



HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ETHNIC STUDIES

- How have race and ethnicity been constructed in the United States and how has it changed over time?
- How does race and ethnicity continue to shape the United States and contemporary issues?

Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses many subject areas including history, literature, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. It emerged to address content considered to be absent from traditional curriculum and encourage critical engagement. As a field, Ethnic Studies seeks to empower all students to engage socially and politically and to think critically about the world around them. It is important for Ethnic Studies courses to document the experiences of people of color in order for students to construct counter-narratives and develop a more complex understanding of the human experience. Through these studies, students should develop respect for cultural diversity and see the advantages of inclusion.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this field, Ethnic Studies courses can take several forms. However, central to any Ethnic Studies course is the historic struggle of

communities of color, taking into account the intersectionality of identity (gender, class, sexuality, among others), to challenge racism, discrimination, and oppression and interrogate the systems that continue to perpetuate inequality. From a history-social science perspective, students could study the history and culture of a single historically racialized group in the United States. Examples might include a course on African American, Asian American, or Chicana/o and Latina/o history. The course could also focus on an in-depth comparative study of the history, politics, culture, contributions, challenges, and current status of two or more racial or ethnic groups in the United States. This course could, for example, concentrate on how these groups experienced the process of racial and ethnic formation in a variety of contexts and how these categories changed over time. The relationship between global events and an ethnic or racial groups experience could be another area of study. In this vein, students could study how World War II drew African Americans from the South to California cities like Oakland and Los Angeles or examine a groups transnational linkages. Alternatively, a course could focus in on the local community and examine the interactions and coalition-building among a number of ethnic and/or racial groups. In an Ethnic Studies course, students will become aware of the constant themes of social justice and responsibility, while recognizing these are defined differently over time.

As identity and the use of power are central to Ethnic Studies courses, instructors should demonstrate a willingness to reflect critically on their own perspective and personal histories as well as engage students as co-investigators in the inquiry process. An expansive range of sources, i.e. literature, memoirs, art, music, oral histories, and remnants of popular culture can be utilized to better understand the experiences of

historically disenfranchised groups--Native Americans, African Americans, Chicana/o and Latina/o, and Asian Americans. At the same time, students should be aware of how the different media have changed over time and how that has shaped the depiction of the different groups.

Models of instruction should be student-centered. For example, students could develop research questions based on their lived experiences in order to critically study their communities. Reading and studying multiple perspectives, participating in community partnerships, collecting oral histories, completing service learning projects, or engaging in Youth Participatory Action Research can all serve as effective instructional approaches for this course.

Teachers can organize their instruction around a variety of themes, such as the movement to create Ethnic Studies courses in universities, personal explorations of students' racial, ethnic, cultural and national identities, the history of racial construction, both domestically and internationally, and the influence of the media on the framing and formation of identity. Students can investigate the history of the experience of various ethnic groups within the United States, with an eye to the diversity of these experiences based on race, gender, and sexuality, among other identities.

To study these themes, students can consider a variety of investigative questions, including large overarching questions about the definitions of ethnic studies as a field of inquiry, economic and social class in American society, social justice, social responsibility, and social change. They can ask how race has been constructed in the United States and other parts of the world. They can investigate the relationship between race, gender, sexuality, social class, and economic and political power. They

can explore the nature of citizenship by asking how various groups have become American and examining cross-racial and inter-ethnic interactions among immigrants, migrants, people of color, and working people. They can investigate the legacies of social movements and historic struggles against injustice in California, the Southwest, and the United States as a whole and they can study how different social movements for people of color, women, and LGBT communities have mutually informed each other. Students can also personalize their study by considering how our personal and/or family stories connect to the larger historical narratives and how and why some narratives have been privileged over others. Lastly, students may consider how to improve their own community, what constructive actions can be taken, and whether they are providing a model for change for those in other parts of the state, country, and world.

Ethnic Studies Classroom Example: Local History

Ms. Martinez teaches social studies at a large urban high school. The student population of the school where Ms. Martinez teaches is comprised of mostly first and second generation Latino/a students. The majority of her students are English learners (ELs) and receive free and reduced price school meals. Recently, Ms. Martinez's school district adopted a measure that required all students to take at least one Ethnic Studies course prior to graduating high school. The purpose of this measure was to increase student engagement, learning outcomes and personal growth. Throughout the course Ms. Martinez's students have engaged in various activities that are relevant to the lives of her students and that promote historical literacy, social justice and personal empowerment.

Currently Ms. Martinez's students are engaging in a local history unit. The class has read primary and secondary sources focused on migrations into their community. Students engaged in a seminar style discussion centered on their personal identities and explored how their family histories have been impacted by these migrations. During these discussions students used evidence from written sources such as policy regulations, as well as maps and artwork to support claims they made related to the topic. Ms. Martinez's students have also investigated the modern history of their neighborhood. Issues such as "redlining" and other policies that resulted in both "white flight" and the concentration of communities of color into certain neighborhoods have been explored.

Ms. Martinez has developed an assessment connected to the unit's focus questions: **What is the story of our community? How and why is the story of our community important? How does the story of our community connect to my personal story? In what ways have members of my community engaged in political activism?** In order to answer these focus questions students engaged in an oral history project that required them to interview at least two people who engaged in community activism during the 1960s and/or 1970s. The first part of the final assessment was for students to write a paper in the form of a historical narrative that provides insights into the life and activism of the people that were interviewed as well as contextualizes their story. These papers have been submitted to Ms. Martinez.

Today, Ms. Martinez's students are doing the final part of their assessment. They are presenting their oral history projects to their classmates. Ms. Martinez

has required all students to create a slide deck presentation that lasts a total of five to seven minutes. She developed a slide deck template that was emailed out to all of her students. She allowed students to create their presentations in class and for homework over the course of three days. Ms. Martinez emphasized that her students tell a story and not merely read from their slide decks verbatim. She encouraged the use of imagery and limited text as a way to enhance the story her students will tell. She modeled what a good slide deck presentation looks like for her students and answered any questions her students had related to the project. During these presentations students are practicing the protocols that Ms. Martinez taught them. Audience members clap before and after each presentation and take Cornell Notes during the presentation. The presenters maintain good eye contact with the audience and do their best to not read directly from their slides. In the future, Ms. Martinez hopes to compile her students' oral histories into an anthology.

CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Chronological and Spatial Thinking 3; Historical Interpretation 1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10.1, 3, 8, 10, WHST.9–10.2, 4, 6, 7, SL.9–10.1, 4, 5, 6

CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.9–10.1, 5, 9, 10a