

2Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

3Why Teach Ethnic Studies?

4Introduction

5As early as the 1970s, some California public high schools began offering Ethnic
6Studies, positing that courses in the field would provide an opportunity to engage the
7history¹, cultures, contributions, perspectives, and experiences of groups that have
8been overlooked, historically marginalized, and often subjected to invisibility within
9mainstream courses. Numerous student outcome benefits of Ethnic Studies have been
10documented. The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers
11to develop culturally/community relevant and responsive pedagogies that are both
12revitalizing and sustaining, help schools better connect with native students and
13students of color, equip all students with the skills and knowledge to think critically about
14the world around them and to tell their own stories, empower students to be engaged
15socially and politically, enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural
16diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism. In
17essence, Ethnic Studies helps improve the U.S. democracy by encouraging the
18participation of all students at all political, social, and economic levels.

19Defining Ethnic Studies

20At its core, the field of Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and
21indigeneity with an emphasis on experiences of people of color in the United States.
22Further, it is the interdisciplinary, loving, and critical praxis of holistic humanity – as
23educational and racial justice. It is from communities of color and our intergenerational
24worldviews, memories, experiences, identities, narratives, and voices. It is the study of
25intersectional and ancestral roots, coloniality, hegemony, and a dignified world where
26many worlds fit, for present and future generations.

11 Throughout this model curriculum, language is used that deliberately offers an
12alternative to traditional wording that could have a particular context within the dominant
13culture. More information about these terms can be found in the Glossary.

27The field critically grapples with the various power structures and forms of oppression,
28including, but not limited to, white supremacy, race and racism, sexism, classism,
29homophobia, islamophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia, that continue to impact the
30social, emotional, cultural, economic, and political experiences of Native People/s and
31people of color.

32Ethnic Studies is xdisciplinary, in that it variously takes the forms of being
33interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, undisciplinary, and intradisciplinary.
34As such, it can grow its original language to serve these needs with purposeful
35respellings of terms, including history as herstory and women as womxn, connecting
36with a gender and sexuality lens, along with a socioeconomic class lens at three of its
37intersections. Terms utilized throughout this document, which may be unfamiliar to new
38practitioners of the field, are defined in the glossary.

39In education, what is often called the “achievement gap” between students of different
40racial backgrounds, is recontextualized by Ethnic Studies as the opportunity gap, and/or
41what Gloria Ladson-Billings framed as the education debt in her 2006 presidential
42address to the American Education Research Association. This debt refers to what
43students of color in the United States are owed after centuries of educational trauma,
44dehumanization, and enforced sociopolitical, cultural-historical, economic, and moral
45constraints via the education system. As a field catalyzed by a righteous angst for
46justice and access to knowledge (rather than merely “closing a gap”), Ethnic Studies
47intentionally works toward helping pay this education debt. Students are asked to
48“achieve academic success” in a humanizing and critically conscious way, while
49demanding the education system reconsider what constitutes the parameters of
50academic success. Ethnic Studies has created a space for all students to learn about
51and analyze their identities and hxrstories, feel proud of them, and actualize their full
52humanity. This is supported by the National Education Association report by Christine
53Sleeter about the academic and social value of Ethnic Studies.

54Ethnic Studies curricular designs need to be responsive to: a) the students in the
55curricular program with considerations of the demographic imperative as well as of each

56student present; b) the community where the curricular program takes place; c) the
57academic discourses of Ethnic Studies respecting students as intellectuals; and d) our
58world—past, present, future.

59Beyond providing a hxrstory and analysis of oppression and power, Ethnic Studies
60offers a dynamic inquiry-based approach to the study of Native People/s and
61communities of color that encourages utilizing transnational and comparative
62frameworks. Thus, the themes and topics discussed within the field are boundless, for
63example, with research being conducted on literary devices in Mexican American texts,
64the implications of war and imperialism on Southeast Asian refugees, African American
65social movements and modes of resistance, and Native American/Indigenous cultural
66retentions, to name a few.

67Ethnic Studies is about people whose cultures, hxrstories, and social positionalities are
68forever changing and evolving. Thus, Ethnic Studies also examines borders,
69borderlands, mixtures, hybridities, nepantlas, double consciousness, and reconfigured
70articulations, even within and beyond the various names and categories associated with
71our identities. People do not fit neatly into boxes, and identity is complex.

72Furthermore, the field presents an opportunity for different cultures to be highlighted and
73studied in a manner that is meaningful and transformative to both students of color, and
74white students. Ethnic Studies provides all students regardless of race with crucial
75interpersonal communication, cultural competency, and equity driven skills that are
76integral to civic engagement and collegiality, especially in a society that is rapidly
77diversifying. Critical solidarities are imperative for Ethnic Studies, it is out of these
78solidarities that the field emerged with the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), and
79with these solidarities that Ethnic Studies is growing nationally today.

80Hxrstory & Background

81Rooted in multimillennial people of color intellectual traditions, the hxrstory and
82genealogy of Ethnic Studies as an emergent academic field in the Western academy
83can be traced back to the activism and intellectual thought of W.E.B. DuBois, Mary
84McLeod Bethune, Carter G. Woodson, Carlos Bulosan, Grace Lee Boggs, Paulo Freire,

85Frantz Fanon, Rodolfo Acuña, Vine Deloria Jr., Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, among
86others. These scholars argued that the hxrstories, perspectives, and contributions of
87those on the social, political, and economic margins—African Americans, Asian
88Americans and Pacific Islanders, Chicana/o/x/, Latina/o/x, and Native Americans—be
89included in mainstream history (as well as other traditional disciplines) to be able to
90better understand the past, envision new possibilities, and celebrate the nation’s wealth
91of diversity.

92By 1968, this call was crystallized as Black Student Union members at San Francisco
93State College (now San Francisco State University) began organizing around the issue,
94soon after, they were joined by other students, culminating with a student strike.
95Inspired by youth activism and organizing in the Civil Rights, Black Liberation, American
96Indian, Chicano, Asian American, labor, and anti-Vietnam war movements, students at
97San Francisco State College embarked on a strike (November 6, 1968–March 20, 1969)
98demanding: (1) equal access to public education, (2) an increase in faculty of color, and
99(3) “a new curriculum that would embrace the history of all people, including ethnic
100minorities.”² Led by the TWLF—a coalition of students from the campus’ Black Student
101Union, Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Intercollegiate Chinese for
102Social Action (ICSA), the Mexican American Student Confederation, the Philippine
103American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), La Raza, the Native American Students
104Organization, and Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA)—students refused to attend
105classes for five months until administrators met their demands.

106In 1969 the first college of Ethnic Studies was established at San Francisco State
107University. Students were now able to take courses devoted to foregrounding the
108perspectives, hxrstories, and cultures of African Americans, Asian Americans and
109Pacific Islanders, Chicana/o/x/, Latina/o/x, and Native Americans. In early 1969,
110students at the University of California, Berkeley successfully launched a strike that
111resulted in the creation of one of the first Ethnic Studies departments. Meanwhile, at the
112other end of the state, as early as 1968 students at California State University, Los

42 Denize Springer, "Campus Commemorates 1968 Student-Led Strike," SF State News,
5last modified September 22, 2008, <http://www.sfsu.edu/news/2008/fall/8.html> (accessed
6November 13, 2018).

113Angeles and California State University, Northridge were establishing Chicano Studies
114and Black Studies Departments. Soon, college students across the nation began calling
115for the establishment of Ethnic Studies courses, departments, and degree programs.
116Over fifty years since the strike at San Francisco State College, Ethnic Studies is now a
117vibrant discipline with multiple academic journals, associations, national and
118international conferences, undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and
119thousands of scholars and educators contributing to the field's complexity and vitality.

120Even with all of its vibrancy, the field of Ethnic Studies remains under attack (e.g.,
121department consolidation, lack of institutional support, threats made by those with white
122supremacist beliefs, blatant resistance to implementation, etc.), and current Ethnic
123Studies advocates, activists, and educators continue to uphold the demands and spirit
124of the TWLF.

125Since the student movements of the 1960s, Ethnic Studies proponents have fought for
126the inclusion of Ethnic Studies across public schools at the K–12 level and higher
127education. Over the last ten years this movement has gained substantial traction at the
128local level as numerous California public school districts have either passed their own
129Ethnic Studies graduation requirements or are implementing Ethnic Studies courses.³

130At the state level, the California State Legislature has drafted and voted on several bills
131to help bolster support for Ethnic Studies implementation at the K–12 level, including
132Assembly Bill 2016, which authorized the development of this document, and Assembly
133Bill 738, which calls for the creation of a Native American Studies model curriculum.

134The Benefits of Ethnic Studies

73 As of December 2018, the following districts have either created an Ethnic Studies
8graduation requirement or have implemented Ethnic Studies courses or programs: Los
9Angeles Unified School District, Woodland Unified School District, San Mateo Union
10High School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, Oakland Unified School
11District, Berkeley Unified School District, San Francisco Unified School District,
12Stockton Unified School District, Oxnard Union High School District, Compton Unified
13School District, Ventura Unified School District, San Diego Unified School District,
14Centinela Valley Union High School District, El Rancho Unified School District,
15Montebello Unified School District, New Haven Unified School District, Santa Ana
16Unified School District, and Coachella Valley Unified School District.

135As the demographics continue to shift in California to an increasingly diverse population
136—for example, with Chicana/o/x/ and Latina/o/x students comprising a majority in our
137public schools—there is a legitimate need to address the academic and social needs of
138such a population. All students should be better equipped with the knowledge and skills
139to successfully navigate our increasingly diverse society.⁴ Ethnic Studies provides the
140space for all students and teachers to begin having these conversations. Furthermore,
141Ethnic Studies scholars and classroom teachers established through research that
142courses in the field have:

143Identity & Socioemotional Development

- 144 • Helped students develop a strong sense of identity⁵
- 145 • Helped students discover their hxrstorical and ancestral origins
- 146 • Reduced stereotype threat⁶
- 147 • Aided in the socioemotional wellness of students

148Civic and Community Engagement

- 149 • Increased youth civic engagement and community responsiveness⁷
- 150 • Provided students with skills and language to critically analyze, respond, and
151 speak out on social issues

174 California Department of Education, *2017-2018 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade*
18(Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, n.d.),
19[https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?](https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cde=00&agglevel=state&year=2017-18)
20[cde=00&agglevel=state&year=2017-18](https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cde=00&agglevel=state&year=2017-18) (accessed November 13, 2018).

215 Christine Sleeter, *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research*
22*Review* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 2011), 8–10,
23<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf> (accessed
24December 12, 2018).

256 See: Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype threat and the test performance
26of academically successful African Americans," in *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, ed.
27Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips (Washington, DC, US: Brookings Institution
28Press, 1998).

297 Christine Sleeter, *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies*, 14.

152 Academic Support and Development

- 153 • Increased critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and interpersonal
154 communication skills
- 155 • Led to a decrease in truancy⁸
- 156 • Led to an increase in standardized test scores⁹
- 157 • Led to an increase in GPA, especially in math and science¹⁰
- 158 • Led to an increase in graduation and college enrollment rates¹¹
- 159 • Introduced students to college level academic frameworks, theories, terms, and
160 research methods

161 Building Trust, Solidarity, and Accompliceship

- 162 • Helped white students become stronger advocates and allies for equity, justice,
163 and liberation.¹²
- 164 • Helped foster a classroom environment of trust between students and teachers,
165 enabling them to discuss contentious issues and topics, as well as current
166 events
- 167 • Strengthened social and cultural awareness

308 Julio Cammarota, "A Social Justice Approach to Achievement: Guiding Latina/o
31 Students Toward Educational Attainment With a Challenging, Socially Relevant
32 Curriculum," *Equity & Excellence in Education* 40, no. 1 (February 7, 2017).

339 Ibid.

3410 Brooke Donald, "Stanford study suggests academic benefits to Ethnic Studies
35 courses," *Stanford News* (Stanford, CA), January 12, 2016,

36 <https://news.stanford.edu/2016/01/12/ethnic-studies-benefits-011216/> (accessed
37 December 12, 2018).

3811 Ibid.

3912 Ibid.

168Moreover, Ethnic Studies is designed to benefit all students. Christine Sleeter, Critical
169Education scholar, posits, “rather than being divisive, Ethnic Studies helps students to
170bridge differences that already exists in experiences and perspectives,” highlighting that
171division is *antithetical* to Ethnic Studies.

172**Approaches to Ethnic Studies**

173When the discipline was first founded, “Ethnic Studies” was (and still is) deployed as an
174umbrella term/field that was designed to be inclusive of four core fields—African
175American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicana/o/x/ and Latina/o/x Studies, and
176Native American Studies. While each core field addresses the specific hxrstories, and
177social, cultural, economic, and political experiences of people from said group, they
178often overlap in their approach, the types of methods and theories that are engaged,
179and discussion of shared/collective struggles.

180With such disciplinary diversity, Ethnic Studies has been approached utilizing various
181instructional formats at the K–12 level. The most common being stand-alone core field
182courses, thematic/comparative race and Ethnic Studies courses, and the integration of
183Ethnic Studies content into existing courses, subject areas, and units, as is more
184commonly seen at the K-8 level. With each approach, at the high school level, students
185are encouraged to reflect on the course’s relationship to their own ancestries and lives
186as hxrhistorically situated human beings.

187Stand-Alone Courses

188These courses tend to focus on core field specific topics like: “African American History,”
189“Asian American Cultural Studies,” “Mexican American Literature,” and “A Native
190American Experience,” to name a few. They provide students the opportunity to delve
191into content relevant to specific core fields, and allow teachers to develop robust and
192focused curriculum. Overall, this approach to Ethnic Studies provides some of the most
193concentrated and comprehensive spaces for learning about a particular area within an
194Ethnic Studies core field.

195Thematic/Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies Approach

196Increasingly, Ethnic Studies courses have been developed and taught using a thematic
197and comparative race approach. Teachers will often identify key themes and concepts
198within the field that can be used to investigate the histories, contributions, and
199struggles of each of the four core groups, both individually and collectively. Indigeneity,
200colonialism, hegemony, systems of power, cultural retention and revitalization, identity,
201and social justice are just a few of the many concepts and themes that can be engaged
202within an Ethnic Studies course employing this approach. In doing so, teachers are able
203to provide a space for multiple perspectives and narratives to be included in units and
204lessons simultaneously. This approach also encourages students to make links across
205racial and ethnic lines, and foregrounds accompliceship and solidarity-building.
206Additionally, students are able to engage readings and materials across each of the
207core fields, thus, exposing them to new ideas and perspectives that they may not have
208encountered in a stand-alone Ethnic Studies course.

209Another way to engage this approach is by using themes to delve into each of the core
210Ethnic Studies areas independently. For example, during a 16-week semester,
211educators can divide the course up evenly, with approximately four weeks dedicated to
212the study of each core field, and a salient focus on particular themes across all the core
213fields. Overall, the thematic and comparative approaches often stress the importance of
214identifying shared struggles, building unity, and developing intercultural communication
215and competence.

216Integrating Ethnic Studies into Existing Courses

217While an increasing amount of districts across the state have worked to develop and
218implement Ethnic Studies courses, there are still many districts that have not been able
219to offer the course for a multitude of reasons (e.g., budgetary and other infrastructural
220constraints, resistance to Ethnic Studies, lack of instructional resources and curriculum
221support, etc.) Consequently, many educators have worked diligently to include Ethnic
222Studies concepts, terms, and topics into existing courses. It is not uncommon to see
223Ethnic Studies integrated into History–Social Science courses, including U.S. History,
224World History, Economics, Psychology, Social Studies, and Geography. There are also
225cases of Ethnic Studies being included in Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematics,

226Science, English Language Arts, and other subject areas. Another example is that in
227math there are courses such as “Am I an Ethnic Statistic” and “Math and Social Justice.”

228For example, a geography teacher might develop a unit or lesson around urban
229geography, where students can delve into key concepts like environmental racism and
230ecological justice, and focus on the experiences of people of color in those spaces.
231Students could draw on local news stories, primary sources like housing and city
232planning maps, archived oral history interviews from current and past residents of the
233area, and literary texts that speak to the experiences of people of color in urban spaces
234like Sandra Cisneros’ *House on Mango Street*, Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the*
235*Sun*, and the poetry of Janice Mirikitani.

236Beyond providing a space for Ethnic Studies material when districts are unable to, this
237approach ensures that the intersectional lens that Ethnic Studies provides is salient and
238manifests within various subject areas. Moreover, this approach further enriches
239traditional subject areas by including a range of perspectives that can further elucidate
240the overall course content.

241Grade Level

242Ethnic Studies has primarily been taught at the college/university and high school (ninth
243through twelfth grade) levels. However, some districts have offered the course for
244grades six through eight, and at the K–5 level Ethnic Studies is commonly included as a
245stand-alone unit. Ethnic Studies should be an essential core component of every
246students’ K–12 education experience. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum has been
247developed for educators teaching grades nine through twelve, and in alignment with the
248University of California “A–G” subject requirements. The sample units and lessons
249included can be tailored to meet specific grade level requirements and standards,
250including those at the middle school level. Adjusting assignments, modes of assessment
251and readings, as well as pedagogical approach, are most important to consider when
252modifying the model curriculum to fit a specific grade level.

253The Model Curriculum

254 Assembly Bill 2016, Chapter 327 of the Statutes of 2016, added Section 51226.7 to the
255 *Education Code*, which directs the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop,
256 and the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a model curriculum in Ethnic Studies.
257 Pursuant to the legislation and SBE guidelines, this document will: (1) offer support for
258 the inclusion of Ethnic Studies as either a stand-alone elective, or to be integrated into
259 existing history social science courses. (2) provide educators and administrators across
260 the state with resources to begin implementing courses in the field, which will bring
261 attention to the history, contributions, struggles, and cultures of communities of color
262 and historically marginalized people in California from a thematic perspective while
263 foregrounding the four original Ethnic Studies areas--African American Studies, Asian
264 American Studies, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Studies, and Native American Studies.
265 Samples of newer Ethnic Studies fields in the U.S., which further specify certain
266 populations, including Pacific Islander Studies, Arab American Studies, Central
267 American Studies, are also included. The ESMC will (3) include course outlines that
268 have been approved by the University of California as having met the "A-G"
269 requirements for college readiness, in addition to sample lesson plans, curricula,
270 primary source documents, pedagogical and professional development resources and
271 tools, current research on the field, among other materials. And (4) the ESMC will be
272 developed with the guidance of classroom teachers, college/university Ethnic Studies
273 faculty and experts, and representatives from local educational agencies, constituting
274 the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (MCAC).

275 Furthermore, this model curriculum should not be seen as exhaustive, but rather a
276 companion document to existing SBE-adopted content standards and curriculum
277 frameworks, including the *History--Social Science Content Standards* and the *History--*
278 *Social Science Framework (HSS Framework)*, the *California Common Core State*
279 *Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science,*
280 *and Technical Subjects, The English Language Arts/English Language Development*
281 *Framework*, and the *California English Language Development Standards*. The *HSS*
282 *Framework* in particular provides some support for the implementation of Ethnic
283 Studies, including a brief outline of a ninth-grade elective course in the field, and the
284 document overall emphasizes some key principles of Ethnic Studies teaching and

285learning like, diversity, inclusion, challenging systems of inequality, and support for
286student activism and social change.

287**Guiding Principles and Outcomes of Ethnic Studies Teaching**

288Given the range and complexity of the field, it is important to identify the key values and
289principles of Ethnic Studies as a means to offer guidance for the development of Ethnic
290Studies courses, teaching, and learning. The foundational values of Ethnic Studies are
291housed in the conceptual model of the “double helix” which interweaves *holistic*
292*humanization* and *critical consciousness*.¹³ Humanization includes the values of love,
293respect, hope, and solidarity are based on celebration of community cultural wealth.¹⁴

294The values rooted in humanization and critical consciousness shapes the following
295guiding principles for Ethnic Studies teaching and learning. These are the guiding
296values and principles each Ethnic Studies lesson should include. Ethnic Studies
297courses, teaching, and learning will

- 298 1. cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-
299 determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native
300 People/s and people of color;
- 301 2. celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of color by
302 providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with
303 their intellectual and cultural wealth;
- 304 3. center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic,
305 familial, and marginalized knowledge;
- 306 4. critique empire and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, patriarchy,
307 cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of
308 power and oppression at the intersections of our society;

4013 R. Tolteka Cuauhtin, “The Ethnic Studies Framework, A Holistic Overview” in R.
41Tolteka Cuauhtin, Miguel Zavala, Christine Sleeter, and Wayne Au, eds. *Rethinking*
42*Ethnic Studies* (Milwaukee, WI, Rethinking Schools, Limited, 2019), 65–75.

4314 Tara Yosso, “Whose culture has capital?” in *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1)
44(2005), 69–91.

- 309 5. challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological,
310 institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels;
- 311 6. connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle
312 for social justice on the global and local levels to ensure a truer democracy; and
- 313 7. conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for post-imperial life that
314 promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and
315 radical healing.¹⁵

316 **Developing an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy**

317 Ethnic Studies teaching is grounded in the belief that education can be a tool for
318 transformation, social change, and liberation.¹⁶ Central to an Ethnic Studies pedagogy is
319 the goal to develop students to be able to effectively and powerfully read, write, speak,
320 think critically, and engage in school. Additionally, Ethnic Studies empowers students to
321 love themselves and their communities. To achieve these goals, Ethnic Studies
322 educators should consider the following five elements as part of their pedagogical
323 praxis: purpose, content and skills, context, methods, and identity. This five element
324 approach and praxis-centered definition of Ethnic Studies will help ensure that
325 educators recognize that one's pedagogy cannot be solely based on pedagogical
326 theories or 'teaching style'. Teaching Ethnic Studies necessitates that pedagogues
327 consider the larger principles and purpose of Ethnic Studies, the context in which the
328 course is being taught, and even a reflection on the pedagogue's identity and
329 positionality.

330 **Purpose**

331 It is essential that Ethnic Studies educators first reflect upon the purpose of the field,
332 and subsequent course, before arriving at their pedagogical approach. Historically, the

4515 Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales and Edward Curammeng, "Pedagogies of Resistance:
46 Filipina/o Gestures of Rebellion Against the Inheritance of American Schooling," in Tracy
47 Buenavista and Arshad Ali, eds., *Education At War: The Fight for Students of Color in*
48 *America* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2018), 233–238.
4916 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2000), 71.

333educational and academic purpose of Ethnic Studies has centered on three core
334concepts: *access, relevance, and community*.¹⁷

- 335 • Access- Providing students with the opportunity to engage Ethnic Studies
336 material within their classrooms; the ability to gain a quality education; and
337 increased institutional and academic support for students of color and those on
338 the socioeconomic margins.
- 339 • Relevance- Ethnic Studies provides students with a quality education that is both
340 culturally and community relevant, and draws extensively from the lived
341 experiences and material realities of each individual student.
- 342 • Community- Ethnic Studies teaching and learning is meant to serve as a bridge
343 between educational spaces/institutions and community. Thus, encouraging
344 students to use their knowledge to become agents of change, social justice
345 organizers and advocates, and engaged global citizens.

346Reflecting on these concepts at the onset will ensure that Ethnic Studies educators are
347creating content and a pedagogical praxis that is grounded in both the field's purpose
348and aforementioned principles. Dawn Mabalon provides the following essential
349questions that guide the purpose of Ethnic Studies: "(1) Who am I? (2) Who is my family
350and community? (3) What can I do to bring positive change to my community and
351world?"

352Content and Skills

353With Ethnic Studies drawing on a range of academic disciplines from history and
354performing arts to sociology and literature, the expectation is that students are
355introduced to an array of academically rigorous content and skills that are
356simultaneously grounded in the contributions, lived experiences, and hxrstories of
357people of color. Students should be exposed to a variety of primary and secondary
358sources, learn how to process multiple and often competing sources of information,
359form and defend their own analyses that are based on evidence, and understand how to

5017Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales et al., "Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications
51for K-12 Schools from the Research," *The Urban Review* 47, no. 1 (March 12, 2015).

360appropriately contextualize and evaluate sources of information by bringing them into
361conversation with other texts, significant events, people, theories, and ideas.

362For additional support on identifying a multitude of sources that can be used in the
363classroom, Ethnic Studies educators should consult the University of California (UC)
364Ethnic Studies course outlines that are included in the appendices of this document,
365collaborate with other teachers at their sites, and engage materials that can be found at
366local and community archives and libraries, especially those housed by the University of
367California, California State University, and local community colleges. Many California
368community colleges also offer evening, summer, and online Ethnic Studies and teacher
369development classes that are accessible to interested teachers.

370Context

371Beyond content, it is important that Ethnic Studies educators are knowledgeable of the
372context in which the course is being taught. Here are some dynamics an Ethnic Studies
373educator might consider: Is the course being taught in a district where parents or
374community members are hostile to the field? Is the course being taught in a school with
375a widening opportunity gap? Or perhaps the course is being taught during a moment
376where racial tensions at the local and national level are beginning to impact students?
377These are just a few of the contextual factors that Ethnic Studies educators must
378consider as they develop their pedagogical praxis.

379While being aware of these dynamics is important, working to address them within the
380course is also key. For example, an Ethnic Studies educator might create a lesson
381around education inequality and the opportunity gap that gets students to reflect upon
382the many factors that have contributed to disproportionate student success across racial
383and class lines. Students could analyze “student success”, “college readiness”, and
384standardized test data from their district or others across the state, read case studies
385that identify some of the key factors that attribute to student success, and reflect upon
386their own experiences, drawing connections to collected data or scholarly analyses, if
387any. A critical part of the context of Ethnic Studies is a sensitivity and preparedness for
388when different emotions and/or traumas arise from students in dealing with potentially

389difficult content or materials—having training with this and resources of further support
390(including school site counselors when needed), is key.

391Methods

392There are various methods or pedagogical approaches that Ethnic Studies educators
393should consider, from culturally/community relevant and responsive pedagogy to the
394important instructional shifts described in the *California History–Social Science*
395*Framework* and the *English Language Arts/English Language Development*
396*Framework*.

397 • Inquiry—An inquiry-based approach to Ethnic Studies invites students to become
398 active participants in the learning process. Students are encouraged to pose
399 questions, investigate and explore academic content, and research and theorize
400 solutions to problems created by centuries of settler colonialism, imperialism, and
401 white supremacy. This approach is inherently student-centered and helps
402 democratize the classroom by allowing students to help shape their education.
403 Thus, the role of a teacher in an inquiry-based classroom is more of a facilitator
404 that helps students formulate questions, conduct research, and come to their
405 own conclusions/solutions. Researchers argue that this approach has yielded
406 student achievement gains/narrowed the opportunity gap (especially amongst
407 historically marginalized students), increased proficiency amongst English
408 language learners, and provides a framework for teachers that might not share
409 the same identities of their students to best engage underrepresented students.¹⁸

410 This approach to teaching moves away from students being seen as repositories
411 that are made to constantly digest content with the expectation that they are
412 tested on the material, but do minimal critical engagement. In teaching Ethnic
413 Studies, this shift is paramount.

5218 Center for Inspired Teaching, *Inspired Issue Brief: Inquiry-Based Teaching*
53(Washington, D.C.: Center for Inspired Teaching, 2008), [https://inspiredteaching.org/wp-](https://inspiredteaching.org/wp-content/uploads/impact-research-briefs-inquiry-based-teaching.pdf)
54[content/uploads/impact-research-briefs-inquiry-based-teaching.pdf](https://inspiredteaching.org/wp-content/uploads/impact-research-briefs-inquiry-based-teaching.pdf) (accessed
55December 12, 2018).

414 In practice, a teacher employing an inquiry based approach to Ethnic Studies
415 might frame the course description around a question like—how have race and
416 ethnicity been constructed in the United States, and how have they changed over
417 time? While broad, this question allows for students to be able to enter the
418 course from various points. This approach encourages the use of lessons
419 grounded in research and academic content. Getting students to engage primary
420 sources, develop youth-participatory action research (YPAR) projects, or create
421 service learning projects are just a few examples of how an inquiry based
422 approach encourages students to become actors within the learning process.

- 423 • Democratizing the Classroom and Citizenship- Ethnic Studies educators
424 democratize their classrooms by creating a learning environment where both
425 students and teachers are equal active participants in the co-constructing
426 knowledge, replacing what Paulo Freire describes as the “banking” concept with
427 problem-posing education.¹⁹ This fundamental shift enables students to be
428 recognized and valued as knowledge producers alongside their educators, while
429 simultaneously placing an emphasis on the development of democratic values
430 and collegiality.

431 This approach to Ethnic Studies teaching is also echoed in the California
432 *History–Social Science Framework’s* underscoring of citizenship as one of the
433 “four important instructional shifts”. Having students research a challenge facing
434 their community, engagement with local elected officials, advocates, and
435 community members, structured debate, simulations of government, or service
436 learning, are all citizenship oriented skills that are best developed in a classroom
437 where students are able to exercise their agency. Furthermore, these types of
438 activities are appropriate for an Ethnic Studies course as they provide a lens for
439 students to identify institutional/structural inequities, advocate for change at the
440 local, state, national, or international level, and to engage in healthy debate and
441 dialogue with their peers.

5619 Ibid.

442 All Ethnic Studies courses should include a community engagement/action
443 project that allows for students to use their knowledge and voice to affect social
444 transformation in their community. Teachers can utilize programs that assist
445 students in collecting data, identifying issues, root causes and implementing a
446 plan to better their environment (e.g., YPAR, Mikva Challenge Action Civics).
447 Their projects need to influence, educate, advocate or speak truth to power. For
448 example, if students decide they want to advocate for voting rights for
449 undocumented immigrant residents at the school district or city elections, they
450 can develop arguments in favor of such a city ordinance and then plan a meeting
451 with their city council person or school board member. To be convincing they
452 must do in depth research on how other cities have achieved this ordinance,
453 demographic data, police representation arguments, survey data, etc. And then
454 plan their speeches. This experience can be powerful and transformational in
455 that it instills a sense of empowerment in youth that they will carry on throughout
456 their lives.

457 This emphasis on citizenship within the pedagogy provides students with a keen
458 sense of ethics, respect, and appreciation for all people, regardless of ethnicity,
459 nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and beliefs. Furthermore,
460 citizenship is a key entry point for students to discuss Ethnic Studies theories
461 like, intersectionality—an analytic framework coined by Black feminist legal
462 scholar, Kimberlee Crenshaw, that captures how multiple identities (race, class,
463 gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) overlap or intersect, creating unique experiences,
464 especially for those navigating multiple marginalized or oppressed identities.²⁰
465 Intersectionality helps students better understand the nuances around identity,
466 and provides them with skills to be able to engage and advocate for/with
467 communities on the margins of the margins. Further, it helps those with privilege
468 at different intersections recognize their societal advantages in these areas, and
469 build solidarity with oppressed groups.

5720 See Kimberlee Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics,
58and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991):
591241-99.

470 • Stressing Literacy- Ethnic Studies, like all areas within the social sciences, is a
471 literate discipline. Students should learn the skills necessary to access
472 informational, scholarly, and literary texts. Moreover, they should be able to think
473 critically and analytically, and express themselves through strong verbal and
474 written communication (expository writing). These skills are integral to students'
475 ability to grasp and master content, engage in inquiry, and be active and well
476 informed participants in society. The specific grade-level skills that students
477 should develop in their high school careers are described in the *History–Social*
478 *Science Content Standards*, specifically the Historical and Social Sciences
479 Analysis Skills, and in the *California Common Core State Standards for English*
480 *Language Arts and Literacy*, including the writing and reading standards for
481 history/social studies.

482 To further develop students' literacy skills, Ethnic Studies teachers should
483 consider including literature or other language arts based texts into their courses,
484 which also speak to some of the principles of Ethnic Studies. For example,
485 including poems, plays, or literature, like the writings of Langston Hughes and
486 Zora Neale Hurston, or dramas produced by El Teatro Campesino. These texts
487 allow for teachers to discuss the literary, poetic, and theatrical devices of these
488 works, while simultaneously highlighting the history of the Harlem Renaissance,
489 and the dramas and cultural production of the Chicano and United Farm Workers
490 movements. The infusion of cultural and more Ethnic Studies based texts also
491 allow for students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum, and to imagine a
492 better world.

493 • Culturally/Community Relevant and Responsive- Ethnic Studies teachers should
494 be sure that their pedagogy is both community and culturally relevant. Beyond
495 teaching content that is diverse, having an understanding of the various cultural
496 backgrounds of students, and being aware of pertinent cultural norms and
497 nuances is also important to Ethnic Studies teaching and learning.²¹ For

60²¹ While often conflated, it should be noted that an Ethnic Studies pedagogy is not the
61 same as culturally/community relevant and responsive pedagogy. The latter is but a
62 facet of Ethnic Studies pedagogy.

498 example, if an Ethnic Studies educator taught a course with several Muslim
499 students that observed Ramadan, that educator might limit food-based lessons,
500 reduce physical activity, advocate for the creation of an alternative space during
501 lunch, offer additional support to those students, or even create a lesson about
502 Ramadan traditions, Islam, and Islamophobia.

503 While much of being able to develop a culturally-responsive pedagogy is about
504 the relationships teachers build with their students, operating from a holistic and
505 motivational space, tailoring lessons and assignments to speak to the needs and
506 cultural experiences of students, and staying abreast of research, trends, and
507 issues that speak to the various cultures of students is also key.²² Furthermore,
508 Ethnic Studies educators should stay abreast of challenges impacting their
509 students' communities, and leverage Ethnic Studies courses to implement and
510 spur discussions, assignments, and community-engaged projects around those
511 issues and/or topics.²³

512 Identity

513 Finally, it is important that Ethnic Studies educators be aware of their own identities,
514 positionalities, subjectivities, and privilege. More specifically, a reflection on how their
515 identities may impact Ethnic Studies teaching and learning. With much of the field
516 focusing on issues related to race and identity, teachers, especially those with limited
517 Ethnic Studies knowledge, should engage in activities that allow them to unpack their
518 own identities, marginalization, lived experiences, and understanding of race, culture,
519 and social justice. For white teachers who may feel especially concerned with teaching
520 Ethnic Studies or may be challenged, leading Ethnic Studies scholars highly
521 recommend that they work through assignments like critical autobiography, critical

6322 Ibid.

6423 For More on Community/Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogies see: Gloria
65Ladson-Billings, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American*
66*Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 465–91; R. Tolteka Cuahtin,
67Miguel Zavala, Christine Sleeter, and Wayne Au, eds. *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*
68(Williston, VT: Rethinking Schools, 2019); Bell hooks. *Teaching to Transgress:*
69*Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994).

522storytelling, critical life hxrstory, or keeping a subjectivity journal, to begin the process of
523“constructively situating oneself in relationship to Ethnic Studies”.²⁴

524Additionally, unlike traditional fields, Ethnic Studies often requires both students and
525educators to be vulnerable with each other given the range of topics discussed
526throughout the course. Thus, educators should work to build community within their
527classrooms, be comfortable with sharing pieces of their own identities and lived
528experience, be equipped to holistically navigate and respond to students’ concerns,
529discussions, and emotions, and recognize that as educators you will not always have
530the answer, thus, be open to learning from your students, and create room for teachable
531moments.

532**In-Class Community Building**

533Given the unique and often sensitive material and discussions that may unfold in an
534Ethnic Studies course, being able to establish trust and building community within the
535classroom are essential. Engaging topics on race, class, gender, oppression, etc., may
536evoke feelings of vulnerability, uneasiness, sadness, or discomfort, especially amongst
537students from hxrstorically marginalized backgrounds. Thus, it is imperative for Ethnic
538Studies educators to develop a pedagogy and classroom that: (1) sees the humanity
539and value in each individual student, (2) recognizes that each student has their own
540wealth of experiences and knowledge that will shape their worldviews and values, (3) is
541grounded in academic rigor, but also tends to the socioemotional development of
542students, (4) encourages students to engage each other with respect, trust, love, and
543accountability, and (5) is a space where learning is democratized and students are
544centered.

545Ethnic Studies educators are encouraged to establish community agreements or
546classroom norms in collaboration with their students, incorporate community building
547activities into lessons, and create time for regular reflection and debrief. Incorporating
548these recommendations can assist in building a welcoming environment where students

7024 Tintiangco-Cubales et al., "Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy," pp 118–120.

549are able to rigorously and intimately engage Ethnic Studies and build upon existing
550interpersonal communication and collaboration skills.

551There are a wide range of existing activities that teachers can use to support community
552building in their classrooms. Activities such as “Diversity Bingo”, “Two Truths and a Lie”,
553and “Four Corners” allow students to share information about their personal background
554and experiences with the educator and their peers. The “Privilege Walk” activity allows
555students to confront aspects of potential personal privilege, and learn about the
556challenges that others face that they may not have considered. “Fear in a Hat” is an
557activity that allows students to anonymously raise issues that preoccupy them in a safe
558setting. Other activities can give students a chance to develop their language skills such
559as, “Who I Am/Where I’m From” poems. For further explanation and direction on these
560community building activities, see the appendix.

561**Guidance and Support**

562Like all successful instruction, teaching Ethnic Studies requires effective preparation,
563depth of knowledge, belief in students as capable learners, as well as strong
564institutional support. Drawing on lessons from San Francisco Unified School District’s
565(SFUSD) effort to build its Ethnic Studies program, districts are encouraged to support
566their teachers’ development in three key areas:

- 567 • *Useful Theory, Pedagogy, and Research*- Teachers and administrators should
568 familiarize themselves with current scholarly research around Ethnic Studies
569 instruction, as well as theorizing around critical and culturally/community relevant
570 and responsive pedagogies, critical race theory, and intersectionality, which are
571 key theoretical frameworks and pedagogies utilized in Ethnic Studies research
572 and instruction. Engagement with theory and scholarly research can help
573 strengthen educators’ ability to distinguish between root causes and symptoms,
574 dispel myth from fact, and address the importance of discussing and problem-
575 solving lasting issues caused by systemic inequities. The bibliography included in
576 this document can be used as a springboard, however, it is strongly encouraged
577 that both educators and administrators consult Ethnic Studies coordinators at the

578 district level, Ethnic Studies classroom teachers offering professional
579 development, and faculty at the UC, CSU, and local community colleges. These
580 sources, contacts, and institutions can help educators and administrators stay
581 abreast of useful theory, research, and content knowledge that can be leveraged
582 in the classroom and/or professional development.

583 • *Ethnic Studies Content-* In Ronald Takaki's seminal text, *A Different Mirror: A*
584 *History of Multicultural America*, he articulates the need for a new "looking glass"
585 from which our society must gaze. He argues that within our national narrative all
586 communities must be able to see themselves. Thus, it is vital for teachers to
587 engage a multitude of stories, narratives, sources, and contributions of everyone
588 in America so that all students can see themselves as part and parcel of the
589 grand American narrative. For if they do not see themselves in the "mirror," they
590 may fall victim to believing, that there is in fact nothing to see, or even worse, that
591 they, like monsters, indeed have no reflection, no meaningful nor positive
592 contribution to this society.

593 Teachers should engage various texts and perspectives when teaching Ethnic
594 Studies; be open to learning from their students; consider allowing students to
595 offer suggested texts or sources that may speak to the specificities of their
596 individual identities; and in addition to consulting other teachers, Ethnic Studies
597 coordinators, and UC and CSU faculty, draw on other instructional materials
598 approved by the State Board of Education, as well as resources provided by
599 other public institutions like local museums, archives, and libraries.

600 • *Academic Skill Development-* Any meaningful education must equip students
601 with the necessary tools to engage and invest in their own learning. Reading,
602 writing, speaking, listening and collaboration are all critical to student success,
603 and foundational to the principles of Ethnic Studies. During lesson planning,
604 Ethnic Studies teachers should reflect upon different ways (exercises, homework
605 assignments, service learning projects, etc.) to get students to engage Ethnic
606 Studies content while rigorously developing academic skills. With fewer K–12

607 instructional materials available for implementing Ethnic Studies, as compared to
608 traditional fields, it is integral that teachers collaborate with each other to develop
609 new units, lessons, and other instructional materials. School administrators can
610 support this collaboration by allotting time within professional development days
611 or during department meetings.

612 Teacher development in these key areas can help ensure that students in Ethnic
613 Studies courses will develop a firm grasp of the field, as well as critical social and
614 academic literacies that equip them to meaningfully participate as confident and
615 engaged citizens.

616 Key Considerations for District and Site Administrators

617 While effective teaching of Ethnic Studies is paramount, a supportive district and site
618 leadership is just as important to the efficacy of the work. District and site administrators
619 should also work to develop their understandings of Ethnic Studies instruction and
620 pedagogies. Below are four ways districts can work to best support their Ethnic Studies
621 teachers:

- 622 • *Consider the local history, demographics and particular needs of your*
623 *district/site's students and their respective communities, including recognition of*
624 *the Indigenous Peoples wherever a course is being taught.* Administrators should
625 consider conducting research on the cultural values, traditions, indigeneity, and
626 histories of the diverse populations represented in schools. This research can
627 be done by delving into reported student data, consulting student families and
628 community stakeholders about pressing issues and concerns facing these
629 communities, or even inviting scholars specialized in the history of the
630 communities represented in the district to edify leadership and staff.

- 631 • *Be grounded and well-versed in the purpose and impact of Ethnic Studies-*
632 Similar to Ethnic Studies educators, administrators should also familiarize
633 themselves with research on the efficacy of Ethnic Studies—from developing
634 strong cultural and academic identity, building academic skills, to facilitating civic
635 engagement with a service and problem-solving orientation. Again, the

636 bibliography included in this document can be used as a starting point.
637 Furthermore, administrators should work to weave the purpose, benefits,
638 principles, and impact of Ethnic Studies into the fabric of the school, and as a
639 means to educate parents and the broader community (e.g., creating a page on
640 the school's website that speaks to Ethnic Studies and diversity explicitly).

641 • *Identify teachers who are willing and committed to invest in developing an Ethnic*
642 *Studies curriculum and pedagogy.* Administrators should work within the district
643 and site departments to identify teachers with backgrounds in Ethnic Studies or
644 strong interest in teaching in the area. Conducting inner-district outreach
645 campaigns, and exploring the possibility of developing Ethnic Studies teachers
646 from the ranks of paraprofessionals and other support staff, are just two ways
647 administrators can work to recruit and develop Ethnic Studies teachers.
648 Additionally, administrators can work with local teacher education programs and
649 university Ethnic Studies departments to actively recruit and develop a pipeline
650 for individuals interested in teaching Ethnic Studies.

651 • *Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate instructional support.* In order for
652 teachers to provide a robust Ethnic Studies learning experience they should be
653 engaged in continual professional development, and supported by their site and
654 district administrators who are working in tandem with students and community.
655 Administrators should consider creating a department or distinct lane of work
656 specifically dedicated to developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating
657 Ethnic Studies instructional materials and professional development (preferably
658 differentiated professional development trainings specifically based on varying
659 levels of Ethnic Studies content knowledge). Administrators can develop their
660 own models of Ethnic Studies professional development and/or instructional
661 materials by consulting other districts with well-established Ethnic Studies
662 departments and teachers. Furthermore, administrators can draw upon the
663 expertise of scholars to help create this tailored training.

664 **Integrating Stakeholders and Community**

665 With the field of Ethnic Studies being born out of a grassroots community movement,
666 community partnership and accountability are central to its identity. By design, Ethnic
667 Studies seeks to be community accountable and responsive. Districts and sites
668 considering offering Ethnic Studies should include students, families and other
669 public/community institutions (museums, community art spaces, local non-profits
670 relevant to the field, grassroots/community advocacy organizations, etc.) in those plans
671 and discussions to ensure that the particular histories, aspirations, struggles and
672 achievement of the communities present in classrooms are reflected in the course.

California Department of Education, June 2019