2020-2021 Social Studies Instructional Guidance for Diverse Learning Settings

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Credits

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Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

Melissa Colsman, Ph.D.
Associate Commissioner
Student Learning Division

Floyd Cobb, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Teaching and Learning Unit

Office of Standards and Instructional Support

Joanna Bruno, Ph.D.
Director

Carla Aguilar, Ph.D.
Music Content Specialist

Maya M. Garcia
Science Content Specialist

Olivia Gillespie
Reading, Writing, and Communicating Content
Specialist

Donna Goodwin, Ph.D.
Visual Arts Content Specialist

Stephanie Hartman, Ph.D.
Social Studies Content Specialist

Judi Hofmeister
Dance Content Specialist
Drama and Theatre Arts Content Specialist

Jamie Hurley, Ph.D.
Comprehensive Health Content Specialist
Physical Education Content Specialist

Raymond Johnson, Ph.D.
Mathematics Content Specialist

Chris Summers
Computer Science Content Specialist

Alyssa Wooten
Financial Literacy Content Specialist

Additional Contributions

Shannon Milliken
Comprehensive Physical Education Senior Consultant
Office of Health and Wellness

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Full Document and Other Support

For the full version of this document that contains all content areas, and for other standards, content, and instructional support, see the website for the Office of Standards and Instructional Support

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Purpose

When CDE describes **best, first instruction**, it is assumed that instruction is occurring in a traditional environment: teachers and students gathered together in a classroom, working in small groups, large groups, and individually, and that there are no safety risks posed by having people in close proximity of each other or touching shared objects. Due to COVID-19, we can no longer assume that this traditional environment is possible or preferable under the current circumstances. Districts and schools have had to consider other options, including hybrid/blended learning, online-only options, or switching to remote learning on an emergency basis when circumstances require it. For most educators, this has created challenging teaching conditions—not only is teaching under these non-traditional settings challenging compared to the classroom environments teachers are accustomed to, but the uncertainty of the moment makes long-term planning and preparation especially difficult.

The purpose of this document is to provide some guidance under these uncertain times for each of the content areas addressed by the Colorado Academic Standards. While some compromises are inevitable when shifting instruction to non-traditional settings, maintaining high-impact instruction (or the highest-impact instruction under the circumstances) requires adherence to certain principles, practices, and strategies. Teaching is a very complex endeavor and while it isn't possible to cover every approach, tool, or practice for every situation, this document aims to inform educators about what teaching should ideally look like given a variety of instructional settings.

Teaching and Learning in Diverse Learning Settings

In March of 2020, schools in Colorado made on-the-fly decisions and took quick action to change the way teaching and learning worked across the state. Several terms emerged to describe the different settings school was happening in, such as *online*, *virtual*, *remote*, and *at home*. To attempt to clarify the language used to describe these settings, this document refers to the following categories:

- **In-person learning:** Face to face instruction within a brick and mortar structure.
- **Hybrid/blended learning**: A combination of in-person learning and remote learning.
- **Online-only learning:** Online learning in Colorado refers to schools that are providing online course offerings on a full or part-time basis. Students who engage in online learning in this context are enrolled in an approved school or program or may be taking an online course to supplement.
- **Remote learning:** Education that occurs away from a school building in response to emergency situations such as COVID-19 or natural disaster. Remote learning seeks to offer continuous educational opportunities that may or may not build upon previously taught content. Remote learning is both a temporary and longer-term option. Remote learning may include digital resources and/or hard copy resources and may include synchronous or asynchronous instruction and/or self-paced independent study work.

Even with these categories and definitions, other variations are possible. For example, in-person learning *with* an enforcement of social/physical distancing will certainly have some constraints that in-person learning *without* social/physical distancing. Similarly, online and remote learning looks very different when it is conducted synchronously rather than asynchronously.

Content-Specific Resources to Support Diverse Learning Settings

CDE's top priority continues to be the health and safety of all students, educators, and communities in Colorado. To help schools plan for educational continuity while the suspension of in-person learning is in effect, we have curated a list of best practices for remote learning and teaching including free web-based resources to help keep students academically engaged. We recognize that the multitude of resources for remote learning can be overwhelming so we have collected and organized material by content area and grade level that may be useful as educators develop plans for their students. While remote learning through the Internet provides a great deal of flexibility in learning opportunities, educators should also consider utilizing hard copy resources (e.g., packet work, textbooks).

There is no requirement for districts to offer remote learning via the Internet, but if educators decide to go this path, they should strive to include equitable access to instruction for all students. Equitable access does not require that all students receive instruction in the same format e.g., online instruction). Districts should consider the individual learning needs of students in determining how to best meet individual needs. Click here for a curated list of resources across content areas.

Equity Considerations for Learning Across Settings

Regardless of the instructional setting, or how it changes in 2020-2021, we suggest you consider the following do support students and their families:

- Support **flexible scheduling and limited technology access when shifting to hybrid/blended or remote** learning settings. Student learning should not be solely dependent on access to devices and the internet. Encourage approaches that can be pursued without technology and/or asynchronously to set students up for success.
- Engage students in **meaningful** explorations, investigations, inquiries, analysis, and/or sense-making. Equitable learning experiences should be both responsive to the current need as well as meaningful to learners.
- When in remote or hybrid settings, encourage students to engage in **activities that already happen in their homes with materials that families already have** (especially so families do not need to purchase additional supplies). Families in poverty may be experiencing several of the considerations described above, along with additional concerns including regular access to meals, utilities, health services, or shelter. Undocumented students and students receiving special education services may face challenges in accessing resources that they need. Encourage educators to prioritize the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of all students.
- Help students make **explicit connections to their interests and identities**.
- **Invite family members to be a partner** in students' learning. Students and families may need to juggle home, caretaking, school, and work responsibilities. Consider a menu of options for learning experiences that allow for different types and levels of engagement during remote learning.
- Provide students with **choices for how they engage, what they investigate/research, or how they demonstrate learning.**
- Support students in **self-reflection** related to content and process to support their learning.
- **Exercise sensitivity** when referencing the current pandemic as a topic for instruction.

- Encourage, support, and facilitate **first-language family participation** in the learning across multiple settings. Take steps to bridge the gap in access to bilingual and native language resources that support learning for students and their families.

General Considerations for Standards-Aligned Instruction

The guidance provided below gives educators insights into "traditional" teaching practices and how shifts in those teaching practices can lead to student learning experiences that are more authentic and engaging in diverse learning settings. These shifts support instructional alignment with the 2020 Colorado Academic Standards.

Learning experiences should look less like…	Learning experiences should look more like…
An attempt to recreate school at home during learning: - assuming a **strict "school day" schedule** **requiring special materials** (e.g. materials not commonly found at home) - pacing with the **planned scope and sequence in remote learning environment** - assigning **readings** to stay "caught up" - packet of **worksheets and busy-work** - all learning experiences happen **virtually**	**Flexible goals and structures for learning** **extended time** for learning and reflection - use of **commonly available materials** **purposeful selection of learning targets** - allowing students to **explore their interests** **meaningful, manageable tasks and projects** **opportunities to learn without the use of devices or the internet**
Teacher-centered instruction - virtual lectures/classes that all students **synchronously** attend - teachers **delivering information and assignments** - teacher instruction and feedback as the **primary mode** of facilitating learning	**Purposeful teacher-student interactions** **optional** opportunities to connect with teachers and peers **virtually and at a variety of times** - teachers providing **coaching, feedback, and encouragement** - encouraging **students to engage in learning and reflection with their families and communities** - encouraging **self-reflection** on what students learn and how they learn it
Assignments to "get through" content **emphasizing memorizing content** or "checking off" tasks on lists - asking students to **complete tasks that are irrelevant, lack authenticity, or are redundant in nature** (e.g., "busy work") - trying to cover content through a volume of activities or skipping from topic to topic	**Assignments that promote authentic learning** **connecting experiences to household activities,** like cooking, fixing things, or gardening, community interactions - asking students to **identify relevant problems** in their lives and **leverage content knowledge** to address them - allowing students to **deeply explore concepts, topics, phenomena (science), and/or problems of interest** through investigation, analysis, research, and other sense-making strategies to build understanding and practice over time

Instructional Guidance by Content Area

CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support stands behind the saying, "All Students, All Standards." The Colorado Academic Standards define learning goals in each content area. By providing a high-quality, standards-based educational experience for students in each of the content areas, schools open doors of opportunity to students' futures. By experiencing high-quality teaching and learning in a variety of content areas, upon graduation students should be prepared to seek out and find success in multiple career fields, college majors, or other future endeavors connecting to any one or more of the content areas for which Colorado has academic standards.

Unlike other sources of guidance for the 2020-2021 school year, the guidance below gives equal preference to each content area. **This is not a guide for narrowing the curriculum down to mathematics and English language arts**. Instead, it is our goal that schools consider the guidance provided and strive to offer well-rounded, enriching, opportunity-creating educational experiences for all students, regardless of the instructional setting.

Social Studies

High-Impact Instructional Strategies for Diverse Learning Settings in Social Studies

While there are numerous teaching strategies for effective social studies instruction, the research on high-impact instruction in social studies (in terms of a positive impact on student learning) focuses primarily in two areas: historical thinking, and civic knowledge and skills for citizenship. History education researchers tend to focus on how students analyze multiple historical documents and develop historical arguments, while civic education researchers focus on students' evaluating information about public issues from multiple sources and viewpoints and develop reasoned judgments (Barton, K.C. & Avery, P.G., 2016, p. 1002). It's important to note that while the strategies below are discussed individually, there is typically overlap among them when they are implemented in the classroom. The chart below explains a few of the high-impact instructional strategies and suggests a few online tools that could be used to move the traditionally in person strategy into an online environment:

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Rote memorization of facts and terminology	Facts and terminology learned as needed while developing explanations and designing solutions supported by evidence-based reasoning and arguments.	Develop & ask disciplinary focused questions: Engaging questions that anchor a unit and engages/interests students in the topic. Primary & Secondary Source Analysis: Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills.	C3 Inquiries: Complete inquiries for students K-12 Mural: a digital workspace for visual collaboration Jamboard: a collaborative digital whiteboarding experience, available through a physical board, tablet and mobile apps as well as on the web

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Learning ideas disconnected from questions	Systems thinking and modeling to give context for the ideas to be learned	Discussion: Productive classroom discussions can build students' higher-order thinking skills. Teacher Modeling: When modeling in social studies, teachers make disciplinary reading and writing strategies explicit for students, so that students are empowered to use these strategies in their work regularly and with independence.	Flipgrid: a free program that will allow you and your students to post short videos online in response to different prompts, and to converse with each other via video. Here's a "how to" video Screencastify: Capture, edit and share videos in minutes!

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Teachers providing information to the whole class	Students conducting investigations, solving problems, and engaging in discussions with teachers' guidance	Interactive "mini lectures": Short, direct instruction that focuses on concepts and/or principles can help guide students in their learning. Discussion: Productive classroom discussions can build students' higher-order thinking skills. Problem/Project Based Learning: a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects.	Screencastify: Capture, edit and share videos in minutes! Educreations: Record your voice and screen to create dynamic video lessons that students can access any time, as needed. Peardeck: an interactive presentation tool used to actively engage students in individual and social learning and give formative assessments. Mentimeter: Create interactive presentations that includes giving students opportunities to vote, etc. Hyperdocs: a digital document—such as a Google Doc—where all components of a learning cycle have been pulled together into one central hub. Within a single document, students are provided with hyperlinks to all of the resources they need to complete that learning cycle.

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Teachers posing questions with only one answer	Students discussing open-ended questions that focus on the strength of evidence used to generate claims	Think-aloud: this strategy asks students to say out loud what they are thinking about when reading, solving problems, or simply responding to questions posed by teachers or other students. Socratic Seminar: a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Question Formulation Technique: a simple, powerful strategy that builds people's skills to ask better questions, participate in decisions that affect them, and advocate for themselves	Voice Thread: a platform where students develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills. FlipGrid: a free program that will allow you and your students to post short videos online in response to different prompts, and to converse with each other via video. Here's a "how to" video Padlet: Allows students to collaborate by posting notes and ideas on a bulletin board type platform

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Students reading textbooks and answering questions at the end of the chapter	Students reading multiple sources, including content-related magazine and journal articles and web-based resources; students developing summaries of information	Close Reading: involves an investigation of a short piece of text, with multiple readings done over multiple instructional lessons Primary & Secondary Source Analysis: Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills.	CommonLit: a foundation of over 2,000 high-quality free reading passages for grades 3-12 in both English and Spanish C3 Inquiries: Complete inquiries for students K-12 Primary Source Sets: Established sets of primary sources built around a specific topic. Elementary Secondary Smithsonian Tween Tribune: Daily AP news stories for K-12 students, including Lexile levels and lesson plans. Articles available in Spanish too.

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Pre-planned outcomes for "cookbook" activities	Multiple investigations driven by student's questions/interests with a range of possible outcomes that collectively lead to a deep understanding of established core ideas	Virtual Fieldtrips: Allows students to virtually visit museums, places of interest, and historical sites. Virtual Museum Tours: Allows students to virtually visit museums and explore artwork, statues, and other artifacts found in museums. Use Hyperdocs for investigations: Hyperdocs allow the teacher to set up an online inquiry with all the resources necessary to complete the inquiry.	Google Arts & Culture: This site provides numerous opportunities and activities that can engage students in exploring museums and historical sites around the world. Hyperdocs: a digital document—such as a Google Doc—where all components of a learning cycle have been pulled together into one central hub. Within a single document, students are provided with hyperlinks to all the resources necessary to complete that learning cycle. Podcasts (e.g., Backstory, The Past & the Curious, Freakonomics)

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Worksheets	Student writing in journals, reports, posters, and media presentations that explain and argue	Document Based Questions: an inquiry question where students analyze a historical issue through provided sources, or "documents," and then write a short essay response to the question.

Document Based Lessons: Lessons that are based on primary source documents that provide contextual understanding of a topic or event.

Writing in the Social Studies: writing regularly in the social studies classroom, students not only become better prepared for reading and writing assessments but gain a deeper comprehension of social studies content. | Reading Like a Historian from the Stanford History Education Group: engages students in historical inquiry. Each lesson revolves around a central historical question and features a set of primary documents designed for groups of students with a range of reading skills.

Online portfolios: A collection of students work that can be curated online. Students can showcase their work, or it could be used to develop a primary source set on a specific topic or event.

Canva: a graphic design platform that allows users to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, and other visual content. |

Moving from less like…	Moving to more like…	Instructional Strategies	Tools to Try
Oversimplification of activities for students who are perceived to be less able than their peers	Provisions for support so that all students can engage in sophisticated lessons and practices	Choiceboards: graphic organizers that comprise of different amounts of squares. Each square is an activity. The activities help students learn or practice a primary concept, while allowing them a choice. Students can be instructed to choose one or more of these activities to complete. Socratic Seminar: a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions.	Think-aloud: this strategy asks students to say out loud what they are thinking about when reading, solving problems, or simply responding to questions posed by teachers or other students. Teacher Modeling: When modeling in social studies, teachers make disciplinary reading and writing strategies explicit for students, so that students are empowered to use these strategies in their work regularly and with independence. Voice Thread: a platform where students develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills. FlipGrid: a free program that will allow you and your students to post short videos online in response to different prompts, and to converse with each other via video. Here's a "how to" video

Resources to Support Diverse Learning Settings in Social Studies

- A listing of online social studies resources for remote learning:
  https://www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/remotelearningresources#ss
- A padlet of social studies digital resources: https://padlet.com/edtechnut/socialstudies
- **Teaching Tolerance** provides free resources to educators to supplement the curriculum, to inform their practices, and to create civil and inclusive school communities where children are

respected, valued and welcome participants. Their program emphasizes social justice and anti-bias: https://www.tolerance.org/

- **Facing History and Ourselves** develops educational material on prejudices and injustice in American and European society, with a focus on Nazi Germany and The Holocaust: https://www.facinghistory.org
- **Social Studies Resource List:** https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies