

Comprehensive Colorado History Curriculum

Grounding Virtues | Pedagogical Guidance

History Colorado Anti-Racism Work Grounding Virtues

In pursuit of a more just and equitable Colorado, we embody the grounding virtues listed below as the foundation of all aspects of our work: our thinking, communication, process, outcomes, and evaluation. We commit to work that is guided by, for, and of the communities we build, belong to, and serve.

Being in Community. History Colorado is committed to being present in and learning about communities across Colorado to ground our work. We invest in authentic relationships and seek to build bridges by being curious about, listening to, and meeting communities where they are, without assumptions or preconceived conclusions. We know it is our responsibility to (re)build trust with communities who have not always felt connected to or appropriately represented by the stories we tell. We know that developing understanding takes time, and in the spirit of healing, we embrace the process.

Amplifying and Centering Voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We at History Colorado are committed to centering BIPOC stories, perspectives, and representation within our staff, exhibitions, museums, collections, preservation projects, publications, education programs, and ongoing dialogue across communities today. We acknowledge, welcome, and engage in many different ways to produce, preserve, and present knowledge. We strive for an expansive historic record that is inclusive of many stories, traditions, practices for communicating knowledge, and communities.

Co-creation and Shared Authority. We build authentic community partnerships and create opportunities to co-author Colorado's shared history so that the work we do is neither owned nor told by any single institution but held in trust between and among collaborators.

Humility and Reflection. We recognize and understand that we cannot know all things and are ultimately interdependent with others. We engage in intentional, self-reflective practices about our own work and organizational culture—especially in hiring and retention—that allow ourselves to be vulnerable, recognize that growth is uncomfortable, name and address past and current structural racism, and transform systems. Our words and actions matter.

Responsiveness and Flexibility. We imagine new ways to foster relationships, connections, and generative practices that allow us to respond to communities' needs and interests in ways that are nimble, flexible, mindful, and meaningful. We build new processes that allow us to overcome obstacles to engagement and that prioritize relationships over paperwork.

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Shared Destiny. We recognize that our success is bound up in the success and vitality of Colorado communities. We explore practices that allow us to question how we work together and dream about our future, creating a deep sense of belonging and connection to History Colorado's mission. We confront historical systems of oppression, unpack our own personal biases, lift up multifaceted stories of our shared past, and continuously advocate for equitable, systemic changes to break the cycles of oppression and discrimination.

Pedagogical Guidance

Education is not memorization. It is the activation of the imagination and a path towards liberation. - [Dr. Christopher Emdin](#)

Looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future. - [Paulo Freire](#)

History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations. – James Baldwin

Essential Understandings from the [Native Knowledge 360° \(NK360°\)](#) Framework

[adrienne maree brown](#) / Emergent Strategies (2017)

We do not have to choose between a rigorous lesson and a culturally responsive one. Our current political moment, and indeed our nation's history, demands both.

[Clint Smith](#) is a Ph.D. candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

It is our hope that this might help students to see the past not simply as prelude to our present, nor a list of facts to memorize, a cast of heroes and villains to cheer and boo, nor as an itinerary of places to tour, but rather as an ideal field for thinking long and hard about important questions. [The "five C's of historical thinking" by Flannery Burke and Thomas Andrews](#)

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Theaster Gates Archive

When people migrate, there is a shedding that has to happen. Because you can't take it all. Whether it is a migration from Mississippi or a migration from Haiti, or from the West Indies back to London. Whether it is by invitation or a forced migration, it feels like one of the things that we are constantly grappling with is how do we make meaning with the stuff that is left. . . . **What do we carry? What do we carry in our bodies that allows our bodies to function as an archive? The songs, the dances, the handshakes, the braiding of hair, the cooking. How can those things kind of retain.** What happens if we then have the possibility like other cultures the accumulation of our things that reaffirm the histories of who we are.

- Transcribed from his spoken words during a discussion at New York Public Library

The Curriculum will be...

Inclusive / A more complete Colorado story by including and centering untold stories.

Hyperlocal / Featuring local stories as a lens to see Colorado history.

Co-Created / Work with the school community to understand needs, build knowledge of place and create content.

Reciprocal / Youth become the protector of the community and carry the story forward.

Build Agency / Students have decision-making power, choice and voice.
We need your help solving problems / history can help us solve them!

Culturally Responsive (and Sustaining) / Students see their own cultural references in all aspects of learning.

Non-Transactional / Education is not just about getting a job, it is also about understanding who we are and how we fit in the world.

Skills-based / Grounded in authentic disciplinary tasks that connect to the real world.

Grounded in Empathy / Cultivate a sense of abundance and generosity toward humanity. Students can Imagine life from another time and place and gain perspective. They become a part of the story, not just an observer of the story.

Embrace Dualities / Discuss multiple truths, histories and perspectives.

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Emphasize Interdependence / History as a circle or web in which generations and places are connected over time. Embrace non-linear perspective.

Focus on Collectivism / Identify and elevate how groups of people have made change and impacted community over time vs emphasising individual biography and private land ownership.