K-5 Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Lesson/Unit Planning, Science, Social Studies and the ELA Common Core

Are you thinking ahead to unit and lesson plans for next year? Here are some questions that may arise as you work to develop plans incorporating the Common Core standards and integrating (where appropriate) with social studies and science. Click the questions below for answers.

- Are we changing standards in Social Studies and Science now?

- How does the ELA common core affect Science and Social Studies?

- Are we changing the course guides for Science and Social Studies to match the sample units being shared at the Georgia DOE website?

- How can you match the sample materials you are finding to what we are doing in Cobb?

- We are creating Cobb resources now to support our existing expectations for lesson and unit planning.

- What about the integration of content?
K-5 Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Lesson/Unit Planning and Integration of Science, Social Studies and the ELA Common Core

1. **Are we changing standards in Social Studies and Science now?** No, in both Science and Social Studies we are continuing to teach the GPS.

2. **How does the ELA common core affect Science and Social Studies?** As we work on the following critical components of the new ELA standards, there are myriad opportunities to integrate content to enhance instruction. Here are just a few of the new emphases that reinforce the need to integrate our teaching:
   - Increased academic vocabulary
   - Greater emphasis on informational reading and writing, speaking and listening
   - Stronger research component
   - Analysis and skillful interpretation of primary sources, experimental results, etc.
   - Demand for more rigorous and relevant performance tasks

3. **Are we changing the course guides for Science and Social Studies to match the sample units being shared at the Georgia DOE website?** No. In Cobb we will continue using the same course guides and the same topic sequence as we have been using for both content areas.
   - **We will be following the ELA state course map for each grade level.** These are found at: [https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-K-5.aspx](https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-K-5.aspx) (Look at each grade level's course map in the menu to the right of the page.)
   - We will have other resources to support the rollout of CCGPS in ELA and the integration of Science and Social Studies. Cobb is not planning on using the ELA state units, because they do not align with our district course guides for science and social studies.
   - Science and Social Studies course guides were adopted by Cobb teachers and are tied to the K-3 report cards and district assessments.
   - New common state standards for Science and Social Studies are coming in the next few years. These may require us to change many of the concepts and sequences we are currently using. We do not feel that it is in the best interest of teachers to change things around now, then again in a couple of years.
4. **How can you match the sample materials you are finding to what we are doing in Cobb?**
   As you are exploring the plethora of common core units and resources that are out there for sale or download, you will find various levels of quality and topics/units that may not align with those we are using in Cobb. Please keep the following in mind:
   - Visit reputable websites and see how they are suggesting their units be taught.
   - View these samples through the lens of what we do in Cobb.
     - Do they align with our course guides for ELA, Science and Social Studies?
     - Have they been constructed with backward design? Remember that we start with the end in mind. We do not build a unit around a piece of text, rather we start with the student learning targets, how we will assess mastery, and the enduring understandings that are to be taught BEFORE we move to the activities that we might use to reach these targets.
     - Be sure to weigh carefully the value of the units provided on the state’s website. Many had text and topics that did not align with the grade level GPS for science/social studies, much less the sequence we follow in Cobb. If you like elements of the DOE units, perhaps you can substitute Cobb aligned resources in place of the resources the state writers listed, in order to make them work.

5. **We are creating Cobb resources now to support our existing expectations for lesson and unit planning.** We will continue to use backward design in planning our own units or outlines. This summer we will be enhancing the Social Studies and Science resources within PICASSO in ways that will support the integration of these content areas with the new ELA common core standards.

6. **What about the integration of content?** We are integrating content when possible where they fit naturally. We do not try to force connections where they distort the content/standards we are trying to teach. We do not believe that all social studies and science can be taught effectively entirely within ELA, although we do think there are many rich opportunities for integration.