

teaching us history thematically

teaching us history thematically offers an innovative approach to understanding the complex narratives of the past by organizing historical content around central themes rather than strictly chronological events. This method enhances students' critical thinking and engagement by connecting disparate events through overarching ideas such as migration, conflict, identity, and innovation. By focusing on themes, educators can present history in a way that highlights cause and effect, patterns, and the human experience across different periods and regions. Teaching US history thematically allows for a more cohesive and meaningful exploration of historical developments, encouraging learners to draw connections and analyze historical significance in depth. This article explores the benefits, strategies, challenges, and best practices associated with teaching US history thematically, providing educators with a comprehensive guide to implementing this pedagogical approach effectively. The following sections will detail the rationale behind thematic teaching, examine practical techniques, and discuss how to assess student learning in this context.

- Benefits of Teaching US History Thematically
- Strategies for Implementing Thematic Approaches
- Common Themes in US History Education
- Challenges and Solutions in Thematic Teaching
- Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Benefits of Teaching US History Thematically

Teaching US history thematically provides several educational advantages that enhance students' comprehension and retention of historical knowledge. This approach shifts the focus from memorizing dates and isolated facts to understanding broader narratives and patterns that define the American experience. By emphasizing themes, students develop critical analytical skills as they explore how various events and figures relate to central ideas. Thematic instruction fosters deeper engagement by making history relevant to contemporary issues and encouraging students to see connections that transcend time periods.

Enhanced Critical Thinking and Understanding

Thematic teaching promotes higher-order thinking skills by requiring students to synthesize information from multiple sources and timeframes. Instead of viewing history as a linear timeline, students analyze themes such as democracy, social justice, and migration, which encourages them to evaluate the causes and consequences of historical events critically. This method helps learners recognize patterns and recurring issues in US history, fostering a more nuanced understanding.

Improved Student Engagement

Connecting historical events through themes makes lessons more relatable and interesting for students. When history is taught thematically, learners can see how past struggles and achievements reflect ongoing societal challenges, increasing their motivation to explore and discuss historical content. This relevance supports active participation and meaningful classroom discussions.

Strategies for Implementing Thematic Approaches

Successfully teaching US history thematically requires deliberate planning and instructional design. Educators must select appropriate themes, design lessons that integrate multiple perspectives, and

use varied resources to support thematic inquiry. Effective strategies include creating essential questions, employing project-based learning, and incorporating primary sources to deepen students' engagement with the themes.

Selecting and Organizing Themes

The first step in thematic instruction is choosing central themes that are broad enough to encompass diverse historical events yet specific enough to guide inquiry. Themes such as migration, industrialization, civil rights, and governance provide a framework for exploring US history comprehensively. Organizing content around these themes allows for flexible pacing and integration of cross-cutting concepts.

Using Essential Questions

Essential questions are open-ended prompts that center learning around the theme and encourage exploration. For example, under the theme of migration, an essential question might be, "How has migration shaped American society and identity?" These questions serve as anchors for lessons, driving inquiry and discussion while linking content to the broader theme.

Incorporating Primary Sources and Project-Based Learning

Primary sources such as letters, speeches, photographs, and artifacts provide authentic insights that enrich thematic lessons. Integrating these materials supports critical analysis and helps students connect personally with historical experiences. Project-based learning activities, such as creating thematic presentations or research projects, allow students to apply their understanding creatively and collaboratively.

Common Themes in US History Education

Several recurring themes effectively structure the teaching of US history and facilitate comprehensive exploration of the nation's past. These themes highlight critical aspects of American development and provide lenses through which students can analyze historical events and trends.

Migration and Settlement

The theme of migration examines the movement of peoples into and within the United States, exploring how these patterns influenced cultural diversity, economic development, and social change. This theme includes Native American displacement, European colonization, westward expansion, and immigration waves.

Conflict and Revolution

This theme focuses on the various conflicts that have shaped US history, from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War and beyond. It explores causes, impacts, and resolutions of conflicts, emphasizing their role in defining national identity and political structures.

Democracy and Citizenship

Teaching US history thematically through the lens of democracy and citizenship allows students to explore the evolution of political rights, governance, and participation. This theme covers the Constitution, suffrage movements, civil rights struggles, and contemporary debates about citizenship.

Economic Growth and Industrialization

The economic development theme investigates the transformation of the US economy from agrarian to industrial to post-industrial, examining how technological innovation, labor movements, and economic

policies influenced society and class structures.

Social Movements and Reform

This theme highlights efforts to achieve social justice and equality, including abolitionism, women's rights, labor reform, and civil rights movements. It emphasizes the role of activism and legislation in shaping American society.

Challenges and Solutions in Thematic Teaching

While teaching US history thematically offers many benefits, educators may encounter challenges that require thoughtful solutions. These obstacles include curriculum constraints, ensuring chronological understanding, and addressing diverse student needs.

Balancing Chronology with Themes

A common challenge is maintaining students' grasp of historical timelines while focusing on themes. To address this, teachers can integrate chronological frameworks within thematic units, using timelines and chronological summaries to provide context without sacrificing thematic depth.

Curriculum Standards and Testing

State standards and standardized tests often emphasize specific historical facts and dates, which can limit thematic teaching flexibility. Educators can align thematic instruction with standards by mapping themes to required content and preparing students for factual recall alongside thematic analysis.

Differentiating Instruction

Students have varied learning styles and backgrounds, which can affect their engagement with thematic history. Employing diverse instructional methods—such as visual aids, discussions, writing assignments, and hands-on projects—can accommodate different learners and promote equity in understanding.

Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Evaluating student learning in a thematic US history classroom requires approaches that measure both content knowledge and critical thinking. Assessment strategies should align with thematic goals and encourage reflection and synthesis.

Performance-Based Assessments

Projects, presentations, and research papers allow students to demonstrate their understanding of themes through applied learning. These assessments provide opportunities for creativity and deeper analysis beyond traditional testing formats.

Essay and Short-Answer Questions

Essays and short-answer questions can assess students' ability to connect historical events to themes, analyze causes and effects, and articulate complex ideas clearly. These formats support evaluation of critical thinking and historical interpretation skills.

Formative Assessments and Feedback

Ongoing formative assessments such as quizzes, class discussions, and reflective journals help monitor student progress and inform instructional adjustments. Providing timely, constructive feedback

encourages continuous improvement and deeper engagement with thematic content.

- Enhances critical thinking by connecting historical events through central themes
- Increases student engagement by making history relevant and relatable
- Facilitates deeper understanding of complex social, political, and economic developments
- Supports diverse learning styles through varied instructional strategies
- Aligns with curriculum standards when carefully integrated

Frequently Asked Questions

What does teaching US history thematically involve?

Teaching US history thematically involves organizing lessons around central themes or big ideas, such as migration, conflict, or democracy, rather than strictly following a chronological timeline. This approach helps students make connections across different historical periods and understand broader patterns.

Why is a thematic approach beneficial in teaching US history?

A thematic approach is beneficial because it encourages critical thinking, helps students see the relevance of history to contemporary issues, and allows for deeper exploration of complex topics by linking events and concepts across time.

What are some effective themes to use when teaching US history?

Effective themes include immigration and identity, civil rights and social justice, economic change and industrialization, democracy and governance, and conflict and cooperation. These themes resonate with students and provide a framework for exploring diverse historical experiences.

How can teachers assess student understanding in a thematic US history curriculum?

Teachers can assess understanding through thematic essays, project-based learning, presentations, and discussions that require students to analyze historical events within the context of the chosen themes, demonstrating their ability to connect ideas and think critically.

What challenges might educators face when teaching US history thematically, and how can they overcome them?

Challenges include ensuring comprehensive coverage of essential historical facts, aligning with standardized testing requirements, and creating cohesive lesson plans. Educators can overcome these by carefully selecting themes that encompass key content, integrating standards into thematic units, and using interdisciplinary resources to enrich learning.

Additional Resources

1. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*

Jared Diamond explores the environmental and geographical factors that shaped the modern world. The book examines how societies developed differently across continents due to access to resources, technology, and immunity to diseases. It offers a broad thematic approach to understanding historical progress and inequality.

2. *A People's History of the United States*

Howard Zinn presents American history from the perspective of common people rather than political

leaders. The book highlights struggles of marginalized groups, including workers, women, and racial minorities. It challenges traditional narratives by focusing on social justice and activism throughout U.S. history.

3. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*

Yuval Noah Harari offers a sweeping overview of human history from the emergence of Homo sapiens to the present. The book discusses major themes like cognitive revolution, agricultural development, and the unification of humankind. It provides insights into how shared myths and cooperation have shaped societies.

4. *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Peter Frankopan re-centers world history around the Silk Roads, the ancient trade routes linking East and West. The book emphasizes cultural exchanges, commerce, and the flow of ideas that have influenced civilizations. This thematic approach highlights global interconnectedness over centuries.

5. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*

Jared Diamond investigates why certain societies have collapsed throughout history while others have survived. The book analyzes environmental damage, climate change, and social factors. It serves as a cautionary tale about sustainability and the consequences of human decisions.

6. *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*

Tamim Ansary narrates world history from the perspective of the Islamic world. The book covers the rise and spread of Islam, its cultural and political impact, and interactions with other civilizations. This thematic history broadens understanding by presenting a non-Western viewpoint.

7. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*

Charles C. Mann challenges conventional ideas about pre-Columbian America, revealing complex and advanced indigenous societies. The book explores themes like agriculture, urbanism, and environmental management. It reshapes our understanding of history before European contact.

8. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*

Isabel Wilkerson chronicles the migration of African Americans from the rural South to urban centers in the North and West during the 20th century. The book explores themes of racial injustice, resilience, and transformation in American society. It provides a human-centered narrative of historical change.

9. *Why Nations Go to War*

John G. Stoessinger examines the causes of war through thematic case studies spanning different historical periods and regions. The book discusses political, economic, and psychological factors leading to conflict. It offers insights into the recurring patterns and lessons from history about violence and diplomacy.

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Get started with an innovative approach to teaching history that develops literacy and higher-order thinking skills, connects the past to students' lives, and meets state and national standards (grades 7-12). Now in a second edition, this popular book provides an introductory unit to help teachers build a trustful classroom climate; over 70 primary sources (including a dozen new ones) organized into thematic units structured around an essential question from U.S. history; and a final unit focusing on periodization and chronology. As students analyze carefully excerpted documents, they build an understanding of how diverse historical figures have approached key issues. At the same time, students learn to participate in civic debates and develop their own views on what it means to be a 21st-century American. Each unit connects to current events with dynamic classroom activities that make history come alive. In addition to the documents, this teaching manual provides strategies to assess student learning; mini-lectures designed to introduce documents; activities to help students process, display, and integrate their learning; guidance to help teachers create their own units, and more. Book Features: Addresses the politicization of history head-on with updated material that allows students entry points into the debates swirling around their education. Makes document-based teaching easy with a curated collection of primary sources (speeches by presidents and protesters, Supreme Court cases, political cartoons) excerpted into manageable chunks for students. Challenges the "master narrative" of U.S. history with texts from Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Malcolm X, César Chavez, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, and Judy Heumann. Offers printable copies of the documents included in the book, which can be downloaded at tcpress.com.

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The second edition of this best-selling book offers the tools teachers need to get started with an innovative approach to teaching history, one that develops literacy and higher-order thinking skills, connects the past to students' lives today, and meets state and national standards. The author

provides an introductory unit to build a trustful classroom climate; over 70 primary sources (including a dozen new ones) organized into six thematic units, each structured around an essential question from U.S. history; and a final unit focusing on periodization and chronology. As students analyze carefully excerpted documents--speeches by presidents and protesters, Supreme Court cases, political cartoons--they build an understanding of how diverse historical figures have approached key issues. At the same time, students learn to participate in civic debates and develop their own views on what it means to be a 21st-century American. Each unit connects to current events, and dynamic classroom activities make history come alive. In addition to the documents themselves, this teaching manual provides strategies to assess student learning; mini-lectures designed to introduce documents; activities to help students process, display, and integrate their learning; guidance to help teachers create their own units, and more--

teaching us history thematically: Teaching World History Thematically Rosalie Metro, 2020 This book offers the tools teachers need to get started with a more thoughtful and compelling approach to teaching history, one that develops literacy and higher-order thinking skills, connects the past to students' lives today, and meets social studies 3C standards and most state standards (grades 6-12). The author provides over 90 primary sources organized into seven thematic units, each structured around an essential question from world history. As students analyze carefully excerpted documents--including speeches by queens and rebels, ancient artifacts, and social media posts--they build an understanding of how diverse historical figures have approached key issues. At the same time, students learn to participate in civic debates and develop their own views on what it means to be a 21st-century citizen of the world. Each unit connects to current events with dynamic classroom activities that make history come alive. In addition to the documents themselves, this teaching manual provides strategies to assess student learning; mini-lectures designed to introduce documents; activities and reproducibles to help students process, display, and integrate their learning; guidance to help teachers create their own units; guidelines for respectful student debate and discussion; and more. Book Features: A timely aid for secondary school teachers tasked with meeting standards and other state-level quality requirements. An approach that promotes student engagement and critical thinking to replace or augment a traditional textbook. Challenges to the master narrative of world history from figures like Queen Nzinga and Huda Sha'arawi, as well as traditionally recognized historical figures such as Pericles and Napoleon. Essential questions to help students explore seven of the most important recurring themes in world history. Role-plays and debates to promote interaction among students. Printable copies of the documents included in the book can be downloaded at tcpress.com.

teaching us history thematically: Thematic Teaching of Women's Rights Issues with Social Studies Trade Books Jeremiah Clabough, Natalie Keefer, 2023-09-29 This edited volume presents a distinctive approach for exploring pedagogical frameworks, methods, and strategies for teaching thematically about women's rights using social studies trade books. After an introductory chapter by Jeremiah Clabough that provides a compelling rationale for thematic teaching of women's rights issues and controversial topics, Natalie Keefer and Tori Flint situate the remaining chapters within the context of theory and research on women's rights issues and include a discussion of implications and considerations for the role multiple literacies have in advancing women's rights in North America and beyond. In subsequent chapters, a diverse assemblage of respected scholars within the field of social studies education introduce important women who advanced women's human rights in the United States, paired with a notable trade book about their life, challenges, and achievements. Then, chapter authors describe student-centered pedagogies, with inquiry-based pedagogies aligned with the NCSS C3 Framework, that teachers can implement with upper elementary and middle school students to seamlessly integrate literacy and social studies for the purpose of thematically teaching about women's rights.

teaching us history thematically: Teaching American History in a Global Context Carl J. Guarneri, Jim Davis, 2015-07-17 This comprehensive resource is an invaluable teaching aid for adding a global dimension to students' understanding of American history. It includes a wide range

of materials from scholarly articles and reports to original syllabi and ready-to-use lesson plans to guide teachers in enlarging the frame of introductory American history courses to an international view. The contributors include well-known American history scholars as well as gifted classroom teachers, and the book's emphasis on immigration, race, and gender points to ways for teachers to integrate international and multicultural education, America in the World, and the World in America in their courses. The book also includes a 'Views from Abroad' section that examines problems and strategies for teaching American history to foreign audiences or recent immigrants. A comprehensive, annotated guide directs teachers to additional print and online resources.

teaching us history thematically: Making Citizens Beth C. Rubin, 2012 Can social studies classrooms be effective makers of citizens if much of what occurs in these classrooms does little to prepare young people to participate in the civic and political life of our democracy? *Making Citizens* illustrates how social studies can recapture its civic purpose through an approach that incorporates meaningful civic learning into middle and high school classrooms. The book explains why social studies teachers, particularly those working in diverse and urban areas, should infuse civic education into their teaching, and outlines how this can be done effectively. Directed at both pre-service and in-service social studies teachers and designed for easy integration into social studies methods courses, this book follows students and teachers in social studies classrooms as they experience a new approach to the traditional, history-oriented social studies curriculum, using themes, essential questions, discussion, writing, current events and action research to explore enduring civic questions. Following the experiences of three teachers working at three diverse high schools, Beth C. Rubin considers how social studies classrooms might become places where young people study, ponder, discuss and write about relevant civic questions while they learn history. She draws upon the latest sociocultural theories on youth civic identity development to describe a field-tested approach to civic education that takes into consideration the classroom and curricular constraints faced by new teachers.

teaching us history thematically: Teaching Difficult Histories in Difficult Times Lauren McArthur Harris, Maia Sheppard, Sara A. Levy, 2022 Despite limitations and challenges, teaching about difficult histories is an essential aspect of social studies courses and units across grade levels. This practical resource highlights stories of K-12 practitioners who have critically examined and reflected on their experiences with planning and teaching histories identified as difficult. Featuring the voices of teacher educators, classroom teachers, and museum educators, these stories provide readers with rare examples of how to plan for, teach, and reflect on difficult histories. The book is divided into four main sections: Centering Difficult History Content, Centering Teacher and Student Identities, Centering Local and Contemporary Contexts, and Centering Teacher Decision-making. Key topics include teaching about genocide, slavery, immigration, war, racial violence, and terrorism. This dynamic book highlights the practitioner's perspective to reveal how teachers can and do think critically about their motivations and the methods they use to engage students in rigorous, complex, and appropriate studies of the past. Book Features: Expanded notions of what difficult histories can be and how they can be approached pedagogically. Thoughtful pictures of practice of some of the most complex histories to teach. Stories of K-12 teachers and museum educators with the research of leading scholars in social studies education. Examples from a wide range of educational contexts in the United States and other countries. Resources useful to teachers and teacher educators. Contributors include LaGarrett J. King, Cinthia Salinas, Stephanie van Hover, Amanda Vickery, Sohyun An, H. James (Jim) Garrett, Christopher C. Martell, and Jennifer Hauver.

teaching us history thematically: Education and Power in Contemporary Southeast Asia Azmil Tayeb, Rosalie Metro, Will Brehm, 2023-07-18 This book focuses on education and power in Southeast Asia and analyzes the ways in which education has been instrumentalized by state, non-state, and private actors across this diverse region. The book looks at how countries in Southeast Asia respond to the endogenous and exogenous influences in shaping their education systems. Chapters observe and study the interplay between education and power in Southeast Asia, which offers varying political, social, cultural, religious, and economic diversities. The political

systems in Southeast Asia range from near consolidated democracy in Indonesia to illiberal democracy in Singapore and Thailand to the communist regime in Laos to absolute monarchy in Brunei. Structured in three parts, (i) centralization and decentralization, (ii) privatization and marketization, and (iii) equity and justice, these themes are discussed in single-country and/or multi-country studies in the Southeast Asian region. Bringing together scholars from and focused on Southeast Asia, this book fills a gap in the literature on education in Southeast Asia.

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teaching us history thematically: Detectives in the Shadows Susanna Lee, 2020-08-04 A century of American history reflected in the iconic private eye. Steadfast in fighting crime, but operating outside the police force—and sometimes even the law—is the private detective. Driven by his own moral code, he is a shadowy figure in a trench coat standing on a street corner, his face most likely obscured by a tilted fedora, a lit cigarette dangling from his hand. The hard-boiled detective is known by his dark past, private pain, and powers of deduction. He only asks questions—never answers them. In his stories he is both the main character and the narrator. America has had a love affair with the hard-boiled detective since the 1920s, when Prohibition called into question who really stood on the right and wrong side of the law. And nowhere did this hero shine more than in crime fiction. In *Detectives in the Shadows*, literary and cultural critic Susanna Lee tracks the evolution of this truly American character type—from Race Williams to Philip Marlowe and from Mike Hammer to Jessica Jones. Lee explores how this character type morphs to fit an increasingly troubled world, offering compelling interpretations of *The Wire*, *True Detective*, and *Jessica Jones*. Suddenly, in the present day, the hard-boiled detective wears his—or her—fatigue outwardly, revealing more vulnerability than ever before. But the detective remains resolute in the face of sinister forces, ever the person of honor. For anyone interested in crime fiction and television, or for those wanting to understand America's idolization of the good guy with a gun, *Detectives in the Shadows* is essential reading.

teaching us history thematically: History Class Revisited Jody Passanisi, 2016-04-28 Learn new approaches to teaching history in middle school so students are more engaged in the big ideas and eager to examine the world around them. Co-published by Routledge and MiddleWeb, this practical guide will help you consider the unique needs of middle schoolers, who are in the midst of many social and emotional changes and need to see why the study of history matters to their own lives. Author Jody Passanisi shares helpful strategies and activities to make your social studies class a place where students can relate to the material, connect past history to present events, collaborate with others, think critically about important issues, and take ownership of their learning. Topics include: Reading and analyzing primary and secondary sources for deeper comprehension of historical issues Developing a written argument and defending it with supporting details and cited sources Examining the social context of a historical event and tracing the historical underpinnings of present day issues Using field trips, games, and Project Based Learning to make learning history a

fun and interactive experience Assessing your students' progress using self-reflection, projects, essays, and presentations The appendices offer resources for each of the topics covered in the book as well as reproducible Blackline Masters of the charts and diagrams, which can be photocopied or downloaded from our website (<http://www.routledge.com/products/9781138639713>) for classroom use.

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teaching us history thematically: Doing History Linda S. Levstik, Keith C. Barton, 2022-09-06 Now in its sixth edition, *Doing History* offers a unique perspective on teaching and learning history in the elementary and middle grades. Through case studies of teachers and students in diverse classrooms and from diverse backgrounds, it shows children engaging in authentic historical investigations, often in the context of an integrated social studies curriculum. The book is grounded in the view that children can engage in valid forms of historical inquiry—asking questions, collecting and analyzing evidence, examining the varied perspectives and experiences of people in the past, and creating evidence-based historical accounts and interpretations. Grounded in contemporary sociocultural theory and research, the text features vignettes in each chapter showing communities of teachers and students doing history in environments rich in literature, art, writing, and discussion. The authors explain how these classrooms reflect contemporary principles of teaching and learning, and thus, the descriptions not only provide specific examples of successful activities but also place them in a context that allows teachers to adapt and apply them in a wide range of settings. *Doing History* emphasizes diversity in two ways: Readers encounter students from a variety of backgrounds and see how their diverse experiences can form the foundation for learning, and they also see examples of how teachers can engage students with diverse experiences and perspectives in the past, including those that led to conflict and oppression. The book also discusses principles for working with English learners and newcomers, and it provides guidance in using multiple forms of assessment to evaluate the specifically historical aspects of children's learning. Updates to this edition include updated historical and instructional examples to ensure currency, new suggestions for children's literature to support good teaching, expanded attention to teaching about oppressed groups in history, and greater attention to when historical perspective taking is and is not appropriate.

teaching us history thematically: Teaching in Themes Deborah Meier, Matthew Knoester, Katherine Clunis D'Andrea, 2015 How do teachers and schools create meaningful learning experiences for students with diverse skills, abilities, and cultures? How can teachers authentically assess the learning of their students and build on their strengths and interests in ways that enrich the larger community? How can schools be turned into places where everyone is learning from each other? These are the big questions that guide the work of teachers at the well-known Mission Hill School in Boston and that are addressed in this book. *Teaching in Themes* will help schools incorporate a whole-school, theme-based curriculum that engages students across grade levels K-8. The authors provide detailed descriptions of four thematic units: What's Baking? Learning Together About Bread and Bakeries; The Impact of Nature and Play; The Struggle for Justice: U.S. History Through the Eyes of African-Americans; and Astronomical Inquiries. Readers will see how teachers and students design "emergent inquiries" within the themes and create artwork, music, presentations, and a variety of hands-on learning experiences that support differentiated instruction across the curriculum. Book Features: Examples of whole-school projects designed to create a deep sense of immersion in a curricular theme and to build a multi-age learning community. Details of how teachers developed rich curriculum tailored to their unique students. The insights of legendary educator Deborah Meier on how whole-school thematic units were used to encourage collaboration among teachers. An afterword by teachers (and film makers) about the thinking behind their work featured in the widely-viewed film series "A Year at Mission Hill." "The schools Deborah Meier

created in New York and Boston are outstanding examples of democratic education in action. I will never forget the first time I visited one of Deborah's schools in East Harlem and saw the joy and curiosity on the faces of children and teachers alike. I took time then to carefully describe the school's practices, including its portfolio-based assessment system, because I believed the word needed to be spread. I still do. Happily, this new book from Deborah and her colleagues at the Mission Hill School adds to the literature on creative and collaborative teaching and on building trusting and powerful learning communities." —Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University "Here is a book that shatters the prevailing definition of a 'good' school as one with high test scores. Teaching in Themes makes clear the often hidden fact that there are many kinds of 'good' schools for children, adults, and a democratic society, past and present. Experienced teachers tell a fascinating story about Boston's Mission Hill School, its goals, curriculum, classroom lessons, and assessments that will knock the socks off many true believers in only one kind of a 'good' school." —Larry Cuban, Professor Emeritus of Education, Stanford University "Real student engagement is not the result of entertaining instruction; it is borne from students being passionate about their own learning—about becoming young experts. This book gives a behind-the-scenes look at Mission Hill, a remarkably successful public school where the quality of student thinking and student work takes precedence over test scores, and where thematic learning builds powerful intellectual bridges within classrooms and across the school." —Ron Berger, chief academic officer, Expeditionary Learning

teaching us history thematically: America Pathways to the Present , 1995

teaching us history thematically: Be the Change Linda Darling-Hammond, Nicole Ramos-Beban, Rebecca Padnos Altamirano, Maria E. Hyler, 2016-01-03 Be the Change tells the remarkable story of an innovative public high school launched by dedicated teachers in East Palo Alto, California, one of a growing number of low-income communities starved of the resources needed to serve its students and schools. Chronicling a rags-to-riches story of how two very different communities came together to change the historical trajectory of educational failure that had robbed so many students of their futures, Be the Change demonstrates how to plant the seeds of new possibilities in its place. The school's unique design, modeled after successful small schools in New York City, offers authentic and engaging instruction in a personalized setting that has allowed students who start off far behind to graduate and go on to college in record numbers. Each chapter examines one of the critical elements the teachers found essential to enable student success: the creation of an academic culture, the development of high standards with high supports, and the process of learning to teach so that students can learn. "A powerful and compelling tale about how educators, parents, and representatives of one of America's most powerful universities came together to create a school that is now a beacon of pride and hope. Their struggle to overcome the obstacles they encountered along the way will inspire others who seek to find ways to use education as a means to break the cycle of poverty and to expand opportunity and justice." —Pedro A. Noguera, distinguished professor of education, Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences, UCLA "This is the story of a little school that could. Could get students to college and beyond, that is. It's filled with evidence, quotes, and anecdotes, but more importantly it demonstrates that will and skill, aligned with vision and values, results in learning environments in which students thrive. While acknowledging the challenges, trials, and tribulations of creating and leading an urban high school, the authors share their success in a passionate and compelling way, inviting others to learn alongside them as they build successful futures for their students." —Douglas Fisher, professor of educational leadership, San Diego State University "With demanding academics, loving support, and genuine affirmation, the staff, parents, community members, and other supporters of EPAA, as well as Stanford faculty and staff, present an encouraging picture of the kind of high school all young people deserve. This kind of success is not easy, but in describing how it can be done, Linda Darling-Hammond and her co-authors have provided a stirring example for all of those interested in equity and hope for our public schools." —Sonia Nieto, professor emerita, Language, Literacy, and Culture, College of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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