COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE
C3 FRAMEWORK
FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

INSTRUCTIONAL SHIFTS

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The C3 Framework represents the ideas and practices that ambitious social studies teachers have long believed and practiced: ideas, and the questions that frame them, matter; disciplinary knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient for powerful social studies teaching and learning; social studies is about making and supporting arguments and using sources thoughtfully; and students need a range of outlets and opportunities to try out and revise their conclusions. As represented in the C3 Inquiry Arc, these ideas and practices set a challenge for students and thus require teachers to shift instruction to meet these new challenges.

These **five instructional shifts** offer teachers a foundation for designing curricular materials and instructional activities that align to the C3 Framework. Good teachers will differentiate the elements of those activities so that all students will be engaged. Instruction that is mindful of the C3 is clear about the kinds of questions employed, the opportunities to work individually and collaboratively, the mix of content and skills taught, the ways in which literacy is woven into lessons and assessments, and the venues offered for students to take informed action. In each of these ways, teachers are taking deliberate steps to help their students become ready for college, career, and civic life.

These shifts articulate ways that teachers can strengthen their instruction, while also impacting the design of curriculum and assessment. They represent the ambitions set forth in the C3 Inquiry Arc, but also reflect exemplary practices that can be found right now in thousands of social studies classrooms. The goal of this publication is to clearly communicate a coherent set of instructional practices and elevate these practices as models for enhancing social studies teaching and learning in all classrooms.

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Craft questions that spark and sustain an inquiry

Dimension 1 of the C3 Framework sets an expectation that *individually and collaboratively* students will construct compelling and supporting questions that initiate and sustain an inquiry. Compelling questions represent academic content-based problems and issues in and across the social studies disciplines. Supporting questions often nestle underneath compelling questions, contributing knowledge and insights to the overall inquiry, and the C3 expects that students will be able to understand and be able to articulate these relationships (D1.4). The C3 Framework notes that students will need considerable guidance from adults to construct questions suitable for inquiry (pp. 24 & 25). Ultimately, the C3 Framework expects that students understand the relevance and importance of the questions under investigation and that this understanding spirals and builds along the inquiry experience.

Cultivate and nurture collaborative civic spaces

Civic readiness is a key component of the C3 Framework. Throughout the C3, indicators are prefaced by the notion that students will "individually and with others..." accomplish the learning goals set forward. The idea of collaboration is hard-wired into the inquiry arc, but collaboration means more than just pairing up with other students to develop questions or analyze sources. When using an inquiry approach informed by the C3 in the classroom, the importance of collaboration as an element of civic life is clear. Collaboration is a natural part of civic life. Students collaborate to develop questions and rely on one another to examine the importance of those questions. When engaging disciplinary content, students "work together to apply civic virtues and principles in school settings." Students are expected to communicate their conclusions to a "range of audiences" (p.60), both in and out of the classroom. Students join efforts to critique arguments and explanations (D4.4 and D4.5) and to further refine their understanding. Perhaps most importantly students assess their individual and collective capacities for addressing problems (D4.7) and then apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures in making classroom decisions (D4.8). In all the places where the C3 emphasizes civic life, collaboration is fundamental to student success.

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Integrate content *and* skills purposefully

Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework focuses on disciplinary skills and key conceptual knowledge associated with civics, economics, geography, and history. Thus, Dimension 2 guides but does not prescribe the selection of curricular content necessary for a rigorous social studies program. Curricular content specifies the particular ideas to be taught and the grade levels at which to teach them; conceptual content is the bigger set of ideas in the C3 that will help frame the curricular content. However, the absence of curricular content in the C3 should not be misinterpreted. Curricular content is critically important to the disciplines within social studies. Teachers will need to be thoughtful in selecting appropriate and relevant content to help students ground their inquiries and build disciplinary skills and conceptual knowledge. The notion of content as separate from skills is an artificial distinction. Skills, particularly those in the disciplines, exist for the purpose of developing content knowledge. The C3 Framework argues for the active (skills-based) development and application of content knowledge. In essence, students will come to know disciplinary content as the apply C3 skills to be fully college, career, and civic ready.

Promote literacy practices and outcomes

The literacies described in the C3 Framework fall into two broad categories: Inquiry and Disciplinary literacies. Inquiry literacies include questioning, developing claims with evidence, and communicating conclusions. While these inquiry literacies represent, in some ways, a new way of thinking about social studies instruction (see shifts 1, 2, and 5), the unique emphasis on disciplinary literacies in the C3 Framework requires a separate consideration. Social studies has long emphasized literacy and social studies teachers recognize that they share the responsibility for literacy instruction in the schools. The Common Core provides a clear accounting for the development of literacies among students. However, the unique disciplinary literacies that emerge in social studies from the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history require special attention. The C3 emphasizes these unique disciplinary literacies in Dimension 2. These indicators represent a roadmap for students to develop disciplinary literacies as they examine content in civics, economics, geography, and history. Included among these disciplinary literacies are processes such deliberation, using economic data, reasoning spatially, and analyzing cause and effect.

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Provide tangible opportunities for taking informed action

Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework closes the inquiry arc with opportunities for students to communicate the results of their inquiries and, in cases where it is curricularly appropriate, to take informed action. The C3 does not prescribe the actions that are appropriate for a particular classroom context or for a specific inquiry. Instead, what these indicators focus on is being ***informed*** when taking action. Students in social studies use their C3 inquiries as a launching pad for action. The indicators in Dimension 4 guide students in doing three things as they move from academic inquiry to the public square: 1) Understand the pervasiveness of the problem as well its complexity (D4.6); 2) Assess options for action given the context of the problem (D4.7); 3) Engage in deliberative processes to move toward an "action" plan (D4.8). There is an expectation that social studies students practice citizenship in the same way they practice historical thinking, economic decision-making or geographic reasoning. As a result, students will need tangible spaces in curricula to consider, debate, and plan for action-oriented experiences that would culminate their academic inquiries.

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