

NERWHA Mentor Questionnaire

Please return this electronically as a MS Word document to both:

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NAME James A. Diskant

Institution: John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science; World History Association

Academic Position: History and Government Teacher; Advisor, Debate and History Club; Chair, Teaching Committee, WHA

Years in Service: 11 at the O'Bryant, more than 30 in education; 13 with the WHA

Area(s) of World History Experience and Expertise

I teach world history at the high school level, where I have helped create a three year sequence that integrates United States with world history. I teach mainly modern history, but have also taught ancient history. While my academic focus is German labor history, in the last 15 years I have focused on pedagogy and the teaching of history. As Editor for Pioneering New Classroom Approaches for World History Connected, I both write and solicit articles on pedagogy at the secondary level. My particular thematic approach to world history is that of community building and the role that people have in creating communities that meet or fail to meet their needs.

How much time, to what degree, and in what way(s) are you willing and able to serve as a mentor. Please be as specific as possible and also be realistic. We are all already busy professionals.

Like most high school teaching, my teaching commitments are heavy. I am willing to spend one to two hours each week in either e-mail or telephone exchanges helping a teacher at whatever level learn how to teach world history through primary sources. That teacher and I can also plan to meet to talk at future NERWHA and WHA conferences.

Please tell us something about yourself, including why you want to be a mentor and how you can best perform this task. Use as much space as you wish.

As already noted, or at least implied, my emphasis is on world history pedagogy as a way to assist students to acquire and sharpen their critical thinking skills, as well as for their learning about the history of the human community's ability to problem solve. I see world history as a field of study that has great moral and civic value and is the best method for multicultural instruction. I see my role as an educator not as one of disseminating information but as one of challenging (and helping) students to think critically and to expand their intellectual and cultural

horizons. As someone who has devoted over three decades to teaching and writing about world history, I want to pass on some of my experience in and, I hope, passion for the field.

Please append a one-page CV.

EDUCATION:

- M.Ed., Vision Studies, Graduate School of Education, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, 1995
- Certification in Secondary History (Courses Equivalent to M.Ed.), Graduate School of Education, Boston College, 1991
- Ph.D., History, Boston College, 1988
- B.A., Connecticut College, New London, CT, 1978

ACADEMIC CAREER:

- John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, Boston, MA, 2001-Present
- Graduate School of Education, Boston College, Spring 2009
- Professional Development Program, Graduate School of Education, Northeastern University, Boston, 2003-2005
- World History Center, Northeastern University, 1999-2003
- Primary Source, Watertown, MA, 1994-99
- Northshore Education Consortium, Danvers, MA, 1995-00
- Newton North High School, Newton, MA, 1994-115
- Brookline High School, Brookline, MA, 1992-93
- Art Institute of Boston, Boston, MA, 1990-94, University of Massachusetts at Boston, 1992-93, & Boston College, 1987-92

RECENT PROFESSIONAL OFFICES:

Chair, Teaching Committee, World History Association;

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

- Contributor, *World History for Us All*: <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/>, 2011 – Present.
- Contributor, The Center for Learning's Advanced Placement U.S History Books, 2008 – Present.
- Editor, *Pioneering New Classroom Approaches*, and Regular Contributor, *World History Connected*: <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiuc.edu/>, 2006 – Present.