



## **History–Social Science: Exploring the Impact of Family and Culture on Children’s Development of History–Social Science Knowledge and Skills**



History–Social Science Domain: Exploring the Impact of  
Family and Culture on Children’s Development of  
History–Social Science Knowledge and Skills

### **Focus Statement**

Students identify considerations related to children’s families, communities, and culture that can help students better understand how children might demonstrate the competencies described in the history–social science foundations.

### **Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes**

The Curriculum Alignment Project’s (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Principle and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Observation and Assessment
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

### **Instructional Methodologies**

- Brainstorming
- Class discussion
- Development of resource tool
- Lecture
- Notetaking outline or guide
- Pairs or small groups
- Personal reflection
- Reflective discussion



## California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will undertake a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies*. The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition



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### Before You Start

Children’s development of knowledge and skills in the history–social science domain, as in all other domains, is influenced and impacted by their family and cultural experiences. By identifying and examining the diversity of many of these experiences, students can increase their understanding of what children bring to the classroom setting that prepares them for learning in the five strands of this domain.

In this learning experience, students will identify questions and considerations that can help them learn about families’ beliefs and practices related to specific foundations. They will then consider how the information garnered from those questions and considerations can help them think about children’s growth in those foundations.

There are two approaches described for this learning experience. The first approach has students working in pairs or groups of three to develop a document that will be shared with the rest of the class. A class discussion is suggested after all students review all the documents. Therefore, there will need to be some provision for making copies of each document available to all students. If the class has file-sharing capability, students could post their documents for retrieval by the other students. Students would probably need outside-of-class time to write and post their papers.

The second approach involves students writing ideas on large sheets of paper posted around the room. Materials needed include 15 sheets of large paper such as flip chart paper, markers in dark colors, and tape that will not harm the walls.

If this is the students’ first exposure to the history–social science domain, it is suggested that the instructor provide a review of the introductory material through either a lecture or assigned reading. Because the strands, substrands, and foundations for this particular domain may not be familiar to some students, it will be important for them to have a basic understanding of the content before engaging in this learning experience.



## Information Delivery



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If students are not familiar with the history–social science domain, it is suggested that the introductory material from the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3* be introduced at the beginning of the session:

- Introduction (p. 1)
- Scope of the Foundations (pp. 1–4), especially the following descriptions of the strands found on page 3:
- Self and Society (beginning to identify with how their family does things and understand that other families and people have ways of doing things that are different or similar to what their family does)
- Civics (how to live with others and how rules work, such as taking turns to go down the slide)
- History (events that happened in the past, even before they were born, such as when their mommy was a little girl)
- Geography (the location of familiar places in relation to each other, such as knowing the way to preschool or that the park is across the street from the grocery store) and the different kinds of places where people live
- Ecology (learning to take care of earth and animals [for example, not wasting water])
- Economics (a beginning understanding of money and the exchange of things and services, such as groceries purchased at the store)
- Purpose of the Foundations (pp. 4–5)
- Understanding the Foundations (pp. 5–6)
- Glossary (p. 39)

It is suggested that students work with one or two partners on one set of foundations. In addition to the foundations, students can also review the Bibliographic Notes section for their assigned foundations. The 15 sets of foundations and pages for the notes are listed for the instructor’s reference:



Strand	Substrand	Foundation	Pages
Self and Society	1.0 Culture and Diversity	1.1	8, 23–24
	2.0 Relationships	2.1	9, 24–26
	3.0 Social Roles and Occupations	3.1	10, 26
Becoming a Preschool Community Member (Civics)	1.0 Skills for Democratic Participation	1.1	11, 26–27
	2.0 Responsible Conduct	2.1	12, 27–28
	3.0 Fairness and Respect for Other People	3.1	13, 28–29
	4.0 Conflict Resolution	4.1	14, 29–30
Sense of Time (History)	1.0 Understanding Past Events	1.1	15, 30–31
	2.0 Anticipating and Planning Future Events	2.1	16, 31–32
	3.0 Personal History	3.1	17, 32–33
	4.0 Historical Changes in People and the World	4.1	18, 33–34
Sense of Place (Geography and Ecology)	1.0 Navigating Familiar Locations	1.1	19, 34–35
	2.0 Caring for the Natural World	2.1	20, 35–36
	3.0 Understanding the Physical World Through Drawings and Maps	3.1	21, 36–37
Marketplace (Economics)	1.0 Exchange	1.1	22, 37–38



## Active Learning



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### Getting it started

Ask students to find one or two partners with whom to explore one or more of the foundations. There are 15 foundations in the history–social science domain, so the instructor may choose to assign one foundation to each group, more than one foundation to each group, or more than one group to a foundation. Students then review their assigned foundation(s), including the examples, and the section in the Bibliographic Notes related to the substrand for their foundation(s). Students should review the foundations for both the 48 and 60 months of age.



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### Keeping it going

Each group of students is asked to brainstorm a list of questions and considerations related to a child's family, community, and culture that they believe are important for understanding children's knowledge and skills described in their foundation(s). For example, some of the considerations for the foundation 1.1 under the Self and Society strand, Culture and Diversity substrand might include these questions:

- How culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse is the child's family? The community in which the child lives?
- What is the child's home language? What languages has the child been exposed to in his home? In his community?
- What traditions and cultural practices has the child experienced in his family? In his community?
- What kinds of foods does the child typically eat at home? What are the family's beliefs and practices around foods and meals?
- What opportunities has the child had to meet people outside his family and immediate neighborhood community? To participate in different community events? To travel outside the town or city in which he lives?

Examples for the foundation related to the substrand Caring for the Natural World might include these considerations:



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- The extent of the child's exposure to and experience with outdoor environments (e.g., parks, gardens, lakes, rivers, streams)
- Child's exposure to animals such as pets and animals found at farms, zoos, ponds or streams, aquariums, aviaries, animal-related theme parks



- Child's familiarity with plants in a home garden, community garden, park, botanical garden
- Range of weather where the child lives
- Child's experience visiting or living in places with weather different from what she typically sees
- How much the child's immediate family members talk about weather, animals, and different environments based on their daily experiences or on books, newspapers, magazines, and television shows
- The kind of recycling practices the family does and talks about

Encourage students to make their lists as comprehensive as possible. This first step is a brainstorming exercise, so it is suggested that they not spend a lot of time discussing their examples. Also, it may be helpful to remind students that these questions or considerations are not to imply any value or judgment about the family's beliefs, practices, or circumstances. They are to provide a broader context for getting to know the children who may be in their preschool classes.

#### Online Options

If the class has document-sharing capability, the brainstorming step could be done by each group of students online

#### Putting it together

Each group next reviews its list and incorporates it into a one-page document that will be shared with the rest of the class. Each document should include the strand, substrand, and foundations as well as the list of considerations and questions.

#### Online Options

If the class has document-sharing capability, students could also complete this step online. If the class has file-sharing capability, each group could then post its document for



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### Taking it further

After reviewing all the documents, students can look for questions or considerations that cross all or most of the foundations. Encourage them to discuss what themes emerge and what overarching questions are suggested by these themes. Also, are there any additional questions that should be added to any of the lists? What are the primary implications of these questions and considerations when thinking about a specific child's progress in developing the knowledge or skill described in the foundation?

### Another approach/way

Instead of having students brainstorm their questions and considerations in small groups and develop documents to share, the instructor could use a carousel approach. If there is enough wall space in the classroom, the instructor could post 15 sheets of large paper around the room. Each sheet should have a foundation, substrand, and strand written on the top. To save space, just write the foundation number and a few key words for the foundation and substrand. Also, include the foundations for both age groups on one sheet.

Then ask students to individually or in pairs or triads position themselves in front of the sheets so that there are students by each sheet. Then give them approximately three to five minutes to brainstorm some questions or considerations for the foundations described on that sheet and quickly write them on the sheet. Call time after three to five minutes, and the students move to the next sheet. Depending on how much time is planned for this learning experience, the instructor can ask students to move to all 15 sheets or just a certain number of them. However, it is suggested that enough different students work on each foundation in order to have at least six to eight items for each one.

Ask for students to volunteer to read the items on each sheet until all the sheets have been reviewed. The instructor could then lead a discussion described in the "Taking it further" section.

#### Online Options

If the class has document-sharing capability, this carousel approach could be done by the whole class. Each foundation could be posted with approximately two minutes for the students to brainstorm ideas online.



## Reflection

The following questions can be used as a concluding class discussion or for students' individual reflection:



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- Which questions or considerations from lists other than the one you developed stand out for you?
- Which questions or considerations surprised you?
- Which questions or considerations would help you develop the most insight into how a child is demonstrating skills and concepts for several foundations?
- How will you use these key questions or considerations in your work with children and families in supporting children's development in the history–social science domain?

## Deeper Understanding



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Ask students to look at the examples for the foundation(s) they worked with in this learning experience. They could now brainstorm other examples for their assigned foundation that specifically relate to a child's family, home, community, or cultural experience. Students should think about the considerations about family, community, and culture discussed in class, and they can also use actual experiences with children and families. If students draw from their work with children and families, they should be careful to observe confidentiality and not share any identifying information about a specific child or family. It may help students to pretend that they are preparing for a parent conference and think of things children might have shared about their life outside school that demonstrate a competency addressed by a foundation.

For example, one foundation in the Navigating Familiar Locations substrand of the Sense of Place (Geography and Ecology) strand is "Identify the characteristics of familiar locations such as home and school, describe objects and activities associated with each, recognize the routes between them, and begin using simple directional language (with varying degrees of accuracy)." The following examples illustrate how a child who lives part-time with two parents might demonstrate competency in that foundation:

- The child talks about where he sleeps when he's with his mother and where he sleeps when he's at his father's home. He might also describe different activities he does when he is at each place.
- The child explains to a friend that when he's living with his mother, she walks him to school and they go by the park. When



he stays with his father, they take the bus and it takes a longer time to get to school.

The same child may show his knowledge about the foundation “Anticipate events in familiar situations in the near future, with adult assistance” in these ways:

- The child explains to the teacher that his father is picking him up after school tomorrow and he’s staying with his father instead of his mother for a whole week because his mother is going on a business trip.
- The child announces during circle time that he and his mother are going to his favorite ice cream store when she comes back from her business trip.

Ask students to take turns sharing two or three examples they came up with for their foundation. As students present their examples, ask the other students to note what aspects of home, family, community, and culture children are bringing to their development of knowledge and skills in history–social science. Encourage students to be as specific as possible. For instance, from the examples provided in this section, it appears that the child has two parents and lives part-time with each parent—one kind of family structure.

After all the examples have been shared, recap the different aspects of home, family, community, and culture that the students identified. Based on the examples they developed, ask students if they think children’s family and cultural experiences seem to have more impact on some foundations than on others.