

Investigating Historical Skills Through the Lens of Film: A Case Study on Historical Thinking Skills Acquired Through Student-Produced Videos

J. Alex Boggs, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of History at Liberty University

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2753-382X>

Abstract

Communication is a necessary skill for students to develop in the 21st century, particularly with the advancement of new and novel practices of communication, but has not reached broad saturation in core curricula. The history classroom is well-poised as a context to build rich historical skills, digital literacy, and media literacy as part of a broader adoption of video production. This single instrumental case study evaluates the historical skills developed through student-generated video in graduate history classrooms. The theoretical framework includes Cognitive Constructivism (Bruner, 1977), and Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001). Ten participants were recruited from one site across different courses. The findings from interviews, focus groups, journal reflections, and video artifacts included four key themes: framing, evaluation, synthesis, and technical video skills. Participants drew connections between their historical training and implemented it into the design of their videos. They modeled the historical process through the production of the videos. The findings blend findings from historical thinking skills as well as distinct phases of the video production process. Implementation of similar projects in graduate history classrooms could warrant honing of historical skills and development of video production skills. Further research is necessary to understand its impact on primary, secondary, and undergraduate education.

Keywords: student-generated video production, historical thinking skills, media literacy, digital literacy, multimodal composition, semiotics.

Overview

Video is an ever-present medium of communication, which has revolutionized the spread of information in the twenty-first century. Film and the arrangement of images in quick and sequential order have been a communication tool since the late nineteenth century, with the advancement of inventors like the Lumiere brothers (Barnouw, 1993). Movies, videos, and film have changed considerably in terms of production costs, distribution, accessibility of creation, and advancement of filmmaking technology. Video stands as a means of communication that rivals the written word, particularly on internet platforms like YouTube, Twitch, and other social media.

Incorporating video into classroom environments has predominantly been in the form of passive or even active viewing on the part of students. Particularly in the field of history, documentaries have long been a pedagogical tool to support learning and immerse students in other cultures, ideas, and to present them with narrative representations of the past (Husbye & Vander Zanden, 2015). Just viewing videos does not give students adequate skill in communicating through the medium of film (Lam et al, 2021; Snelson, 2018). Further investigations into the world of multimedia composition support initial investigations into the topic of filmmaking in the classroom (Huang & Xia, 2024; Lam et al., 2021; Xia, 2024)

Studies to date on student-generated video in the classroom have been conducted in the sciences and in English (Reyna & Meier, 2018; Snelson, 2018). Scholars have also attempted categorization of filmmaking practices for the classroom by defining taxonomies of video style (Arruabarrena et al., 2021; Xia, 2024). Thus far, limited research has been done on the development of historical skills or video skills through the development of videos in the history classroom. Additionally, there are few studies that tackle multimodal video production within graduate education. History is a discipline that is rich in media literacy skills and it is also features strong storytelling to guide the overall narratives produced from research (Gaddis, 2004; Lukacs, 2011). The goal of this study is to bridge the gap between historical thinking skills and video production to provide a framework to introduce multimodal video as an activity to stimulate historical thinking. Finding alternative avenues to present historical research will retain interest from students, while also providing them opportunities to engage in deeper critical thinking, content acquisition, and digital technical skills.

Theory and Literature:

Two theories guide this research – Cognitive Constructivism and Activity Theory. Cognitive Constructivism is a natural part of the process of developing knowledge, particularly as it has been expressed by Jerome Bruner (1966). For history, the development of knowledge happens in phases both in content acquisition and in the skill

development to further analyze historical content. Cognitive Constructivism consists of the development of new knowledge through the incorporation of existing knowledge into new knowledge (Dewey, 1910; Bruner, 1966, 1977). Bruner describes a spiral method of knowledge construction whereby learners observe a central phenomenon from different angles and repeatedly, as if they were observing it by walking around it down a spiral staircase (Bruner, 1977). In Cognitive Constructivism as a whole, there are representative building blocks of information that form new information, partially described by schema, and further elucidated by the process of discovery (Dewey, 1910; Piaget, 1977). When learners first interact with a topic, it is often clumsy, confused, and ill-defined, but as the process of discovery unfolds, it becomes more defined and clear to the point of abstraction. Bruner (1966, 2006) represents these steps through enactive, iconic, and symbolic expressions. These expressions align with the field of history, a field which Bruner (1977) would label as intuitive, where knowledge is not always constructed evenly and takes several attempts to build fuller pictures of the whole field by several observations of primary and secondary accounts.

Within the classroom, Cognitive Constructivism leverages the malleability of the construction of knowledge into tangible steps for the learner. The learner starts in a context where the problem is ill-defined, but the teacher makes it manageable through scaffolding. Teachers then organize content to reinforce to students, moving them through optimal sequencing of material, then to patterns of reinforcement (Bruner, 1977, 2006). The process by which the learner masters skills and content can be summarized by acquisition, transformation, and evaluation of content (Bruner, 1966; Stapleton & Stefaniak, 2019). In history, these skills are connected through understanding basic concepts, connecting those concepts into causal relationships, and further developing learning through the evaluation of other sources to connect ideas (Bruner, 1966; Monte-Sano, 2016; Stapleton & Stefaniak, 2019). For this study, Cognitive Constructivism guides the discussion of the learning process of video production.

The development of a product also bears with it a context of creation. Where Cognitive Constructivism provides scaffolding for the mental work happening during the process of video production, Activity Theory gives structure to the work of students, but it also exists within a broader context of viewership (Engeström, 1987, 2001). For any learning event, there are tools, subjects, and outcomes for any given activity (Engeström, 1987; Gagne, 1970). Beyond these three central items are the broader social context of division of labor, community, and rules (Engeström, 1987). For students within the context of making a video, they are navigating a world where the rules of the discipline of history and the rules of filmmaking apply an implicit guideline for what is considered good communication. The video is not developed within a backdrop that is just the student alone, but one where the teacher reviews, peers may view, and the knowledge is not always clear. Activity Theory, in the context of this study, provides a framework for the production of videos removed from the learning processes. Working in tandem, Cognitive Constructivism provides a mental framework centering on historical thinking and Activity Theory provides the necessary context of rules and tools for students developing film through the focus on video skills.

Activity Theory: In Context

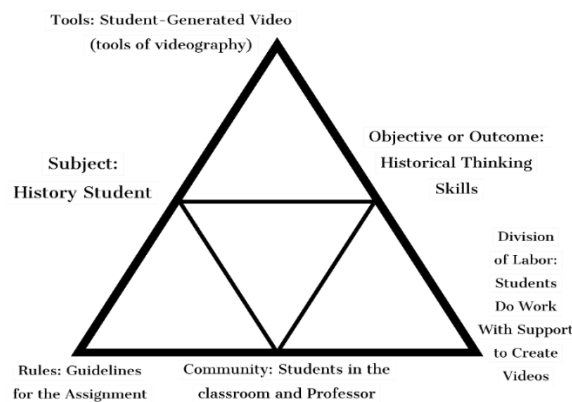


Figure 1.

Note. Model of Activity Theory adapted for use within the construct of this research study. Focuses on splitting out the different areas of the filmmaking process within the scope of Activity Theory. Adapted from Activity Theory Model in Wikimedia, n.d., (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18600235>). Copyright, 2012 by Matt Bury CC BY-SA 3.0.

As this topic combines several fields, digital literacy, historical skills, and video production, it is useful to understand the scope of the field as it stands today. Digital literacy is part of the process by which students demonstrate fluency with media available through the internet. Broadly, it is the manner in which students find, source, evaluate, interpret, consume, and construct digital media (Park et al., 2021). Engaging with different media types, perspectives of authors, or even varied levels of authenticity adds to the overall complexity of developing digital fluency (Jones-Jang et al., 2021). Social media represents a newer context in which students find videos (Masanet et al., 2019; Scolari, 2019). The mediating factor of algorithmic feeds providing users with direct information, vetted or unvetted, can lead to issues with understanding and making meaning of the content that is being consumed. If a person identifies with a figure online, the line between misleading and verified information can be blurred (Huang et al., 2023; Masanet et al., 2019; Scolari, 2019).

To be fully fluent within these media takes time to develop skills of understanding the grammar of the systems, let alone the language that is used (Guzmán-Simón et al., 2017; Karasavvidis, 2019; Nichols & Stornaiuolo, 2019; Tiernan & Farren, 2017). For video specifically, skills include understanding the perspectives of the person speaking, the language of cuts and edits, visual representations, and semiotics, as well as putting these into action in their own constructions (Karasavvidis, 2019; Mengis et al., 2018; Palmgren-Neuvonen & Korkeamaeki, 2015; Rainville & Gordh, 2016; Snelson, 2018). The construction of video material takes more than just the review and consumption of video material, but also includes strictly auditory clips, still photographs, and myriad written materials (Husbye & Vander Zanden, 2015; Park et al., 2021; Xia, 2024).

Digital literacy also includes the skills students need to use information available to them through AI sources. For the subject of video, AI represents a clunky but improving method of conversing through digital media (Orak & Turan, 2024). There are advancements that make AI a powerful tool for video creators, including storyboarding, image generation, and motion control enhancements, but also contain promises that are not fully realized yet (Huang et al., 2023). Tools for video production also contain some issues with privacy and ethics, including deepfakes or misleading videos (Huang et al., 2023). AI literacy currently overlaps the information literacy aspect of digital literacy in the impact it has on students in multimodal compositional contexts (Wu & Zhang, 2025).

This historical field has skills which overlap some of those found in the digital space, but are tuned for analyzing sources from the past. Seixas (2017) identified six key historical skills that students practice within the broader historical field: historical significance, primary source evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective-taking, and moral reasoning. There are key primary source skills that form the core of analysis for students in the history classroom (DIG, 2020; Seixas, 2017). Primary source analysis forms the basis of historical thinking through the skills of sourcing, corroboration, contextualization, and close reading (DIG, 2020; Breakstone et al., 2018). Argumentation is the process by which students formulate or frame their evidence, claims, and warrants (Monte-Sano, 2016). Historical thinking revolves around the concept of meaning-making, where scholars and students must grapple with issues of time, contingency, and scale (Gaddis, 2004; Seixas, 2017). The softer skills of history are less evaluative in nature, but reflect more of the ethical or moral dimension of how learning history impacts students as it is learned (Carr, 1961; Fea, 2013; Seixas, 2017). While not a justification of actions, empathy can be a powerful tool to understand the motivations behind the actions of people in the past (Fea, 2013; Lowenthal, 1987). For the purposes of this study, these historical skills can be simplified to three core areas, framing, evaluation, and synthesis.

Video production includes its own distinct cycles: media review, pre-production, production, and post-production, and distribution (Bowen, 2024; Palmgren-Neuvonen & Korkeamaeki, 2015; Mengis et al., 2018; Snelson, 2018). Pre-production is the planning stage, production is where the director collects or creates the documents, images, or video for the final product, and post-production includes the assembly of the previously collected media (Palmgren-Neuvonen & Korkeamaeki, 2015; Mengis et al. 2018; Snelson, 2018). Pre-production includes prior knowledge of the director, which may involve evaluating or reflecting on how other media or their own media have been shaped in the past. The production of video contains a set of rules that includes video and sound composition, designing the plan to organize and collect media, and storyboarding the final product (Aaltonen, 2017; Choo et al., 2018; Kettle, 2018). There are many representational layers to video production, including semiotics, or the making meaning of symbols or the relationship of juxtaposed clips (Lam et al., 2021; Xia, 2024). The role of semiotics plays a role in guiding the production and post-production phases where directors make meaning from the collected materials. The role of semiotics and post-production extends to how the director envisions the final product and how it is then received by the audience, leading to discrepancies in encoding and decoding of semiotics (Bødker, 2016; Conway, 2017; Hall, 2006). Post-production can include distribution of the final product, but this can also be a distinct phase on its own (Bowen, 2024).

Methods and Design:

This study used a descriptive, instrumental single case study approach to investigate the process by which one site implemented video production in its curriculum (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). The choice of a case study was made because the particular site was unique in its broad incorporation of video production into the curriculum, and it was prudent to investigate the process by which skills were developed. The bounded case for this study was defined as the process of developing historical skills in the context of the graduate history classroom. Case studies allow for flexibility of data collection to deeply investigate process and flow of a particular site and phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The participants were graduate history students who were 18 or older, who attended a medium to large-sized institution of higher education that offers residential and online course programming. Graduate students were chosen because they were better prepared by the nature of their education to describe historical skills developed through the student-generated video process. The researcher has 10 years in history education and practicing videography skills, creating bias in favor of inclusion of video production in the classrooms. Constructivism guides the framework of the philosophical underpinnings of the study.

Prior to the implementation of the full study, a small pilot of the interview and focus group questions was reviewed to ensure they were appropriate for the study. Participants for the pilot were taken from the population for the general study, as well as a peer review of questions. The pilot resulted in updating questions to be clearly understood, as well as a preliminary understanding of potential themes and patterns that emerged in the full study. For the full study, criterion sampling was used to identify appropriate participants for the study, as well as snowball sampling to reach full saturation. Participants were recruited via email based on whether they had taken a course that contained a video as part of the curriculum. This email was sent out on behalf of the researcher, and potential participants could respond to the request. Roughly 70% of participants were recruited through email, with the rest recruited through snowball sampling from the original responders. Social media was used as a recruitment platform, but no participants were recruited from that source. Participants were asked to sign a consent form, complete a 45-60 minute virtual interview, a 60-minute virtual focus group, submit a guided written response via online form, and a digital artifact in the form of a sample video they produced for their coursework, submitted via online form.

The study contained 10 total participants, 7 of whom participated in the focus group due to scheduling conflicts. Saturation was reached after the 8th and 9th interviews and the second focus group as no new codes were developed from those interviews (Saldaña, 2025). One more interview, journal entry, and video was completed to bring the total participant list to 10. No participant data was excluded. Incentive compensation was offered to all potential participants in the form of a \$25 digital gift card. Participants were also given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

The research questions were as follows:

Central Question: How do graduate students describe the development of historical thinking skills through the use of student-generated video in the history classroom?

Sub-question 1: How do graduate students develop the framing skills of historical thinking—historical significance, argumentation, and use of evidence—through student-generated video assessments?

Sub-question 2: How are the primary source evaluation skills—contextualization, corroboration, sourcing, and close reading—developed through the process of graduate students creating their own videos in the history classroom?

Sub-question 3: How do graduate students develop the synthesizing skills of historical thinking—using cause and consequence, continuity and change, and historical perspective-taking—developed through student-generated video in the history classroom?

Results

Data analysis followed the process of case study research and qualitative data coding strategies. Data were analyzed by one researcher, with oversight and audits from the research committee. The researcher was also the key investigator, with review audits coming from colleagues, but no further development of codes and themes from those reviewers. Member checking was completed to verify the themes matched expectations of the participants. The lack of intercoder feedback and discussion was mitigated by design of data collection as well as reflexivity practices found in memos throughout the data collection process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflexive memos were written during each interview and focus group to guide expectations and surprises from the researcher. These moments helped to separate bias in the data analysis phase.

After data were transcribed from interviews and focus groups, cleaned from written prompts, and videos assessed through an observation rubric, a two-cycle coding strategy was followed. Structural coding served as the first cycle approach, whereby a central framework was applied to the data (Saldaña, 2025). Pattern coding was applied

to further strengthen connections in the data during the second cycle coding process (Saldaña, 2025). All data were checked against memos taken by the researcher to ensure triangulation and validity, as well as a further review from colleagues and member checking of themes. Triangulation was also ensured by the variety of data types, interviews, focus groups, journals, and videos. Data types in different media offered all participants alternative ways to communicate and one way to show evidence of their work through the sample video. A rubric was used to cross-reference all video submissions to allow for an equal position to discuss the products. All data were then presented in the linear-analytic model to connect theory, model of research design, and research results (Yin, 2018).

Participants were divided into levels of comfort and experience with video production, six of which were labeled as beginner, three were labeled as intermediate, and one was labeled as advanced. Data collected through interviews, focus groups, journals, and video analysis all converged to develop the themes. The data was used to corroborate themes, as well as a member check of the findings after the results were outlined. The following four themes and their subthemes were the result of the analysis on historical skills development through student-generated video: framing, evaluation, synthesis, and technical video skills.

Table 1: *Research Participants Experience (N = 10)*

Participant	Degree Track	Content Area	Experience Level with Video
Brittany	Master’s	History	Intermediate
Corrine	Ph.D.	History	Intermediate
Fred	Ph.D.	History	Beginner
Jane	Ph.D.	History	Beginner
Jill	Ph.D.	History	Beginner
Liam	Ph.D.	History	Beginner
Megan	Ph.D.	History	Beginner
Michael	Ph.D.	History	Intermediate
Robert	Ph.D.	History	Advanced
Simon	Master’s	History	Beginner

Note. Degree track represents highest degree being pursued at time of study. Experience level was assessed through researcher observation during focus groups and self-reports in interviews. Ph.D. = Doctor of Philosophy.

The first theme, framing, described the process by which participants reported organizing and planning their videos. The participants drew on their previous experience with writing history papers and doing research to frame their videos. Fred, one of the participants, reflected, “To me this [in reference to the video assignments] is no different than writing a paper. I must have an introduction/thesis, a body – supporting evidence, and a conclusion.” Other participants supported and built on this theme by articulating their perspectives on framing their videos in terms of who their audience was for a particular video, as well as the argument behind it. The role of structure to the video, including the centrality of forming historical arguments was clear, from the participant responses. How each participant collected and used evidence varied from topic to topic, with some just pulling books of the shelf and others digging into primary sources and translated material to understand a very niche topic. They used this information to support their arguments, or even to refine it when it was necessary to adjust it.

Several subthemes emerged to support the development of a fuller picture of framing. Historical significance, argumentation, and use of evidence. Historical significance for some participants was guided by the topic for the class to help them elaborate on a topic for their video. For others, historical significance was an opportunity to link general and particular history to tell a local story while connecting broad, sweeping historical events. Arguments were central to the videos for the participants as they allowed them to focus on a central theme and carry it through each element of the video. Rather than just the structure of content or chronology, they used the argument as the central frame on which they built the rest of their film. The participants generally agreed that they had to make decisions on how they used evidence, what was left in or taken out, in order to produce a clear documentary that met the time constraints.

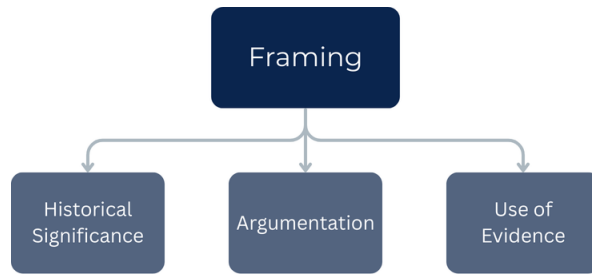


Figure 2.

Note. Image contains a flowchart representing the central theme of framing with its subthemes. Framing consists of the design aspects of a historical film project.

Evaluation was a theme that emerged to describe the process that largely occurred behind the scenes in historical investigation. A lot of the participants described how they would review sources, or even their interviews, within a broader context of the rest of the sources, but that much of the evaluation work rarely makes it on film. From one of the reflective journal entries from Robert, “This type of work required conducting first background research on each individual as well as historical research on their connection we wanted to explore in the film.” To paraphrase from Liam, there’s a lot more room when writing an essay to elaborate on the differences and similarities between sources, where that may not work as well on film.

The participants covered subthemes of evaluation, including contextualization, corroboration, close-reading, sourcing, and primary sources as visual elements. Most of these align with DIG’s (2020) model for analyzing historical thinking skills. Participants discussed the importance of contextualization with any source, as well as corroborating it within the larger pool of information to ensure that the claims could be verified. Sourcing and close reading were important for participants as they allowed them to understand the person behind the source as well as the intent of the author. Some of the considerations of the participants included evaluating the meaning behind words in translations, the location of a site based on conflicting primary records, and how different sources can strengthen arguments by corroborating core claims. Primary sources benefited from becoming tools for inclusion in video, more often than would otherwise be included in most traditional historical research. From Robert’s journal, “Film utilizes multiple mediums to engage the viewer. Oral and visual historical content along with sounds and music create an experience that can captivate a wider audience that may not otherwise engage the same material in written form.” Using multimodal expressions connected ideas to viewers, but also showed the richness of historical analysis.

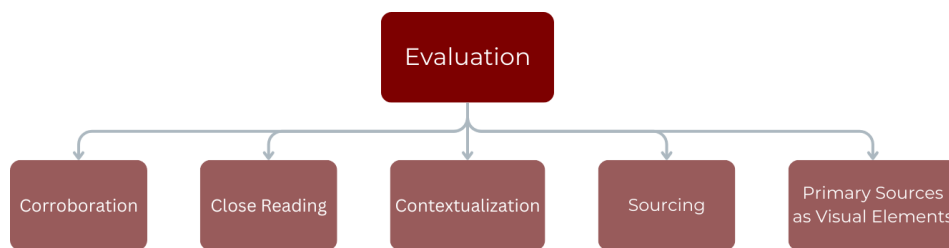


Figure 3.

Note. Image includes a flow chart representing the theme of evaluation with its subthemes. Evaluation represents the analysis phase of historical filmmaking.

Synthesis is a theme that encapsulates the process by which the participants articulated the connections they made in their visual narratives. This was a fascinating theme as it explored the intricacies of not just presenting historical research but connecting and building a narrative to express that research. As Liam wrote in his reflective journal, “The key to organizing video presentations, though, is not the organization itself, but rather how smooth and cogent the transitions are from subtopic to subtopic and point to point.” Michael built on establishing a narrative throughline by discussing the way he constructed the narrative of the story through the stages of the battle as it unfolded. He used the phrase “what happened” as a core organizing framework for discussing the events, to then offer an interpretation of those events through historical scholarship.

The following subthemes emerged to explain synthesis: continuity and change, multiperspectivity, cause and consequence, and bias. The subthemes overlapped with the literature from Seixas (2017) and Monte-Sano (2016) to explain the connective tissue of the work of the historian. Continuity and change were a present discussion as

the concept placed historical investigations in a long chain of history, particularly through Jane’s comment in the interview

To make it relevant like show where the path has intersected with the current times or you know why that something that happened back then why you should study it because it led to one of them that led to another, that led to another, that has shaped our world today.

Causality was at the center of historical discussion as it was the catalyst that changed history, and as Robert emphasized, those are the areas that historians gravitate toward when studying the past. Several participants mentioned multiperspectivity as either a collection of different senses or different perspectives from various sources in the past. When varied perspectives were brought in, the participants discussed the issue of bias and ensuring that both historians remain objective or at least discuss the role of bias in their research, while also accounting for it within the texts and documents they reviewed. Corrine summed up bias by stating in the focus group, “you may have your own views on it, but you do have to acknowledge that there are other views.”

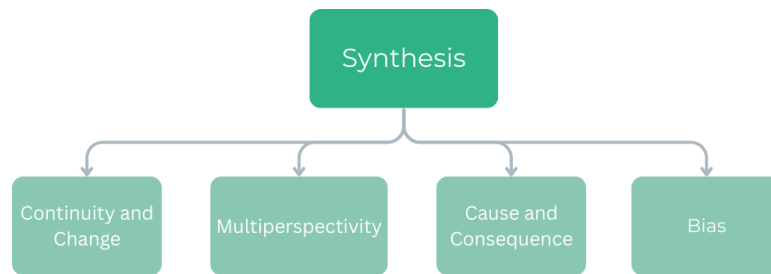


Figure 4.

Note. Image includes a flow chart representing the central theme of synthesis with its subthemes. Synthesis represents the connective elements of drawing a historical film project together.

Beyond the specific historical skills that emerged to align with the video process, there were specific video skills that were recognized by the participants. The theme emerged as a way of highlighting the gap between historical skill and the development of video skills for the students. Many participants learned video skills on their own rather than have a set curriculum to guide them. The participants discussed how the length of the video impacted how they were structuring their ideas as well as how deep they went in the analysis. This was an issue in comparison to writing where much more, according to Jill, “could fit so much more information in a page rather than a timed video presentation. Quality also became a concern for participants as many were novice before making a video for their courses. Some participants focused on self-presentation or the presentation of the talent on screen while others focused on the quality of sources used via green screens. The participants considered how they were communicating their ideas as well as how they were being received. According to Robert,

It’s really just again trying to stick to that outline of how do we want this film, or what do we want this film to achieve? What did we want to portray? How do we want the audience to feel when they’re watching this, and what’s the message or the takeaway that we want them to have?

His line of questioning showed the tension between the content the director has in their head and how it is received by the audience consuming it.

Fear was also an ever-present factor for some of the participants, as many of them navigated video production for the first time. Some of the fear came from presenting on camera for the first time and growing comfortable with it. They also expressed some stress with filming in-office or on-location. The participants noted that the on-location shots were necessary for historical work, but presented challenges with wind, crowds, weather, and lighting inconsistencies. Robert encapsulated some of the issues with using film equipment: “Moreover, because shoots cannot often be repeated, all the necessary film materials must be shot the day of the interview; one cannot go back to add questions, follow-ups, or B-roll material that would enhance the quality of the film.” The stress with working with filmmaking equipment extended to using video editing programs. Jane encapsulated some of the struggle with the equipment by stating that: “editing is tedious and challenging but an essential part of every project.” The consensus among participants was that there are many skills outside of the historical realm that they had to embrace to produce a video that communicated their research.

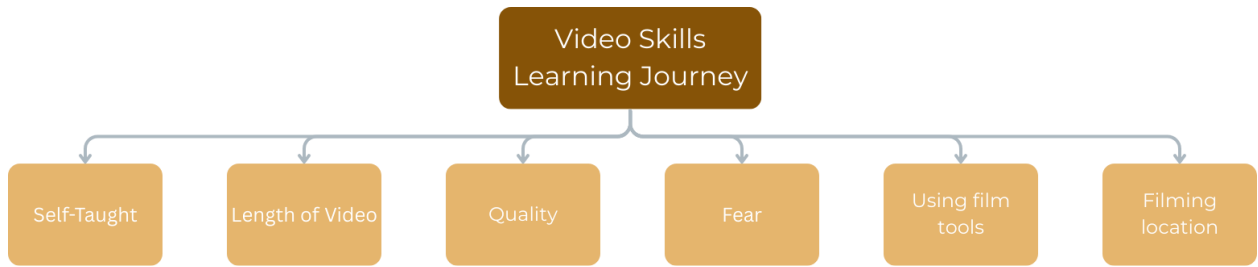


Figure 5.

Note. Image includes a flow chart representing the central theme with subthemes. The theme addresses video skills and challenges from the perspective of students.

While most of the participants noted positive experiences with video, despite frustration, one participant, Jill, was more negative regarding the process. Most of these comments were centered around the structure of the classroom and perceptions that the assignments were easier to grade, which was not related to the topic of the rest of the study. This negative perception, in turn, spilled into frustration with the use of video as an assessment tool. Understanding this negative perspective, coupled with some fear and trepidation about the use of film in the classroom, was useful as a foil to the rest of the themes and data collected.

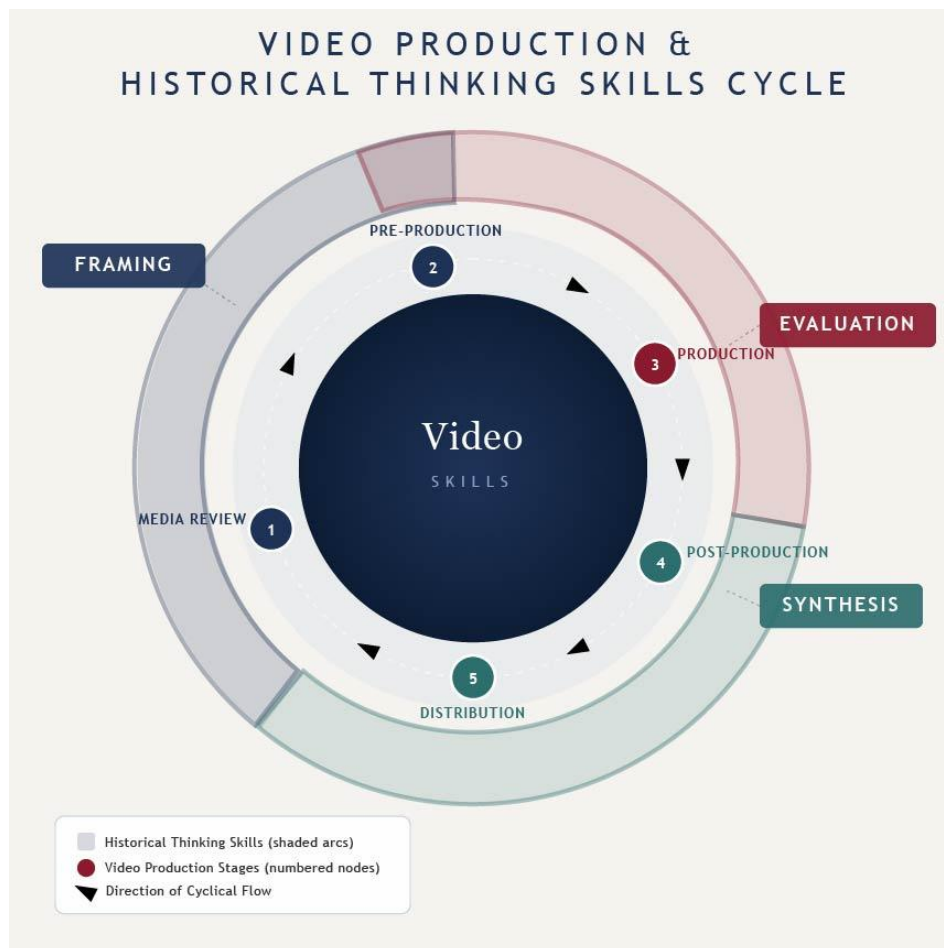


Figure 6.

Note. Image developed to visualize the position of historical skills relative to video skills within the video production process. Developed by author.

Discussion

This study brought together historical thinking and video production to align the cognitive skills of analysis with the technical skills of producing films. The results showed considerable overlap in the development of videos in the classroom, with advanced history students articulating historical skills through the process. It is useful at this point to draw attention back to the video production process, starting with media review, going through pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution (Figure 6). The core themes of this study serve as a

blanketing mechanism to encapsulate these processes and highlight areas of overlap between the work of historical analysis within video production.

Thematically, framing as the first of the broad topics connects across disciplines to establish a more robust framework for understanding and utilizing film as a medium for inquiry (Aaltonen, 2017; Arruabarrena, et al., 2019). Framing includes elements of media literacy to foster a full understanding of the type of media being produced, from documentaries to dramatic works, thereby guiding discussion toward purpose, audience, and argument (Monte-Sano, 2016). By threading the line between media literacy, historical analysis, and pre-production, framing encompasses a broad swath of the planning process of filmmaking (Madariaga et al., 2021; Mengis et al., 2018; Monte-Sano, 2016; Seixas, 2017; Snelson, 2018). The design-centric focus of framing allows for more reflection and inquiry before more work begins. The findings of the study agree with and link disparate aspects of the literature to draw a connection between the historical process of framing research to filmmaking skills involved with pre-production (Aaltonen, 2017; Arruabarrena, et al., 2019; Seixas, 2017; Xia, 2024).

As students continue the cycle of development toward production, they encounter an overlap between framing and evaluation. Where framing serves as a place to plan, ideate, and organize, evaluation serves as a place to parse the data that has been collected and to evaluate it for its purpose within the story (Caulfield & Wineburg, 2023; Jones-Jang et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2021). Students in this phase must evaluate the sources that they have either for authenticity, historical provenance, weight to support claims, or to see how they will fit in the narrative (DIG, 2020). The findings of the study place emphasis on the connections between the evaluative historical skills and the process of production, where directors collect and organize their shots, visuals, and other materials (Madariaga et al., 2021). Participants identify skills in the evaluative phase as either comfortable for most of the historical skills, or confusing if they were on the technical side of video production (Snelson, 2018). This expression from participants aligns with other studies that focus on student experience and some of the reservations they have with using film equipment for the first time (Arruabarrena, et al., 2019; Madariaga et al., 2021).

Rounding the last third of the video production cycle features students engaging in post-production and distributing their films. For historical films, the post-production cycle features connecting sources together to create the argument that was planned in the pre-production stage. Rather than merely design the narrative, synthesis of the materials is where the story takes shape. To do this student assign meaning to texts, clarify it with images, and highlight important arguments with audio clips (Conway, 2017; Hall, 2006; Monte-Sano, 2016; Seixas, 2017). The study builds on video production by adding a layer of historical analysis not readily apparent in the literature (Seixas, 2017). Meaning-making exists as a topic within the broader scope of multimodal design, but this study augments the skill to layer in historical thinking (Aaltonen, 2017; Bowen, 2024; Madariaga et al., 2021). As participants articulated, editing and post-production can pose technical challenges, which aligns with the discussion of literature where students express little prior knowledge of the video editing software or process (Madariaga et al., 2021; Palmgren-Neuvonen & Korkeamäki, 2015).

The findings of the study also add to the literature that filmmaking is an iterative process that continues as students move on. As the spiral curriculum of Bruner (1977) indicates, the more a student engages in a skill or approaches a content area, the more they learn by seeing a different aspect of the subject. Students in video production will finish a project, reflect on its outcome, and start again with another project through this reflection to strengthen video skills (Conway, 2017; Engeström, 2001; Hall, 2006). Similarly with history, seeing the topic from unique angles and through multiple sources allows students to develop more nuanced takes on content-level history (Monte-Sano, 2016; Seixas, 2017). This cyclical nature of filmmaking is not new, nor is the spiral curriculum, but the connection of the domains is not predominantly portrayed in the literature (Snelson, 2018). From a theoretical perspective, the results draw on Cognitive Constructivism to provide a mental framework and on Activity Theory to provide clarity on the importance of the tools, rules, and community in which students develop their final video products. The internal processes, represented by historical thinking skills, and the external processes, represented by the tools and rules of filmmaking, join theory, literature, and findings into one cogent framework for thinking of future applications of student-directed videos in the classroom.

The implications of the study build a framework for policy considerations as well as practice changes or adoption. First, it builds the literature further to connect disparate fields of historical thinking and video production. Connecting the literature to evaluate the design components of video production assessments to build historical skills sets up further study and implementation across various age ranges. For policy consideration, school districts can recommend different modalities, including video production, to teachers. They can also use it to leverage additional funding for equipment for the classrooms. As national organizations evolve, they can be used to leverage recommendations on best practices or policy surrounding safe filmmaking practices with respect to

privacy and protection for students in the K12 environment. Currently, ISTE Standards support the teacher and student in the development of videos as they give students hands-on experience with different modalities for communication, as well as giving them valuable technology training (ISTE, 2024a; ISTE, 2024b).

For practice consideration, there would be additional professional development needed as video production includes some elements of learning the technology to learn with or be a step ahead of the students as they are completing their assignments. Structuring learning for the educators as well as the students would be the first step in providing updates to practice. Teachers would also need to consider their resources before committing to adding to the curriculum. If there are limited resources, then the practical inclusion of video in the classroom may take the form of group work and design rather than full implementation of video. This involves a smaller-scale implementation of the work, without the high cost of technology such as cameras and non-linear editing programs. Additionally, more knowledge about cheap or free resources would be necessary for teachers, as well as a rudimentary knowledge of fair use and copyright laws for the use of primary sources and videos.

This study has lasting implications for educational technology, including promotion of multimodal design within the historical field, where writing has been the sole focus of communication for centuries (Lukacs, 2011). Learning the grammar of filmmaking allows students to broaden their perspectives and deepen their understanding through a multilayered understanding of a topic (Bowen, 2024; Bruner, 1961; Caulfield & Wineburg, 2023; Jones-Jang et al., 2021). Thinking visually, conceptually, and argumentatively provides a complex product that is produced through deep thinking. History as a discipline is often slower to adopt technology, but the use of film allows history students to learn the skills of documentarians in the field to shift the nature of their inquiry beyond what can often be limited to text-based sources (Barnouw, 1993; Bowen, 2024; Lukacs, 2011). Finally, digital and AI literacy are enhanced through engaging with various media to develop interpretations of history (Caulfield & Weinburg, 2023; Monte-Sano, 2016; Xia, 2024). Requiring students to be critical of images, either real or generated, provides an opportunity for students to practice evaluative skills that in turn fuel other skills of development of argument and synthesizing the evidence into clear interpretations (Madariaga et al., 2021; Seixas, 2017; Snelson, 2018; Wu & Zhang, 2025).

Limitations and Delimitations:

This study contained limitations first in timing of the study and then in impact of programmatic change. The study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic when many residential programs were forced online. This impacted some cognates and programs which included on-site video production and travel for history class credit. Because of the pandemic, these programs were shuttered, not to resume after residential courses were offered again. This impacted recruitment, caused delays, and altered the original design of the study to fit a more flexible participant pool.

The study itself was intentionally delimited to include only graduate students of history to ensure that they were able to clearly articulate historical skills within a unique paradigm of video production. Undergraduate programs did not include the breadth of video production expected for students to adopt higher-level reasoning as well as deeper research and scholarship. The definitions of the historical skills and the availability of the population were the largest reason to delimit to just graduate students in history programs. Those who were film majors alone were not considered as they did not have the background of historical skills required to complete the study.

From this research, there are opportunities to extend similar case studies or qualitative studies to the K12 and undergraduate history classrooms. Future studies would focus on historical thinking skills and video production, but change the context to undergraduate, secondary, and primary education. The goal is to understand the perspectives that these students can articulate regarding the varied applications of skills, as well as to see the efficacy of the assessment design on their skill development and critical thinking. Broadly, it is crucial to establish student-generated video within the Historical Assessments of Thinking (Smith et al., 2019). Using the Historical Assessments of Thinking instrument will allow for generalizability about areas that are more or less prevalent.

Conclusion

With shifts in technology making it possible for students to become directors of their own films and with the medium being pervasive for broad communication, it is imperative to position filmmaking within more curricula. History is a discipline that is often reluctant to change its methodology or presentation, yet it is also a field where works of all types – books, podcasts, and videos – are widely accessible to the public beyond the classroom. Engaging with history in ways that access its storytelling aspects and combining that with the medium of filmmaking gives teachers an opportunity to build content-level skills, technical competence, and create artifacts that others in the community can enjoy. This level of hands-on experience is good for students to immerse themselves in the world they are studying, and it has the additional impact of keeping human-centric design when

many other fields face persistent threats from unconstrained AI. History provides the skills necessary to combat some of the ills of AI, while also acknowledging its potential for good. This case study analyzed the process of student-directed filmmaking to build a useful conceptual model based on the theories of Cognitive Constructivism and Activity Theory to structure historical thinking through the rules and tools of videography. Filmmaking in the history classroom thus provides the nexus of learning where students can be challenged pedagogically, rewarded creatively, and leave with a new set of interpretative and communication skills upon completion of a course of study.

Acknowledgements:

This document was constructed as part of the findings of a dissertation study. Dissertation supervisors are acknowledged for their time and guidance of the study. In the final stages of production of this particular article, Artificial Intelligence models were used to provide triangulated feedback to strengthen the writing, but not to generate text for the article. The AI models were used as a preliminary peer-review before submission. The image of themes was refined by AI from a sketch from the author to produce a more legible design without access to more nuanced graphic design software. This chain of development can be provided upon request. There are no known conflicts of interest with the researcher.

References

- Aaltonen, J. (2017). Script as a hypothesis: Scriptwriting for documentary film. *Journal of Screenwriting*, 8(1), 55-65. <https://doi.org/10.1386/josc.8.1.55-1>
- Arruabarrena, R., Sánchez, A., Blanco, J. M., Vadillo, J. A., & Usandizaga, I. (2019). Integration of good practices of active methodologies with the reuse of student-generated content. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0140-7>
- Arruabarrena, R., Sánchez, A., Domínguez, C., & Jaime, A. (2021). A novel taxonomy of student-generated video styles. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 18(1), 68. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00295-6>
- Barnouw, E. (1993). *Documentary: A history of the non-fiction film*. Oxford University Press.
- Bowen, C. (2024). *Grammar of the edit*. Routledge.
- Bødker, H. (2016). Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model and the circulation of journalism in the digital landscape. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 33(5), 409-423.
- Breakstone, J., McGrew, S., Smith, M., Ortega, T., & Wineburg, S. (2018, March). Why we need a new approach to teaching digital literacy: To assess the credibility of the information they find online, students shouldn't start with a close reading of the given website. Rather, they should turn to the power of the web to determine its trustworthiness. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99(6), 27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721718762419>
- Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1977). *The process of education*. Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (2006). *In search of pedagogy, volume I: The selected writings of Jerome Bruner, 1957-1978*. Routledge.
- Carr, E. H. (1961). *What is history?* Random House, Inc.
- Caulfield, M., & Wineburg, S. (2023). *Verified: How to think straight, get duped less, and make better decisions about what to believe online*. University of Chicago Press.
- Choo, Y. B., Abdullah, T., & Nawi, A. M. (2018). Digital storytelling to unlock reflective practice in the classroom. *Asian Social Science*, 14(11), 52. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v14n11p52>
- Conway, K. (2017). Communication is translation, or, how to mind the gap. *Palabra Clave*, 20(3), 622-644. <https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2017.20.3.2>
- Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*. D.C. Heath & Co Publishers.
- Digital Inquiry Group [DIG]. (2020). Historical thinking chart. *Stanford History Education Group*. <https://www.inquirygroup.org/history-lessons/historical-thinking-chart>
- Engeström, Y. (1987). *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*. Orienta-Konsultit Oy.
- Engeström, Y. (2001). Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity-theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), 133-156.
- Fea, J. (2013). *Why study history?: Reflecting on the importance of the past*. Baker Academic.
- Gaddis, J. L. (2004). *Landscape of history: How historians map the past*. Oxford University Press.
- Gagné, R. M. (1970). *The conditions of learning*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Guzmán-Simón, F., García-Jiménez, E., & López-Cobo, I. (2017). Undergraduate students' perspectives on digital competence and academic literacy in a Spanish University. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 196-204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.04.040>

- Hall, S. (2006). Encoding/Decoding. In M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds), *Media and cultural studies* (pp. 164-173). Blackwell Publishing.
- Huang, Q., & Xia, S. (2024). Preparing learners for digitally mediated academic communication: Digital multimodal practice in students' knowledge dissemination videos. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 71, 101429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2024.101429>
- Husbye, N. E., & Vander Zanden, S. (2015). Composing film: Multimodality and production in elementary classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 54(2), 109–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2015.1010840>
- International Society for Technology Education [ISTE]. (2024) ISTE standards: For educators. <https://iste.org/standards/educators>
- International Society for Technology Education [ISTE]. (2024). ISTE standards: For students. <https://iste.org/standards/students>
- Jones-Jang, S. M., Mortensen, T., & Liu, J. (2021). Does media literacy help identification of fake news? Information literacy helps, but other literacies don't. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 65(2), 371–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219869406>
- Karasavvidis, I. (2019). Students' use of digital video effects in multimodal compositions: An exploratory study. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 38(3), 221-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1051144x.2019.1611697>
- Ketelle, D. (2018). What is storytelling in the higher education classroom? *Storytelling, Self, Society*, 13(2), 143-150. <https://doi.org/10.13110/storselsoci.13.2.0143>
- Lam, W. S. E., Smirnov, N., Chang, A. A., Easterday, M. W., Rosario-Ramos, E. M., & Doppelt, J. C. (2021). Multimodal voicing and scale-making in a youth-produced video documentary on immigration. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 55(4), 340–368. <https://doi.org/10.58680/rte202131256>
- Lowenthal, D. (1987). *The past is a foreign country*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lukacs, J. (2011). *The future of history*. Yale University Press.
- Madariaga, L., Nussbaum, M., Gutiérrez, I., Barahona, C., & Meneses, A. (2021). Assessment of user experience in video-based learning environments: From design guidelines to final product. *Computers & Education*, 167, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104176>
- Masanet, M. J., Guerrero-Pico, M., & Establés, M. J. (2019). From digital native to digital apprentice. A case study of the transmedia skills and informal learning strategies of adolescents in Spain. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 44(4), 400-413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2019.1641513>
- McGahan, W., Ernst, H., & Dyson, L. E. (2016). Individual learning strategies and choice in student-generated multimedia. *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning*, 8(3), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJMBL.2016070101>
- Mengis, J., Nicolini, D., & Gorli, M. (2018). The video production of space: How different recording practices matter. *Organizational Research Methods*, 21(2), 288-315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428116669819>
- Miller, S. M. (2013). A research metasynthesis on digital video composing in classrooms: An evidence-based framework toward a pedagogy for embodied learning. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 45(4), 386-430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X13504867>
- Monte-Sano, C. (2016). Argumentation in history classrooms: A key path to understanding the discipline and preparing citizens. *Theory into Practice*, 55(4), 311-319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1208068>
- Nichols, T. P., & Stornaiuolo, A. (2019). Assembling "digital literacies": Contingent pasts, possible futures. *Media and Communication*, 7(2), 14-24. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i2.1946>
- Orak, C., & Turan, Z. (2024). Using artificial intelligence in digital video production: A systematic review study. *Journal of Educational Technology and Online Learning*, 7(3), 286–307. <https://doi.org/10.31681/jetol.1459434>
- Palmgren-Neuvonen, L., & Korkeamäki, R. L. (2015). Teacher as an orchestrator of collaborative planning in learner-generated video production. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 7, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2015.09.002>
- Park, H., Kim, H. S., & Park, H. W. (2021). A scientometric study of digital literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. *Journal of Data and Information Science*, 6(2), 116–138. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jdis-2021-0001>
- Piaget, J. (1977). *The essential Piaget* (H. E. Gruber & J. J. Vonèche, Eds.). Basic Books, Inc.
- Rainville, K. N., & Gordh, B. (2016). Toward a narrative classroom: Storytelling, media, and literacy. *YC Young Children*, 71(4), 76-81.
- Reyna, J., & Meier, P. (2018). Learner-generated digital media (LGDM) as an assessment tool in tertiary science education: A review of literature. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 6(3), 93-109. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.6.3.06>
- Saldaña, J. (2025). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publishing Inc.
- Scolari, C. A. (2019). Beyond the myth of the “digital native.” *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 14(03-04), 164-174. <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1891-943x-2019-03-04-06>

- Seixas, P. (2017). A model of historical thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49(6), 593-605. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1101363>
- Smith, M., Breakstone, J., and Wineburg, S., (2019). History assessments of thinking: A validity study. *Cognition and Instruction*. doi: 10.1080/07370008.2018.1499646
- Snelson, C. (2018). Video production in content-area pedagogy: A scoping study of the research literature. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 43(3), 294-306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2018.1504788>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Stapleton, L., & Stefaniak, J. (2019). Cognitive constructivism: Revisiting Jerome Bruner's influence on instructional design practices. *TechTrends*, 63(1), 4-5. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-018-0356-8>
- Tiernan, P., & Farren, M. (2017). Digital literacy and online video: Undergraduate students' use of online video for coursework. *Education and Information Technologies*, 22(6), 3167-3185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-017-9575-4>
- Xia, S. (2024). Incorporating digital multimodal composition in content teaching: A multimodal analysis of students' legal popularization videos. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 66, 101163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2024.101163>
- Wu, D., & Zhang, J. (2025). Generative artificial intelligence in secondary education: Applications and effects on students' innovation skills and digital literacy. *PLOS One*, 20(5), e0323349. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0323349>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Yuan, Y.-H., Liu, C.-H., & Kuang, S.-S. (2021). An Innovative and Interactive Teaching Model for Cultivating Talent's Digital Literacy in Decision Making, Sustainability, and Computational Thinking. *Sustainability*, 13(9), 5117. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13095117>

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Good morning/afternoon, I'm glad you could join me for this interview. I want to start off getting to know your background with history. How did you decide to study history at the graduate level?
2. I would like for you to discuss the video that you made for your history class. Can you give a brief description of your video?
3. What is your own experience with making videos?
4. What do you see as a difference between doing a video and writing a paper?
5. The next few questions will cover a similar topic from different stages. Can you explain how you planned and researched your videos?
6. Can you describe the process of filming your video?
7. Can you explain how you assembled and finalized your video?
8. What are some skills that you developed through this assignment?
9. In the next few questions, we are going to look at historical skills specifically. What are some skills that a historian must have to interpret the past?
10. How did you incorporate and analyze primary sources in your video?
11. How did you show historical cause and effect through your video?
12. How did you identify your topic as historically significant?
13. Describe how you formed your argument or interpretation in your video.
14. Through your video, how did you incorporate multiple historical perspectives to interpret the past?
15. Can you describe how you contextualized the sources used in your video?
16. What guided your research as you created the videos?
17. What do you think would improve the program of making videos in the classroom?
18. As we are wrapping up, what else would you like to add about your experience with student-directed video?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Can you describe the video project that you completed for your history class?
2. How did you approach organizing and planning research?
3. How did making a video impact the way you research in your history class?
4. What are some things that inhibited creating a video for your history class?
5. How did producing a video compare to writing a paper, specifically as far as your research process is concerned?
6. What historical skills are you aware of now that you have completed a video assignment?
7. To wrap up our discussion here, what topics would you like to cover that we have not already addressed?

APPENDIX C: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Instructions: For the following prompts, please provide a reflection that is between 500 – 1,000 words for each question when you are in each phase of your video specified in the prompt. For example, when you are preparing and planning your video write your reflection on prompt 1. Retain all journals until you have completed all three. You will submit them to a form to collect your work.

1. Please discuss your thoughts as you have searched for research in preparation for this project. Be candid about any stumbling blocks or differences you may experience from typical history assignments.
2. Please discuss your thoughts on the process of making a video. What did you discover was an issue for you that you did not expect? How do you see this process in the scope of learning in the field of history?
3. Please discuss your thoughts on the process of editing and structuring the story of your video. What was your experience with thinking of how to organize the material you collected? How does it compare to typical history assessments?

APPENDIX D: PILOT STUDY

Procedures

Faculty and potential participants for the study were contacted to complete a review of questions used in the study. Both a faculty and expert review as well as a potential participant review were necessary to see the efficacy of the questions. Departmental approval was ascertained before the pilot study commenced to ensure that the correct students and faculty were contacted with permission. As this pilot study was indicated through the IRB as a review of questions, the procedures for some question asking was maintained, but the questions were workshopped to improve clarity. Experts and participants were asked to participate in interviews, focus groups, and to complete reflective journals as they are completing video assignments. This information was used to understand what information the reader saw in each question. This information, as well as a review of the questions with each participant after was used to clarify any misunderstandings in the process of posing questions.

From the pilot study a few issues were raised with the questions in the interview and focus group. First with the interview, several of the questions that focused on skill development, namely questions 9-14 seemed to be confusing for participants. These questions were adjusted heavily to specify the specific skill to clarify in the context of video. Additionally, some answers were broadly on the subject of history instead of specifically on the video that was created and how historical skills were used for this, so question 2 was adjusted to frame the rest of the questions in the context of that student-generated video. One question was removed entirely as it seemed that it did not fit and only confused participants, this was question 16. Other than these mentioned, the other questions were only minimally changed for clarity or otherwise not changed.

Regarding the focus group questions, these were clearer and the dialog created amongst participants created good conversation. There were not too many needing corrections for clarity, but there were a few questions that did cause students to stumble. As it was difficult for students to refer back to before the class to know what skills they had, questions 6 and 7 were combined to focus solely on the skills that students indicated that they developed through the process of making their video. As with the interview questions, the focus did not seem to be on a specific video during the pilot study, so the first question of the focus group was adjusted to allow for the participants to discuss the content of their student-directed video. This would allow for a clearer framing on the topic of the video and the participants would be able to refer to the video to clarify historical skills used in the production of the video.

Furthermore, the background of the participation seemed to dictate how they answered the question. Since the study focuses on graduate students, there is a disparity between experiences of the individuals. Some had far more video experience, teaching expertise, or content knowledge than others and because of that experience leaned on that to answer some questions instead of focusing on the subject matter expected from the question. This information was useful heading into the research study to understand how to approach different backgrounds and what to expect from each. For example, those who had more experience with film equipment focused their attention on the skills of video instead of the skills of historical thinking. As this study considers video production a tertiary aspect of the study, these answers were not as useful as ones that clarified the historical thinking process in video.

Interview Questions

1. Good morning/afternoon, I'm glad you could join me for this interview. I want to start off getting to know your background with history. How did you decide to study history at the graduate level?
2. I would like for you to discuss your journey in making a video as a part of the assignments in this course.
3. What is your own experience with making videos?
4. What do you see as a difference between doing a video and writing a paper?
5. The next few questions will cover a similar topic from different stages. What structures do you identify that are in place to guide you through the process of planning videos?
6. What arrangements do you see in place to guide you through the process of filming videos?
7. What structures do you see in place to guide you through the process of editing videos?
8. What are some skills that you hope to build or have already developed through this assignment?
9. In the next few questions, we are going to look at historical skills specifically. What are some skills that a historian must have to interpret the past?
10. In the process of making this video, how did you approach primary sources?
11. How would you describe the process of approaching cause and effect in making this video?
12. How would you address issues of attributing historical significance in forming your argument and interpretation in making a video?
13. How do you see your video helping in developing skills of multiperspectivity, or seeing multiple perspectives of the past?

14. How do you see fitting your video in context, both in time and place, in making your video?
15. What guided your research as you created the videos?
16. Regarding your expectations, what do you see as the expectation of you in developing your own videos?
17. What do you think would improve the program of making videos in the classroom?
18. As we are wrapping up, what else would you like to add about your experience with student-directed video?

Focus Group Questions

1. Overall, in this process, what did you learn through the process of making your video?
2. How did you approach organizing and planning research?
3. How did this approach impact the way you research in your history class?
4. What are some things that you were inhibited by while producing videos for history classes?
5. How does producing a video compare to writing a paper, specifically as far as your research process is concerned?
6. I'd like to see what each of you brought into this project as far as skills go. What are some of the historical skills that you were aware of before this project?
7. What skills are you aware of now?
8. To wrap up our discussion here, what topics would you like to cover that we have not already addressed?

Reflective Journal Questions

Instructions: For the following prompts, please provide a reflection that is between 500 – 1,000 words for each question when you are in each phase of your video specified in the prompt. For example, when you are preparing and planning your video write your reflection on prompt 1. Retain all journals until you have completed all three. You will submit them to a form to collect your work.

1. Please discuss your thoughts as you have searched for research in preparation for this project. Be candid about any stumbling blocks or differences you may experience from typical history assignments.
2. Please discuss your thoughts on the process of making a video. What did you discover was an issue for you that you did not expect? How do you see this process in the scope of learning in the field of history?
3. Please discuss your thoughts on the process of editing and structuring the story of your video. What was your experience with thinking of how to organize the material you collected? How does it compare to typical history assessments?

APPENDIX E: VIDEO ARTIFACT DATA ANALYSIS RUBRIC

Element of Historical Thinking	Evident (3 Points)	Developing (2 Points)	Missing (1 Point)
FRAMING			
Historical Significance (Seixas, 2017).	Carefully frames the argument of the video around a central theme. Expresses the theme in the light of general and particular history. General history – Broad aspects and themes. Particular is the specific event in focus.	Has a main idea but does not show it clearly or misses part of showing themes in light of general and particular history. May contain broad discussion and not a specific discussion, or vice versa.	Has a topic within the video, but the argument is not clearly defined. Cannot understand the relationship between the broad history and the narrow history as presented.
Use of Evidence (Monte-Sano, 2016; Seixas, 2017).	Uses a blend of primary and secondary sources to underpin and support argument. Understand the limitations of each source used.	Relies more on secondary sources and less on primary sources for the presentation. Understands some of the limitations of sources, but not all.	Relies on secondary sources, textbook, or encyclopedia articles. Does not consult primary texts or present understanding of the limits of sources.
Argumentation (Monte-Sano, 2016).	Lines out argument and the points borne out through the evidence collected. Builds strong argument through use of evidence. Asks questions that can be answered fully.	Has a good argument, but may not have enough evidence to support it. Builds an argument, but evidence either does not support or is missing some parts of the question to be answered.	Has a poorly structured argument and does not supply much evidence to support it. Does not take a critical view and presents argument as a matter of fact.
EVALUATING			
Corroboration (Wineburg, 2001; SHEG, 2020).	Evaluates source within the confines of other sources in the field. Chooses a broad array of sources to show other perspectives and evidence.	Evaluates source through only a few sources. Gives some other examples of sources, but not in-depth.	Takes the source at face value without looking for other evidence.
Close Reading (Wineburg, 2001; SHEG, 2020).	Reads into the intent that the author puts into the text. Takes seriously the meaning behind the words on paper, print, or digital release.	Does a surface level read of the intent of the author. Addresses the idea of analyzing deeper but does not evaluate much deeper meaning or intent.	Reads a source at face value. Does not go into further analysis to think about the intent of the author.
Contextualization (Wineburg, 2001; SHEG, 2020).	Evaluates sources in the context of the time in which they are written. Evaluates this as a background to understand intent and environment of author	Addresses some of the context or addresses the wrong context of the document. Develops part of the picture of the time in which the document is written.	Does not add a meaningful backdrop to the context of documents.
Sourcing (Wineburg, 2001; SHEG, 2020).	Establishes knowledge about the author to clarify intent, ambitions and trustworthiness of author.	Addresses tertiary issues of sourcing, including websites sources, trustworthiness of archives, but not the source itself.	Does not address the trustworthiness of the source. Accepts the description from the author with no other thought of further analysis.

SYNTHESIZING			
Cause and Consequence (Seixas, 2017).	Weaves narrative structures to explain what happened in the past. Show that actions have other actions precipitating from them and the connection in human decision-making.	Somewhat addresses the actions of the past and displaying what happened. Sometimes approaches it from a standpoint of this happened, then this happened, without expressing why or showing the process of decision-making.	No clear thread of action displayed. Difficult to see the human agency involved with decisions of the past.
Continuity and Change (Seixas, 2017).	Weaves narrative to show shows that events do not neatly fall within periods that are defined as many things are occurring at once. Clearly exhibits that history is not a monolith of constant change and progress, but one that involves choices and often involves discontinuity	Weaves a narrative of continual progress. Somewhat addresses issues of continuity and choices but does not fully express or show this. Somewhat addresses issues of multiple events occurring simultaneously.	Does not address issues of continuity. Either sees decisions without context or sees history as one fluid sweep with no interruptions.
Multiperspectivity (Seixas, 2017).	Connects understanding by using multiple perspectives in the past to include more than several points of view in an analysis. Takes into consideration several perspectives as narrative is constructed.	Addresses the existence of other perspectives but does not include them completely in the interpretation. Does not address other points of view in a way that strengthens the narrative.	Does not address multiple perspectives to build an interpretation. Focuses only on one side of the story.