

A GUIDE TO

# MATRIX THINKING

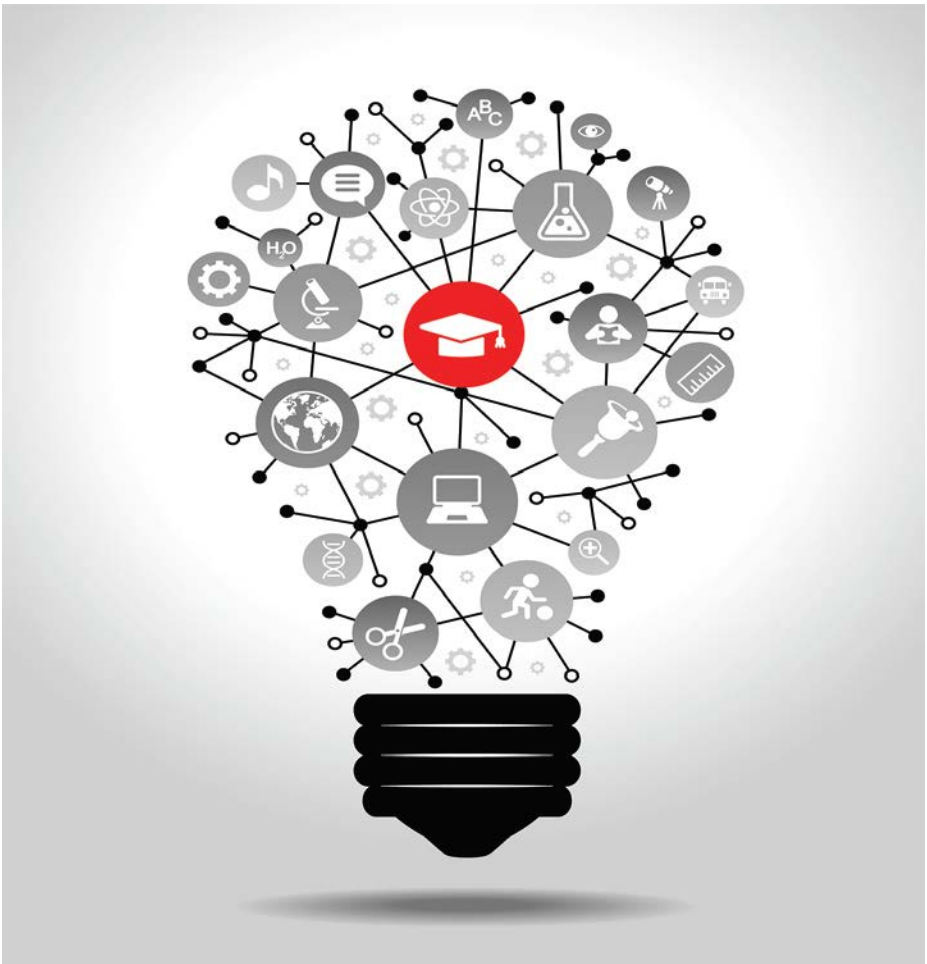


Ideas for Portfolio Design and Development

**THE LEARNING LOG**



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# GUIDE 1: THE LEARNING LOG

### What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide will help you to familiarize yourself with the biographies and Matrix Maps. Once you select what you want to learn, you will research the four terms in each case in the Matrix Map to figure out how the terms connect, what they reveal and how that information relates to the biography. Then you will connect the knowledge and select at least one adjacent multimedia source that helps you deepen your understanding of the relationships. You will then document your connections and your summary of the multimedia source and evaluate your learning experience.

Targeted Proficiency

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Writing Skills

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Intellectual Skills

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Applied Learning

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Broad, Integrative Knowledge

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VALUE RUBRICS

**Critical Thinking**

or

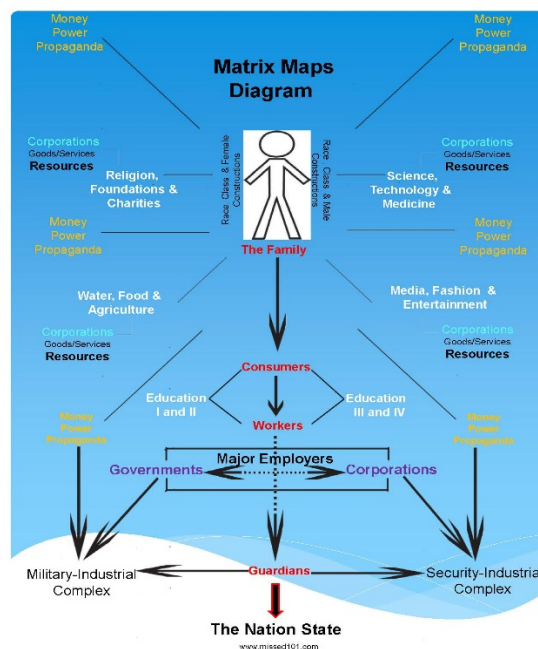
**Information Literacy**

# THE LEARNING LOG

A *learning log* allows you to maintain a record of the interdisciplinary connections you create using Matrix Thinking and the Matrix Map and biography you selected. What is a matrix? A matrix is a model typically used in algebra and General System Theory to frame and analyze complex interactions. In other words, a matrix arranges information (usually numbers) to show variability, connections and simulations. Because of its multiple meanings and surprising reoccurrence across so many academic fields, the matrix becomes the master trope that helps you make connections using learning guides called Matrix Maps.

Matrix Maps provide descriptive frameworks and contexts for the bits and pieces of interdisciplinary information that shape *human* experiences. More importantly, Matrix Thinking is the way you learn to discover, develop and connect relationships inside and outside of that framework. It is a metaphor for interconnectedness and intertextuality.

The learning log provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to connect interdisciplinary information and strengthen your critical and creative thinking skills. You will need to select one or more biographies and one related Matrix Map at [www.missed101.com](http://www.missed101.com). The biographies serve as introductions to the Matrix Maps. The Matrix Maps Diagram below helps you to situate and connect relationships between the individual, the family, the nation state and the cases in your Matrix Map. If you have problems deciding on a combination based on your interests and career goals, you can select from the options below.



## **OPTION 1**

### **The Story of Cyrus**

Cyrus encounters a lot of people in the small store he owns. When he finds himself caught in the middle of a dispute between a well-respected reverend and a secretive fraternal order, Cyrus discovers that he does not understand religion, education or human nature as well as he thought. Surprising revelations and disaster cause Cyrus to rely on an unusual source to cope with loss and the blurred line he discovers between seeing and believing.

### **Enemies, Empires & the Rhetoric of War and Conspiracy**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Economics, Finance, Geography, Political Science, Mass Communications, International Relations, Legal Studies and/or Network and National Security.

As the European powers relinquished their status and colonies, the U.S. filled the void in order to limit the march of communism and to control the growing anticolonial sentiments at home and across the world, but not without British networks. The U.S. distinguished the way it managed its role in the world from the British Empire. Yet, the power dynamic is the same and questions abound concerning the use and abuse of propaganda, austerity programs, technology, the military-industrial complex and the security-industrial complex. Also, accusations about cover-ups, support for dictators and bungled operations have created a sense of public paranoia that inspires the conspiracist blowback that is often discounted but remains a persistent part of the American public imagination. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore the conflicting interests and shifting narratives surrounding many famous foreign entanglements around the planet. Also, it reveals why limited transparency makes distinguishing rhetoric from reality very difficult, raising even more concerns about the permanence of war and the economics of misery and violence in the nation state.

## **THE CHALKBOARD**

### Alternative combinations for you to consider

**The Story of Jasper and God, Pedigree & the Architects of the Classroom**

**The Story of Rachel and Love, Money & the Reproduction of Debt and Desire**

**The Story of Earl and American Dreams, Global Realities & the Story of Work**

**The Story of Abel and Enemies, Empires & the Rhetoric of War and Conspiracy**

**The Story of Mattie and Unforgettable Differences & the Intersection of Race,**

**Gender and Class**

## **OPTION 2**

### **The Story of Grace**

After marrying an abusive man, Grace has to figure out how to stay alive. She befriends a seamstress named Iris, who offers Grace advice and refuge in her home. Grace tries to create a life for herself, but she struggles, creating new obstacles as she tries to remove old ones. In the end, Grace holds on to a destructive secret that she must keep from her husband and Iris, the very secret that restored her faith in redemption and changed her ideas about love.

### **Love, Money & the Reproduction of Debt and Desire**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Business Administration, Economics, Financial Planning, Religious Studies, Biology and/or Counseling.

Marrying for love has not always been the norm. Land, wealth and alliances were considered more important for marriage than romantic love. Unions between men and women resembled business deals and money often sat at the center of the marriage exchange system. Not only would this system define and reinforce gender roles and divisions of duties in the household and workplace, it would also be instrumental in producing and reproducing the consumers and consumption patterns that influence education and the circulation of goods and services across industries and institutions locally, nationally and globally. This Matrix Map will provide you with opportunities to explore traditional and non-traditional ideas about love and money, and it reveals how the fate of money, debt and banking are intrinsically tied to the body, human relationships and financial illiteracy.

## **OPTION 3**

### **The Story of Billy**

Billy, a young man with more determination than job skills, is looking for success in a place where work seems to be in short supply. Suddenly, he falls in love with a woman from a different side of town. His obsession almost costs him an opportunity to enter the restaurant business and have a life with the woman who truly cares about him. After surviving a voodoo spell that goes wrong, Billy achieves what he thought he never could and more.

### **American Dreams, Global Realities & the Story of Work**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Economics, Legal Studies, Education, Social Work, Political Science and/or Criminal Justice.

Market forces and the control of land, food, natural resources and human bodies created the disruptions that helped to establish labor systems such as indentured servitude, slavery, peonage, and eventually, wage labor. As most of the world has transitioned from agrarian to

industrial to knowledge-networking economies, there are concerns about the potential impact on human identities, labor competition and law and order. The mass production that followed industrialization required mass consumption, mass education, mass marketing and mass incarceration. The information economy is reshaping this paradigm as globalization, outsourcing and technology create unemployment, displacement and an international underclass. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore the changing nature of work and the potential shocks to civic relations at home and abroad when work runs out. Also, it reveals the benefits, struggles, distractions and internal problems of unions and their decreasing influence in the wake of powerful trade agreements.

## **OPTION 4**

### **The Story of Mattie**

Mattie is an old woman who reassesses her life before dying. In her last moments, she revisits the uneasy relationships she had with her doctor, her husband and her son. She blames herself for her loveless marriage and her son's social inadequacies. Mattie has advice for her daughter-in-law, hoping she will be a better mother and not make the mistakes she made while taking care of a farm and a family constantly threatened by foreclosure and disaffection.

### **God, Pedigree & the Architects of the Classroom**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Education, Social Work and other Human Services, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

Schools were not always such a dominant part of the human experience as they are today. Many parents had to be persuaded, even forced, to send their children to school. Before World War II, a college education was thought to be unimaginable or unnecessary for the average person. Deeply influenced by the British and German educational systems, the schools today continue to support the differentiation, efficiency and compulsion needed for stabilizing social hierarchies, the workforce and the economy. Ironically, schools educate and nationalize at the same time they privilege and punish, making it difficult for all academic institutions to deliver on a democratic mission, particularly as charter schools, student loan debt and the information economy threaten the entire system. This Matrix Map will provide you with opportunities to explore the purposes of education and how it picks up where faith and religion leave off. Also, it reveals some of the figures who have influenced education and why the system tends to yield the same unequal access and opportunities today as it did in the past.

## **THE CHALKBOARD**

**If you have trouble filling in the spaces on the learning log, use a word processing program to retype the instructions, dates and your responses.**

## **OPTION 5**

### **The Story of Abel**

Abel is a barber and a veteran who takes pride in his keen sense of duty and community history. Ironically, his recollections of war and an unresolved murder create tension between him, fellow veterans and a new schoolteacher seeking the truth. After the fatal shooting of a young man by a sheriff, Abel must face his insecurities about his own mortality, his daughter's transformation and the fact that the young man's death puts an end to a rivalry and a mystery Abel finds impossible to forget.

### **Unforgettable Differences & the Intersection of Race, Gender and Colonialism**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in History, Africana Studies, Gender Studies, International Relations, Economics and/or Education.

Anticolonial movements after World War II are linked to the quest for civil rights for minorities in America. Protests and solidarity movements unite them around common experiences of inequality. Their calls for liberation from discriminatory policies and practices in the U.S. mirror those of Third World countries oppressed by years of colonial rule. U.S. domestic and foreign policies often follow a similar trajectory in responding to all of these movements as surveillance, sabotage, propaganda and violence became strategic tools for limiting the spread of disruptive ideas and re-establishing a new colonial order that needed to maintain access to cheap labor, natural resources, international markets and strategic geographical locations. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore how colonialism in the context of the African Diaspora manifests and reflects differences associated with race, gender and class. Also, it reveals the ways the three often coalesce as systems of difference and easily split under the weight of competing visions of democracy and structuralism.

## **OPTION 6**

### **The Story of Rachel**

Rachel has a vision of a better future, but only on her terms. One day, she quits her job. In her attempt to be self-sufficient, Rachel finds herself ostracized for stepping outside of the roles others feel she should embrace. Rachel fights to keep her good name and her independence. Along the way, she even finds companionship with a man who is as unconventional as she is. However, the relationship is bittersweet because it creates tension in her friendship with Sofia, who experiences major changes of her own.

### **Unforgettable Differences & the Intersection of Race, Gender and Class**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in History, African-American Studies, Gender Studies, Public Policy, Economics and/or Education.



Race, gender and class are social constructions carved by people and power. The three are dynamic on their own. However, they are often experienced under similar conditions of oppression. Even today, they network and intersect in ways that maintain, reproduce and reinforce inequalities, often with the help of stereotypes, philanthropy and leaders who exploit differences instead of similarities. In spite of major changes, fear of difference continues to haunt our social and cultural spaces. This shapes identities and experiences, sometimes under extraordinary instances of psychic, physical and economic violence. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore how the African-American experience offers one analytical framework for surveying the interconnected nature of race, gender and class as systems of difference. Also, it reveals the ways these constructions have formed a symbiotic permanence that is always open for alteration but never eradication.

## **OPTION 7**

### **The Story of Earl**

Earl and Jesse are old friends who accept the fact that they seldom see eye to eye on events. Over the years, Earl has come to rely on Jesse to help him care for Cluke, Earl's mentally disabled brother. They fail to get Cluke to understand the rules that prohibit Sutter Jefferson from entering the famous long-car caboose race. They watch Sutter, who is desperate for the prize money to care for his sick wife, defy authority and run in the race. Earl and Jesse come to an agreement on what caused the death of Cluke, but they are not sure if Sutter's death is an accident or a final act of heroic defiance.

### **Sports, Branding & Control of the Modern Gladiator**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Sports Medicine, Sports Management, Sports Psychology, Business Administration and/or Marketing.

Modern athletics have roots in pagan celebrations and war preparations. In ancient Rome, sports would acquire the commercial and entertainment value that we recognize today, as spectacular events and deaths became an effective way to defuse social, political and economic tensions among the people. Today, sports help regulate leisure, but they also promote the integration of people from diverse backgrounds into a national system of values so vital to the discipline and sense of meritocracy found in our social institutions and the workforce. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore how sports continue to reflect the problems of the larger society and create the action dramas that often play out in subsidized stadiums as well as classrooms, court rooms, bedrooms, boardrooms and emergency rooms. Also, it reveals how physical prowess and fame deify sports stars and why their star power makes them icons for selling products, culture and simulations.

## **OPTION 8**

### **The Story of Odessa**

Odessa resents having to answer to her older sister, Fancy, after the death of their mother. As they struggle for the upper hand in a religious household, Odessa finds an ally in their stubborn uncle and Fancy, their compliant father. However, Odessa anticipates her freedom after Fancy takes the advice of a psychic and runs off with an escaped convict, only to return home penniless and pregnant. In order to silence her critics and restore her position in the family, Fancy must figure out how to reclaim and revise the very things that caused her to leave.

### **Food, Frankensteins & the Business of the Body**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Agriculture and Food Science, Nursing, Biology, Medicine, Funeral Services and/or Culinary Arts.

Food fuels the human body, but it also greatly influenced early human relationships and community development. The need to hunt and gather food created the cooperation needed for survival. However, agriculture, animal domestication, food surpluses and enclosures changed these relationships in ways that established patterns of social divisions and political arrangements that are still prevalent today. The human body as a site for the consumption of food gave way to its becoming a site of labor exchange for profit and protection and later a site for medical experimentation and exploitation. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore how food, health and life turn into mathematics. Also, it reveals how special interests in agriculture and medicine make it increasingly difficult to determine where government policies begin and corporate goals end.

## **OPTION 9**

### **The Story of Jasper**

The arrival of Mary Jean, the new girl in school, spells trouble for Jasper and his classmates. In a classroom filled with more chaos than learning, Mary Jean dreams of becoming a star. When the teacher has the students explore their future careers, they recognize the gap between the careers they choose for themselves and the ones predicted for them. While Jasper questions his teacher about the discrepancies, Mary Jean escapes, leaving her classmates wondering about their futures and hers.

### **Hollywood, Avatars & the Politics of Entertainment**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Film Studies, Theater, Mass Communication, American Studies and/or Political Science.

California became the home of the movie industry because it provided a way for early filmmakers to escape a movie monopoly. The immigrants who founded Hollywood claimed they

wanted to create films that offered escapism, fantasy and an idealized America. In reality, they often established stratified studio systems and reproduced images and narratives that sustained rather than challenged the status quo. Although the entertainment industry consolidated over the years and shored up its connections in Washington through lobbying, campaign contributions and the election of celebrities, the number of those who participate in the development and creation of the simulations we see on the silver screen still do not adequately reflect the larger society. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore how the entertainment industry has appropriated and repackaged culture and marketed it for amusement, propaganda and politics. Also, it reveals how some of the ethnic communities that influence Hollywood and popular music continue to face challenges inside and outside the industry.

## **OPTION 10**

### **The Story of Sonny and Cleophus**

Sonny and Cleophus develop an awkward friendship as inmates in prison. While Cleophus has been there for years, Sonny is new and under threat. In order to keep him alive, Cleophus takes Sonny under his wings and attempts to find out the real reason for his incarceration. Distrustful and afraid after the brutal death of his cellmate, Sonny hides behind an elaborate myth. Cleophus does the same. However, Sonny fails to understand that Cleophus's story is really a cautionary tale. When Cleophus makes Sonny a deal he cannot accept, Cleophus ends his protection. Sonny survives an attack by rival inmates, but he struggles with his injury as he faces a broken justice system and the lasting consequences of living in communities that turn identity into crime.

### **Superheroes, Salvation & the Architects of Utopia**

This Matrix Map or learning guide is recommended for students interested in Political Science, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Film and Animation, History and/or International Relations.

Throughout time, people have dreamed of utopias or ideal communities beyond their current realities. Whether it is in the form of ancient legends, cartoons, literature or films such as *The Matrix*, the longing for a hero and a better world is a common sentiment among the religious and non-religious, especially during times of personal and national crisis. Visions of ideal societies have offered hope to the despondent. They have influenced the establishment of colonies, cities, immigration patterns and the aspirations of marginalized people around the world. However, utopias seldom turn out to be such ideal paradigms, as *The Autobiography of Moon County* reveals. Utopian enterprises often morph into dystopias due to bad leadership and ideology, especially when they combine to personalize problems rooted in politics and policy. This Matrix Map will provide opportunities for you to explore various utopian arrangements, both real and imagined, and why they succeed or fail. Also, it reveals how heroism, faith and hope continue to assuage discontent and inspire re-creations in spite of a long record of global tragedy.

# LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 1

Describe the connection(s) between cases 1 and 2.

Exercise Begins

/ /

Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

/ /

Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 2 and 3.

Exercise Begins

/ /

Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

/ /

Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 2

Describe the connection(s) between cases 3 and 4.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

/ /

Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 4 and 5.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 3

Describe the connections between cases 5 and 6.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 6 and 7.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 4

Describe the connection(s) between cases 7 and 8.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 8 and 9.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 5

Describe the connection(s) between cases 9 and 10.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the Multimedia Source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 10 and 11.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.



## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 6

Describe the connection(s) between cases 11 and 12.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 12 and 13.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 7

Describe the connection(s) between cases 13 and 14.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 14 and 15.

Exercise Begins

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Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

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Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

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