



# Shifting *Instruction*

## How California's new History-Social Science Framework can support teaching and learning

By Nancy McTygue, Executive Director

**F**irst, the bad news. We're not getting new standards anytime soon. I know we need them, and maybe the powers that be will find both the motivation and funding to take up the cause, but I'm not holding my breath.

But now the good news. We are, assuming the State Board of Education approves it next month, getting a new Framework and it will provide both updated grade-level content and discipline-specific strategies to improve student learning and literacy. Teachers can incorporate these practical, engaging, and innovative strategies into their classrooms today.

Simply put, the new Framework is vastly different from previous versions, and it offers both a conceptual model and concrete examples to help your students. Here's what you need to know:

**Discipline-Specific Inquiry.** Like the Common Core State Standards and C3 Framework, the new Framework encourages teachers to organize their instruction around questions of significance for students to explore and, after analyzing relevant evidence, develop their own interpretations. By employing disciplinary tools to deepen content knowledge, student critical thinking and literacy will also be improved. Like the ELA/ELD Framework, the new HSS Framework includes a variety of grade-level specific classroom examples to support student inquiry. For example, in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade elective chapter, in the section on California history, students are asked to consider demographic and economic data in order to investigate the state's population growth in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century: "Why did California attract new residents? What could it offer to them?"

**Expanded Content.** As many have rightly pointed out, the new Framework is a lot longer than it has been in the past. One main reason for this is that there is substantially more content in this version. For example, we've added content on a variety of different topics in response to recent legislation (such as the FAIR Act), to incorporate the latest historiography (such as a more connected and less regional approach to world history), and to integrate public comment (such as an expanded section on Korean Comfort Women).

**Student Literacy.** In order to understand and be successful in their study of history, geography, economics, and government, students must be able comprehend what they read, write clearly and persuasively, and communicate with each other and adults. These disciplinary demands align with the literacy expectations outlined in the Common Core and English Language Development Standards, and the new Framework offers strategies to integrate content and literacy instruction. For example, in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade chapter on nineteenth-century U.S. History, there is a detailed example of how history and ELD teachers can work together to examine the writing of Frederick Douglass to both better understand the abolitionist movement and improve student reading comprehension.

**Citizenship.** Although previous iterations of the Framework also included significant attention to developing student understanding of our democratic system of governance, this version extends that work by offering concrete examples of how schools can not only teach how our government works, but it goes one step further to support student participation in civic discourse, and to promote public service. The Framework provides opportunities for students to marshal the lessons they've learned in history-social science classes to improve their local communities. In the 4<sup>th</sup> grade chapter, for example, students explore primary sources on a variety of Californians in order to develop their own answer to the question, "How did this person contribute to the state?"

For a fuller explanation of these shifts, as well as specific examples, check out the introduction and one or more grade level chapters in the current draft: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/hssfw2ndreview.asp>. For additional information about the Framework or support for its implementation at your school or district, contact the California History-Social Science Project ([chssp.ucdavis.edu](http://chssp.ucdavis.edu); [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu); 530-752-0572).