). While the details of Baker's content and lesson plans are not

available this lesson shows an unfortunate aspect of thinking creatively in the classroom.

The school's consultant said it was 'not logical, does not contribute to effective teaching or monitoring of progress, and puts students at a disadvantage' with newly instituted statewide tests, according to a paper on the subject by Professor Nancy Patterson of Bowling Green. Baker appealed but lost, and was eventually 'prohibited from teaching U.S. history,' Patterson writes. (Drum, 2007, pg. 1)

The paper Baker used in his appeal is the very paper that was examined in the prior paragraph. While innovation and new approaches should be examined, the story of Baker serves as an example. Even sound research has limitations in the public school setting. Baker was limited in his scope of how he could present history. In contrast, some teachers enjoy more freedom in developing curriculum.

Christopher S. Wilson is a professor at Izmir University of Economics in Turkey. At a guest lecture in the Universidad Francisco Marroquín a college in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The title of Wilson's lecture was *Chronological vs. Thematic Methods of Teaching History and Theory*. Wilson teaches a class on the introduction of art and design. Traditionally architecture history, design history and art history seem to start at some origin of prehistoric time (Wilson, 2008). Wilson believed that when he taught chronologically, he was merely skimming the surface and not adding much depth for his students. Wilson combated this dilemma by switching his method to a thematic method. His first lesson focused

on composition, which included symmetry, balance, harmony and horizontal and vertical lines. The majority of Wilson's outline focused on outlining lesson for lesson his art history class but he did mention a different technique for evaluating students. Wilson included four components for his tests including reading, compare and contrast, terminology and drawing. This allowed students to find a have multiple styles testing their knowledge. While this is a nice sentiment, this section of the video was labeled under aspects of student evaluation. The hope was that this would be students' feedback of the thematic approach.

Unfortunately, throughout the lecture Wilson spent very little time outside of his introductory justification for the switch to thematic teaching. Wilson's switch shows that this issue can be seen in nonconventional history classes including art history.

### **Advantages of chronological approaches**

The chronological approach includes several advantages. One of these advantages is the fact that the framework of a unit or term is already in place. Oregon Social Sciences Academic Content Standards state that 8<sup>th</sup> grade covers U.S History from 1765 to Reconstruction (*Oregon Department of Education*, 2011). For an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher it would make sense to begin the class by starting with events in 1765. Ideally the teacher would cover topics of significance all the way up to Reconstruction. When the chronologic approach is applied the class



becomes very linear. Another advantage of the chronological approach is that transitions are smooth from unit to unit. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher could divide the class into the following units:

**Unit 1: The Native Americans**

8.24. Compare fictional portrayals of a time, place, or character to historical or other non-fictional sources relating to the same period.

**Unit 2: European Exploration and Settlement**

8.8. Evaluate information from a variety of sources and perspectives.

**Unit 3: The English Colonies in America**

8.16. Compare and contrast how European governments and the United States government interacted with Native American peoples.

**Unit 4: Life in the Colonies**

8.11. Identify and describe patterns and networks of economic interdependence, migration, and settlement.

**Unit 5: Tensions in the Colonies**

8.22. Distinguish among tariffs, quotas, and government policies as means to regulate trade.

**Unit 6: The Declaration of Independence**

8.21. Analyze important political and ethical values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the

Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

**Unit 7: The American Revolution**

8.5. Analyze the causes as outlined in the Declaration of Independence, and examine the major American and British leaders, key events, international support, and consequences of (e.g., Articles of Confederation, changes in trade relationships, achievement of independence by the United States) the American Revolution.

**Unit 8: Creating the Constitution**

8.15. Contrast the impact of the Articles of Confederation as a form of government to the U.S. Constitution.

**Unit 9: The Bill of Rights**

8.18. Examine and analyze important United States documents, including (but not limited to) the Constitution, Bill of Rights, 13th-15th Amendments.

8.20. Analyze the changing definition of citizenship and the expansion of rights.

**Unit 10:** Political Developments in the Early Republic  
8.17. Examine the development activities of political parties and interest groups and their affect on events, issues, and ideas.

**Unit 11:** Foreign Affairs in the Young Nation

8.28. Investigate a response or solution to an issue or problem and support or oppose, using research.

**Unit 12:** Andrew Jackson

8.1. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of United States history by analyzing examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations.

**Unit 13:** Manifest Destiny and the Growing Nation

8.2. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of United States history, by analyzing key people and constitutional convention, age of Jefferson, industrial revolution, westward expansion, Civil War.

8.3. Examine social, political and economic factors that caused westward expansion from American Revolution through reconstruction.

**Unit 14:** Life in the West

8.27. Examine the various characteristics, causes, and effects of an event, issue, or problem.

**Unit 15:** The Worlds of North and South

8.12. Investigate how differing geographic perspectives apply to issues in U.S. History.

**Unit 16:** African Americans at Mid-Century

8.4. Evaluate the impact of different factors, including gender, age, ethnicity and class on groups and individuals during this time period and the impact these groups and individuals have on events of the time.

**Unit 17:** A Dividing Nation

8.7. Analyze evidence from multiple sources including those with conflicting accounts about specific events in U.S. History.

**Unit 18:** Civil War

8.2. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of United States history, by analyzing key people and constitutional convention, age of Jefferson, industrial revolution, westward expansion, Civil War.

**Unit 19:** The Reconstruction Era

8.3. Examine social, political and economic factors that caused westward expansion from American Revolution through reconstruction.

Each of these units could be taught roughly in a week of teaching. Coincidentally these units are also the chapters of *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism*. Not only do textbooks align congruently with these units but also so do the Oregon Social Sciences Academic Content Standards. In comparison to thematic approaches of teaching history the chronological approach offers more structure with clearer starting and ending points. Despite the many advantages the chronological approach offers there are still many disadvantages.

### **Disadvantages of chronological approaches**

The chronological approach can be found in the majority of history classrooms. Logically it makes sense to teach history with a clear starting and ending point. However, in an attempt to make sure that the end point is met teachers may rush through certain units in order to make it to the end. In a recent presentation to the Social Studies Pedagogy class Andrea Morgan, an overseer of Social Sciences Curriculum, remarked that teachers must avoid “the chronological death march from Pre-Columbus to the present” (Morgan, 2013). While teachers have the best of intentions to cover all material, the present and most recent events inevitably are the events not covered in detail if at all. While it can be seen as an advantage that textbooks often align with the chronological approach this can also be detrimental to the class. With the availability of textbooks the temptation exists for teachers to just “teach to the textbook.”

Instead of preparing elaborate assignments and projects it becomes much easier for teachers to simply assign a section of the textbook to be read by students. These textbooks can also be hurtful when only the typical rote-learning premade tests are used to assess students.

The chronological approach is not exclusively but can be seen as very teacher-focused. There is less work for students to complete when the class is already structured. While students can give opinions and research various events, the fact of the matter is that the class will generally stay on course and not diverge to focus on matters that interest students. The chronological approach can also be limiting when it comes to assignments given. For example, there are only so many topics that students can write papers on focusing on the differences between the North and the South.

### **Advantages of thematic approaches**

One advantage of thematic approaches is the amount of ways that history can be viewed. While the chronological approach can include multiple perspectives, this can limit how far in time a class is able to cover. Themes are broad enough that content could be presented but through non-traditional perspectives. In “Redrawing the Boundaries: A Constructivist Approach to Combating Student Apathy in the Secondary History Classroom,” author Christopher Kaiser argues the need for alternative perspectives to be taken.

In attempting to engage their students, history educators are faced with the unenviable task of making topics such as economic systems, presidential policy, and U.S. foreign relations not only interesting, but relevant to teenagers who often find these topics dry and disconnected from the reality in which they exist. Therefore, the use of student driven, non-traditional historical perspectives is warranted to "hook" apathetic students. (Kaiser, 2010, p. 228)

Kaiser later details an assignment that engages students in both history and subject matters that interested them. This assignment revolves around students choosing a subject of interest to them and examining history through the perspective of their topic of interest. The criteria for this assignment included writing a paper involving major events for their topic, the connection these events share to traditional history and a presentation to the class. When techniques like these are used, history can become less of a dry subject matter and one that is inviting of students many interests. The same time frame was covered using Kaiser's approach but was catered specifically to students' interests.

Another advantage of the thematic approach is that history can become more relevant and accessible to all students. Often students complain about history because they fail to see the relevance to their lives. When teaching thematically, a teacher can cater units of studies to students' particular interests. If students are interested in music, a unit on the changes of music would be

fitting and appropriate for any area of history. -Thematic approach can be student led because student's interests can be used in developing lessons

A final advantage is that the thematic approach is more open-ended. A teacher is not as limited to a certain time period in history. Instead, the teacher has the ability to move around from theme to theme. Theoretically, a teacher could move from one region of the world to another with ease within the same unit or lesson. This would allow students to be exposed to a diverse array of views that could strengthen both their appreciation for history and diversity.

### **Disadvantages of thematic approach**

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching thematically is incorporating the skill of cause and effect. Cause and effect relationships are embedded into a chronologically based class. For example, students studying the American Revolution would learn that a cause of the revolution was the Intolerable Acts and an effect was the creation of the new nation. Cause and effect is an essential topic for students to learn and in a classroom where various themes are covered cause and effect is not as prevalent. While it would still be possible, a teacher would spend a greater deal of time finding ways to include cause and effect in meaningful ways.

The flow from unit to unit can become more difficult when planning a class around themes. Transitions may make less sense than in a typical chronological class where they are outlined by a timeline. More care and consideration are

needed when determining the order of units surround various themes. A teacher considering teaching a thematic based classroom would first have to contemplate what themes are being taught and what order will these themes appear in.

Another consideration for a teacher thinking of implementing a thematic based course would be the amount of research that is necessary for each unit. While a textbook may have some information on themes of music, sports, technology or media in most cases this would not be in-depth enough to teach students. A teacher wanting to teach thematically would need to be aware of the extra time needed to research and create materials for each lesson.

### **Examples of Lesson Plans**

The below lesson plans demonstrate how both a chronological and thematic approach could be used to teach to the same Oregon Social Studies Standard. The standard used for these examples is for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The goal of the standard is that students can evaluate the impact of different factors, including gender, age, ethnicity and class on groups and individuals during this time period and the impact these groups and individuals have on events of the time. The same textbook, *History Alive*, is used for both lessons.

## Chronological Approach

<b>Lesson Title/Description: Reformation during the 1850's</b>		
<b>Lesson #</b>	<b>1 of 1</b>	<b>Time Allotted for this Lesson: 1 day</b>
<b>Goal</b> 8.4. Evaluate the impact of different factors, including gender, age, ethnicity and class on groups and individuals during this time period and the impact these groups and individuals have on events of the time.		<b>Objectives:</b> Students can correctly summarize the issues and outcomes various reformers had in the United States during the 1850's by writing a paragraph with at least 4 correct pieces of information.
<b>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills:</b> Students should be aware of events that led up to the 1850's involving education, slavery, women's rights and jailhouses in the United States.		
<b>How I know the students have this:</b> Prior assessments will determine if students have a grasp of this information. Questions will also be given during the warm-ups to assess how much students are aware of what these four aspects were like in the United States leading up to the 1850's.		
<b>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation: (Describe how you will distribute and collect them)</b> <i>-History Alive!</i> -Graphic Organizers		
<b>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</b>		<b>Procedure: Students Do.....</b>
<b>Time</b> 10 Minutes	<b>Motivation/Hook:</b> The teacher will monitor the progress of students answering the prompt. After students have been given enough time to answer the question, the teacher will instruct them to find someone in the class who wrote on something else. Students will teach each other what they knew about	<b>Motivation/Hook:</b> Students will respond to the following prompt on the screen:  Choose one of the four topics listed below. Write a few sentences showing what you know about the topic from what has been covered in class. You may use a textbook but do may only use Chapters 1-17. •Jailhouses •Education



	<p>their chosen topic. This will be repeated until every student has been exposed to all four topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Slavery</li> <li>•Women’s Rights</li> </ul> <p>Students will then follow the teachers’ instructions and share with a partner. This will be repeated until every student has been exposed to all four topics.</p>
5 minutes	<p><b>Teaching (Modeling):</b> The teacher will then guide the students in taking notes on Reformation movements. The teacher will have students fill out a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer will consist of a flow chart. Students will choose one of the four topics. At the top of their chart they will list any prior information they know about the topic. They will then leave the other boxes blank. The teacher will then have students gather with students who chose the same topic. Once in groups students will be instructed to research the topic they chose using the textbook <i>History Alive!</i>.</p>	<p><b>Teaching:</b> Students will fill out a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer will consist of a flow chart. Students will choose one of the four topics. At the top of their chart they will list any prior information they know about the topic. They will then leave the other boxes blank. Students will then gather with students who chose the same topic. Once in groups students will be instructed to research the topic they chose using the textbook <i>History Alive!</i>.</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>Group Application:</b> The teacher will monitor group progress on reading and writing notes on their flow charts.</p>	<p><b>Group Application:</b> Taking turns reading aloud in their groups students will read the corresponding passage on their topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Jailhouses (p. 244)</li> <li>•Education (p. 245)</li> <li>•Slavery (p. 246)</li> </ul>

		<p>•Women’s Rights (p. 248)</p> <p>Students will take notes on their flow charts listing key people and changes to their topic during the 1850’s.</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>Independent Application:</b></p> <p>The teacher will then form new groups. Each group will consist of one member from the previous group. That student will then be responsible for explaining to their group the most important aspects of their topic. Other group members will be responsible for taking notes.</p>	<p><b>Independent Application:</b></p> <p>Students will be assigned to new groups Each group will consist of one member from the previous group. That student will then be responsible for explaining to their group the most important aspects of their topic. Other group members will be responsible for taking notes.</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Closure:</b></p> <p>With the remaining time, the teacher will instruct students to write a new paragraph. This paragraph will be similar to the prompt they answered at the beginning of the class but will instead focus on the topic of reform they just learned about.</p>	<p><b>Closure:</b></p> <p>Students will answer the following question in paragraph form:</p> <p>How did Jailhouses, Education, Slavery or Women’s Rights change during the 1850’s? Be sure to include anything you learned about these changes.</p>
<p><b>Meeting Varying Needs of Students:</b></p> <p><b>Scaffolding for students without pre-requisite knowledge:</b></p> <p>The beginning assignment will provide students with a framework of what the lesson will cover. That way if they were absent or new they would be able to understand the prior information on the topics covered.</p> <p><b>Extension task (include how this will support students):</b></p> <p>For students capable and interested an extension assignment would be provided. The students would be asked to determine how these topics have</p>		

changed between the 1850's and now. Students will be given time at the beginning of the next class period to share their findings with the class.

**Assessment**

**1. Evidence collected during/as a result of this lesson:**

Formative assessment will include students' answers to the first prompt and work during group time.

**2. How are you determining proficiency?**

Proficiency will be determined using a rubric to grade students paragraph responses from the end of the class.

Thematic Approach

<b>Lesson Title/Description: Women in Early America</b>		
<b>Lesson #</b>	<b>1 of 1</b>	<b>Time Allotted for this Lesson: 1 day</b>
<b>Goals (i.e. Oregon social studies standards, NCSS strands)</b> 8.4. Evaluate the impact of different factors, including gender, age, ethnicity and class on groups and individuals during this time period and the impact these groups and individuals have on events of the time.		<b>Objectives:</b> Students can correctly summarize the conditions and lives of women in early America by writing a paragraph with at least 4 correct pieces of information.
<b>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills:</b> Students should have a basic understanding of the various time periods that will be covered during including colonial times, life in the west and Reformation.		
<b>How I know the students have this:</b> Students will demonstrate this pre-requisite knowledge by their prior assessments.		
<b>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation: (Describe how you will distribute and collect them)</b> -History Alive! -Graphic Organizers		
<b>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</b>		<b>Procedure: Students Do.....</b>
<b>Time</b> 10 minutes	<b>Motivation/Hook:</b> The teacher will monitor the progress of students answering the prompt. After students have been given enough time to answer the question, the teacher will instruct them to find someone in the class who wrote on something else. Students will teach each other what they knew about their chosen time period.	<b>Motivation/Hook:</b> Students will respond to the following prompt on the screen:  Choose one of the three time periods listed below. Write a few sentences showing what you know about the time period from what has been covered in class. You may use a textbook. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Colonial times</li> <li>•Life in the west</li> <li>•Reformation</li> </ul>

	This will be repeated until every student has been refreshed on all three time periods.	Students will then follow the teachers' instructions and share with a partner. This will be repeated until every student has been refreshed on all three time periods.
10 minutes	<p><b>Teaching (Modeling):</b> The teacher will show various medias highlighting both the inequality between men and women and strides that have been made towards equality. This will act as a framework for the rest of the lesson. The teacher will have students write a reaction to each media shown. Students will then be granted an opportunity to share their reactions with the class. The teacher will segue this to learn about how women have been treated in the past.</p>	<p><b>Teaching:</b> While the teacher shows various medias highlighting both the inequality between men and women and strides that have been made towards equality students will write a reaction to each media shown. Students will then be granted an opportunity to share their reactions with the class. The teacher will segue this to learn about how women have been treated in the past.</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>Group Application:</b> The teacher will place students into three groups. Each group will be responsible for learning about women in their respected period.</p>	<p><b>Group Application:</b> The teacher will place students into three groups. Each group will be responsible for learning about women in their respected period. This information can be found in <i>History Alive!</i> on the following pages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Colonial (p. 58)</li> <li>•Life in the west (p. 220)</li> <li>•Reformation (p. 248)</li> </ul> <p>Students will take notes listing key information about women during these time periods.</p>

10 minutes	<p><b>Independent Application:</b> The teacher will then form new groups. Each group will consist of one member from the previous group. That student will then be responsible for explaining to their group the most important aspects of their topic. Other group members will be responsible for taking notes.</p>	<p><b>Independent Application:</b> Students will be assigned to new groups Each group will consist of one member from the previous group. That student will then be responsible for explaining to their group the most important aspects of their topic. Other group members will be responsible for taking notes.</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Closure:</b> With the remaining time, the teacher will instruct students to write a new paragraph. This paragraph will be comparing and contrasting women today with women in either colonial times, life in the west or the period of reformation.</p>	<p><b>Closure:</b> Students will write a paragraph on the following prompt.  Compare and contrast the ways that women live today with either colonial times, life in the west or the period of reformation.</p>
<p><b>Meeting Varying Needs of Students:</b>  <b>Scaffolding for students without pre-requisite knowledge:</b>  The beginning assignment will provide students with a framework of what the lesson will cover. That way if they were absent or new they would be able to understand the prior information on the time periods covered.</p> <p><b>Extension task (include how this will support students):</b>  Students who want an extension will have the option of researching a woman in recent times that is considered a role model to young women. The student will then compile a report on why they believe this person is a good role model to young women. The teacher will provide examples as needed.</p>		
<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Evidence</u> collected during/as a result of this lesson:</b> Formative assessment will include students' answers to the first prompt and work during group time.</li> <li><b>How are you determining proficiency?</b></li> </ol>		

Proficiency will be determined using a rubric to grade students paragraph responses from the end of the class.

In both lessons, the same goal was used but the approach changed. The chronologic approach focused on the various groups during a specific period in time. The thematic approach instead focused on women throughout history by having students examine different periods of American women. The comparison of the two shows that there is no one right way to teach history but instead that a teacher can apply either approach to their class and successfully engage students in history.

### **Observations from Student Teaching**

When student teaching I was hopeful I would break the mold and stray away from the typical chronological approach. However, this was impossible to do with my first term. Since I was only responsible for one week of instruction my teacher provided me with the topic she wished to be covered, groups that moved west. I was able to avoid relying solely on lectures (often a disadvantage of the chronological approach) and instead provide multiple ways for the focus to be on the students. While I do not believe that one approach is superior to the other I was dissatisfied that I was unable to experiment with a thematic based approach. I can see the difficulty teachers may have in implementing a thematic based class. For a thematic approach to be most efficient it would need to be implemented

from the beginning of the school year. Not only would the teacher teaching need to be okay with this approach but it would be almost essential for others within the department to be on board with it as well. This is because that collaboration would be greatly hindered if one teacher chose to structure their class thematically and the other chronologically. When I have a classroom of my own I will be left with the choice to break the mold and teach thematically or teach the traditionally taught chronological approach.

### **Conclusion**

Both the thematic approach and chronological approaches have clear advantages and disadvantages. Students would be able to make meaning out of either one of these approaches given a teacher dedicated to making lessons and the content engaging. In most schools and districts a chronological approach will be favored over other methods. While this makes it more challenging to teach a history class through themes I believe it is still possible. Regardless of the approach a teacher takes the most important component of teaching in general is to ensure that it is engaging for students. As a future educator, I am eager to attempt to create if not a curriculum at least a few units of study based off the thematic approach. I hope that by doing this I can engage all students especially those not typically interested in history.



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