



EDUCATING FOR **AMERICAN ★ DEMOCRACY**



**Pedagogy Companion to the Roadmap
to Educating for American Democracy**



We strive to support rigorous teaching of our constitutional principle of ‘We the People’ through integrated civics and history instruction, and also through opportunities for students to understand their civic responsibilities, to develop and use their voices, and to practice democratic engagement within and outside of the classroom.

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Introduction

This *EAD Pedagogy Companion* is intended to support implementation of the *Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy*, an inquiry-based content framework developed for the Educating for American Democracy (EAD) initiative, which has so far engaged more than 300 stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and roles, including K–12 teachers, students, and parents. The *EAD Report* presents an ambitious vision of what education for American democracy involves, highlighting the imperative that every student must be provided with opportunities to grasp the full and diverse narratives of American life and institutions, past and present. EAD’s goal is to empower educators to develop a generation of resilient, caring, and informed citizens, thoughtful young people who will participate vigorously in the ever-renewing project of American constitutional democracy. We strive to support rigorous teaching of our constitutional principle of “We the People” through integrated civics and history instruction, and also through opportunities for students to understand their civic responsibilities, to develop and use their voices, and to practice democratic engagement within and outside of the classroom.

AS AN INITIATIVE, EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY HAS THREE MAJOR AIMS:

- ☆ **60 MILLION STUDENTS** will have access to high-quality, EAD-aligned civic learning opportunities, and a diverse supermajority of those 60 million will be actively engaged in earning civic learning credentials;
- ☆ **100,000 SCHOOLS** will have in place an EAD-aligned civic learning plan and supporting resources; and
- ☆ **1 MILLION TEACHERS** across all grade levels will be EAD-ready, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to teach the *EAD Roadmap*.

None of these goals is achievable without teachers and students and school administrators who support them, which is why the EAD principal investigators, with teacher inputs, decided that this *EAD Pedagogy Companion* is a necessary accompaniment to the *EAD Roadmap*. As we continuously engaged with educators in preparing this document, we were simultaneously inspired by their support for EAD’s vision and sensitive to their concerns, such as worries about parent and community responses to deep inquiries about “hard histories,” and predicted lack of school and district leadership support.

In addition to using early teacher feedback, we have based this *EAD Pedagogy Companion* on the latest research in education, learning science, and developmental science. Together, these sources made clear to us that teaching the *EAD Roadmap* involves more than deploying evidence-based techniques and strategies. Instead, this document evolved into a holistic framework supporting engaged and diverse educators who strive to provide rigorous instruction while intentionally connecting learning with the EAD design challenges.

Those who we’ve come to call “EAD teachers” build in their classrooms a supportive and resilient community of learners who gain strength through rigorous inquiries and courageous actions related to our history and civic life.

Big Picture: Where the *EAD Pedagogy Companion* Fits

Educators should view this *EAD Pedagogy Companion* as part of a set of three documents that support high-integrity implementation of the EAD initiative. The other documents in the set are the *EAD Report* and the *EAD Roadmap*.

The *EAD Report* provides the rationale behind the EAD initiative and explains the different strategies that work together to achieve its ambitious goals. The *EAD Report* builds the context for the development of the *EAD Roadmap* and the *EAD Pedagogy Companion*.

The *EAD Roadmap* provides the content that should be addressed across the five design challenges and seven content themes across grades K–12.

Together, these three documents create the foundation for shifting history and civics content and pedagogy in diverse classrooms across the 57 states and territories that comprise our American democracy.

Using This *EAD Pedagogy Companion*

This document provides guidance, not standards of practice. It contains examples for illustrative purposes and describes potential ways to measure progress in local schools and districts. It is our hope that this *EAD Pedagogy Companion* builds an important bridge between inspiration and action. As educators explore how they might use this document in their own schools, we would like to note the following.

First, the *EAD Pedagogy Companion*, like the *EAD Roadmap* itself, favors targeted outcomes, not comprehensive coverage of all instructional strategies used in civics and history classes for every grade and every type of student. We value that the United States is a pluralistic society—one that was founded on a set of shared ideals, but that also represents many different peoples and perspectives.

Second, in keeping with our appreciation of diverse solutions in diverse contexts, we opted not to define what all districts and states should do, but rather to describe six core pedagogical principles and provide a set of empirically supported instructional and school support strategies that embody each of those principles. We encourage school districts and educators to leverage the *EAD Roadmap* and *EAD Pedagogy Companion* in ways that are consistent with their local context and the concept of EAD teacher.

Third, while encouraging diversity in implementation and curriculum design at the local level, we also acknowledge that a range of examples are useful to many educators. Through

the design of this document, we provide examples of teacher and student “moves” within each core pedagogical principle. “Moves” are actions, protocols, and activities that both students and teachers can use to support learning when engaging with a given principle. Exemplary teacher moves suggest the choices a teacher may make when planning and implementing lessons. Identifying student moves reinforces the importance of students’ engagement and agency as they deepen their content knowledge in history and civics. Sample practices and protocols incorporated within these moves can be integrated across grades K–12 when implemented alongside grade-level aligned content. The EAD initiative is committed to providing accessible resources to teachers by creating a well-curated clearinghouse of EAD-aligned resources, which can be found at educatingforamericandemocracy.org.

The Five Design Challenges

Five design challenges presented in the *EAD Roadmap* state honestly and transparently some of the rich (and challenging) push-and-pull factors that educators will encounter as they work with the *EAD Roadmap*’s seven themes. Since the beginning of this initiative, EAD initiative leaders have agreed that deep understanding of and engagement with American constitutional democracy requires students and educators to pursue inquiries that invite multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives; challenging answers; and more questions. Despite knowing that some of the enduring tensions at the heart of a republican form of government— tensions between liberty and equality, for example, or between the few and the many—can at times be uncomfortable for teachers and students alike, we believe that deep and critical exploration of these questions will ultimately serve all of our students (and our educators) better than avoiding them. To support this goal, we acknowledged design challenges as part of the *EAD Roadmap*. People who write or implement standards, curricula, materials, lessons, and



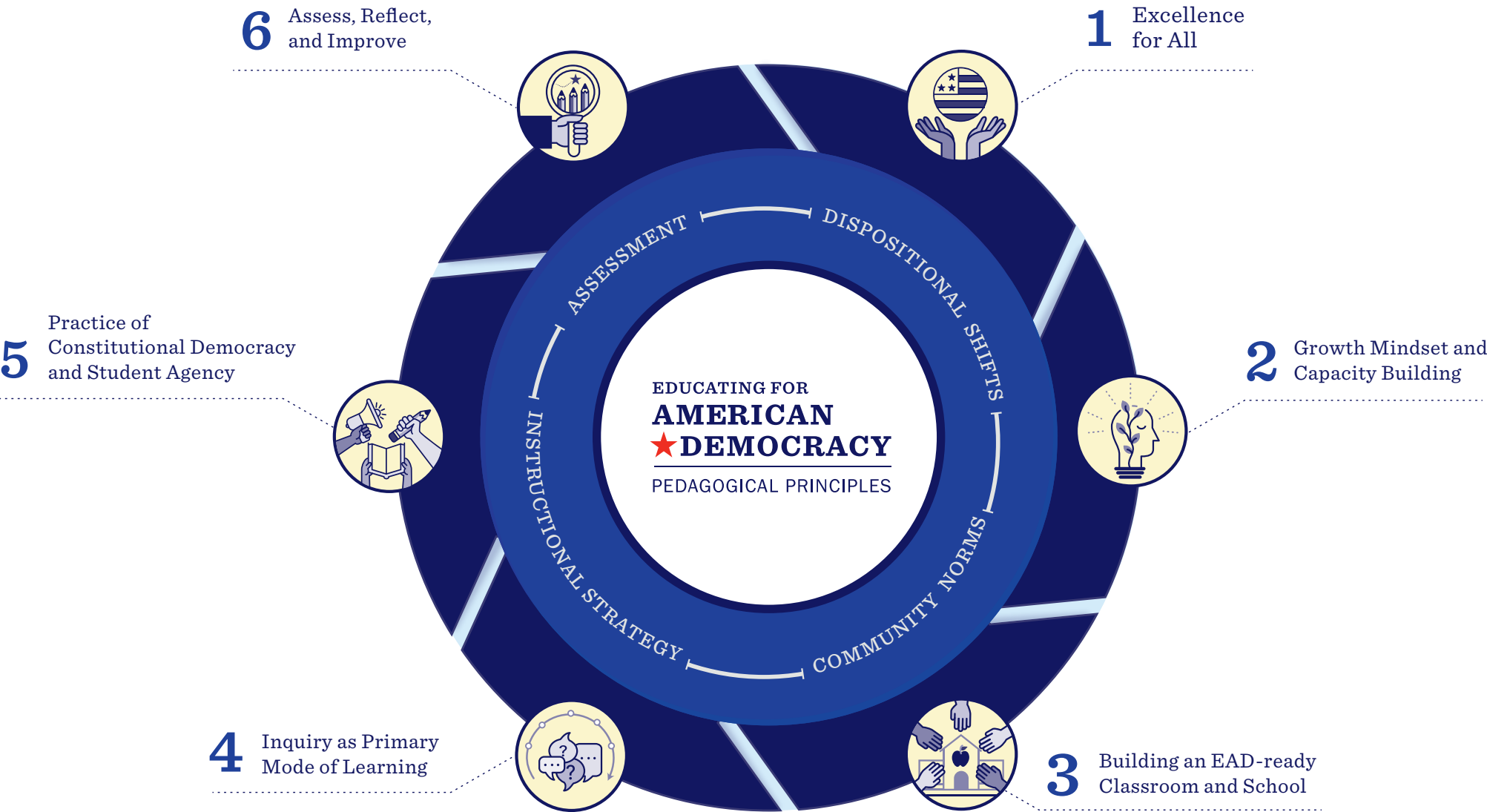
assessments in civics and U.S. history should attend to these challenges carefully. Many teachers and their students will also want to wrestle with these challenges directly in their classrooms.

The Seven Themes

The seven content themes presented in the *EAD Roadmap* encompass the material necessary to explore what it means to participate in American constitutional democracy; how American constitutional democracy came to be; the places and peoples of which it consists; how shared political institutions emerged, have been transformed, and operate now; the diverse array of benefits and harms that have been wrought by those institutions; the place of the United States in the world more broadly; and the ongoing debates that characterize contemporary American civic life, as well as the possibilities available to us now for concrete realization of our ideals.

The Six Core EAD Pedagogical Principles

To express the concrete process of becoming and/or supporting an EAD teacher, we developed the six core principles of EAD pedagogy, which are described in the graphic and text that follow. An EAD teacher embodies six core principles that are connected sequentially. Each principle contains action items for teachers, students, and school and community leaders. Being an EAD teacher starts with a dispositional shift to truly expect and support success in civic life from all students and a commitment to continuous improvement. It then moves to establishing a set of community norms that allow rigorous and challenging topics and questions to be explored deeply and courageously. Once these conditions are met, we describe how an inquiry-based instructional arc can be designed using a vast number of pedagogical techniques, supported by student engagement in practices of constitutional democracy within the classroom and then in the community. The cycle of development for an EAD teacher starts with a commitment to serve all students well and ends with affirmation of that commitment through use of formative assessments and information from assessments for self-reflection and refinement of instructional strategies.



The Six Core EAD Pedagogical Principles



PRINCIPLE 1. Excellence for All

EAD teachers commit to learn about and teach full and multifaceted history and civic narratives. They appreciate student diversity and assume all students’ capacity for learning complex and rigorous content. EAD teachers focus on inclusion and equity in both content and approach as they spiral instruction across grade bands, increasing complexity and depth about relevant history and contemporary issues.



PRINCIPLE 2. Self-Reflection and Growth Mindset

EAD teachers have a growth mindset for themselves and their students, meaning they engage in continuous self-reflection and cultivate self-knowledge. They learn and adopt content as well as practices that help all learners of diverse backgrounds reach excellence. EAD teachers need continuous and rigorous professional development (PD) and access to professional learning communities (PLCs) that offer peer support and mentoring opportunities, especially about content, pedagogical approaches, and instruction-embedded assessments.



PRINCIPLE 3. Building an EAD-Ready Classroom and School

EAD teachers cultivate and sustain a learning environment by partnering with administrators, students, and families to conduct deep inquiry about the multifaceted stories of American constitutional democracy. They set expectations that all students know they belong and contribute to the classroom community. Students establish ownership and responsibility for their learning through mutual respect and an inclusive culture that enables students to engage courageously in rigorous discussion.



PRINCIPLE 4. Inquiry as the Primary Mode of Learning

EAD teachers not only use the *EAD Roadmap* inquiry prompts as entry points to teaching full and complex content, but also cultivate students’ capacity to develop their own deep and critical inquiries about American history and civic life, and their identities and communities. EAD teachers embrace these rigorous inquiries as a way to advance students’ historical and civic knowledge and connect that knowledge to students and their communities. EAD teachers also help students cultivate empathy across differences and inquisitiveness to ask difficult questions, which are core to historical understanding and constructive civic participation.



PRINCIPLE 5. Practice of Constitutional Democracy and Student Agency

EAD teachers use their content knowledge and classroom leadership to model our constitutional principle of “We the People” through democratic practices and promoting civic responsibilities, civil rights, and civic friendship in their classrooms. EAD teachers deepen students’ grasp of content and concepts by creating student opportunities to engage with real-world events and problem-solving about issues in their communities by taking informed action to create a more perfect union.



PRINCIPLE 6. Assess, Reflect, and Improve

EAD teachers use assessments as a tool to ensure all students understand civics content and concepts and apply civic skills and agency. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning and give feedback to their teachers in higher-order thinking exercises that enhance as well as measure learning. EAD teachers analyze and utilize feedback and assessment for self-reflection and improving instruction. These principles are well aligned with the six “practices” first articulated in “The Civic Mission of Schools” report (2003 and elaborated in later documents. When viewed and applied comprehensively, the *EAD Roadmap* and *EAD Pedagogy Companion* update and build on those lists of practices and should therefore replace them. (See Appendix C in the EAD Report for detail.)



What?

EAD teachers believe in all students’ potential to achieve civic excellence. They commit to providing support for all students to reach civic readiness and actively seek ways to address inequity in their own classrooms. They embrace diversity in backgrounds, values, and needs of their students and commit to acquiring requisite knowledge and skills to serve all students.

We use the phrase “all students” frequently in this document. In this phrase, we acknowledge both the importance of making access to high-quality civic learning experiences universal, while also naming groups of students who have been historically more likely to face marginalization and receive less optimal educational experiences. Such groups include Black, Indigenous, and other students of color; students from immigrant and mixed-status households; gender non-conforming and LGBT students; students with disabilities and/or learning differences; students with significant needs; English language learners; students in alternative learning programs; and students with family experiences of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, or incarceration. Beyond these groupings, we also call on teachers to acknowledge and embrace religious and ideological diversity, as well as other life circumstances such as high mobility and grieving over loss and/or trauma. In designing curriculum and the culture of a classroom, we encourage EAD teachers and education leaders to value the unique individuals that students are while validating the experiences of students as members of historically marginalized groups. Those systemic challenges are themselves a subject of learning in history and civics.¹

Why?

Our ambitious undertaking aims to make civic learning and rigorous civic dialogue and engagement accessible to all students in the United States. Therefore, the concept of an “EAD teacher” begins with an unwavering commitment to serving all students. It is also important for the future of American constitutional democracy to build capacities, environments, and instructional practices that are accessible and robust enough to work well even in challenging conditions.

How?

To meet our shared commitment to excellence for all, teachers and school and district leaders must design local curriculum and lesson plans with relevance, rigor, and relationship in mind. They need to design curriculum and curate content with student diversity in mind. For instance, teachers can increase the relevance of content and learning activities by incorporating students’ voices, knowledge, and communities. Exposing students to diverse content, representation, and perspectives engages students and builds resilience and civic disposition. At the same time, teachers who learn about and incorporate perspectives and civic narratives that are underrepresented, invisible, and/or may be in conflict with each other promote rigor by telling an honest and full story of American history. Teachers must communicate clear and consistent expectations and provide support for all students to meet these expectations. As we will discuss in depth in Principle 6, a commitment to the success of all students should be accompanied by formative assessments to support learning and address potential differences in students’ experience of learning by analyzing information and improving practice.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **AFFIRM** diverse identities and provide inclusive instruction and examples.
- ☆ **COMMUNICATE** clear expectations and express support and care to students.
- ☆ **PROVIDE** opportunities for students to deepen and synthesize learning.
- ☆ **DIFFERENTIATE** and scaffold instruction to ensure accessibility for all learners.

Student Moves

- ☆ **TAKE** ownership and responsibility for learning.
- ☆ **CONNECT** content with relevant experiences and interests to deepen learning.
- ☆ **DEVELOP** an understanding of themselves, including their identities, interests, strengths, and areas for growth.
- ☆ **RECOGNIZE** the possibilities for all people in the United States to participate in American constitutional democracy.

School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **UTILIZE** concrete strategies and suggestions to design learning opportunities that enable all learners to engage in rigorous civics and history instruction.
- ☆ **CONSIDER** the diversity of learners and develop clear benchmarks of progress to support all students and teachers in building and communicating informed arguments. Build systems that ensure all students have access to effective learning experiences.
- ☆ **COLLABORATE** with families and community members to learn and incorporate local context into student learning opportunities.



EAD teachers commit to learn about and teach full and multifaceted historical and civic narratives. They appreciate student diversity and assume all students’ capacity for learning complex and rigorous content. EAD teachers focus on inclusion and equity in both content and approach as they spiral instruction across grade bands, increasing complexity and depth about relevant history and contemporary issues.

¹ Student Voice 2020.



What?

EAD teachers believe in all students’ worth and capability to improve and achieve comprehension of complex and deep content, to develop civic virtues² and agency, and to apply their learning through civic engagement in real life starting in early elementary and preschool grades. To do so, EAD teachers seek and apply professional training and self-reflection so they can provide excellent, relevant, and rigorous instruction to all students. EAD teachers engage in continuous improvement of their instruction and collective sharing of classroom practices. They strengthen alignment with the *EAD Roadmap* by joining professional communities. Students assert agency in their own growth, challenge themselves to engage in deep and rigorous inquiries, and take ethical and informed civic action.

Why?

Teaching the *EAD Roadmap* content fully and well to all students requires that all educators—including those in and outside of social studies disciplines and at all grade levels—believe in students’ capacity to grasp the complexity of the *EAD Roadmap*, regardless of where they start. EAD teachers design and deliver instruction accordingly. EAD teachers must also be willing to reflect on their own instructional practice and commit to continuous professional growth, deepening their content expertise and building capacity to incorporate social and political events into their pedagogy inside and outside of school.

How?

When we say “growth mindset,” we refer to a large body of research indicating that a belief in every student’s ability to achieve excellence requires educators to provide supportive structures and practices. Those structures and practices drive motivation and hard work in students, which in turn results in higher achievement.³ EAD teachers would embrace a growth mindset for themselves and for students. Because of their commitment to making sure that all students are prepared for civic life, EAD teachers seek out high-quality training and practice self-reflection, which are shown to promote effective instruction, so that they can continue improving the quality of student learning by making adjustments to their instruction.⁴ The same idea applies to student learning: students who perceive high expectations from their teachers and feel that their teachers are invested in their success improve their achievement.⁵

A three-year study of the efforts to strengthen instruction as part of the implementation of the civics law and standards in Illinois further suggests first explaining to teachers why changing instructional strategies will support their students, and then personalizing and scaffolding training to “meet teachers where they are,” promotes high-integrity implementation.⁶ A review of empirical studies of professional development identified five factors that promote teacher growth: content focus, active learning methods, coherence with state standards, duration, and collective participation.⁷ These factors should be used as a guideline for high-quality professional learning.

Importantly, EAD teachers should strive to use self-reflection in their everyday practice since professional development opportunities are often only sporadically available. For instance, in an experimental study of the Facing History and Ourselves’ teacher training, the authors found that an emphasis on critical self-reflection is a pathway to more informed pedagogic practice.⁸ Through self-reflection and continuous improvement, supplemented by new efforts in social professional development, educators can adapt instruction and be responsive to local contexts inside and outside of school, which students often need in order to connect and retain their learning.

Students as well as teachers should have recurring opportunities to develop and practice a growth mindset. This means that teachers and school leaders should systematically incorporate ways to balance rigor with multiple opportunities for success by communicating clear feedback and giving students a chance to revise their work. Formative assessments are a useful tool for reinforcing student growth mindset because teachers and students have an opportunity to reflect on what they did and didn’t do well and to apply those reflections to revision and future learning activities.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **ENGAGE** in professional development about
 - EAD principles and design challenges;
 - EAD teacher components; and
 - deepening content learning through inquiries in the *EAD Roadmap*.

- ☆ **JOIN** professional learning communities focused on support, sharing resources, and mentoring to promote a continuous cycle of improvement and courageous engagement in dialogues and discussions that result from teaching the *EAD Roadmap*.
- ☆ **GATHER** formal and informal student feedback on their learning experience to understand individual needs and strengths. Engage in self-reflection to identify and address implicit biases and practices that may interfere with some students’ learning processes.
- ☆ **SEEK** out professional development and utilize resources to provide a historical context that is inclusive of historically underrepresented groups.
- ☆ **USE** formative assessments and other forms of feedback to communicate strengths and weaknesses of students’ learning and support improvement by giving them a chance to reflect and revise their work (*see Principle 6*).
- ☆ **LEARN** about activities to cultivate student motivations to improve and develop a growth mindset.

Student Moves

- ☆ **REFLECT, RELEARN, REVISE, AND REVISIT** learning to solidify content acquisition and ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply their knowledge.
- ☆ **MAINTAIN** expectations to continuously improve their work and develop content expertise with civic purpose.
- ☆ **GIVE** feedback about learning experience and advocate for the support needed to achieve excellence.
- ☆ **LEARN AND USE** strategies for persisting and overcoming learning struggles.

² We use the term “virtue” as used in a definition, “a virtuous person is like an expert who has highly cultivated skills—sets of procedural, declarative and conditional knowledge— that applied appropriately in the circumstance...Moral expertise is applying the right virtue in the right amount at the right time” (Narvaez and Bock 2014, p. 144).

³ Blackwell, Tiezesnewski, and Dweck 2007.

⁴ Desimone and Garett 2015.

⁵ Blackwell, Tiezesnewski, and Dweck 2007.

⁶ Daneels, Kawashima-Ginsberg, and Healy 2019; Hayat and Kawashima-Ginsberg 2020.

⁷ Active learning in professional development allows opportunities for teachers to become engaged in their own analysis of teaching and learning (Desimone et al. 2002; Garett et al. 2001), or involves experiencing a pedagogical strategy while learning about it. For example, teachers observe, receive feedback, analyze student work, and may make presentations, as opposed to passively listening to lectures (Desimone and Garett 2015). Coherence in this context refers to clear connection between the professional development content and state standards and mandates as well as teachers’ existing knowledge and beliefs. Based on a study of implementing the Illinois civics standards (Hayat and Kawashima-Ginsberg 2020), it is clear that local ownership and adaptation will be important in implementing the EAD initiative. Therefore, we have designed the *EAD Roadmap* and *EAD Pedagogy Companion* with an aim for high integrity, but also with a diverse adaptation implementation model.

⁸ Barr et al. 2015.

PRINCIPLE

03

Building an EAD-Ready Classroom and School



School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **OFFER** evidence-based instructional training and mentoring to all teachers so they can strengthen content knowledge and instructional strategies to facilitate engaged and effective learning (e.g., culturally responsive strategies, formative assessments, social-emotional learning).
- ☆ **GIVE** encouragement and create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration to allow teachers to work together to integrate civics and American history with English language arts, mathematics, science, and other existing priorities.⁹
- ☆ **MAKE** significant and long-term investment in
 - (a) developing an EAD-aligned curriculum that suits local priorities and meets state standards, and
 - (b) training teachers, starting at the kindergarten level.
- ☆ **ADOPT** student growth mindset across academic and social contexts in the school community.
- ☆ **AIM** for adoption with both integrity and flexibility; own the *EAD Roadmap* as a key district priority to enhance student learning.
- ☆ **INVOLVE** educators, students, and families in EAD-aligned curriculum development.¹⁰

⁹ A recent longitudinal study published by the Fordham Institute (Tyner and Koubneck 2020) shows that spending extra 30 minutes a day on social studies in kindergarten results in enhanced reading comprehension in 5th grade; increasing time spent on English language arts, math, or science is associated with no such gain. The findings were more pronounced for students who are English language learners and those who come from low-income households.

¹⁰ We learned from our educator listening sessions that sustainable educational reform is only possible if educators first understand why stated changes to pedagogy and standards are needed or benefit student learning and believe that they have authentic inputs into how these changes will roll out (Scott, Foley, and Kawashima-Ginsberg 2020).

What?

EAD teachers understand that learning the *EAD Roadmap* through inquiry around diverse narratives of American constitutional democracy requires strong relationships, a climate of mutual respect, and an inclusive culture that enables students to feel secure and engage courageously in rigorous discussion. School climate, or the qualities of school life, is reflective of the common experiences that all parties have within the school and has significant influence on student learning experience and outcomes. EAD teachers need and help to build a team that supports teaching the *EAD Roadmap*—an EAD classroom and an EAD school. EAD classrooms and EAD schools are viewed as intellectually rigorous and supportive places to learn and work by staff, students, and community members. Finally, EAD teachers should be offered a chance to develop leadership and agency so they can promote student leadership and agency through modeling and guidance.

Why?

Teaching the complex and deep content of the *EAD Roadmap* will require teachers to build and sustain strong learner communities in which all members have a sense of belonging and responsibility, and all members contribute to each other’s success. Research has established that a positive school climate (e.g., community-building, collaboration, student voice and inputs, mutual support and respect, and quality relationships) affects students’ sense of belonging, motivation to learn, and therefore students’ achievement and learning. Positive school climate has also been associated with students’ development of positive identity, inclination to act in the interest of the public good, and ability to form stronger connections to their community and society.¹¹ Students are motivated and persistent in their learning when they tap into their own interests, identities, and curiosities, which then drive academic performance, self-esteem, and mental health outcomes.¹²

¹¹ Flanagan et al. 2010.

¹² Hernández et al. 2019; also see MindShift 2015.

Teachers should not be alone in building an EAD-ready learning environment. School leaders, staff, and teachers from other disciplines should support the types of discourse and learning promoted by the *EAD Roadmap* by soliciting support and engagement of the entire school community and local partners.

How?

There are a diverse set of strategies to create a climate that allows for meaningful relationships and connections that allow students and teachers to engage fully with rigorous inquiries and courageous dialogues in the *EAD Roadmap*. Below are some key themes that emerge from a synthesis of research from multiple disciplines. For research support for these elements and sources, see the Appendix.

FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY THAT CELEBRATES STUDENTS’ INDIVIDUALITY AND DIVERSITY:

EAD teachers and school leaders should allocate time for community-building and create structures that facilitate collaborative relationships among faculty and students and between students and faculty.

STRENGTHEN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

EAD teachers and school leaders should strive to form strong school-community connections with families, create opportunities for students to connect with the local community, and strive for their school to become a site of civic engagement for the community. EAD school leaders can increase the value of students’ time outside of the classroom by engaging community organizations and extracurricular youth programs as student civics project partners and facilitating diverse parents’ active involvement in their children’s civic education.

DEVELOP STUDENTS’ SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES AND CHARACTER:

EAD teachers and schools provide students with opportunities to build character and embrace a positive identity by learning to empathize with others and by developing

self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills essential to responsible decision-making. This type of development also requires students to engage in self-reflection and build a sense of competency, engaging in problem-solving and conflict resolution as needed. The *EAD Roadmap*’s challenging inquiries provide rich opportunities for students to build and apply these skills with intentional support from teachers.

DEVELOP STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP: The EAD school and classroom should reflect principles of constitutional democracy. Students, as citizens of a school community, need coherence between what they learn about people’s power to shift institutions for the better and how they perceive their own educational institutions in order to engage fully with learning about American constitutional democracy. Thus, there should be diverse, developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to develop and use voice and to feel that their stories and opinions matter while making necessary compromises at times. Students should also have opportunities to develop leadership, including peer mentoring opportunities in the classroom. We discuss how these ideas can be put into practice especially in Principle 6.

Further, in the classroom and wider campus settings, there should be clear rules and consistent responses to violations, with a commitment to ensuring that every student has an opportunity to be heard when they are in conflict or facing discipline.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **INTENTIONALLY SEEK** to learn more about students and their families and strive to build relationships with and among students.
- ☆ **CREATE** opportunities through a variety of discussion structures and protocols for students to understand diverse perspectives.
- ☆ **HELP** students engage productively with disagreements and solve conflicts.
- ☆ **SUPPORT** students to process emotionally difficult events using different modes of expression including dialogue, writing, and creating art.

Student Moves

- ☆ **BUILD** self-management, empathy, and relational skills to develop social-emotional competencies and character strength.
- ☆ **DEVELOP AND EXERCISE** voice and choice in the classroom.
- ☆ **ENGAGE** collaboratively with peers and learn to take various roles in team dynamics.
- ☆ **LEARN** to make constructive compromises.

School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **ESTABLISH** a culture of rigorous learning, including social-emotional learning, as a schoolwide priority.
- ☆ **ENGAGE** in continuous development of a positive school climate.
- ☆ **UTILIZE** a learning environment self-assessment tool for district teams.
- ☆ **USE** Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) tools and restorative justice practices to support students.

- ☆ **CREATE** opportunities for teacher leadership and student voice through working groups and committees. Set up a system for leveraging student expertise and inputs, especially from those who are challenged by the school climate.
- ☆ **IMPLEMENT** teacher leadership and opportunities for collaboration through mechanisms like a faculty senate, instructional leadership teams, subcommittees, and unions in order to help teachers develop skills needed to create an EAD-ready climate.
- ☆ **PARTNER** with community-based organizations, extracurricular programs, local government, and families. Local organizations such as historical societies and museums can support deep learning about the local community and its history. Municipal governments and local nonprofits can provide internships and other learning opportunities for students to engage in civic life directly.¹³
- ☆ **BUILD** relationships with community organizations and make academic connections in extracurricular and community-based programs.¹⁴
- ☆ **ENGAGE** families in opportunities for learning and collaboration with school leadership.

¹³ Cohen et al. 2009; Hernández et al. 2019.

¹⁴ Scales and Houlberg 2020.

PRINCIPLE

04

Inquiry as the Primary Mode of Learning



What?

EAD teachers utilize inquiry as the primary process of learning when teaching the *EAD Roadmap*. Inquiry is an evidence-supported and widely used social studies instructional practice endorsed by many educator communities including, among many others, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) through its College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. Educators should treat the *EAD Roadmap* as an overarching set of themes supported by examples of content-focused questions that can complement existing inquiry-based instruction. As a process, inquiry includes evidence-based pedagogical strategies including direct instruction, discussion, investigation, document analysis, project-based learning, and simulations of democratic processes to spark active, rigorous learning. Through the intentional inclusion of diverse narratives and perspectives, EAD teachers design learning opportunities that allow students to learn and reflect upon core constitutional principles, achievements, and conflicts. Students will also grapple with larger questions asked as design challenges in the *EAD Roadmap*. Using inquiry as a primary mode of learning in history and civics beginning in the early grades, EAD teachers help students develop a habit of moving from familiar to more abstract concepts as they build deeper knowledge and skills. Inquiries that increase understanding and application of concepts can be applied to informed action (see *Principle 5*). Asking the fundamental questions described in the EAD design challenges from early grades on helps students develop a habit of engaging with big questions and developing interest in understanding those who are different from themselves.

Why?

In the American tradition, inquiry-based learning goes back at least to John Dewey, who posited that students should be actively learning about how to think and ask questions, not just

memorizing rote facts.¹⁵ A meta-analysis examining the impact of inquiry-based learning across disciplines, outcomes, and assessment methods indicates that it can be significantly more effective than lecture-style teaching. The quality of instruction and the amount of guidance given to the students drive the impact.¹⁶ Each EAD theme’s key learning concepts and careful instructional design allow teachers to do more than simply ask questions. Inquiry-based instruction is also a well-known strategy to many social studies teachers because of the 2012 publication of the NCSS C3 Framework and strong research, training, and curriculum development efforts based on that framework.

Although relatively few impact studies about inquiry in civics and history have been published, one study using guidance strategies aligned with EAD found that critical inquiry-based learning strategies increase students’ civic efficacy, as well as positive identity of minority students. In a rigorous design-based intervention curriculum study of project-based AP Government courses, researchers found that students in the project-based learning condition scored as well as the control group students who received more fact-heavy instruction.¹⁷

How?

In the *EAD Roadmap*, inquiry is the primary mode of instruction. Students retain their curiosity to learn about the world, seek out others who are different from themselves, and develop a habit and the supporting skills to explore deep and complex questions about civic life and American history for the rest of their lives.

Analysis and investigations are essential parts of EAD inquiries because these strategies promote deep engagement with content. In some cases, students learn to use disciplinary tools while learning content through the close analysis of historical artifacts or the close reading of a primary text. Typically, students will identify and research issues and questions to develop knowledge and/or identify solutions. While there are

several approaches to inquiry-based learning, most share a focus on authentic, real-world problems, a commitment to active learning and collaboration, and an expectation that content knowledge is acquired as students work toward answers and solutions, whether through a year-long project or a single lesson covering a discrete topic.

Direct instruction refers to instructional approaches that clarify steps in a process, break down a complex task set, help students make sense of an exploration or simulation, or model an instructional task or exemplar. It can also be used to clarify learning objectives and provide supportive feedback and corrections. Although the term “direct instruction” is sometimes used interchangeably with “stand-and-deliver”-style lecture, it in fact encompasses a broader and more complex set of practices than a teacher delivering content to students. Direct instruction practices associated with the largest gain in learning include:

- ☆ Teacher-led skill or process demonstrations
- ☆ Explicit teaching of steps or processes
- ☆ Guided practices and think-alouds
- ☆ Reciprocal teaching
- ☆ Modeling
- ☆ Scaffolding
- ☆ Storytelling lecture¹⁸

Discussions and debates represent another time-honored pedagogical approach to the teaching of history and civics. They allow students to develop critical thinking and public speaking skills while, importantly, marshaling evidence and analyzing key subject matter content more deeply. Debates and discussions are often a wise choice for exploring or highlighting opposing viewpoints that are inherent to the study of American constitutional democracy. They can help students evaluate answers to questions that do not have a single right answer. There are many ways to structure such conversations, depending on

your goals for the activity. One might select a Socratic seminar to achieve a deeper understanding of a complex concept, or choose a deliberation to strive for shared understanding of a complex topic or text. Debates, on the other hand, may be useful if the goal of the instruction is to help students understand different points of view, where they come from, and the evidence that supports them, even when they do not personally agree with the viewpoint they represent.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **DESIGN** lessons that uncover the complexity of an event, dynamic, social group, or leading individual.
- ☆ **INCORPORATE** opportunities to analyze diverse forms of evidence, including images as well as texts.
- ☆ **INTRODUCE** new concepts by building on background knowledge.
- ☆ **ENGAGE** students in historical thinking skills.
- ☆ **BUILD** student engagement with media literacy.

Student Moves

- ☆ **EVALUATE** the strengths, weaknesses, and factualness of varied sources.
- ☆ **APPLY** historical thinking skills during analysis and investigation of content.
- ☆ **CONSTRUCT** written and oral arguments using evidence.
- ☆ **RESPOND** to competing arguments and revise their own.

School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **STRIVE** to understand the principles of the EAD initiative and the *EAD Roadmap* and express vocal support for EAD-aligned inquiries used in your own school or district.
- ☆ **REACH** out to families and local stakeholders and explain the nature of EAD-aligned inquiries and why they are valuable to students’ learning experience.
- ☆ **ENCOURAGE**—by providing resources and time—multidisciplinary and cross-grade learning experiences designed using the *EAD Roadmap* inquiries.

¹⁵ National Research Council 2000.

¹⁶ Lazonder and Harmsen 2016.

¹⁷ Hipolito-Delgago and Zion 2017; Parker, Valencia, and Lo 2017.

¹⁸ Rosenshine 2011.

PRINCIPLE

05

Practice of Constitutional Democracy and Student Agency



What?

EAD teachers model practices of citizens in constitutional democracy and develop student agency by integrating opportunities for students to engage in civic practices and actions that are relevant, responsible, and informed. Students learn how to exercise and understand civil rights and responsibilities to address issues that are pertinent to their communities. Such experiences in and beyond the classroom solidify students’ understanding of content and provide opportunities to reflect on their learning. Through direct engagement with real-world issues, students understand what it means to support and challenge existing rules and institutions, as well as how to value principles while making compromises when needed. In other words, Principle 5 provides rich opportunities for students and teachers to explore and apply the EAD design challenges in real-world settings.

Why?

The *EAD Roadmap* starts and ends with civic participation, underscoring the importance of developing students’ skills, knowledge, and agency for participation in constitutional democracy. EAD teachers use the *EAD Roadmap* to teach about how people of the United States govern our constitutional democracy, and explicate the challenges people have grappled with in pursuit of a more perfect union. Students need opportunities to engage firsthand in the practices of constitutional democracy from the early elementary grades (even preschool when possible), because these experiences expand students’ ability to answer EAD’s overarching questions and wrestle with the design challenges.

How?

Students have opportunities to engage in practices for constitutional democracy across multiple settings such as the classroom, school, and community. The practices allow

students to demonstrate a commitment to “excellence for all” by modeling fair and just democratic processes. Substantive student leadership and democratic practice opportunities within schools include student government, student voice committees, and participatory budgeting, all of which allow increasing levels of student participation in developmentally appropriate decision-making.¹⁹ Connecting with local civic and political leaders and community organizations allows students to take informed action.

Classroom-based practices of constitutional democracy is a pedagogical approach that centers the student in the instructional activity and cultivates the daily habits of a learner and citizen. Such repeated, even daily processes allow students to master the content and concepts of American constitutional democracy by regularly engaging in its practice. When done well, direct engagement encourages student-teacher contact, student collaboration, and active learning and reflection. As is the case with all other pedagogies, direct engagement works for early learners and mature students alike. Examples include:

- ☆ Carpet-time democracy
- ☆ Class governance and creating class compacts
- ☆ Participatory budgeting
- ☆ Classroom-based deliberation and collaborative decision-making
- ☆ School-based student policy-making (student inputs, student-led proposals, student advisory and government)

Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional approach that helps students to acquire deeper content knowledge and academic and civic skills by working for an extended period of time actively exploring complex and real-world issues. PBL can be collaborative or self-directed. It does not replace content, but deepens it, as students engage with, reflect on, and often create something content-rich (e.g., essay, legislative proposal,

recommendations for leaders, action plan). There are many variations to PBL, but most are characterized by deeper learning, in context, for sustained periods of time. Examples of these activities include:

- ☆ Authentic writing tasks/media production
- ☆ Critical service-learning
- ☆ Civic engagement projects leading to informed action
- ☆ Interdisciplinary research projects
- ☆ Collaborative projects
- ☆ Action civics

Field or community-based activities are an exciting and effective way to inspire student interest in historical and civic topics, as well as deepen their knowledge and develop relevant skills. When direct forms of participation are available off campus, field trips to those spaces allow students to experience or practice them. Similarly, students can learn more about government by directly interacting with public or elected officials. When a particular concept, practice, or position is not accessible for students—for example, passing a federal law, running for president, or serving on a jury—simulations offer powerful alternatives for them to experience it.

Example activities include:

- ☆ Place-based learning
- ☆ Showcases and competitions
- ☆ Interactions with public and elected officials
- ☆ Coordinated learning opportunities with community organizations and extracurricular programs

Practices of constitutional democracy within and beyond the classroom enhance a sense of community, inclusion, competency, character, and contribution by providing opportunities to practice civic friendship, civil disagreements, and civic virtues.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **PROVIDE** students the opportunity to practice democratic skills in the classroom.
- ☆ **FACILITATE** opportunities for students to interact with community leaders, initiatives, and issues.
- ☆ **FACILITATE** opportunities for students to take informed action in their communities.
- ☆ **DESIGN** lessons to support student research skills including data collection, conducting interviews, and reporting findings.

Student Moves

- ☆ **ANALYZE** multiple perspectives around issues and events.
- ☆ **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** to build informed, well-supported arguments.
- ☆ **IDENTIFY AND RESEARCH** issues that are central to students’ communities.
- ☆ **DEVELOP** interviewing skills and interview members of the community.
- ☆ **PARTNER** with school administration.

School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **EXPRESS** strong support for EAD-aligned civic learning and advocate for student civic engagement.
- ☆ **PROVIDE** students the opportunity to practice civic skills in the school community (e.g., participatory budgeting, student government, and student newspapers).
- ☆ **INCORPORATE** multiple ways to leverage youth expertise to inform decisions.
- ☆ **COLLABORATE** with local government, community organizations, and extracurricular programs to increase equitable access to civic engagement opportunities.

¹⁹ Hart 1992.

PRINCIPLE

06

Assess, Reflect,
and Improve



What?

EAD teachers believe in all students’ potential to reach civic excellence, commit to providing support for all students to reach civic readiness, and actively seek ways to address inequities in their own classroom. Through formative assessments, students and teachers communicate about the quality of teaching and learning in their EAD classroom and seek out ways for everyone to improve. Although this is the last principle in a circle of EAD core pedagogical principles, it is less the end of a cycle than the beginning of an iterative circle of feedback, response, and shared growth.

Why?

EAD teachers honor their commitment to excellence for all students (Principle 1) and their investment in their own growth as educators (Principle 2) by analyzing information about student learning and refining instruction from assessment. Both teachers and students should reflect not only on what individual students have learned but also on how their classroom and school is doing in providing equitable learning opportunities and outcomes. This type of rich, multisided assessment not only measures learning, but also strengthens the culture of rigor, reflection, and support in the classroom community (Principle 3). Students should not only understand what they were able to learn but also how they learn the best, which builds metacognition, an awareness of how they learn and what interests and motivates them.²⁰

Formative assessment is not an add-on to instruction but is part of EAD- and standards-aligned instruction, in which students from kindergarten to 12th grade have ample

opportunities to demonstrate what they know and how deeply they analyze and apply information while engaging in inquiries (Principle 4).²¹

In an EAD classroom, learning means understanding and applying content through student engagement in practices of constitutional democracy (Principle 5).

EAD teachers are committed to excellence in civic learning to students across diverse backgrounds and honor this commitment by assessing teaching and learning through the use of formative assessments to improve learning for everyone in an EAD classroom. Students can also participate in the improvement of their own and others’ learning by reflecting on how they progress and what interests them, and by providing feedback to their teacher and peers. Both teachers and students should not only reflect on what individual students have learned but also on how their classroom and school is doing in providing equitable learning opportunities and outcomes. Communicating regularly with students and their families about assessment and improvement is also a way to affirm the commitments of EAD teachers to provide all students with excellent civic learning, opportunities to grow, and preparation for participation in American constitutional democracy.

How?

While there are many types of assessments, we focus on instructionally embedded and formative assessment processes here. Instructionally embedded assessments (IEAs) are in-class activities, projects, presentations, assignments, or exercises that provide information or data about a specific learning outcome, which can then be applied to improve instruction. Learning outcomes may be simply the mastery of concepts or understanding of vocabulary used in a text. But

they can also extend to competences and capacities that are hard to measure in testing, such as student agency or ability to understand and show empathy for people who are and think quite differently from themselves.

Research has identified the following best practices that should be applied in reviewing and using any assessment strategies:

- ☆ Assessment should be aligned with learning goals and state standards.
- ☆ Assessment should be used as a source of information for teachers and students.
- ☆ The results of assessments should be used to inform/shift practice (but only if the assessment is designed to measure what it aims to).
- ☆ Assessments should be followed by second chances for students to demonstrate growth and success.
- ☆ Teachers should receive training and support to interpret and use assessment data effectively.
- ☆ If there is a high-stakes test in place, evaluation of student performance should also include IEAs.
- ☆ Students should be informed about how they will be assessed and the purpose of the assessment.

Teacher Moves

- ☆ **CHECK** for understanding and depth of comprehension throughout lessons/units.
- ☆ **ASSESS** student knowledge and skills using visual arts/representation.
- ☆ **ASSESS** students’ civic skills and agency.
- ☆ **SEEK OUT** student feedback to facilitate self-reflection and growth in meeting the needs of all students.
- ☆ **USE** formal and informal assessment and feedback to help students cultivate a growth mindset.

Student Moves

- ☆ **ENGAGE** in continuous growth through assessment, feedback, and revision.
- ☆ **PARTICIPATE** in peer review/assessment processes to provide substantive and constructive feedback to others.
- ☆ **PRACTICE** self-reflection and self-assessment of work and track growth/learning over time.

School and District Leader Moves

- ☆ **FACILITATE** opportunities for educators to collaborate and analyze student work.
- ☆ **PROVIDE** opportunities for educators to engage in conversations to build vertical alignment.
- ☆ **CREATE** opportunities for students to share reflections about their learning with families and community.
- ☆ **IDENTIFY** other types of assessments and accountability measures that may complement or benefit from using the *EAD Roadmap* and one or more of the core pedagogical principles and support holistic teacher and school success.

²⁰ Research has established the importance of self-awareness and motivation for learning and achievement, see, for example, Terada 2017; Farrington et al. 2012.

²¹ The use of formative assessment processes is also recommended by the NCSS’s 2018 National Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers, which emphasizes the importance of training teachers to be well-versed in multiple methods to assess students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In this guidance, we opt not to make recommendations about summative assessments; instead this guidance focuses on teaching, and assessment in that context serves to improve the quality of teaching. This means that assessments need to provide information about learning very soon after it is given, which is not the case with many summative assessments. We are not opposed to use of summative assessment and believe firmly that these are local decisions.

Indicators of Success: What Will Success Look Like?

Students, teachers, and education leaders who engage with the *EAD Roadmap* themes and design challenges, and the *EAD Pedagogy Companion*'s core pedagogical principles should be able to:

- A.** Take informed action based on a full understanding of their role as participants of a constitutional democracy despite the magnitude of our shared challenges;
- B.** Fully consider the diverse narratives of Americans from different backgrounds while also seeing and valuing the shared inheritance of all Americans;
- C.** Analyze and reflect on both the promise of the U.S. founding principles and challenges we the people have faced at various moments; and
- D.** Apply the concepts of civil disagreement and civic friendship simultaneously with an understanding of both the value and the danger of civic compromises.

When teachers, students, and school and district leaders are aligned with the EAD core pedagogical principles, we expect to see the following exemplar outcomes and many more.

Exemplar Outcomes for EAD Students

- A.** Engage in multiple and connected opportunities to gain deep comprehension of the American constitutional principles and reflect on their role in civic life.
- B.** Reach proficiency in civic literacy and civic agency.
- C.** Hold high expectations for their civic learning to be rigorous, supportive, and relevant.
- D.** Engage in continuous learning and improvement through assessments, reflection, and revision.
- E.** Believe in fellow students' capacity to grapple with rigorous inquiries and engage in active civic learning.
- F.** Have access to create a positive school climate in which teachers and peers support and respect them.

- G.** Demonstrate ability to understand and empathize with those who are different from themselves or disagree with their views.
- H.** Use various means of investigating, exploring, discussing, and formulating answers to inquiries.
- I.** Develop a lifelong habit of exploring deep and complex questions about civic life and American history.
- J.** Express and retain curiosity to learn about the world and seek out others who are different from themselves.
- K.** Demonstrate skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- L.** Understand and hold themselves accountable to their civic responsibilities.
- M.** Expect to receive feedback and assessments to improve learning experiences and outcomes from their teacher and peers.
- N.** Give thoughtful feedback to fellow students and to instructors in order to improve learning for everyone and support the classroom community.

Exemplar Outcomes for EAD Teachers

- A.** Design and provide multiple and connected opportunities for inquiry-based learning to help students gain deep comprehension of American history and civics.
- B.** Communicate clear and high expectations for learning by all students, and use strategies to support all students.
- C.** Establish a developmental relationship with students by helping to broaden students' horizons and make connections between their lives and the principles of American constitutional democracy, and providing an intentional balance of (a) challenge with support and (b) authority with student voice.
- D.** Believe students of all backgrounds and achievement can achieve civic excellence and engage with rigorous content and inquiry.

- E.** Hold high expectations for themselves, and seek support and mentoring to accomplish competency.
- F.** Engage actively in creating and supporting an intellectually and emotionally engaging culture in their classroom and school.
- G.** Practice self-reflection with a goal of improving instruction for diverse students.
- H.** Utilize a variety of evidence-based instructional strategies that account for the diverse needs, backgrounds, and perspectives of all students while balancing rigor and support.
- I.** Create opportunities for students to contribute and improve the classroom community through civic participation.
- J.** Connect student learning to community resources, concerns, and issues.
- K.** Develop and use formative assessments to give thoughtful feedback to students.
- L.** Seek feedback from students and reflect on ways to improve learning experience and outcomes for all students.
- M.** Learn to utilize and add value to the existing standards and accountability measures to balance multiple priorities that coexist with EAD.

Exemplar Outcomes for EAD School and District Education Leaders

- A.** Invest resources to make sure that all students in grades K–12 have access to excellent civic learning, gain deep comprehension of American history and constitutional principles, and reflect on their roles in civic life.
- B.** Communicate high expectations for teachers in grades K–12 to use EAD-aligned inquiries and instructional strategies.
- C.** Prioritize development of a rigorous EAD-aligned civics and history curriculum.

- D.** Provide universal access to EAD-aligned professional development and professional learning communities that fit educator needs under varied conditions and state-specific requirements.
- E.** Champion an engaging, positive school climate among all members of the school community.
- F.** Establish a culture, policies, and procedures that promote rigor with equity, and that respect the dignity of all students with high and consistent expectations.
- G.** Create academic opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration between educators for vertical and horizontal alignment.
- H.** Establish collaborations within and beyond the school to create equitable access to community resources across all members of the school community.
- I.** Support teachers in utilizing formative assessments to improve instruction and inform their practice by allocating time and resources.
- J.** Design feedback cycles to engage students, educators, families, and community stakeholders to continuously improve EAD implementation and instruction.

Conditions for Success: What Do Teachers Need to be Successful?

Shifting classroom instruction to align with the *EAD Roadmap* and the *EAD Pedagogy Companion*’s core pedagogical principles requires broader systemic change that establishes conditions for success within our educational systems in order to develop a sustainable model that cultivates civic capacity.

Educator and Student Support

Leadership, ownership, and advocacy for the *EAD Roadmap*, alongside shifts in school and district policies and infrastructure, enable these core pedagogical principles to complement the teaching of the *EAD Roadmap* content, and solidifies student learning. Educators must receive administrator and district support to shift instructional practice to conduct rigorous inquiries. Community organizations and parents need to support educators to foster an environment that addresses the tensions uncovered through the content of the *EAD Roadmap*. Educators should also be able to build community with peers to provide opportunities for collaboration and support and consultancy.

Pre-Service and Educator Pipelines

In order to ensure that pre-service educators enter the field with a deeper understanding of history and civics content and EAD-aligned pedagogy, district and state education departments need to collaborate with local pre-service training programs. District leaders can also create educator pipeline opportunities to engage in EAD training aligned with district goals. Developing tools to create a crosswalk between EAD student/teacher competencies and state standards can further facilitate alignment. Finally, a well-structured teacher preparation framework that aligns with EAD’s core principles should intentionally recruit and support teacher candidates across the demographic and ideological spectrum.

In-Service Professional Development and Teacher Leadership

Inquiry-based instruction will be more successful if educators engage in professional learning focused on building pedagogical skills, participatory civic skills, and content knowledge. Such skills include strategies to build a classroom community that can sustain civil disagreement and civic friendship at the same time. EAD inquiries will be most successful when educators have opportunities to connect their work with other disciplines and instructional priorities, including English language arts (ELA); science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and college/career skills. Finally, professional learning opportunities need to address approaches to incorporating real-world issues to make learning authentic for students.

Appendix: Approaches in K–12 History and Civics Descriptions and Research Evidence

ACTION CIVICS: Action civics (Andolina and Conklin 2020) is a specialized form of project-based learning that emphasizes youth voice and expertise based on their own capabilities and experience, learning by direct engagement with a democratic system and institutions, and reflection on impact. It is rooted in John Dewey’s conception of learning, which emphasized teaching about society by engaging on matters close to children’s immediate environment (Dewey 1902).

APPLIED CIVIC LEARNING IN COMMUNITY: By high school, many students are ready to engage in a real community setting through work-based learning or student internships so that they can apply what they have learned in an authentic setting. For instance, work-based learning, such as a civic internship, has been shown to increase political knowledge and political efficacy among youth (Hamilton and Zeldin 1987). Many states and counties permit high school students who are not yet 18 to work as poll workers, giving students a close-up view of voting and election processes, and building stronger connections to their local community and government (Anderson, Norman, and Scheel 2019).

CARPET-TIME DEMOCRACY: Children as young as preschool are developing clear ideas about themselves and others (Serriere 2010), and this pedagogy relabels “circle time” on the rug as “carpet-time democracy.” This practice has an explicit emphasis on care and respect as fundamental components for positive civic education in the classroom. Additionally, this practice emphasizes the importance of a teacher who models the act of questioning and critical reflection and provides the scaffolding for discussions (often used in elementary grades).

CHRONO-THEMATIC: Combining a chronological and thematic form of teaching history has been found to produce the highest level of learning, reaching the greatest number of students (Libresko and Wolfe 2003).

CIVIC AGENCY: Civic agency is a term used by several scholars; the definition used within this document is provided by

Danielle Allen, a professor in Harvard University’s Democratic Knowledge Project: “Why do we care that governments should rest on the consent of each and every one of us? Being human involves seeking to control one’s life. Achieving that requires having a role in politics because political decisions have such a big impact on our life. The idea of human rights captures the notion that every human being ought to have a chance to control his or her own life, including through political participation.”

CIVIC-FOCUSED SCHOOLS: School climate, school connectedness, and academic efficacy all impact civic engagement, especially for middle school students of color. Guillaume, Jagers, and Rivas-Drake (2015) found that minority students must actually feel a sense of connection to their school in order to have an impact on their civic engagement. A positive perception of the school is not enough; the middle school environment is a “developmental niche for emergent citizenship” (ibid.).

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING: Collaborative teaching, as defined by Robinson and Schaible (2019), is meant to describe a pedagogical technique where two teachers work with one another to both design and teach a class. This class itself is one that uses group learning as a fundamental component (ibid.).

COMMUNITY-BASED: At a young age, it is important for students to understand that they are a part of a larger community and that their individual actions within that community have consequences. Personal responsibility, caring for others and the community, and leadership are all skills that should be developed and fostered early (Chi, Jastrzab, and Melchoir 2006).

CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING: Constructivist teaching practices include activating prior knowledge, acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge, using knowledge, and reflecting knowledge. The four types of constructivist teaching that emerge from these five elements are application, discovery, extension, and invention (Zahorik 1995).



COOPERATIVE APPROACH: Small group settings within the cooperative approach allow for student discourse to flow naturally. Some find that a combination of the mastery approach and the cooperative learning approach produces the best outcomes for students (Laney 1999).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: Culturally responsive teaching²² is a widely used term to describe a set of beliefs and strategies that aim to serve all students, especially those who represent cultural and demographic groups that have been historically marginalized and/or underrepresented in various aspects of American life, including media, leadership, and education.

DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCY-BASED: This framework focuses on seven democratic competencies that are central to a healthy democratic culture; several models exist. In a model composed by Jónsson and Rodriguez (2019), the competencies include (1) discursive, which is the ability and willingness to engage with others; (2) conflict resolution; (3) critical reevaluation; (4) communal living, referring here to coexisting within diverse communities; (5) resilience; (6) competence for forming a conception of “the good life”; and (7) respecting the natural boundaries of human living, which refers to environmental harmony and global responsibility.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CLIMATE: Research shows that a democratic school climate increases the sense of civic responsibility youth feel. Civic discussions and the perception of fairness are essential components to the existence of such an atmosphere. This climate has been further shown to increase adolescents’ desire to participate in civic life as they grow older (Lenzi et al. 2014).

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: The experiential learning theory emphasizes experience as a fundamental part of obtaining knowledge. Students learn differently, through experiencing either concrete or abstract ideas. Likewise, some students

learn more through observing others’ experiences as opposed to actively experimenting themselves. This learning theory can thereby aid in developing proper instruction for unique individuals, ensuring learning for all (Kolb, Boyatzis, and Mainemelis 2001).

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING: Inquiry-based learning is the central spine of NCSS’ C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards (2012) which has subsequently been adopted in about 15 states. Inquiry-based learning starts with formation of a “compelling question” which addresses a key issue that is both core to the discipline and relevant to students’ experiences. Teachers guide students through a scaffolded process of inquiry using discipline-specific tools (such as issue discussion and primary source document analysis) and concepts (such as division of power), and teachers measure student learning and effectiveness of instructions for all students using formative tasks throughout the inquiry arc. Inquiry-based learning concludes with students reflecting on the problem, assessing options, and then taking informed action, which can include a range of activities such as presentation, model-bill writing, and community service project.

OPEN CLIMATE: An open climate in the classroom can significantly improve civic engagement among youth, encourage them to be an informed voter, and minimize the gap of levels of engagement from those of different socioeconomic statuses. Additionally, this type of environment improves knowledge and appreciation of political conflict. While many previous studies have examined the importance of extracurricular activities and service-learning approaches, these activities largely take place outside of the classroom. Campbell contends that even the classroom environment to which students are exposed can have an effect on the level of political knowledge they obtain and, further, on their political engagement. In other words, it is not just the existence of

a civics course, but the effectiveness of such courses that impacts what students obtain from the experience (Campbell 2008; Torney-Purta 2002).

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: According to recent major research synthesis on school climate and brain development, positive school climate is defined by authentic teacher-student relationships (marked by care and acceptance), high and consistent expectations and organized instruction, teachers who promote deep exploration of learning goals, communications, a sense of belonging, and strong leadership. Positive school climate drives whole-child development, student engagement, and achievement (Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey 2018).

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING: Problem-based learning refers to a form of pedagogy where problems are the focus of the curriculum (Moore 1997). However, this form of learning does not necessitate a specific teaching method. The specific method of problem-based learning should be chosen based on the specific students in the classroom and the strengths of the individual teacher (Barrows 1986).

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: Project-based learning is a teaching approach that prioritizes engaging students in subjects by assigning them tasks that may improve their ability to understand and process material (Blumenfeld et al. 1991). Project-based learning has specifically been found to help solidify concepts for students (Vinnakota 2019).

SERVICE LEARNING: The definition of service learning varies among scholars and educators, with different programs being distinguished by their differing purpose and focus. National Youth Leadership Council’s K–12 Service-Learning Standards define high quality by links to curriculum, reflection, progress monitoring, mutually beneficial partnerships, advancing understanding of diversity, youth voice, and sufficient duration and intensity (NYLC 2015; see also Furco 1996).

SIMULATION OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND ROLES: Mock election, mock court, mock congress, etc. are game-based learning about processes that are not likely to occur in everyday civic life (Supreme Court) or not available to students (running for office).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING: According to the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL), social-emotional learning (SEL) is “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation” (2020). SEL teaches students self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and how to make responsible decisions (Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan 2013). SEL enables students to actively listen and understand others who are different from themselves, develop trust and a sense of community, feel empathy, and foster equity (High 2017). When implemented schoolwide, SEL provides students a strong sense of emotional support and allows for autonomy and voice (Weissberg et al. 2015).

²² Oftentimes “relevant” is substituted for “responsive” and/or “teaching” is substituted for “pedagogy,” but these variations and others refer to the same approach. See Aceves and Orosco 2014; Nieto et al. 2008; Santamaria 2009; Gordon and Baldwin-Philippi 2014; Sleeter 2012.

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