



## **ELEMENTS OF A BALANCED CURRICULUM**

2017

### **Introduction**

At the college and university level, ethnic studies and related courses are sometimes taught from a specific political point of view or frame of reference. In K-12 education it is imperative that students are exposed to multiple perspectives, taught to think critically and form their own opinions on these and other issues. Accomplishing a balanced curriculum and pedagogy—well rounded instructional program—can be a complicated and difficult endeavor to achieve. Therefore, the Division of Instruction has developed the following guiding document in order to assist teachers with this process.

### **Overall Goal of a Balanced Curriculum**

A goal of history, literature, and ethnic studies related courses should be to equip students with the skills required to understand and analyze multiple perspectives or points of view on relevant topics so that they can develop their own opinions and present well-articulated arguments supported by evidence.

### **Elements of a Balanced Curriculum**

#### ***Curriculum, resources, and materials include:***

- A balance of topics, authors, and concepts, including primary and secondary sources that represent multiple, and sometimes opposing, points of view or perspectives (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016).

- Sources and genres that represent a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews (Introduction to CCSS, 2010).
- Opportunities to teach students “to both understand our increasingly complex society and participate fully in our democratic system” (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016).

*Students will:*

- Grapple with multiple and often competing pieces of information, form interpretations based on evidence, and learn how to place information in its appropriate context, and connect it to issues of broader significance (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016).
- Actively seek to understand, analyze and articulate multiple points of view, perspectives and cultures (Introduction to CCSS, 2010).
- Learn that reading informational text in newspapers, articulating similarities and differences between political candidates, making claims supported by evidence, and discerning genres of arguments, for example, are all essential virtues that an informed citizenry must possess (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016, p. 20).
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate into argumentative and expository writing and speaking (California College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing and Speaking/Listening, 2010).
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge (California College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, 2010).
- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (California College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking/Listening, 2010).

***Curriculum, resources, and materials:***

- Are appropriate for students with diverse learning needs (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016).
- Incorporate the historical thinking skills of sourcing, close reading, corroboration, and contextualization (Stanford History Education Group Reading Like a Historian).

***Pedagogy:***

- Attend to the varied student populations in the classroom by embracing diversity as an asset for engaging in rich and rigorous instruction. *See the Access and Equity Pedagogy Principles document for more information.*
- Must emphasize evidence based disciplinary practices and concepts which include investigation, evaluating evidence, close reading, and argumentative writing [and speaking] (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016, pg. 3).
- Must support that, in the investigation, presentation and interpretation of facts and ideas within the prescribed course of study, teachers shall be free to examine, present and responsibly discuss various points of view in an atmosphere of open inquiry, provided that the instruction, material, or discussion: is appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students; is a fair and balanced academic presentation of various points of view consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias or partisanship (adapted from the United Teachers – Los Angeles/Los Angeles Unified School District Contract 2014-2017, Article XXV Academic Freedom and responsibility, 1.0 Lesson Content).

***Content examples of a balanced curriculum:***

- ...imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule (California State History-Social Studies Standard 10.4.3).

- ...conflicting interpretations of state and federal authority as emphasized in the speeches and writings of statesmen such as Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun (California State History-Social Studies Standard 8.10.1).
- The voice/role of women in the Black Civil Rights Movement, Chicano Movement, Anti-War Movement, etc.
- Cesar Chavez' multidimensional position on immigration.
- Multiple perspectives of the feminist movement including that of women of color.
- Gender identity and sexuality.
- A Mexican-American Literature course should also include the writings of Richard Rodriguez.
- The complexities surrounding Japanese American internment.

***Please note that on the digital version of this guide, the bullets above will be linked to resources on the DOI website***

### **Resources**

*For additional resources, please click here (links to the DOI website)*

*This guiding document was developed by the LAUSD Multidisciplinary Ethnic Studies Advisory Team in 2017. The team is comprised of representatives from Local District Central; the Division of Special Education; the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department; Access, Equity and Acceleration Department; and Division of Instruction Content Coordinators.*