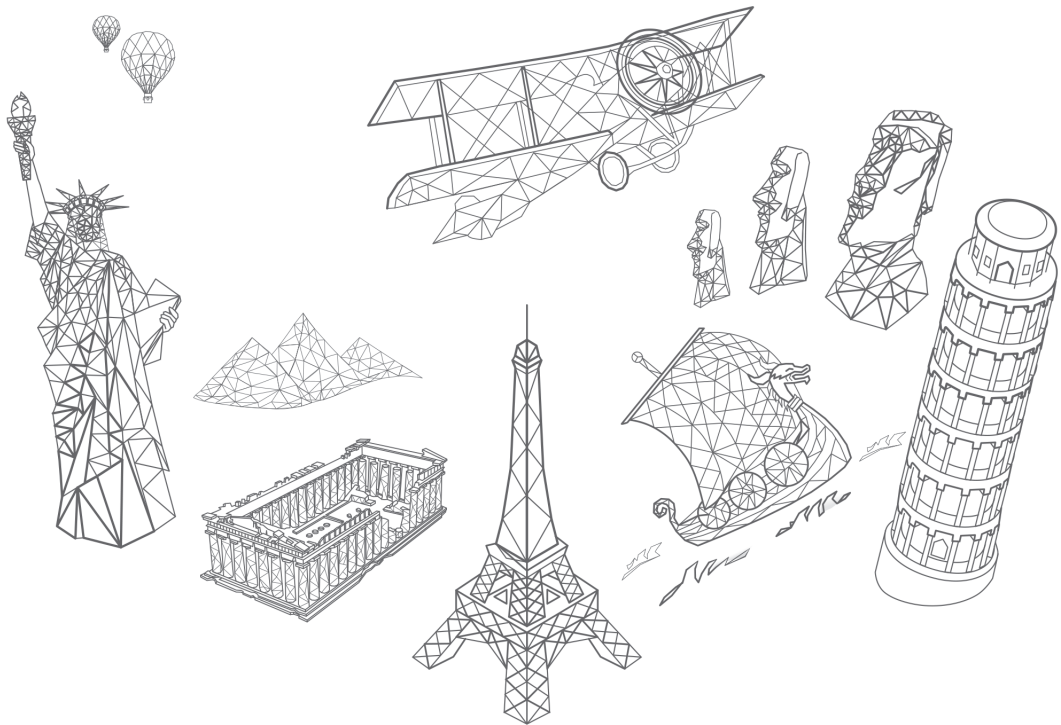# BRING HISTORY & CIVICS TO LIFE

Lessons & Strategies to Cultivate Informed, Empathetic Citizens

Karalee Wong Nakatsuka and Laurel Aguilar-Kirchhoff

International Society for Technology in Education
PORTLAND, OREGON • ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

History teaches students how to write, how to analyze evidence, how to participate as a citizen, and why America is exceptional—for all the good and bad reasons. This book welcomes teachers and educators of all stripes into a vibrant online community, encourages them to embrace history, and shows them how to bring history to life in a fun and engaging way. So many teachers (and citizens!) believe in the power of history but aren't sure how to use it in the classroom. This book is the answer.

–Dr. Lindsay M. Chervinsky, presidential historian
and author of *The Cabinet: George Washington and
the Creation of an American Institution*

This book was a joy to read. You can feel the authors' love of history and passion for student learning jumping off each page. Stories from the classroom (especially the civics example) remind us how important and impactful an engaged and enthusiastic history teacher can be for young people. Many of the lessons—about historical empathy, building community, practicing informed civic engagement—transcend age and grade level. I can't wait to bring some of these principles into my college classroom!

–Jane Hong, Associate Professor of History, Occidental College

Karalee and Laurel pack the pages of this book full of practical strategies, tools to empower, and activities that create community, foster connections, plus build awareness and empathy! *Bring History and Civics to Life* is an incredible book that will help you move from "why" to "how" and see new possibilities to explore history and honor the stories and people that came before—all while teaching best practices to structure and frame conversations, showing you how to guide classroom activities to create safe spaces, and establishing community practices to help facilitate meaningful learning experiences. This is a must-read for every educator on a journey to help students become informed and empathetic citizens.

–Ann Kozma, @annkozma723, Educator Innovation Lead, Flip | Microsoft"

I'm not a techie—which is why I'm so thrilled to see this masterful guide to using tech to enhance civic learning. It's hard to believe that Karalee Wong Nakatsuka was ever a beginner herself, which should give every educator more confidence. As a constitutional scholar, I'm grateful to the authors for helping educators make our nation's history and charters more accessible to all. We need digitally and civically empowered Americans now more than ever!

   –Linda R. Monk, J.D., author of *The Bill of Rights: A User's Guide*

Bring History and Civics to Life is an essential tool for pre-service and in-service teachers, and methods professors. The resources provided in this book demonstrate how teachers can use technology in a civically responsible manner that fosters historical inquiry and community. The ISTE standards are critical to the education courses I teach, especially with the proliferation of online teaching and learning since the COVID-19 pandemic. Karalee Wong Nakatsuka and Laurel Aguilar-Kirchhoff masterfully unpack these standards with reflection, compassion, and encouragement in order to demonstrate how implementing technology can promote critical thinking, historical empathy, civic engagement, and active citizenship.
–Katherine Perrotta, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Middle Grades and
Secondary Education (Social Studies),
Mercer University Tift College of Education

Jam-packed with big ideas and powerful strategies! Using this book as a roadmap doesn't just prepare our learners for future "real world" experiences, it empowers learners to connect to the world now as historians, community builders, and civically engaged leaders. If you are ready to cultivate a community of inquiry focused on nurturing the whole child and developing a historical empathy mindset, this is the book for you. Highly recommend!
   –Lainie Rowell, educator, author, and international consultant
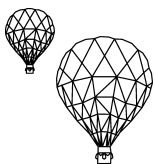
INTRODUCTION

Setting the Stage

Karalee Wong Nakatsuka

Laurel Aguilar-Kirchhoff

Welcome! We're so happy you're here. We had a lot of fun writing this book together during a worldwide pandemic (mainly via Zoom and Google Meet), and we're excited you've decided to join our conversation. Grab your beverage of choice, be it coffee or Diet Coke like Laurel, or green tea or Cherry Coke like Karalee. Pull up a chair and make yourself comfortable. Since you've joined us and picked up our book, we now consider you a friend. You're part of our community, our Professional Learning Network (PLN). So let's get to know each other—we probably have a lot in common.

We, Laurel Aguilar-Kirchhoff and Karalee Wong Nakatsuka, have more than 50 combined years of experience in education, and we both have a lot to say. (Laurel is chuckling now—this is an understatement.) We are both experienced middle school history teachers and history moms, and we love talking history; if you hang out with us long enough, you will inevitably hear us debating about Thomas Jefferson or George Washington. (Now Karalee is chuckling at that one.) We spend a lot of time researching, discussing, and reflecting on edtech, accessibility, community, and civics, then applying our findings and best practices to all our spaces. When we're not in a pandemic, we

enjoy presenting, learning, and interacting with our fellow tech and history friends at conferences and other in-person events. In fact, we first met at a history conference: the California Council for the Social Studies (CCSS). (It's a great story—we'll tell you all about it later in the book.) We can also be found hanging out on Twitter with our history and edtech friends (PLN). Come join us; it is chock-full of social studies teacher fun.

Join a PLN (Professional or Personalized Learning Network): a community that uses social media and technology to collect, communicate, collaborate, create, and connect colleagues (edut.to/3NGtiko)

Join your local and/or national social studies council. Take advantage of their professional development and attend their conferences. This is a great way to learn and improve your teaching practices, as well as to meet and interact with awesome history educators. (If you don't have a local or national social studies council, you can always find fellow history teachers through ISTE communities.) Karalee likes to say that history conferences are like History Teacher Disneyland–the happiest history place on earth!

History-Social Science Twitter has a wonderful online community. History-social science teachers and historians (#TwitterStorians) routinely share and interact with one another. It's a great opportunity to get new ideas, reflect on best practices, ask questions, and learn from each other. Resources and research are shared freely, and there are discussions on a variety of topics. You can start by following Laurel @LucyKirchh and Karalee @HistoryFrog on Twitter! Also, follow the hashtag #ssChat (an open conversation among Twitter social studies educators and a weekly Twitter chat) and see what your fellow history teachers are thinking.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (bit.ly/GilderLehrman) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to K–12 history education. Sign up for free to become an affiliate school and learn about and participate in their many free offers, resources, trainings, webinars, seminars, and more. Gilder Lehrman also hosts an annual National History Teacher of the Year Award (bit.ly/GilderNHTOY). Nominate a deserving colleague.

Take a moment to look at *Time* magazine's September 2021 article "From Teachers to Custodians, Meet the Educators Who Saved A Pandemic School Year" (bit.ly/TimeTeachers) and read the inspiring stories of K–12 educators and staff who went above and beyond to care for their students; you might even see a familiar face featured in one of the stories. Reflect on the lessons we all learned and can continue to apply in our classrooms.

Why History, Civics, and Empathy are Important to Teach (Now More than Ever)

When we first envisioned this book, we imagined it would be about bringing history to life with technology. But we live in a historic moment of our own, and as we worked on the book in 2020 and 2021, the United States was embroiled in an election and political cycle like no other, as well as dealing with the ramifications (both educational and social-emotional) of a worldwide health crisis. As we researched and wrote, reflected and discussed (on the web and in video calls—hooray for technology!), we realized that the core of our book needed to shift so that we could also address history's role in promoting civics and citizenship through educational technology. Throughout history, it's been easy for people to other and dehumanize those who are not like them; we history and civics teachers have the opportunity to change this script and be more inclusive in our

approach. We are passionate about demarginalizing history so that our students will see themselves, as well as others, in the diverse, inclusive, full story of history. In turn, it is our sincere wish that this will empower, inspire, and motivate them to become actively engaged citizens who contribute to all of their communities.

History education, civics education, and educational technology in the classroom are not new concepts. But is there a way for all three to come together to help our students become informed global citizens who participate in civics in a meaningful way? In an *EdTechReview* article, author Ananya Debroy writes, "Due to technology advancement, teachers have . . . options to use digital tools and projects that can connect students to the world in ways that promote a mind-set of taking action and applied learning" (Debroy, 2019). That is where *Bring History and Civics to Life* comes in. This book is designed to help educators from all over the world gain insight into historical empathy, community building, and civics, both in and out of the classroom, and to show how educational technology can bring these concepts to life for students. The ultimate goal is to provide opportunities for students to apply that learning in ways that promote civics and citizenship on a local, national, and global level.

Who Is this Book For?

This book was written for all educators who are passionate about their teaching practices. We want to meet you where you are on your journey. This book is written for all levels of tech savvy—from the beginner to the most advanced. We have designed this book to be user-friendly and accessible. (We'd like to think of ourselves as user-friendly and accessible too!) Our mantra when writing this book was, "Start from where you are and go from there. . . . there is no such thing as perfection in edtech" (Nakatsuka, 2021).

While we, Karalee and Laurel, are both experienced U.S. History teachers, our goal for this book is to be accessible and user-friendly for all content areas in the social sciences and beyond. We encourage you to look at this book through the lens of your content area and make connections

that seem relevant and meaningful to your current teaching assignment. Being a professional educator is a lifelong commitment to learning—both for ourselves as educators and for our students, especially as we find new ways to provide them with accessible, equitable, and meaningful learning. (We're sending you virtual high fives—we're passionate about teaching too, in case you haven't noticed by now.)

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Book Club!
AN EXPERIENCE FROM KARALEE AND LAUREL

June 2020

The conversation was lively. The participants were engaged. It was early Saturday morning, and we enthusiastically participated in our history book club. The hour flew by; as we departed, we said our goodbyes and thanked the hosts and our friends for another thoughtful conversation. No, we weren't in the back room at the local library; we were on social media participating in a #ssChatReads online book club hosted via Twitter. We joined our virtual community of history-social science teachers from many geographic areas, as we sat in our own living rooms, connected to Wi-Fi, chatting through our laptops, all during a pandemic. Technology brought us together in a way that might never have happened in real life (IRL).

One book in particular made a huge impact on us both. For four weeks during the months of June and July 2020, we both woke up bright and early to join our #ssChatReads Twitter book club friends to discuss Erika Lee's *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States*. The book was intense and thought-provoking. And though the topic was heavy, we both enjoyed and actively participated in the Twitter conversation. As we spent time with colleagues, we reflected on how our understanding of the past informs our present realities, our personal identities, and our actions as informed citizens. Technology provided the opportunity for us to connect, build community, and reflect on history's role in our

lives. This type of access to technology will continue to allow us to shape our own approaches to historical perspectives and teaching practices, as well as to continue learning throughout our lives.

IRL (in real life) is an abbreviation to distinguish an interaction that happens in in-person reality, as opposed to a virtual interaction such as online on Twitter and other social platforms or a video chat/meeting through Zoom.

#ssChatReads is an online Twitter book club, held on designated Saturday mornings at 7 a.m. PT | 10 a.m. ET. Participants are invited to follow the schedule, read the book that was selected, and then discuss the book together in a Q&A format via a virtual Twitter chat. You can check out the archive of #ssChatReads discussions here: bit.ly/ssChatReadsArchives. An informative article by Dr. Lindsay M. Chervinsky, historian, podcaster, speaker, and author of *The Cabinet*, explains "Why You Should Participate in an (Online) Book Club" (bit.ly/WhyBookClub).

What's in This Book

This book is meant to provide thought-provoking ideas and resources, as well as relevant places to start or continue in your educational practice. We have divided it into two sections:

- **Part 1: The "Why."** In chapters 1, 2, and 3 we explore the pedagogical and edtech connections to teaching and learning history-social science. You will find plenty of opportunities to reflect on your current educational practices so that you can foster historical inquiry, build community, and help your students connect to civic action.

- **Chapter 1: History**—Why is it important to teach history, and whose history are we teaching? How can educators help their students develop historical empathy?
- **Chapter 2: Community**—What does it mean to "build community"? How can educators create safe, welcoming, and supportive classroom environments? What are some community-building activities and resources?
- **Chapter 3: Civics**—How do we define "citizenship" and "civic education"? How can educators in all content areas incorporate a "civic mindset" into their subject areas? How does digital citizenship fit into all of this?

- **Part 2: The "How."** In chapters 4 and 5 we provide the opportunity for you to apply all you've learned after exploring and processing the "why" in the first few chapters. We will share an abundance of edtech tools with you and the space for you to apply your new insights and understandings as you work toward designing your own lesson.

  - **Chapter 4: Using Edtech for History, Civics, and Community Building**—This is a deeper dive into the world of edtech and history, but fear not! There is something for everyone at every level of edtech expertise.
  - **Chapter 5: Lesson Design and Inspiration**—Here is your opportunity to apply everything you've learned from chapters 1 through 4. We've provided a lesson template along with a sample lesson from both of us to help guide and inspire you as you design your own lesson to bring history and civics to life with edtech. This chapter also contains lesson plan ideas from outstanding, experienced educators from our PLN. We hope these will inspire you and provide ideas for you to apply in your own classroom.
  - **Conclusion: You Can Do This!**—Join our community! Spoiler alert: we tell our story of how we met, how we learned to

incorporate edtech into our own classes, and how you can do the same. (Karalee says it's a good story, you don't want to miss it.)

Each chapter has ideas and suggestions on how to incorporate edtech to help history and civics come to life for your students. You don't have to be an edtech expert to start this journey! You will see sidebars with in-depth information, definitions, and activities that correlate with the research, stories, and practices being discussed. At the end of each chapter, there is a #TryOneNewThingChallenge chart to help promote self-reflection and encourage you to try one new thing at the level that you feel most comfortable with right now. These easy-to-implement ideas will help you make changes for lasting educational impact in your classroom and approaches to teaching.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS BOOK

We encourage you to read and use this book in a way that makes the most sense for you. You can read this book in any order that you wish. If you are new to teaching (or new to teaching in the history-social sciences), we recommend that you read this book in order, from cover to cover; the ideas and concepts build a cohesive picture of how to bring history and civics to life for your students. If you are a veteran teacher with more experience teaching history-social science, you can choose the educational adventure that will be most meaningful for you. You may want to skim the chapters and then return to a particular section that stands out to you. Laurel would start by flipping through the chapters to see all of the bulleted lists, charts, and tables of resources to share. Karalee would head straight to the stories and sidebars, hoping for a laugh and something to apply to her classroom right away. However you decide to read this book, we encourage you to utilize the resources and connections that are provided.

You will see QR codes (quick response codes) and Bitly links sprinkled throughout this book. These provide direct access to the materials and links we share. Some of the QR codes will also connect you to our wonderful companion website BringHistoryToLife.com, where we provide additional resources, expanded information, and so much more.

QR codes are scannable images that can be instantly read with a QR code scanner app or with most smartphone cameras. They can link to online content such as websites and applications. QR codes can be generated for free and are a great way to share content with students (bit.ly/GenerateQRCode).

Bitly is a URL (web address or link) shortener; people can shorten and customize longer links allowing for greater accessibility and the ability to share content more easily. Remember, Bitly links are case sensitive (bitly.com).

We also encourage you to take notes, grab resources, and reflect in a way that will be useful and meaningful for you as you read. Laurel would grab a few packs of her favorite sticky notes (in neon colors, of course) and fill them up with all the ideas and resources that resonate with her to create a visual map of the material to serve as placeholders in the book for her to return to and share with her students. (Karalee is smiling and nodding her head; you should see Laurel's books filled with a collection of colorful sticky notes!) Karalee would create a Wakelet (a digital folder; see the tip in the sidebar), take notes, and grab links to websites and resources that excite her, then promptly share them with her history buddies (sharing is caring). Grab a yellow legal pad, open a Google or Word document, or turn to the next blank sheet in your composition notebook and begin sketchnoting (see tip in the sidebar)—choose what works for you, and let us begin our adventure together.

As you grab resources via the numerous links sprinkled throughout our book, please be aware that bit.lys are case sensitive and must be typed exactly as they appear. You can also grab these wonderful resources with the QR codes provided.

Sketchnoting is a form of note-taking using doodles and text. Sylvia Duckworth offers an abundance of sketchnoting resources and tutorials on her website (bit.ly/SketchNoteClass). You can also check out Nichole Carter's book, *Sketchnoting in the Classroom: A Practical Guide to Deepen Student Learning*, published by ISTE.

Wakelet is a digital curation platform that allows users to collect, curate, and organize digital resources and moreeasily and efficiently. Wakelets can also be used collaboratively for content sharing. Think of it as a shared digital folder–collaborators can access the Wakelet and add content that is accessible to all collaborators. Classrooms on Wakelet allow teachers and students to share resources in a safe way (wakelet.com).

ISTE Standards and Resources

The word "standards" puts some teachers on high alert for a multitude of reasons. In education, you can't get away from the word, which is used in so many ways and so many different contexts. Standards can refer to the quality of teaching, as well as to a concrete list of content area material that must be taught during a school term. While there are definite pros and cons to having defined learning standards for students, the term itself means a level of quality or attainment (Lexico).

In this book we will be utilizing the ISTE Standards for both Students and Educators as our pedagogical basis of understanding and a means to streamline the conversations and resources. This is not to say that other standards or frameworks don't bring meaning to our work in the history-social science classroom. We also acknowledge that there are valuable resources and guidelines that are provided through the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework (C3) (bit.ly/CThreeFramework), in

addition to your own state/local content area standards. (Karalee says it's like CYOA: Choose your own standards/framework adventure! Some standards and frameworks are required—for example, content area standards. Other standards and frameworks may not be required but can help add meaning and guidance to improve our educational practices.)

"But what are the ISTE Standards?" you may be asking yourself. Laurel likes to envision the ISTE Standards as a set of guidelines for solid educational practices that are rooted in research and provide a roadmap for learning, teaching, and coaching with the use of technology. The ISTE Standards were written to "ensure that using technology for learning can create high-impact, sustainable, scalable and equitable learning experiences for all learners" iste.org/iste-standards). They are not a static set of standards; they are reviewed regularly for relevance. You may see updates and iterations of the ISTE Standards over time, but as of the writing of this book they have recently been updated to their most current format.

As you travel down the road of your own educational practices and learning, think of the ISTE Standards as a map, or as signs posted along the side of the roadway of education that help guide you in your practices and provide direction for your teaching and learning. Karalee finds this a comforting and inviting description: she pictures Laurel standing by the side of the road, holding up a sign with the ISTE Standards while she, seated in her car, glances back and forth along the Standards road, using these Standards road signs and her ISTE Standards GPS to successfully navigate along the educational highway.

> The ISTE Standards were written to "ensure that using technology for learning can create high-impact, sustainable, scalable and equitable learning experiences for all learners."

LAUREL'S TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ISTE STANDARDS
When I talk to fellow educators about the ISTE Standards, I begin by

trying to put them at ease. The first thing to know is that these standards are non-evaluative and are not content-based. They are meant to help us in our educational practices. ("Yay! The ISTE Standards are your friend!" says Karalee).

There are five sets of ISTE Standards; they all build and interweave common themes and topics in education, but which one(s) you use are dependent upon your role. The five sets of ISTE Standards are:

- ISTE Standards for Students
- ISTE Standards for Educators
- ISTE Standards for Education Leaders
- ISTE Standards for Coaches
- ISTE Computational Thinking Competencies

I encourage educators to begin with either the Student Standards or Educator Standards, both of which clearly connect to learning and teaching practices. Each broad standard has multiple indicators that provide definitions and clarifications for the standard. These indicators are the heart of the roadmap and keep us driving on the right educational road toward positive student learning outcomes.

You may be asking yourself, "But what do I do with the ISTE Standards?" I often tell educators to start with a single standard and read and reflect on that standard and all its indicators. Your reflection should be focused on what this standard means to you as you design learning opportunities for your students. Where can you identify that you are on the right road? This is an important reflection question for educators because it can show you that much of what you are doing is already in line with great practices and pedagogy. Conversely, where do you find yourself asking questions or digging deeper into your practice? Reflection is not intended to identify what you are doing wrong, but rather to shine a light on opportunities for growth—for ourselves as professionals and educators, as well as for our students. (Karalee says that Laurel's user-friendly guide through the ISTE Standards can also be used with other standards and frameworks as well.)

1. Choose one ISTE Student or Educator Standard.

2. Read the standard and all its indicators.

3. Reflect on your chosen standard.

4. What does this standard mean to you as you reflect on your own education practices?

5. Where can you identify that you are on the right road?

6. Where can you identify that you can make improvements or adjustments as you design learning opportunities for students?

As the two of us set out to write this book, we wanted to make sure our approach was rooted in solid pedagogy and best practices. Throughout the book, we reference both the ISTE Student Standards and the ISTE Educator Standards where they align with the ideas and practices being discussed. As you read, you will see references to the ISTE Standards and indicators as they are applied to the learning. You can also find all the ISTE Standards at iste.org/iste-standards, along with a host of resources to get you started on your ISTE Standards journey. Happy travels!

> Reflection is not intended to identify what you are doing wrong, but rather to shine a light on opportunities for growth—for ourselves as professionals and educators, and for our students.

Our Hope for You

This book is the result of a little bit of courage, a friendship, and two women educators willing to ask tough questions. Our insights, as well as our understanding and application of how to use edtech to bring history

to life, did not form overnight but are the result of a lifelong journey of iterating, collaborating, and innovating; it's a journey that never ends.

Our hope is that this book will help you make connections and discover practical applications of technology that will enable you to make history come alive for your students. It is vital that students connect empathetically with the past, then apply that lens to the present and future, so that they can learn to be informed, critically thinking, and engaged citizens who care to make a difference in the world. Our mission is to help educators and students demarginalize history so that the diverse, inclusive, full story of history can be brought forth. When students can see themselves as part of history, they can be inspired and motivated to become actively engaged as empathetic, informed people who make a difference *in all their spaces*.
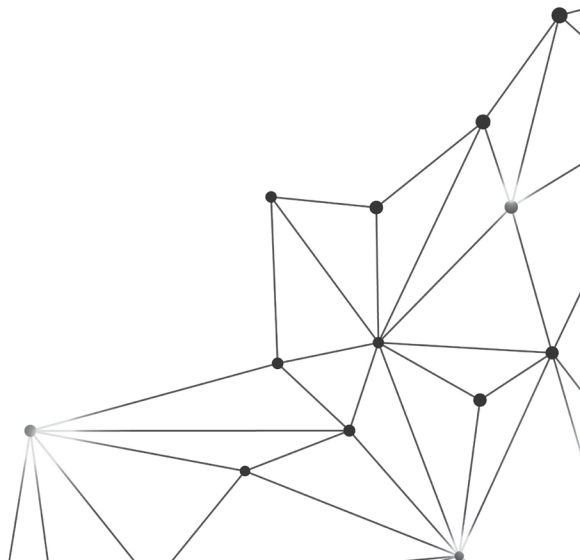
Through this book, we invite you to join our conversation, start from where you are, keep an open mind, and reflect and ask your questions as we embark on this journey together.
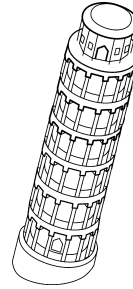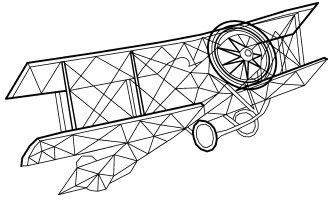
Welcome friends,
Karalee and Laurel
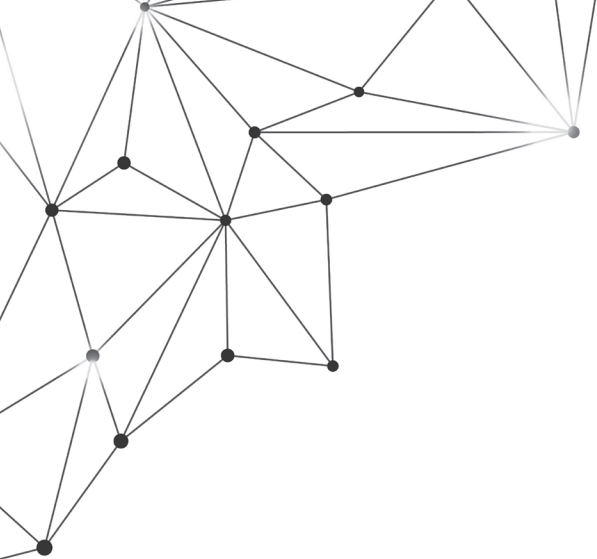
Part 1

The Why

The History Chapter

. . . .

History Is BORING!
POTENTIALS AND POSSIBILITIES:
AN EXPERIENCE FROM LAUREL

"What exactly is history and why would it matter to thirteen-year-olds?" I began pondering this question from the moment I walked into my new classroom. I was a veteran teacher of thirteen years, but I had previously taught physical and life science, not history or social science. I wanted to move to a school closer to home and to my two children's elementary school, but there were no openings for a science teacher. Instead, I was offered a position teaching U.S. history (which I also had a credential to teach). I jumped at the opportunity. So what if I had never taught the subject? How hard could it be to teach history? Teaching was teaching, right? (Are all the history-social science teachers out there laughing out loud right now?) I was handed classroom keys, a pacing guide for the year's curriculum, a teacher's edition of a ten-year-old textbook, the worksheet masters, and a few reams of paper.

I soon realized that even though I had been a teacher for over a decade, I was certainly not ready for this upcoming school year. Fortunately, two creative and engaging U.S. history teachers from my new department, Kristiane and Courtney, took me under their wing and invited me to collaborate and think outside of the pacing guide with them. I quickly learned to approach teaching history skills through creative project-based learning and inquiry. We used formative assessments to monitor student learning and worked together to improve our teaching practices in the areas that would serve our students best: inquiry, research, critical thinking, argumentative writing, and more. My love of teaching history soared and so did my students' interest in the subject. I was able to regain my hope, recognizing the potential and possibilities that history and civic education could provide for my students.

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Why do students say they "don't like history"? Usually, they say it's because history is boring. Who can blame them? Many adults feel the same way when they think back on the history classes they took in school while growing up.

Too often, history has been taught as a list of names, dates, and battles to memorize, or as a celebration of some imaginary glorious past, shining a positive light on only one culture, one state, or one country. And too often, when history is taught this way, students find the subject irrelevant to their lives—and therefore boring. If students don't see themselves as part of the narrative in history or they feel relegated to the literal margins of their textbooks, how can they make connections to civic actions, and how can they make a change in the world? This dysfunctional approach must change; history must be taught in a meaningful way that will provide hope and spark the interest of students, helping them make connections to their learning, as well as to their role as citizens of their school, community, country, and world.

What Is History?

Dictionaries define "history" as a record of events or the chronological study of human affairs, but there is much more to history than a dry recitation of facts.

History attempts to explain the tapestry of life that came before. We are all part of "history." We are creating it simply by being alive and taking actions in our lives. History matters because we're part of a continuum that started long before we were born and will last long after we're dead. It connects us to the people who came before us and to those who will come after us. But who writes the history, and what do they have to gain by perpetuating myths, stories, and legends? Who is included in the history, and whose stories are left out?

The history we teach needs to be more than a collection of stories or myths. We need instead to examine the real people: their times, societies, choices, and actions that not only shaped their own reality but may also have had lasting impacts on the future.

For example, imagine standing on a road built by the Romans in the fourth century BCE. Who were the people who built these roads? Who were their families, and under what conditions did they find themselves in the position to be constructing these roads? Taking it a step further, how did these roads change the way that the Romans interacted with and expanded their empire? The biggest question of all is this: Why do we still care about all this, thousands of years later? Why do we still teach our students about events that are long past and seemingly without connection to life with cell phones, social media, and Wi-Fi? (Don't worry—there are answers to these questions in the next section!)

We can examine the real people: their times, societies, choices, and actions that shaped not only their own reality but may have had lasting impacts on the future.

Why Does Teaching History Matter?

It is often said that we study history so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. But the purpose of history is more than just avoiding negative repetitive outcomes; a rigorous and engaging history education provides the opportunity for our students to become positive contributors toward our future. Instead of concentrating on avoiding the mistakes of the past, we should be asking: How are we teaching and studying history to learn and grow as people, societies, and as an ever-connected world? Our triumphs and tragedies can serve not only as a reminder of where we come from but also as a guide for where we want to go in the future.

While technology skills are crucial for students to survive and thrive in this digital age, historical thinking skills and historical empathy play a vital role in helping students make connections to their learning, as well as to envision their role as a citizen of their school, community, country, and world.

To develop into informed, engaged citizens, students must learn skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and media and technological literacy. The history classroom is uniquely positioned to cultivate those skills because it provides opportunities to:

- promote critical thinking through the study and analysis of primary and secondary sources;
- increase creativity through project based learning and authentic learning opportunities (such as virtual field trips);
- increase communication, helping students to synthesize and express their student voice;
- provide opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate not just with each other, but also through research opportunities (National History Day projects, etc.); and
- supply opportunities for students to examine and evaluate sources to practice media and technological literacy skills.

WHOSE HISTORY?

"History is written by the victors" (unknown) is a well-known quote, and unfortunately, it has also been the predominant way to teach and learn about history. However, this approach doesn't truly represent history, and it shortchanges our students by failing to provide a complete picture of the past, with all its challenges, failures, and complexities. History must be told through the voices and perspectives of all its stakeholders. Students need to see that history happened to people who looked like them and to people who didn't look like them, to real people who disagreed, debated, collaborated, and worked toward creating the world we live in today. History teachers need to convey to their students that history is full of complexities and nuances, since humans are complex beings.

Dr. Joanne Freeman, an award-winning historian, Yale professor, and leading expert on Alexander Hamilton, says, "History is all about contingencies" (Jones, 2019). There are no guarantees of happy endings, that the "good guys" will always win, that democracy will prevail, and that the nation will stand. There was no magical golden age that came before today. History is full of gray, uncertain areas that need to be examined from multiple points of view. "As much as we might like to, we can't assume that all will be fine in the end. . . . The future is always in flux . . . for better or worse, history doesn't stop. And for that very reason, our actions and decisions now—today—matter in ways that we can't begin to fathom" (Freeman, 2020).

It is imperative that we as educators examine our past and discover the roots of who we are as a people, culture, and society. It is necessary to ask ourselves and our students hard questions: Whose stories are currently being told? Whose stories are being left out (deliberately or not)? Who do we collectively want to be? Asking these questions provides the space for meaningful conversations with students to help them understand their place in the world with the hope of making their present reality more closely match aspirational ideals.

> History must be told through the voices
> and perspectives of all its stakeholders.

"History Matters (. . .and so does coffee!)" is a weekly webcast sponsored by the National Council for History Education (NCHE). Every Friday morning, Dr. Joanne Freeman, a professor of history at Yale University, discusses a historical topic, what it reveals, and how it connects to people today. After each conversation, she answers questions from the audience. Come join the conversation, learn, ask questions, and have some history fun. You might even see Karalee chiming in the very active "History Matters" video chat (bit.ly/HistoryMattersAndCoffee)!

HISTORICAL EMPATHY

It is often said that a person needs to understand the past to understand the present, but is that all? What must be done with this understanding? Recognizing where we have come from (as individuals and as a larger society/culture) informs our decisions for today and our perception of possibilities for the future. Educators can foster this process of growth in their students by helping them cultivate historical empathy.

In their article "An Updated Theoretical and Practical Model for Promoting Historical Empathy," Jason Endacott and Sarah Brooks write that historical empathy is a school of thought and/or pedagogical theory to help students look at history through a historical lens of the people and the culture, society, and times that they were living in often through primary sources and contextualization (Endacott & Brooks, 2013).

Students develop historical empathy as they learn the lessons of the past and identify with the real people who made the choices that affect us today. When students can connect the past to the present and have opportunities to apply this empathetic lens to their present world, they learn and practice how to be engaged and informed citizens, both now and in the future.

In "Reflecting the Past, Reflecting the Present: How History is Shaped by Imagination and Perspective," an article published on the

website of Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Ann Hall interviews historians on the purpose of studying history in modern times and writes,

> Despite multiple and sometimes conflicting narratives, scholars who study the past provide a window into how our forebears thought and behaved centuries and millennia ago. Often, they discover that we grapple with the same issues, hold the same viewpoints, make the same jokes. We are studying history, but the history of people. People that were living their lives and didn't know how their story would end. . . . In the end, history becomes less about the impossible task of determining what happened at a particular time and more about understanding the multiple dimensions that have influenced people, and how—and why—they continue to have relevance for us today (Hall, 2017).

Teaching both ancient and more recent history benefits students by establishing a chronological understanding of our world timeline, while also expanding students' understanding of the world, cultures, and societies, as well as the changes that occur as civilizations progress and recede. Historical inquiry and empathy are essential parts of any curriculum that is intended to broaden students' understanding of the current world and to incorporate inclusion and diversity into our teaching (Walther, 2018).

Sometimes the past doesn't seem real or relevant to students' lives. They fail to connect with historical figures who exist only in a painting, a black-and-white photograph, or a paragraph in a textbook. Students need to understand that the past isn't made up of esoteric names and faces and random dates and facts. As educators, we need to guide our students into an understanding that history happened to real people (just like them) and that governmental actions and policies have an impact on people in real ways; the positive or negative results still reverberate and affect our lives today and in the future.

Often, history is taught through the lens of "presentism," which means approaching the past from our current perspective. Collectively, societies tend to view and interpret historical events through their own current experiences and culture. This makes it easy to look back and cast judgment on historical events and people. The outcomes of those past events are now known, as well as the ramifications of decisions that people made. A favorite lesson in U.S. history classes is the Age of Jackson; often students are asked to make the case: "Andrew Jackson: Hero or Villain?" This approach to historical teaching can be a useful and necessary scaffold to introduce students to the complexities of history and historical figures. But while it can help students prepare to enter the world of historical inquiry and empathy, we can't let the lessons and learning stop there. We encourage educators to move past the teaching of a simple good-versus-evil, two-dimensional historical world.

When we embed historical empathy and context within content, students can grasp historical foundations and make connections to their lives today. Teaching with historical empathy requires that educators work with students to understand the perspectives of the people who lived before and to examine the personal experiences of the real people who experienced the past and authored historical documents. By infusing historical learning with inquiry and historical empathy skills, students can make connections that will not only impact their historical understanding of the past but will also broaden their understanding of their place in the world and inform how they can actively participate in their communities.

Students develop historical empathy as they learn the lessons of the past and identify with the real people who made the choices that affect us today.

Learn more about historical empathy by listening to "Historical Empathy, Making It Real for Kids," a *Let's K12 Better* podcast conversation between host Amber Coleman-Mortley, podcaster, former teacher, and civic evangelist, and Dr. Katherine Perrotta, Assistant Professor of Middle Grades and Secondary Education with an emphasis on social studies education at Mercer University's Tift College of Education (bit.ly/LetsK12Empathy).

HEADING DOWN THE ROAD TO BUILDING COMMUNITY

Teaching social studies through the lens of historical empathy may seem like a daunting task, but it is also an exciting opportunity full of potential and possibilities. Before students can authentically connect with the past, teachers need to empathetically connect with them; it all starts with relationships and building community in our classrooms, and we'll talk about that in the next chapter as we head down the road to building community.

Chapter Wrap-Up

#TRYONENEWTHINGCHALLENGE

Getting Started	In the Middle	Deep Dive
Self-Reflection		
Where are you with content? How are you providing opportunities for students to explore and "do history"?	How do you encourage and teach historical empathy with your students? Where are there opportunities for you to expand historical empathy skills with students?	What history, people, and experiences have been relegated to the margins of the content that is being taught? What steps can be taken to make history more inclusive? What voices can be added?
Try One Thing		
Project Based Learning Opportunities	**Explore Historical Empathy Resources**	**Exploring/Attending Content Based Professional Development**
Buck Institute/PBLWorks Resources bit.ly/BuckInst	Elizabeth Jennings Project bit.ly/ ElizabethJenningsProject	Gilder Lehrman Seminar bit.ly/GilderSeminar

Getting Started	In the Middle	Deep Dive
Project Based Learning Opportunities	**Explore Historical Empathy Resources**	**Exploring/Attending Content-Based Professional Development**
National History Day bit.ly/NationalHD	Facing History Resources bit.ly/FacingHistoryResources	Monticello Teacher Institute bit.ly/MonticelloMTI
	New Zealand's History Empathy Resources bit.ly/NewZealandEmpathy	Ford's Theatre bit.ly/FordsTheatreTeachers
		OER Project bit.ly/ResourcesOER
		World History Commons bit.ly/WorldHistoryCommons

ISTE Standards

- **ISTE Student Standard 1.3 Knowledge Constructor:** Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

  - 1.3d: students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.

- **ISTE Student Standard 1.7 Global Collaborator:** Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally.

  - 1.7a: Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.

 Check out more history resources on our companion website (bit.ly/BringHistoryToLifeHistory1).