



Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goals and the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies

The [Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goals Overview](#) provides the research base associated with this evidence-based instructional practice.

What are connections between the Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #2: Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goals and the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies*?

The *KAS for Social Studies* is designed to promote the development of knowledge and skills that will produce Kentucky graduates who are civically engaged, socially responsible and culturally literate. The standards guide student exploration of the relationships and interactions among individuals and groups at local, state, national and international levels through the disciplines of civics, economics, geography and history and the inquiry practices of questioning, investigating, using evidence and communicating conclusions. The standards are designed to include a breadth of knowledge, not as isolated facts to be simply memorized, but as usable knowledge to be integrated into an understanding of the world.

In order to achieve these goals and meet grade-level expectations, teacher and student clarity around learning goals, relevance and success criteria are essential. Learning goals should be clearly expressed by the teacher daily, on an ongoing basis, so it is clear to students what they need to know, understand and be able to do as a result of their social studies learning experiences. Making connections to students' lives is important in social studies, as this promotes relevance by addressing a concept, problem or issue that is similar to one that they have encountered or are likely to encounter in daily life outside of school. Additionally, students should have knowledge of and ownership involving the success criteria that will demonstrate whether students have achieved their learning goals in social studies. This is critical in social studies because student voice in the educational process is essential for students to demonstrate mastery of the inquiry practices of the *KAS for Social Studies*.

Self-directed learners need to understand what they are learning and how to get there. When designing instruction aligned to the *KAS for Social Studies*, it is imperative that educators have determined the learning goals and success criteria for the coherent period of learning as the learning goals and success criteria will impact the development of compelling and supporting questions, as required by the *KAS for Social Studies*. For example, educators must be able to identify the learning goals prior to developing the compelling question to answer "What must my students know and be able to do when they have concluded this coherent period of learning?" When educators develop compelling questions, they must have the learning goal(s) in mind to ensure that the compelling question supports students in attaining the learning goal(s) and demonstrating mastery of the standards. Knowing the success criteria is essential for developing the supporting questions because the success criteria support students in attaining the learning goals, much like the supporting questions drive the investigation of the compelling question. It is important to note that often there might be more than one learning goal, and its associated success criteria, connected to helping students be able to effectively address a compelling question.

What are planning considerations for the successful implementation of the Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #2: Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goals to ensure that all students have equitable access and opportunity to learn the standards contained in the *KAS for Social Studies*?

- Develop a thorough understanding of your grade-level standards, including the ability to effectively break down a standard.
- Understand each of the inquiry practices and disciplinary strands, and how they work together and are both essential, as concept knowledge cannot be achieved effectively without the practice of inquiry. Throughout a child’s social studies education, students engage in the inquiry practices – questioning, investigating, using evidence and communicating conclusions. Students use these practices to acquire, refine and extend knowledge and understanding of key social studies concepts within the four disciplinary lenses of civics, economics, geography and history.
- Understand the progression of the *KAS for Social Studies* by becoming familiar with the grade level standards that precede and follow your grade level’s standards.
- Provide students opportunities to take ownership of their learning by collaborating to co-construct success criteria.
- Establish a physical and social environment in your classroom that builds respectful relationships and enables effective discussion. This will allow students to feel comfortable providing input when participating in class discussions around developing success criteria.
- Create assignments that are strongly aligned to the *KAS for Social Studies*. Assignments should:
 - Connect directly to the content and skills expectations of the identified standards.
 - Ask students to organize and interpret information in addressing a concept, problem or issue.
 - Elaborate on their understanding, explanations or conclusions on important social studies concepts through elaborated expressive communication.
 - Ask students to address a concept, problem or issue that is similar to one that they have encountered or are likely to encounter in daily life outside of school.
- Analyze student work produced from assignments aligned to the *KAS for Social Studies*. Student work should demonstrate:
 - A mastery of the content and skills expectations of the standards.
 - Thinking with social studies content by questioning, investigating, using evidence and communicating conclusions to produce comparisons/contrasts, arguments, application of new information to new contexts, and consideration of alternative viewpoints.
 - Understanding of ideas, concepts, theories, and principles from the social studies disciplines by using them to interpret and explain specific, concrete information or events.
 - An elaboration of his or her understanding or explanations through elaborated expressive communication.
 - The ability to address a concept, problem or issue that is similar to one that they have encountered or are likely to encounter in daily life outside of school.
- Reflect on the alignment of assignments and student work to the expectations of the *KAS for Social Studies* and determine changes that need to be made to better address the expectations of the standards.

What strategies and resources can support the implementation of Evidence-Based Instructional Practice #2: Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goals within the *KAS for Social Studies*?

Brain Research and the Need for Clear Learning Goals

For more information on establishing clear learning goals, relevance and success criteria in the social studies classroom, visit:

- KDE's [Performance Assessments in Social Studies Module](#)
 - This module explains the value of creating and implementing effective performance assessments in social studies. Since the *KAS for Social Studies* requires students to engage in disciplinary strands, inquiry practices and disciplinary concepts and practices, educators need ways to assess these in integrated ways as standards implementation requires new thinking about how assessment can be used to support student growth. Module resources include the [Facilitator's Guide](#), [PowerPoint](#) and [Module at a Glance](#) document. Section B: Connecting Standards to Assessments supports educators in learning how to use standards to build assessments to identify if students are reaching the standards. When students know what they are learning, why they are learning it and believe they can meet the expectations, it promotes student ownership in the learning process.

Starting with Teacher Clarity

For more information on promoting teacher clarity around what the *KAS for Social Studies* are asking students to know and be able to do, visit:

- KDE's [Getting to Know the KAS for Social Studies](#) Module
 - Module 1 is a resource for developing a foundational understanding of the *KAS for Social Studies*. Utilizing this module before beginning standards alignment work is recommended in order to build knowledge and capacity around the standards and to capitalize on the opportunity to improve teaching and learning.
- KDE's [Inquiry Practices of the KAS for Social Studies](#) Module
 - Module 3 provides support for understanding and implementing the inquiry practices (Questioning, Investigating, Using Evidence and Communicating Conclusions) of the *KAS for Social Studies*. Implementing the inquiry practices of the *KAS for Social Studies* effectively promotes teacher clarity around the skills students should demonstrate in social studies throughout their social studies education.
- KDE's [Minding the Gap](#) Module
 - Section A: Understanding Progressions begins to build a shared understanding of the *KAS for Social Studies* progressions and grade level expectations.
 - Section B: Unpacking the Standards demonstrates how to unpack the standards in order to clearly understand each piece of a standard.
- KDE's [Social Studies Breaking Down a Standard Protocol](#)
 - The purpose of this protocol is to guide teachers through a process for utilizing the components within the *KAS for Social Studies* to gain greater clarity in what the standards are asking students to know and be able to do in order to meet grade-level expectations.
- KDE's [Social Studies Assignment Review Protocol](#) Module
 - Module 5 focuses on building teacher capacity to effectively evaluate an assignment's alignment to the *KAS for Social Studies*. This module explains the characteristics of a

strongly aligned *KAS for Social Studies* assignment. This understanding is critical to teacher clarity, as it ensures students are experiencing standards-aligned, grade level appropriate assignments.

- KDE's [Social Studies Student Assignment Library](#)
 - The Social Studies Student Assignment Library provides examples of student assignments that are weakly, partially and strongly aligned to standards. Strongly aligned assignments are provided for each grade Kindergarten through Grade 8 and high school. Weak and/or partially aligned assignments are provided for each grade band (elementary, middle and high). The assignments can be used with the [Assignment Review Protocol](#) to develop a better understanding of the tool and how it can be applied to a teacher's own work.
 - Within the Student Assignment Library, Teacher Notes are designed to support educators in implementing assignments that are strongly aligned to the *KAS for Social Studies*. Teacher Notes, which are available for kindergarten – high school, contain guidance on how to scaffold student understanding of the inquiry practices and the disciplinary strands referenced in the strongly aligned assignments to the *KAS for Social Studies*.

Establishing Student Clarity

For more information on ensuring students' understanding of the standards' expectations in social studies, visit:

- KDE's [Social Studies Student Work Review Protocol](#)
 - This tool is intended to help teachers answer the question, "Are students demonstrating the expectations of the content and skills of the *KAS for Social Studies*?" Each section of the protocol will allow you to rate that aspect of the student work either weakly aligned, partially aligned or strongly aligned. The protocol concludes with an opportunity to reflect and determine changes that need to be made to better address the expectations of the standards if needed.

Co-Constructing Success Criteria

For more information on incorporating student ownership into the co-construction of success criteria, visit:

- KDE's [Inquiry Practices of the *KAS for Social Studies* Module](#)
 - One goal of this module is to acquire ways to get students to engage with and create compelling and supporting questions when required. Learning goals represent to students the destination of their journey, signaling clearly what they are learning and why it is important. Understanding the scope of a learning goal supports students in understanding the scope of a compelling question. This aligns well with the compelling question because the compelling question focuses on significant, enduring, unresolved issues, and multiple perspectives, among other characteristics. To answer a compelling question, students will have to synthesize knowledge they have gained from answering the supporting questions. The success criteria will enable students to monitor their learning when engaging with supporting questions to use this knowledge to attain the compelling question and the learning goal. The learning goal should be demonstrated in a students' response to a compelling question. The following sections discuss students creating their own questions:
 - Section B: What are Compelling Questions and how do students ask them?
 - Section C: What are Supporting Questions and how do students ask them?