

# Ethnic Studies: Lessons from Tucson, San Francisco, and the Nation



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# Overview



- Rationale: Why Ethnic Studies
- Tucson Unified School District
  - Context
  - Results
- San Francisco Unified School District
  - Context
  - Results
- National Educational Association – Literature Review
- Implications

# Ronald Takaki: *A Different Mirror*



“What happens, to borrow the words of Adrienne Rich, when someone with the authority of a teacher describes our society, and you are not in it? Such an experience can be disorienting—a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.” (Takaki, 1993, p. 16)

# TUSD Context

- Department (1997), classes (2002)
- Year-long courses (5 HS)
- Offered in Junior and Senior years
- Southwest US
- High academic standards
- Core credit requirements



# Results from TUSD



- Pre-MAS academics
- MAS => Significantly...
  - More likely to pass AIMS
    - ✦ Writing
    - ✦ Reading
    - ✦ Even Math?
  - Graduate
  - More classes=Greater likelihood

Source: Cabrera et al.  
(2014)

# Context of SFUSD



- 2007 curriculum developed
- Piloted, 2007-2008
- Scaled up, 2010-2013 (5 HS)
- Students identified: 8<sup>th</sup> grade GPA < 2.0 or < 87.5% attendance
- Random assignment



# Results from SFUSD



- Attendance: +21 percentage points
- GPA: +1.4 grade points
- Credits earned: +23 credits

Source: Dee and Penner (2016)

# Results Nationally: National Education Association Review



- “Heroes and Holidays” *don’t* work
- Done well (centering racism):
  - Improved literacy
  - Improved math/science skills
  - Positive academic identity
  - Agency development
  - “Democratic outcomes”

Source: Sleeter (2011)

## The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies

A Research Review

Christine E. Sleeter



# Implications



- Biggest impact – lowest performing students
- Many cognitive and non-cognitive benefits
- Can benefit *all* students as long as....
  - Center inequality (esp. racism)
  - Reflect students' lived realities
  - High academic standards
  - Pilots=>Scaling up
  - Structured and institutionalized
  - Year long/more than just one course
  - More than electives

# References



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