



AMERICA: THE LAST BEST HOPE

Research-Based Strategies That Guided the Lessons and Project Creations on the Roadmap By Team HOPE (History Opens Eyes)

It is our desire to share the concepts and developmental strategies we used in creating these lessons with teachers using these materials. As [Milken Educators](#), we like most concerned practicing professionals, are keenly aware of the latest and most reliable research on instruction and student learning. We have used these models in the design process for the lessons and activities included in the Roadmap to *America: The Last Best Hope*. These lessons and projects fit within widely accepted research-based models of classroom instruction that provide the greatest amount of student achievement.

We reference [Robert Marzano](#), Senior Scholar at [McCREL](#) (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning), a leading research institution. Marzano's work has been published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), a highly respected professional education organization. Marzano has researched multiple teaching strategies and techniques, finding the [nine essential instructional strategies](#) that produce the most student learning in any content area. Many practicing educators believe that these nine essential strategies should be used by teachers in the classroom. Listed by name these nine strategies are:

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Nonlinguistic representations
6. Cooperative learning
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Cues, questions, and advance organizers

If you are not familiar with the in-depth descriptors of these strategies, offered by Marzano in his book, [Classroom Instruction That Works](#), we encourage you to examine them carefully to enhance the many skills associated with your teaching practice.

Our lessons, skill development activities, projects, mnemonics, plays, debates and more have been developed with the above strategies in mind. In other words, teachers can apply their knowledge of Marzano's nine essential strategies by embedding our activities into lessons focused upon one or multiple essential strategies at a time. Those familiar with the applications Marzano suggests for each of the essential strategies, will



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probably soon acknowledge how our content designs and activities can be used for gaining the greatest possible student achievement in American history.

Having pointed out these essential strategies for student learning, we do not mean to suggest that teachers or schools in general should begin by simply selecting some strategies and teaching them to students. Knowing what teachers want students to learn and intentionally organizing such patterns is crucial to student achievement success. We are also keenly aware of the work of **Grant Wiggins** and his book published by ASCD, [*Understanding by Design*](#). Part of the key concept in his work is “Backward Design,” the practice of looking at the outcomes in order to design curriculum units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction. These are important components for development prior to teaching. Additionally, we have followed the work of [**Heidi Hayes Jacobs**](#) in “Curriculum Mapping,” described in many of her ASCD published books but particularly, from our perspective, in her book *Getting Results from Curriculum Mapping*. The key to Hayes Jacobs’ approach is a procedure for reviewing the operational curriculum as it is entered into an electronic database at any school. Key to the approach is that each teacher enters what is actually taught in real-time during the school year. The entries by teachers are not left alone. Because the work is displayed on internet-based programs, it is open to view by all professionals in a school or district. It is the belief of Team HOPE that we should point these out to you so that it is clear we have taken such research-based practices into account, prior to developing our program. We believe that all schools intending to be “high performing schools” can use our work as a component of the overall set of strategies they will be using for their instructional programming.

Finally, we note the significance of Carol Tomlinson’s work in “[Differentiated Instruction](#).” Tomlinson advocates active planning for student differences in classrooms, to accommodate the range of learners with a vast array of abilities and readiness skills for learning. We realize that few history teachers can teach today with a “one size fits all” strategy. We know that often classroom discussions, projects, and activities have to be broken into different delivery methods so that ALL students learn the desired outcomes. Tomlinson’s approach was a focus while developing our materials for teacher use.

We hope you enjoy the Roadmap and Premium curriculum materials and use them to affect your teaching strategies and increase student achievement. We encourage you to do deeper study into the strategies and models listed above to enhance your teaching skills. If you have any further questions for Team HOPE regarding these research topics, please contact us at contactteamhope@thomasnelson.com. Enjoy *America: The Last Best Hope* and the Roadmap!