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Impact of the Teacher Fellowship programme

I have found aspects of the programme challenging, on an academic and teacher-planning level. I came to the programme without deep knowledge of the links between World War I and remembrance and how it has been portrayed in art and entered into the national culture, and have completed the programme with a much clearer understanding not only of the scholarly debate around memorialisation and recent historiographical contributions to the study of World War I, but also of what good teaching around World War I could/should look like.

What I found most challenging – and eventually enjoyable – was the close link between the readings set, the face-to-face sessions and the Moodle discussions. As I found a lot of the material complex and intellectually new, it was very helpful that each reading and topic was broken down, giving us time to explore much of the material in quite an extensive way.

I think the most direct impact of the course is that I am now able to share knowledge of recent historiography and where to find appropriate resources with my department and also with colleagues in other schools. I am hopeful that this will have a positive impact on our teaching of World War I – including concepts like war, remembrance and national memory.

Rationale

Context for resource creation

The resource I have created originated out of the concern that in many history departments (including mine), the teaching of World War I has become staid and has in fact remained within the trenches of the Western Front and within the confines of the years 1914–1918, which saw a ‘paroxysm’ of fighting (Gerwarth and Manela, 2014, p. 2); this makes sense from the perspective of the major Western European powers, but does not really account for the global, spatial nature of the fighting itself. I have sought to make a small contribution that hopefully pushes teachers to consider expanding the temporal horizon within which they and their students view World War I; by considering events after 1918, teachers and students should therefore find it easier to understand the war as a global one, and not just a war between European powers.

Curricular and scholarly rationale

Teaching in a school with a diverse intake (similar to many other schools), I became concerned that World War I may effectively fade from memory if it is seen as a distant war that had no global impact on its contemporaries nor lessons for today.

By extending the temporal and spatial aspect of the debate, and encouraging/challenging students to situate the War within wider contexts on these axes, students will be able to understand why World War I is still such an important historical period of study, why there is so much continued interest across the country, and why attempts to direct national remembrance towards the War (without evaluating their success) continue to exist over a century after the War began.

Resource guidance

Recognising that teachers are interested in teaching the course of World War I's major events in varied ways, this lesson would be most suitable for teaching at the end of a sequence that introduces the key causes, events and actions of World War I to students. This will allow teachers flexibility in how they teach the events of World War I and bring students to this enquiry with at least some degree of fingertip knowledge that they can use to support their thinking.

The resource comprises a self-contained lesson that seeks to investigate and respond to the following question:

When did World War I really end?

Estimated timing	Activity	Key questions/notes
15 minutes	<p>Starter (PowerPoint Slides 1–5):</p> <p>Students to use blank world map to show existing knowledge of World War I's reach.</p> <p>Teacher then shows completed copy on the board – this should stimulate discussion of how far and wide the War's effects were.</p> <p>Teacher then recaps chronology of fighting, 1914–1923, aiming to show students that fighting</p>	<p>Teacher should be able to explain how imperialism contributed to the War's global reach – including knowledge of the spread of British, Russian, German and Ottoman influence, either regionally or globally.</p>

	<p>continued well after the War's official conclusion.</p> <p>The lesson question and objectives are then introduced.</p>	
20 minutes	<p>Task 1 (Slides 6–8):</p> <p>Students are given Task 1 (double-sided, colour and laminated if possible) and should read through and highlight any instances of each empire being involved in fighting after 1918. This is then followed up by the review activity on Slide 8.</p>	
20 minutes	<p>Task 2 (Slide 9):</p> <p>Students consider the impact of war on the four empires from the previous task through the lens of an important national figure. Students should read through the Task 2 sheet (again, double-sided, colour and laminated if possible) and have paired discussion or write down answers to the questions for each empire. This is then followed by a teacher-led class discussion of the main question.</p>	<p><i>Did the end of World War I in 1918 bring peace to the world?</i></p> <p>Teacher should also be able to explain clearly what communism is/was in the context of the German and Russian Revolutions, as well as domestic opposition to Britain's involvement in the Russian Civil War ('Hands off Russia!' campaign).</p>
	<p>Plenary (Slide 10):</p> <p>This draws together all of the students' learning on World War I, so that they can make a final decision on the lesson question.</p> <p>Students should consider whether World War I's formal end in 1918/treaty signing in 1919 was the real</p>	<p>Teacher should be able to explain the Treaty of Versailles and why the fighting in Russia and Turkey fell outside the 'official' confines of World War I.</p>

	<p>end of the War or whether historians should consider a later date as the true end of the War.</p> <p>This task can be either a discussion or a written task, depending on the school, teacher and student dynamics.</p>	
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References

Gerwarth, R. and Manela, E. (2014) *Empires at War: 1911–1923*, Oxford: Oxford University Press