



## **The Ethnic Studies Six Guiding Pillars For Interdisciplinary Learning**

*A framework for course creation and implementation*

As we embark on the journey to create Ethnic Studies courses, curriculum, and culturally relevant content and pedagogy across the curriculum in the Santa Ana Unified School District, K-12, we need to become grounded in the Ethnic Studies framework to help guide our practice.

### **1. Cultivate Indigeneity and Cultural Roots**

- Foster respect grounded in land acknowledgement for the aboriginal peoples of Orange County, the Ajachemen and Tongva.<sup>1</sup>
- Recognize diasporic indigeneity, pre-colonial ancestry and roots.<sup>2</sup>
- Place high value on the pre-colonial, ancestral knowledge, narratives, and communal experiences of Indigenous people, communities of color and groups that are typically marginalized in society.<sup>3</sup>
- Celebrate and honor communities of Asian and Pacific Islander American, Black/African American, Chicax/Latinx, and Native American people by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.<sup>4</sup>
- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially of the Asian and Pacific Islander American, Black/African American, Chicax/Latinx, and Native American people.<sup>5</sup>
- Implement student-centered instruction that fosters a sense of belonging, student voice and dialogue, and assisting students in developing a positive

---

<sup>1</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

<sup>2</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>3</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

<sup>4</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

<sup>5</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

image of themselves and their identity.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Critique Coloniality, Dehumanization, and Genocide

- Ensure the study of how colonization has led to neocolonial ideology, systemic and structural racism and present day mainstream culture resulting in dehumanization, genocide and ecological destruction.<sup>7</sup>
- Critique empire-building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism and other forms of power and oppression.<sup>8</sup>
- Analyze and articulate concepts such as race, racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism etc.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. Challenge Hegemony and Normalization

- Co-construct learning spaces with students to develop critical historical literacy in order to counter the normalization of the master dominant narrative (i.e., standards of beauty, economic systems, legal and political structures, etc).<sup>10</sup>
- Study the 4 I's of Oppression<sup>11</sup>:
  - Ideological
  - Institutional (no such thing as reverse racism)
  - Interpersonal
  - Internalized
- Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, imperialist/colonial beliefs, color blindness, and practices on multiple levels.<sup>12</sup>

## 4. Embed Intersectionality

- Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, spirituality, national origin,

<sup>6</sup> Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing. (n.d.). XITO. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/tiahui>

<sup>7</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>8</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

<sup>9</sup> California State University Council on Ethnic Studies (October 8, 2020). Core Competencies for Ethnic Studies System-wide Graduation Requirement. Retrieved February 8, 2022. [https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/final-csuc-es-core-competencies-oct\\_8\\_2020.pdf](https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/final-csuc-es-core-competencies-oct_8_2020.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing. (n.d.). XITO. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/tiahui>

<sup>11</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

<sup>12</sup> Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. (n.d.). LESMC. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [www.liberatedethnicstudies.org](http://www.liberatedethnicstudies.org)

immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age in Native American, Black/African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Chicana/Latina communities.<sup>13</sup>

## **5. Connect and Conceptualize Decoloniality, Regeneration, and Social Justice**

- Ensure the study of counter-narratives, decolonization, counter hegemony, transformation, collective healing, acceptance, identity transformation, etc.<sup>14</sup>
- Engage in critical analysis using an Ethnic Studies lens, studying local, personal, and familial issues and connecting them to larger systems of oppression and the reproduction of inequality and marginalization.<sup>15</sup>
- Examine and assess how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced, enacted, and studied by communities of color are relevant to current structural issues.<sup>16</sup>
- Connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice and an equitable and democratic society.<sup>17</sup>
- Treat students as intellectuals and help students critique racism and its personal-social impact; challenge oppression using an intersectional lens to examine how multiple oppressions and identities intersect (i.e. race, class, gender, cultures, nationalities, sexual orientations, ableism etc.).<sup>18</sup>
- Develop learning spaces that are validating to students' ethnicities, ancestries and languages, and build upon community cultural wealth.<sup>19</sup>

## **6. Community Engagement**

- Foster students' critical consciousness towards community transformation and liberation through praxis (direct action).<sup>20</sup>
- Conceptualize, imagine, and create new possibilities in a society that challenges systemic racism and promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing through civic action and community connection.

---

<sup>13</sup> California State University Council on Ethnic Studies (October 8, 2020). Core Competencies for Ethnic Studies System-wide Graduation Requirement. Retrieved February 8, 2022. [https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/final-csues-core-competencies-oct\\_8\\_2020.pdf](https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies/Documents/final-csues-core-competencies-oct_8_2020.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>15</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>16</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>17</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>18</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>19</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

<sup>20</sup> Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. NY: Continuum

- Provide the conditions for students to develop agency to make changes to the conditions impacting their communities. Utilize Project-Based Learning that is student and community-focused.<sup>21</sup>
- Ensure civic engagement as a bridge between formal education spaces, community activism, and involvement<sup>22</sup>. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
  - student-led campaigns in which students identify problems/issues in their community/society
  - action-based research, utilizing methods such as Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)
  - the Mikva Challenge Issues to Action Civics Program and Project Soapbox

Notes: Modifications or adaptations to these six guiding pillars for course creation and implementation are subject to the expert evaluation of the Ethnic Studies Steering committee.

---

<sup>21</sup> Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing. (n.d.). XITO. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://www.xicanxinstitute.org/tiahui>

<sup>22</sup> Cuauhtin, T. et al. (2019). *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.