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Sequencing Rationale  
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The curriculum of this course is sequenced in a way to promote scaffolds that foster independent and collaborative skills that students will need to engage in more critical analysis later in the course. The first unit, “Geography,” focuses upon providing students with experiences that help them develop an awareness of map skills, regions, and landforms that will help them analyze the effects of geography on specific civilizations later in the unit. In addition, teaching these geography skills first allows geographical concepts to be applied to better understand new ideas in subsequent units.

By following the “Geography” unit with the “Economics” unit, students can apply geographical concepts and skills to understand why some regions are more likely to specialize in certain areas than others, as well as to understand geographical challenges to global trade. The “Economics” unit, therefore, builds upon the concepts and skills obtained in the previous unit, while also preparing students with experiences that will help spark their curiosity when it comes to next unit, “Types of Government.” If experiences are provided by the teacher during the “Economics” unit that provide opportunities for students to observe the different ways government can influence trade, they will be more interested in exploring the various types of government and the other effects they have on their citizens and their world in the following unit.

Again, the “Types of Government” unit builds upon skills students have obtained in previous units by applying them in a new context. In this instance, students will need to use their knowledge of geography and economics to determine how rulers come to power and how they influence historical relationships between other countries. Due to previous exposure when studying economics, students may be interested in exploring other ways governments affect their citizens and the global community, in addition to trade. Using the skills they have obtained in previous units, they can begin to explore areas of interest independently, with support.

In the following unit, “World Religions,” students can analyze the spread and diffusion of world religions through analysis of geographical concepts, historical trade relationships, and within various types of government. By providing them with these skills prior to this unit, students can take a more broad and well-rounded approach to studying the spread of world religions, while also observing conflicts and cooperation between these religions in historical, geographical, and economic contexts. Lastly, by observing the process by which world religions spread across geographical and cultural territories, students will have background knowledge they will need to observe and research the movement of people and ideas in ancient civilizations.

The next unit, “Early Humans”, students will use their knowledge of geography as well as the skills they learned in the unit to determine the process by which early humans were able to settle in one place and develop permanent civilizations. Without the previous preparation, students may not have adequate knowledge of the impact of geographical features, such as rivers, on the development of permanent civilizations. In addition, students may not have the skills they need to understand the importance of specialization of jobs in a society without studying economics. By providing these scaffolds prior to this unit, students can make stronger connections to the content and develop deeper understandings of these first civilizations. As they move on to more advanced civilizations that sprang from this first community, the students in my classroom will also be able to use the skills obtained in this unit to explore the subsequent civilizations on a deeper level.

The following four units focus upon the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. Though students can use the skills and concepts they have incorporated into their background in previous units to analyze these in any order, I have chosen to organize them in a manner in which they begin with the “Cradle of Civilization” in Mesopotamia and then move across the Eastern Hemisphere from the east to the west to allow opportunities for spatial thinking. In these units, students will be more engaged in the inquiry process, focusing on independent or collaborative investigations into the mechanics of the civilizations, using the various skills they have acquired in the previous units. They will be making observations about what made these civilizations some of the most successful in the world, while also providing suggestions or solutions to problems these civilizations faced. Without the pervious scaffolding, the inquiry-based learning taking place in these units could not occur.

Through the scaffolding and structure of this course, students will be provided with tools actual historians use to analyze historical events and will be better prepared to make a variety of decisions in any context. The structure of this course also allows students to take time to develop inquiry skills instead of placing them directly in an inquiry-based experience with no experience. By gradually introducing skills and incorporating them into subsequent units, students will engage in contextual learning experiences that reinforce the importance of the skills and provide opportunities for meaningful learning experiences.