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The Criteria For Developing A TK-12 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

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THE CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING A TK-12 ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL
CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

THE CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING A TK-12 ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL
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by Taunya Jaco

Over the past five decades, educators have been working to develop authentic Ethnic

Studies courses that can be implemented in both higher education and K-12 schools.

Ethnic Studies has been documented to be effective in growth in several metrics used to

assess student "achievement." Despite its results, there is much debate as to whether or

not Ethnic Studies should be a high school graduation requirement in California K-12

schools. This study explores key policies on Ethnic Studies in California, particularly the

legislative mandate to develop a K-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. Through an

exploratory documentary film study, this dissertation investigates the criteria for

developing a TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. As a result, there were five criteria

that emerged: 1) curriculum must be defined and written by Ethnic Studies practitioners

and scholars who collectively represent the four racialized communities of color, 2) units

and lessons must include the guiding values and principles of Ethnic Studies, 3)

curriculum must include lessons for each of the four different standard grade level

groupings for TK-12 schools, 4) all lessons and selected texts must be written by and

must center the histories and experiences of the four racialized communities of color, and

5) pedagogy must be rigorous, culturally and community responsive, as well as reflective.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father and mother, Winston and Kerry Jaco – I am who I am today because of your unconditional love, support, and selfless sacrifices. To my late brother, Winston Jaco Jr. – I know he would be proud. To my sister Lorraine – I don't know how I would have made it without your prayers. Last but not least, to my grandparents, Zack and Gretchen Hamlett – thank you for being my first example of an educator and community organizer.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Each day nearly 53,000 American youth (18 years or younger) are held in detention facilities as a result of their juvenile or criminal involvement, which almost always resemble adult correctional facilities. In fact, almost one out of every ten youth are kept in an adult jail or prison, and thousands of youth in America are held in these facilities before they have even been found guilty through a justice system that ensures due process. The majority of these youth are held for non-violent, low-level offenses, and some are held for behaviors that aren't even criminal violations (Sawyer, 2018).

While there are a high number of American youth entering the criminal justice system, racial disparities also exist within these systems, with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who are overrepresented in juvenile facilities. While Blacks make up less than 14% of all youth under 18 in the U.S., boys make up 43% and girls make up 34% of youth in juvenile facilities. Native Americans make up 3% of girls and 1.5% of boys in juvenile facilities, even though they are less than 1% of all youth nationally (Washburn, Guzman, and Ridolfi, 2016). Research suggests that youth who are exposed to the adult criminal justice system experience trauma, and as a result of that trauma, they are far more likely to experience recidivism, re-entering the system repeatedly throughout their life.

Education is considered to be the antidote to the growing number of youth entering the criminal justice system. Conversely, recent research shows that schools are doing quite the opposite to reduce youth incarceration. In-fact, educational institutions are

found to be contributors to a national trend that pushes students out of public schools and right into the juvenile and criminal justice systems through their disciplinary policies and practices. School rules are subjective in nature and not necessarily culturally relevant, and policies such as "Zero Tolerance" impose strict punishments for infractions of these rules. Moreover, "Zero Tolerance" policies, in theory, seek to minimize violations; however, in practice, they operate by criminalizing students for minor infractions, which further pushes students out of schools and into a criminal system, where they are more likely to continuously recidivate into their adult years.

This process by which students are pushed out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice system is referred to as the "School-to-Prison Pipeline" (NAACP LDF, 2018). When analyzing the correlation between incarceration and education, if any, studies found that nearly 68% of state prison inmates had not completed high school. Of the American youth, ages 18 and under, who were sentenced to adult prisons, 75% of them had not completed the 10th grade. Within the population of adolescents in the juvenile justice system, 70% of them were identified as having learning disabilities and 33% of them were below a 4th grade reading level. (Wald and Losen, 2003). This shows that there is a significant correlation between education and incarceration.

Not only are school systems criminalizing more and more of American youth, but it is also costing taxpayers money. With a continuous increase in incarceration, it can be suggested that policies, such as "Zero Tolerance," are ineffective in eliminating school infractions (NAACP LDF, 2018). These policies do, however, have a direct effect on

state and federal budgets. According to the annual report of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisors, the average annual cost of youth incarceration is $112,555 per child, which is 3.5 times the average annual cost of a four year college institution (CEA, 2015). It is 11.5 times the amount of the average head start program and 9 times the average per pupil spending for public schools (Holodny, 2016). In 2016, California spent approximately $11,495 per-pupil to educate its youth. On the other hand, that same year California spent anywhere between $134k - $233k for each youth in juvenile incarceration, depending on the region (Washburn, 2017). Studies have shown that "a 1% increase in the high school completion rate would save the United States as much as $1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime incurred by victims and society at large" (Lochner and Moretti, 2003).

With the number of youth incarcerations and per capita spending at an all-time high, it is critical that school policies and practices be thoroughly analyzed for the purposes of finding alternative measures to eradicate the school-to-prison pipeline. For too many students, this pipeline begins with inadequate resources to meet their social and emotional needs. This is particularly evident in schools that serve high concentrations of students who are living in poverty. In a report published by the Education Trust, titled, *The Funding Gap 2005,* it found that, "In 27 of the 49 states studied, the highest-poverty school districts receive fewer resources than the lowest-poverty districts. Across the country, $907 less is spent per student in the highest-poverty districts than in the most affluent districts" (Education Trust, 2004). Many of these schools lack qualified teachers

and they are severely underfunded, which means they lack the resources for critical positions, such as counselors, special education services, and culturally relevant textbooks (American Civil Liberties Union, 2017). The inability to meet holistic needs of students contributes to disengagement.

For many underfunded and under-resourced schools, communities see an increased reliance on police officers rather than educators and administrators to manage the school's discipline (French-Marcelin, 2017). Rather than employing counselors, numerous districts employ school resource officers (SROs) to patrol school hallways (Sun et al., 2019). With little to no training in developing the social and emotional well being of students of any age, SROs are then tasked with the responsibility to patrol campuses. As a result, a growing number of students under the age of 18 are subjected to school-based arrests, which feeds the school-to-prison pipeline. The majority of these violations of school rules are for nonviolent wrong-doings, which include but are not limited to, disrespect, defiance, and disruptive behavior. The increase in SROs and school-based arrests, not only contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, but they also provide a fast and direct means for students to be pushed out of classrooms and directly into juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The time that students spend out of class and in our juvenile and criminal justice systems is a contributing factor to the "achievement" gap within education (Sacks, 2017). Any student who is out of the classroom on a regular basis for any length of time is destined to fall behind in their coursework. While all youth subject to these

disciplinary measures risk limited educational outcomes, Black students in particular are subject to a disproportionate number of infractions and suffer resulting educational consequences. These disparities in school discipline can be identified as early as preschool. Black students make up 42 percent of students with an out-of-school suspension and 48 percent of students with multiple out-of-school suspensions, even though they are only 18 percent of the population of children in preschool. Black students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of white students. They make up 16 percent of the student population, yet they are 32 percent of the students who receive in-school suspensions, 42 percent of students who receive multiple out-of-school suspensions, and black students make up 34 percent those who are expelled (Sacks, 2017). School suspensions contribute to both the "achievement" gap and the school-to-prison pipeline.

Income levels are also a critical factor in the "achievement" gap. The "achievement" gap impacts communities in poverty, which primarily consist of people of color. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, children who are classified as either low-income – 200% of the federal poverty *line (FPL)*; poor – below FPL; or as in deep poverty – below 50% of FPL, are overwhelmingly made up of children of color (Semega, Kollar, Shrider, & Creamer, 2020). Poverty disproportionately affects students of color, but especially Black and Hispanic students. The "achievement" gap in education is on track to increase substantially. The percentage of students of color in the United States is growing at a continuous and constant rate, causing the percentage of white students to

shrink. The existing gaps in education will continue to grow and prove to be increasingly problematic for individuals, local communities, and society at large. According to the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA), state racial "achievement" gaps are strongly correlated with state racial socioeconomic disparities (Nader, 2018). These gaps are strongly correlated with racial gaps in income, poverty rates, unemployment rates, and educational attainment.

Statistically, parents of Black and Hispanic children tend to have lower incomes and lower levels of education when compared to their white counterparts (Nader, 2018). Data shows that households with higher incomes are closely linked to educational attainment, and as a result, are able to provide more educational opportunities for their children. Access to a quality education yields higher incomes; higher incomes provide more educational opportunities for the next generation and the cycle repeats. Not only does access to education provide additional opportunities, but it also reduces poverty rates, unemployment rates, and crime.

Conversely, families with lower levels of education and who live in poverty, are more likely to have limited access to less educational opportunities and will result in earning less as an adult (Heuer & Stullich, 2011). This vicious cycle perpetuates poverty and the compounding issues that are associated with poverty. These issues contribute to the academic "achievement" gap and the behavior concerns that invoke school discipline policies, both which work together to push students out of school and into our criminal justice system. This process of pushing youth out of schools disproportionately impacts

communities in poverty and communities that are predominantly made up of Blacks, Indeginous, and people of color (BIPOC).

While there are many variables that need to be addressed both in schools and in the larger community and society to eliminate the educational "achievement" gap among Black, Indigenous, and other students of color, one area that shows promise are efforts by schools to develop and implement culturally responsive pedagogy (Tanner, Hermond, Vairez Jr., Larchin, & McCree, 2015). In other words, to develop curricula that are inclusive of the diverse identities and backgrounds that have shaped their lives, that reflect relevant issues which resonate and engage them in learning, and that takes a holistic approach to educating the whole student. For example, in a study that examines the effective support for at-risk students through Ethnic Studies coursework, researchers saw significant educational improvement. For students who were enrolled in an Ethnic Studies course, they found that attendance increased by 21 percent. The average student GPA went up by 1.4 points, with math and science seeing the largest growth. Not to mention the dropout rates were also reduced for these at-risk youth (Dee & Penner, 2016). Yet, despite the educational success this study points to, Ethnic Studies courses are not consistently implemented, if at all, in most schools' curricula.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are burdened with the responsibility for the disproportionate rates that students of color are represented in referral and suspension data; the growing opportunity gap among communities of color and students from low-income households;

and the correlation between graduation and incarceration rates. Research shows that Ethnic Studies is a viable curricula and pedagogical response to the development of student self-determination, student engagement, and academic "achievement"; however, the implementation of Ethnic Studies is inconsistent throughout school districts nationwide, if implemented at all. In California, two bills have been introduced and are working their way through the State Assembly – one that will require Ethnic Studies as a high school graduation requirement and the other that will require students to complete an Ethnic Studies course as a California State University graduation requirement. In preparation of a statewide mandate, California passed legislation that requires the state to develop a K-12 Ethnics Studies model curriculum that can be adopted by school districts. Since the model curriculum will be the first of its kind in the nation, there is a need to examine the process and integrity of the curriculum, particularly in the event that Ethnic Studies becomes a state mandate in K-12 schools. Moreover, it is possible that other states will attempt to replicate the process or adopt the curriculum itself.

Statement of Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this exploratory documentary film study is to examine the development of California's Ethnic Studies model curriculum for K-12 public schools, which will be the first of its kind in the nation. This dissertation study will explore the legislative mandate to develop the curriculum, along with school districts in California that offer Ethnic Studies courses and have developed their own curriculum. This

qualitative study will include lawmakers, educators, students, and community leaders. The research question guiding this study is:

What is the criteria for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum for TK-12 schools?

Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study that centers Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, Chicanx/Latinx , American Indians/Native Americans, and Africana/Black/African Americans who have experienced, survived, and resisted settler colonialism, racism, hegemonic systems and structures of oppression. Culture is defined as a shared set of values, beliefs, and customs. While race is defined as a social construct that categorizes individuals based on shared physical features, ethnicity is defined as cultural expression based on common tribal, racial, national, linguistic, religious, and/or background. Cultural competence is a teaching skill where educators demonstrate the ability to teach in a cross-cultural or multi-ethnic setting, and they demonstrate the ability to empower each student to relate course content to their own cultural context. See Appendix A for a limited list of definitions used in Ethnic Studies curriculum.

To begin, this research will focus on key Ethnic Studies legislation in California and the process to implement policies that are signed into law. Additionally, this study will concentrate on school districts where Ethnic Studies courses are offered, organizations who advocate for the discipline in TK (transitional kindergarten)-12, as well as individual Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars. Observations will be made with the intention of assessing the criteria for developing the model curriculum, the challenges,

and potential solutions. Interviews will be conducted with lawmakers, educators, students, and community leaders.

I plan to conduct an exploratory study using a video documentary film in order to answer the guiding research question. The qualitative study will use documentary film as a visual research methodology. This research study examines the development of California's Ethnic Studies model curriculum for K-12 public schools, which will be the first of its kind in the nation. The study, using video documentary format, seeks to bring the perspectives of Ethnic Studies scholars and practitioners, students, and advocates to the forefront.

Positionality

I began working in public schools as a substitute teacher. Every sub-assignment began with me calling student names in order to take attendance. One day, while subbing in a 5th grade class, the only Black student interrupted attendance after calling just a few names.

He stood up and blurted out, "Excuse me! You're African-American, right?"

I froze.

"Okay, so you are," he stated with conviction and then proceeded to declare, " I just want to tell you that you are the first Black teacher I have ever had. We need more of you. I'm going to go to the mall to start recruiting."

I smiled while trying to hold back tears of joy because of the shared sense of pride we both had that I was his first Black teacher. I also held back tears of sadness because I

was his first Black teacher, and I would only be his substitute for two days. That afternoon, I walked into the teachers lounge during lunch, and several teachers sat next to me.

"You must be Ms. Jaco," they laughed. "We heard about you during recess, and Malcolm is really excited to have you as a teacher."

That day I was reminded that representation matters.

Growing up my grandfather used to always tell me to "Take two sets of notes: one to get an A and one to get away." He explained that I should study and give the teacher back what they taught me in order to earn an "A" in class, and that I would need to continue learning the full truth about history outside of school in order to liberate my mind. I learned that education was important and the key to success, but I also learned that there were huge gaps missing in the textbooks I would learn from at school. I understood at a young age that I, a Black girl, did not fit into the public education system, yet it was necessary to matriculate through that system if I wanted to have access to opportunities to support myself or a family as an adult. I knew that I needed to go to school and then on to college because it would be my key to success in life as it pertained to securing a job and earning an income.

Exploring my own cultural identity, reading about history through the lens of people who look like me, being exposed to the rich histories of people who were non-white, males, or cultivating my self-esteem are just a few examples of the gaps in my educational experience as a student that my family and I would be responsible for

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supplementing outside of class. My mother is white and my father is Black. When my mother was pregnant with me, her parents told her, "Don't bring it into our home." I don't have a relationship with my mother's side of the family, and while I am biracial, my experience in the world has been that of a Black female. I was fortunate to have a close relationship with my grandparents on my father's side, who were educators. Both my mother and father, along with my father's side of the family, played an integral role in shaping my identity, self-worth, and self-esteem.

I am currently a middle school teacher in a Title I school, and not much has changed in the curriculum that I learned from as a student and the curriculum that I am now expected to teach. Year after year, we review data that consistently shows the disproportionate rates that non-white students are represented in school referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates. As I prepare for my 7th year as a classroom teacher, I recognize that it is imperative to think critically about the educational system that is presumed to provide fair and equal opportunities to achieve academic success; however, school data indicates that our schools are not fair, equitable, or inclusive. Thinking critically about this system is incomplete. I believe it is far more important to also work towards systemic change for the betterment of this generation and generations to come.

It is a critical component of my philosophy as an educator that students should not have to take two sets of notes. I recognize that my own identity and experiences cause me to have biases towards the teaching profession, as well as the discipline of Ethnic

Studies, which must be taken into consideration when analyzing data and conducting interviews. It will be imperative that all stakeholders are incorporated to avoid creating an echo chamber. Diverse vantage points within the field of education are crucial for understanding best practices when developing Ethnic Studies curriculum for TK-12 public schools in order to keep fidelity at the forefront.

Chapter 2: Review Of Literature

This chapter includes a review of the literature in the areas of discipline policies, curriculum, pedagogy, philosophies, historical context, and Ethnic Studies legislation. The disproportionate rate that Black, Indeginous, and students of color receive referrals and suspensions in schools when compared to their white counterparts, dropout rates, and the increasing academic "achievement" gaps, collectively highlight a systemic issue within our public school systems.

Research shows that Ethnic Studies is proven to positively impact these gaps. As a result, legislation requiring Ethnic Studies courses become a high school graduation requirement in California continues to be a topic of debate, and lawmakers have been unsuccessful in passing any bill that would make the course a requirement. One of the arguments includes the need for curriculum in order to meet a state mandate that would make the course a graduation requirement. California's current legislative mandate states that the State Board of Education will develop a K-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum that would be available and optional for districts to adopt. Once developed, this model curriculum will be the first of its kind in the nation, which other states may seek to replicate. The research question used to guide this study seeks to identify the criteria for developing an TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum.

The purpose of the literature review in this chapter is to provide historical context for understanding how inequities and social justice in education have been analyzed and critiqued. The literature will examine various aspects of education that include school

discipline policies, curriculum, pedagogy, philosophies, and research on Ethnic Studies. The intention of the literature is to also uncover ways to see what is not seen. What are the underlying issues, and how can they serve to enlighten pathways for tangible solutions.

It is anticipated that through a thorough review of the literature that certain patterns will surface, affirming what methods for addressing these concerns are necessary. It is also presumed that through a thorough analysis of the literature, areas of opportunity for further research will become visible, which will provide the necessary frameworks and guide the methods for study.

School-To-Prison Pipeline

When considering the gaps in "achievement" that exists, along with the rates in which Black and Latinx students are referred and suspended from schools, it is imperative to consider the root cause(s) in order to adequately offer solutions that will yield visible results. The "achievement" gap and disparities in discipline rates have existed for decades, which have been the basis for the development of various literacy programs, school wide behavior intervention and supports (SWPBIS), preschool and head-start programs, and so on as a means to address the inequities within education. These programs are all designed to manage inequities, but they do not address the systems that are in place which create them. Thus, while they may cause marginal shifts in the data, they fail to create systemic change. As the "achievement" gap continues to increase, there is a need to evaluate the structural and systemic causes of these unjust

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practices within education. The school-to-prison pipeline has been identified as one of the systemic and structural ways in which students of color, particularly BIPOC, are pushed out of schoolS. Ethnic Studies goes beyond this management approach and requires that both the educator and student take a critical look at the systems of power and calls for innovative approaches to eradicating oppressive systems.

According to the U.S. Education Department analysis of other civil rights data, Black students are 3.5 times more likely to be expelled when compared to their white counterparts. Hispanics and Blacks make up 70 percent of the number of students arrested or referred to law enforcement. This is where the school-to-prison pipeline begins, which is a disparity that plagues students of color. There are several contributing factors. The ACLU explains the school-to-prison pipeline as:

> a disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse, or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services. Instead, they are isolated, punished, and pushed out (ACLU, n.d.).

The pipeline provides a means of understanding and explaining the way in which students of color are systematically pushed out of schools. Students who are in schools with a high poverty rate tend to also have a higher population of students of color, and these schools typically have access to fewer resources. This means that these "students have less access to credentialed, experienced teachers, to high quality curriculum, and to advanced level courses than their more affluent, white peers" (Wald & Losen, 2003). It's

these schools who have fewer resources that also tend to have lower high school graduation rates and college attendance.

Some policies in education, while on the surface seek to eliminate disparities, conversely work to reinforce systems of oppression. Policies, such as Zero Tolerance, are intended to make discipline practices fair and equal. On the other hand, "the growing use of suspensions for trivial conduct, much of which is subjectively labeled "disrespect," "disobedience," and "disruption" (Tipton, 2015) proves otherwise. Not only are Black and Latinx students being punished at higher rates, but they are also punished more harshly for minor infractions. According to a study by the U.S. Department of Education, "Black students are punished more severely for lesser offenses, such as 'disrespect, excessive noise, threat or loitering' when compared to their white peers" (Wald & Losen, 2003).

The evidence for zero tolerance policies and their ability to be effective in changing or preventing misbehavior in schools remains insufficient. Unfortunately, the high rate of recidivism among suspended students serves as an indicator that these policies and practices are, in fact, ineffective. They fail to act as a deterrent for some students, and consequently, serves as a reinforcer for misbehavior. "Although the purpose of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions is to teach students a lesson about misbehavior, many students view these punishments as being based more on the reputation of students than on their behavior and thus unfairly target certain groups of students—e.g., students of color" (Tipton, 2015). This reputation, not only impacts the

ways students view themselves, but it also impacts the way educators view certain

groups of students, which is referred to as deficit thinking.

Subtractive Curriculum

In her novel *Subtractive Schooling: U.S. – Mexican youth and the politics of caring,*

Angela Valenzuela highlights just how schools in America contribute to the

"achievement" gap as it pertains to Mexican youth by stripping them of language and

culture with the intention of assimilation with the majority group. Valenzuela provides a

framework for understanding these disparities by outlining how schools dismiss the idea

of education grounded in Mexican culture, which she refers to as "educación" – the idea

that an individual student's progress is linked with the caring relationship that is

developed between a teacher and a student. Valenzuela (1999) writes:

> Although educación has implications for pedagogy, it is first a foundational cultural
> construct that provides instructions on how one should live in the world. With its
> emphasis on respect, responsibility, and sociality, it provides a benchmark against
> which all humans are to be judged, formally educated or not. (p. 21)

School systems regularly fail to recognize the complex layers that make-up a

students' identity. Over and over again, students are expected to disconnect from one or

more of the ways in which they identify in order to meet a predetermined standard of

academic and social "achievement". Our public schools systematically put students

through a process that forces them to suppress pieces of themselves and conform to the

perceived normative culture in order to achieve academic success. This process suggests

that the "achievement" gap that exists between students of color and their white counterparts is caused, at least in part, by the existing systems and institutions.

Deficit Thinking

When students fall short of meeting a school's behavior expectations and standards for academic performance, they are punished with failing grades, retention, and disciplinary actions that place them in the school-to-prison pipeline. In order for change to occur, educators must first become reflective in their practice. There are two key perspectives that can be used when looking through any framework – deficit thinking or critical thinking. According to Valencia (1997), "Deficit thinking typically offers a description of behavior in pathological or dysfunctional ways – referring to deficits, deficiencies, limitations or shortcomings in individuals, families and cultures" (p. 7).

This means that educators can see their students of color from low-income households and use it as criteria to justify the student's low-performance levels and the school's discipline practices. It can be presumed that because a child comes from poverty or because English is their second language or because their parents did not go to college that education is just not that important to them; that they are just lazy; that they are incapable of learning; or that they simply do not care.

Deficit thinking is an extremely problematic worldview among educators within our educational systems, as it impedes an educators ability to fully engage students in learning. To come from a place of deficit when assessing a student's ability to reach their highest academic success, by default sets both the student and teacher up for failure. It

presumes that the student is the problem, the student is the one who needs to be fixed, and if the student is unwilling to cooperate, then they are incapable of learning.

There are various critiques of deficit thinking, where the systems themselves are challenged, rather than the individual students. In his critique of the notion that students fail because of their own deficiencies, Curt Dudley-Marling explores the idea that students fail because of a lack of opportunities. He states, "Children living in poverty are not lacking in language or cognition. They are deficient, however, in opportunities for thoughtful, engaging learning" (Dudley-Marling, 2015). Through study, Dudley-Marling demonstrates that when students of color, who are in high-poverty schools, are engaged and challenged by curricula that is commonly found in affluent schools, students are capable of meeting high-expectations and attaining academic "achievement".

The alternative perspective, critical thinking, does not hold a student's race or income levels ultimately responsible for their outward behavior or academic challenges and abilities. Critical thinking recognizes that perhaps students have internalized (consciously or subconsciously) the racism embedded within society, but especially the schooling system. It calls into question whether or not their students have learned to accept their own failures, and as a result, have begun to act out the negative stereotypes that have been imposed on them. The critical thinking perspective challenges the notion that students possess the tools necessary to understand the process, and it recognizes the educational system's failure to equip them with these tools (Valencia, 1997).

Critical Race Theory

While critical thinking does not hold a student's race or income levels ultimately responsible for their outward behavior and/or academic performances, the perspective alone does not eliminate the need to discuss the role that race plays as a root cause for the inequities that exist within education. Given that the disparities in academic "achievement" and discipline rates negatively impact BIPOC communities, it is imperative that race in education be examined. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a process for developing a consciousness in order to understand the structures and systems of oppression that are perpetuated within education as an institution. Tara J. Yosso (2005) defines CRT as, "a framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses."

Yosso (2005) goes on to discuss how education is a powerful means of empowering and liberating oppressed communities; however, it is regularly used to do just the opposite. Yosso (2005) argues that our educational systems are used as a means to oppress, suppress, and further marginalize already marginalized communities. Daniel Solórzano (1997) identified the following five principles of CRT within education that operate as a theoretical foundation, which allows the inequities within society and the U.S. schooling system to be recognized and acknowledged for the purposes of analyzing and critiquing:

> 1. The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination. CRT acknowledges that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and are fundamental to defining how US society functions. CRT also acknowledges the

racial subordination that is based on gender, class, immigration status, phenotype, accent and sexuality.

2. The challenge to dominant ideology. CRT acknowledges and challenges White privilege in order to refute the claims that the education system makes toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity. CRT challenges the notions of 'neutral' and or 'objective' research or researchers and calls out deficit-informed research that ignores the stories and accounts of People of Color (Yosso, 2005; Delgado Bernal, 1998). CRT challenges that these 15 biased claims camouflage self-interest, power and the privilege of the dominant group in the US.

3. The commitment to social justice. CRT is committed to social justice and the elimination of racism. The critical race theorist acknowledges the struggle toward the abolition of racism is also connected to the broader goal of ending all forms of subordination including, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

4. The centrality of experiential knowledge. CRT draws on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives.

5. The transdisciplinary perspective. CRT spans to other fields of study with the purpose of analyzing race and racism from historical and contemporary contexts. CRT draws on scholarship from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, film theatre, and others (pp. 69-91).

The five aforementioned modes are recognized and utilized by those seeking to

challenge unjust inequalities that exist as a result of systematic mechanisms. CRT also

illuminates the ways in which racism is masked in standard educational practices and

normalized policies. By looking at various aspects of education (e.g. curriculum,

discipline policies and practices, and so on) through the frameworks of CRT, we are able

to detect the camouflaged ways in which students are oppressed and further

marginalized. CRT plays a vital role in providing a means for those who are victims of

systemic racism to become empowered and find ways of overcoming. They discover

ways to defend themselves. "When the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can often find their voice." (Yosso, 2005). It is through CRT that the counter-narratives to the dominant culture lead to the eradication of racism and liberation for marginalized and systematically oppressed communities of color.

Community Cultural Wealth

Deficit thinking, by definition, presumes that students of color are operating from a place of deprivation, and are therefore unable to attain academic success without being taught the normative culture. This idea of an educational banking system, where students are operating from a deficit and must accumulate culture in order to attain success was critiqued by Paulo Freire (1973). Freire discussed how this default thinking is a result of racialized generalizations about communities of color. Along the lines of a system of banking, if one culture is perceived as the normative culture, then the implication is that one culture has more cultural capital than the other. As a result, the voices and perspectives of people of color are far too often missing from educational experiences, along with pertinent research. "Looking through a CRT lens means critiquing deficit theorizing and data that may be limited by its omission of the voices of People of Color (Yosso, 2005).

This raises the question as to what is cultural capital and who has access to it? Pierre Bourdieu's critique of cultural capital argues that White, middle class culture is the norm, and therefore, has cultural wealth (1977). Wealth, in this case, is perceived as

knowledge and skills that can be acquired. When all other cultures are held to the White,

middle class as a standard, they are regularly perceived as less than, having a deficit, and

culturally poor. Conversely, Yosso (2005) uses CRT to shift the focus from the notion

that White, middle class culture has cultural capital and are the standard norm to BIPOC

communities. In doing so, she names cultural capital wealth in BIPOC communities into

the following six categories:

1. Aspirational capital describes the ability to retain hopes and dreams in the face of adversity and inequity, even when existing circumstances make it difficult to see how positive progression might be achieved. This resilience is often evidenced in how individuals aim to raise their occupational status above that of their parents and how parents in turn try to assist their children to surpass their own academic and occupational attainments.

2. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills acquired through use of more than one language or varying styles of language and is often to be found in the children of immigrants. In some instances this can refer to individuals or communities with a strong oral traditions which may develop such qualities as "memorisation, attention to detail, dramatic pause, comedic timing, facial effect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme" (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital can also describe communicative ability through art or music.

3. Familial capital is "cultural knowledge nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition" (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital can take the form of encouragement and support but also it can be the fostering of ambition and determination through the telling of stories which relate to historical familial struggles, which inculcate a desire for social mobility.

4. Social capital applies to networks of individuals and community resources. These networks can often be essential instrumental and emotional support mechanisms for individuals trying to navigate through bureaucratic institutions. These could take the form of community or peer support with applications, financial concerns, legal issues, employment, education or health issues.

5. Navigational capital refers to the skills acquired by an individual as a result of navigating through socially hostile environments. It is this capital that develops a sense of resilience as it involves drawing from an individual's pool of inner

resources to survive, recover and sometimes thrive in the face of adversity. Through the process of networking individual navigational capital can facilitate community navigation.

6. Resistance capital can be described as the knowledge and skills developed through the actions of opposing and challenging oppression and inequality. When this capital is informed by a critical understanding of the underlying structures that lead to oppression then it can challenge an individual's perception of their own identity leading to the motivation to transform the sources of their oppression (pp. 69-71).

When educators are able to recognize and affirm these values as having capital within the classroom, it can be incredibly powerful for engaging students in a meaningful way. When students are engaged, they are able to develop the positive relationships with adults, peers, and the school community at-large that are necessary for their academic "achievement". By shifting the perspective of students of color from deficit thinking to recognizing the multiple ways in which they bring value into the classroom, educators also shift their thinking in what they believe can be potential outcomes for students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is a framework for understanding a students long-term academic "achievement" while inviting and validating their cultural identities in the classroom. Ladson-Billings (2006) described a framework for culturally relevant pedagogy encompassing three components:

1. Culturally relevant pedagogues think in terms of long-term academic achievement and not merely end-of-year tests.

2. Culturally relevant pedagogues focus on cultural competence, which "refers to helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture, where they are likely to have a

chance of improving their socioeconomic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 36). Culturally relevant pedagogues understand that students must learn to navigate between home and school, and teachers must find ways to equip students with the knowledge needed to succeed in a school system that oppresses them.

3. Culturally relevant pedagogues seek to develop sociopolitical consciousness, which includes a teacher's obligation to find ways for "students to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities" (pp. 3-12).

As students embrace their cultural identities, CRP builds directly from CRT's method for challenging dominant ideologies in order to think critically in challenging the normative culture. When students identify with the content, they are engaged in developing their critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity as they work to develop solutions to the problems that they identify within the system.

Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies is a discipline that is over 50 years old. In California, Merritt College was the first community college to offer a Black history course in 1964, as well as an Associate of Arts degree in Afro-American Studies; several years later it became the first department in 1967. "The establishment of the department is the culmination of almost two years of planning and development of the Black Studies program which was stimulated by the Soul Students Advisory Committee (BSU) at Merritt" (Heyman, Calhoun, Gordon, Wansley, Kahn, & Wells, 2014). The foundation of these efforts were initiated by Bobby Seale, a Merritt College student and co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Melvin Newton, the first chair, and leading educator Dr. Cecilia Arrington, who taught in the department for over 30 years (Heyman et al., 2014).

The Black Studies program at Merritt College gave expression to the efforts of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), a coalition between the Black Student Union and other student groups. The TWLF organized a student-led strike on the campus of San Francisco State University that lasted from November 6, 1968, to March 20, 1969. They demanded equal access to public higher education, more senior faculty of color, and a new curriculum that included the history and culture of all people including ethnic minorities. Their efforts institutionalized the first Ethnic Studies Department at San Francisco State University in 1969, and helped to establish Ethnic Studies as an interdisciplinary field in the U.S. (Lopezbanos Carrion, Ysip, & Conclara, 2019).

The discipline of Ethnic Studies has proven results, particularly when it comes to addressing the opportunity gaps within education. In a study that examines the effective support for at-risk students through Ethnic Studies coursework, researchers saw growth in several metrics used to assess student "achievement." For students who were enrolled in an Ethnic Studies course, they found that attendance increased by 21 percent. The average student GPA went up by 1.4 points, with math and science seeing the largest growth. Additionally, dropout rates among at-risk youth significantly declined (Dee & Penner, 2016).

In order to eliminate the opportunity gaps, it is imperative to develop curriculum and pedagogy that is culturally and community responsive. "It is not enough to adopt an Ethnic Studies curriculum without attending to pedagogy." (Cuauhtin, Zavala, Sleeter, Au, Tintiangco-Cubales, & Carrasco Cardona, 2019). Ethnic Studies is the

interdisciplinary study that centers Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders,

Chicanx/Latinx, American Indians/Native Americans, and Africana/Black/African

Americans who have experienced, survived, and resisted settler colonialism, racism,

hegemonic systems and structures of oppression. While the content of Ethnic Studies

centers the perspectives of the four racialized communities of color, it also uses an

intersectional lens of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, language,

immigrant status, religion, and class. According to Cuauhtin et al. (2019),

> Ethnic Studies pedagogy is defined by its purpose, context, content, methods, and the identity of both students and educators, which includes:
>
> 1. Engagement with the purpose of Ethnic Studies, which is to address racism by critiquing, resisting, and transforming systems of oppression on institutional, interpersonal, and internal levels;
>
> 2. Knowledge about personal, cultural, and community contexts that impact students' epistemologies and positionalities while creating strong relationships with families and community organization in local areas;
>
> 3. Development of rigorous curriculum that is responsive to student's cultural, historical, and contemporary experiences;
>
> 4. Practices and methods that are responsive to the community's needs and problems; &
>
> 5. Self-reflection on teacher identity and making explicit how identity impacts power relations in the classroom and the community. (p. 25)

Ethnic Studies provides a means for BIPOC (Black, Indeginous, and People of

Color) students to see themselves in the curriculum. When students are able to see

themselves, they are exposed to and empowered to tap into their own community of

cultural wealth. "Cultural wealth is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts

possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2005). Rather than focusing on what an individual might lack, there is an emphasis to recognize and utilize the strengths they already possess and readily have access to.

When a student is able to see their culture as wealth in society it shifts the paradigm about education as an institution. Rather than viewing education as an oppressive system that strips students of their own culture and requires them to divest from select parts of their identity, Ethnic Studies creates opportunities for education to be experienced as an academically enriching environment for students of all races, ethnicities, beliefs, and creeds. It also prepares students to think critically about the systems and structures that create perpetual inequities, and it prepares them to actively engage within their communities.

> Many Ethnic Studies teachers use Jeff Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell's elaboration of Paulo Freire's cyclical praxis model:
>
> 1. Identify a problem;
>
> 2. Analyze a problem;
>
> 3. Create plan of action to address the problem;
>
> 4. Implement the plan of action; and
>
> 5. Reflect on the plan of action. (Cuauhtin et al., 2019, p. 23)

Culturally relevant pedagogy is effective and backed by research; however, it is not a substitute for Ethnic Studies – the two pedagogies are not synonymous. As a means of

good practice, Ethnic Studies educators use culturally relevant pedagogy in order to connect students' lives with Ethnic Studies content. Ethnic Studies pedagogy is rigorous, culturally responsive – placing students' culture and funds of knowledge at the center – as well as community responsive, and reflective (Cuauhtin et al., 2019).

Legislation

Beginning in 1998, the Tucson Unified School District began offering classes that focused on Mexican American history, literature and art. In 2010, the Arizona State Legislature enacted HB 2281, which essentially banned Ethnic Studies from its public schools, particularly the Mexican American/Raza Studies (MARS) courses that were offered in its high schools. Proponents of HB 2281 stated that the course taught students to hate white people and promoted them to overthrow the U.S. government. The bill "prohibited a school district or charter school from including courses or classes that either promote the overthrow of the United States government or promote resentment toward a race or class of people." In order to enforce the bill, it gave the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at that time, Tom Horne, the authority to withhold funding from the Tucson Unified School District if it refused to stop teaching Mexican-American Studies. The bill, in part, states:

> If the ADE, the Auditor General, or the Attorney General determines that a school district is substantially and deliberately not in compliance with pupil disciplinary actions and if the school district has failed to correct the deficiency within 90 days after receiving notice from the ADE, the Superintendent may withhold the monies the school district would otherwise be entitled to receive from the date of the determination of noncompliance until the ADE determines that the school district is in compliance.

It should be noted that Tucson offered programs for African American Studies, Pan-Asian Studies, and Native American Studies, yet none of them were targeted for enforcement – MARS was singled out for enforcement of the law. Tucson Unified School District's MARS had 48 course offerings, making it the largest Ethnic Studies program nationwide. By definition, Ethnic Studies includes the 4 racialized communities of color, so while Mexican American Studies was the primary target, it was a legislative stance against Ethnic Studies as a discipline. In this case, Ethnic Studies courses in high schools were not only criminalized, but the bill itself set a precedent for other states and school districts seeking to implement Ethnic Studies within their schools, and it created additional barriers for advocates of the discipline.

In September 2016, the California Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2016, written by Assemblyman Luis Alejo, that requires the state to develop and adopt a model curriculum of Ethnic Studies and made available for school districts to adopt. The curriculum was expected to be complete by June 30, 2019, and fully adopted by November 30, 2019. This timeline was extended in October 2019, when Governor Newsom signed AB 114, which extends the timeline for completion of the curriculum to March 2021. The California Department of Education (CDE) will conduct further research, visiting districts that have implemented Ethnic Studies in order to gain additional input from teachers and administrators regarding the successes and challenges of implementing the course. This input is vital for the development of a curriculum that meets local needs. The AB-2016 reads, in part:

This bill would require the Instructional Quality Commission to develop, and the state board to adopt, modify, or revise, a model curriculum in ethnic studies, and would encourage each school district and charter school that maintains any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, that does not otherwise offer a standards-based ethnic studies curriculum to offer a course of study in ethnic studies based on the model curriculum.

While the bill states that school districts would be encouraged to adopt the curriculum, it raises questions as to how this legislative mandate will be met – who are the writers of the curriculum, who gets to give feedback, how will feedback be incorporated in revisions, if at all, and who gets to decide if the curriculum maintains its integrity?

Additionally, if a school district decides to adopt the curriculum, it raises questions about who will teach the courses and how the implementation will be funded. Not only is funding needed for materials themselves, but also for ongoing professional development for educators. Student populations that have the greatest opportunity to benefit from Ethnic Studies, as it pertains to eliminating the opportunity gaps, tend to come from low-income households, which means their communities have less funding for their public schools. Subsequently, will all schools have equitable access to the Ethnic Studies model curriculum and ongoing professional development for its educators?

In 2017, U.S. District Judge A. Wallace Tashima reversed Arizona's HB 2281, which banned Ethnic Studies in schools. The bill was found to be discriminatory in its intention based on race and violated the constitutional rights of students. In his ruling he stated

that, "the law was enacted and enforced, not for a legitimate educational purpose, but for an invidious discriminatory racial purpose, and a politically partisan purpose ... (therefore, the law) cannot be enforced." This federal court ruling sets a new standard for lawmakers and supporters of the implementation of Ethnic Studies in K-12 schools. While it does not give any implication that courses must be offered or required, it establishes a precedent that laws may not be enacted that would forbid the implementation of Ethnic Studies courses in K-12 schools.

In 2018, California Assembly Jose Medina introduced AB 2772, which would make Ethnic Studies a high school graduation requirement. That bill was vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown in September 2018. On January 31, 2019, an assembly bill was reintroduced to the California Legislature (AB-331) by Assembly Members Medina, Weber, and Bonta, that would make Ethnic Studies a requirement for high school graduation in California. The bill, in part, reads:

> Commencing with the 2023–24 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies, in either the subject of social studies or English, based on the model curriculum developed pursuant to Section 51226.7. A local educational agency may require a full-year course in ethnic studies at its discretion pursuant to paragraph (2).

If passed, this new requirement requires further study for equitable access of quality curriculum, implementation and practice, as well as accountability. There are concerns about adding additional graduation requirements for students who are already struggling to meet the current graduation requirements. Not to mention, the way that the bill is written, school districts would have a choice to fulfill the required subject in either

social studies or English. So what happens if a student who has fulfilled the requirement for English in one district, and then changes districts prior to graduation to a district that states that the course must be fulfilled in social studies?

Furthermore, if the mandate is coming from the state, then who has a say in how it is implemented, funded, and what accountability measures should be put in place? While there is sufficient research to substantiate the benefits of ethnic studies when it comes to closing the "achievement" gap and preventing the perpetuating cycle of poverty, further study is needed to ensure a fair and equitable implementation due to the fact that "The local culture may cause a policy context that can weaken school reform capacity" (Wirt & Kirst, 2009, p. 153).

In August 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed AB-331, and expressed "... concern that the initial draft of the model curriculum was insufficiently balanced and inclusive and needed to be substantially amended." This could mean that a statewide mandate for Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement hinges on, at least in part, the development of a model curriculum. As a result, the quality and integrity of the model curriculum are critical.

Intersectionality

In her talk for TEDWomen: *The Urgency of Intersectionality*, Kimberlé Crenshaw discusses how the public has a general understanding of disparities among individual groups and social justice issues independent of one another, but they fail to see the layers of these issues as their own. For example, the masses have a general

awareness of the issues that impact women, and they also have an understanding of the issues that impact the black community. However, what they fail to recognize are the issues that explicitly impact black women as their own group.

> Now, communications experts tell us that when facts do not fit with the available frames, people have a difficult time incorporating new facts into their way of thinking about a problem. These women's names have slipped through our consciousness because there are no frames for us to see them, no frames for us to remember them, no frames for us to hold them. As a consequence, reporters don't lead with them, policymakers don't think about them, and politicians aren't encouraged or demanded that they speak to them (Crenshaw, 2016).

Crenshaw calls this place where the two groups meet "intersectionality," and she asserts that social justice issues are often overlapping, creating several layers to what is meant by social justice. In order for society to properly address these issues, they must be able to see that the problem even exists. She writes that "Without frames that allow us to see how social problems impact all the members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of our movements, left to suffer in virtual isolation. But it doesn't have to be this way" (Crenshaw, 2016).

The "achievement" gap in education consists of layers of social problems. Not only are students of low socioeconomic backgrounds impacted, but students of color are also affected. Closing the "achievement" gap for students of color who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds means that there is a need to examine their unique needs through a more inclusive framework that would allow researchers to see them, cause policymakers to think about them, and demand politicians to speak to them (Crenshaw, 2016).

Intersectionality provides a framework for addressing the fact that there are multiple layers that must be considered when finding solutions to eliminate the "achievement" gap within education. A layer that must be considered, and one that is regularly neglected, is the students' cultural background and social capital.

Gaps in the Literature

It is embedded within the fibres of our educational institutions to compartmentalize areas of research, data, and subject matters that are taught in school. The literature evaluates how CRT raises the consciousness of others in order to understand the structures and systems of oppression that exist within education through the counter-narrative to dominant culture. Deficit thinking provides a means for understanding the adverse impact of educator perspectives of students. The literature also analyzes the benefits of culturally relevant pedagogy, along with the positive effects of Ethnic Studies on different metrics used to assess students. However, what is missing and what I seek to explore in my research is: what is the criteria for developing Ethnic Studies model curriculum for TK-12 public schools? The literature fails to adequately illustrate the required criteria for developing the curriculum or the impacts of Ethnic Studies when mandated by the state and implemented in TK-12 schools statewide. Therefore, the research question cannot be answered without further study.

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation will rely on two theoretical frameworks to answer the RQ: Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.

CRT as a theoretical framework. For this study, CRT will be used as a leading framework for understanding the criteria for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum for K-12 schools and maintaining the integrity of the discipline itself. Each of the five principles of CRT works to unpack the underlying questions that drive this research. The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination provides a lens to understanding the history and intent of the current school-to-prison pipeline as a system, and it's negative impact on communities of color (Yosso, 2005).

It is necessary to challenge the dominant ideology in order to refute the claims that the education system makes toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity (Yosso, 2005). Data shows that communities of color are disciplined at higher rates, have higher dropout rates, and are over-represented in the U.S. criminal justice system. The alternative to critiquing what has been established as the normative culture, would be to accept a deficit thinking perspective - holding people of color individually responsible for their failures (Valencia, 1997).

The inequities that exist within education, at their root, are racial and social justice issues. CRT is committed to social justice and the elimination of racism. The critical race theorist acknowledges the struggle toward the abolition of racism is also connected to the broader goal of ending all forms of subordination including, gender, class, and sexual orientation (Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). The injustices within education are connected to a broader issue and goal to eradicate all forms of systematic discrimination and oppression.

To understand the role that Ethnic Studies plays in education, it is imperative to place the lived experiences of racialized communities of color at the center (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). It is absolutely vital to the eradication of racism and the liberation of oppressed communities that the counter-narrative be told from the perspective of the communities themselves. This is a transdisciplinary perspective and practice, which leans on the scholarship from Ethnic Studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, film theatre, and others (Yosso, 2005).

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework. As CRT draws from multiple disciplines of study, Intersectionality as a conceptual framework provides an additional lens to further understand the layers of oppression. Intersectionality will be used as a means for exploring the impact of Ethnic Studies on the social identities of racialized communities of color, which also includes gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, special education needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds. According to Crenshaw, systems of oppression can have layers of impact, but without Intersectionality as a framework, we have no real way to recognize or understand the depths of their impacts. The absence of intersectionality as a conceptual framework may have unintended consequences - creating sub-cultures of further marginalized communities whose voices are absent from the research and silenced, as a result.

Chapter 3: Research Design & Methodology

This chapter will summarize the research methods and procedures that are used in this study to answer the research question, which sought to identify the criteria for developing an TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. The chapter includes the following: statement of the purpose, research question, research design, selection criteria for the sample, data collection, data collection procedures, and organization of the data analysis.

Statement of Purpose & Research Question

I conducted an exploratory study using a video documentary film in order to answer the guiding research question - what is the criteria for developing Ethnic Studies model curriculum for TK-12 public schools? This qualitative study used documentary film as a visual research methodology. This research study examined the development of California's Ethnic Studies model curriculum for K-12 public schools, which will be the first of its kind in the nation. The study, using a video documentary format, sought to bring the perspectives of Ethnic Studies scholars and practitioners, students, and advocates to the forefront.

I believe that a documentary allows those impacted an opportunity to speak for themselves. Documentaries are also a means of bringing social justice issues in education to the front line. The visual narrative of various stakeholders' experiences also serves as a means to showcase new program practices for educators preparing to go into the classroom and/or educational leadership (Friend and Caruthers, 2016). A

documentary has the potential to reach a broad and diverse audience, as it can be shared

through various communication platforms (e.g. social media, television, and internet

sites). Lastly, a documentary provides visual context and transparency in the research

process (Friend & Caruthers, 2016).

In order to showcase the visual narratives of different stakeholders in a documentary,

this study followed traditional qualitative methods including a focus group and personal

interviews. The purpose of the filmed interviews and focus group served to gain a

deeper understanding of the process taken by the California State Board of Education,

Instructional Quality Commission, Advisory Committee, Ethnic Studies practitioners

and scholars, as well as students and organizations to develop the nation's first K-12

Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Additionally, the purpose was to identify criteria for

developing a curriculum of its kind in order to answer the research question, but also to

provide a standard for other states that may seek to replicate this model.

The documentary filming process included each of the essential elements of a

qualitative investigation. It includes: 1) site selection – where to film and framing the

person on camera, 2) choosing participants – who to film and obtaining consent, 3)

inquiry – designing protocols for interviews and observations during filming, 4) data

analysis - reviewing and selecting video and audio clips during editing, 5) findings –

constructing meaning of the audio and video files, adding other audio visual elements in

order to add valuable meaning, and lastly 6) publishing – disseminating the results

through documentary film (Friend & Caruthers, 2016).

Outlined below is an overview of questions that were asked in order to guide interviews and discussions, as well as an explanation of why they are appropriate (See Appendix B for a complete list of participants).

A. Student Interview (See Appendix C) - these open ended questions were designed to give each student the opportunity to share their honest sentiments about their educational experiences. The intent was to illuminate how students feel about school, what makes them feel included and excluded in the classroom and on school campuses, and their attitudes towards the purpose of a formal education. By providing a space and a platform for these students to share their experiences, it provides greater insight into how Ethnic Studies courses operate from the student perspective. Moreover, it explores the value of Ethnic Studies in the lives of students.

B. Educator Interview (See Appendix D) - these open-ended questions were designed to understand how practitioners in the field, who have experience in developing and teaching Ethnic Studies curriculum, curate content. Additionally, these questions were designed to understand the best pedagogical practices for Ethnic Studies courses in TK-12, as well as higher education. Lastly, additional questions were developed specifically for the educators who were writers and members of the state's advisory committee in order to understand the process that California undertook through the lens of these practitioners and scholars.

C. Administrator Interview (See Appendix E) – these open-ended questions were designed to understand how Ethnic Studies curriculum is developed and implemented at a school district and school site level. Additionally, these questions were designed to understand what supports are needed for educators developing and teaching Ethnic Studies courses at their school sites and within their districts in TK-12. Lastly, questions were developed to understand what structures are needed at the site and district level, if any, to support students and educators attending and teaching Ethnic Studies courses.

D. Community Leader Interview (See Appendix F) – these open-ended questions were designed to give a historical and legislative context of the movement for Ethnic Studies in California. The purpose of speaking with individual community members and organizations provides an additional lens for seeing and understanding the controversy surrounding Ethnic Studies as a discipline, as well as the development of a model curriculum. Their stories not only help to further explain the movement for Ethnic Studies, but they also help to strengthen any emerging themes in the findings.

Documentary Production Process

Production of this exploratory documentary film consisted of three different phases: 1) pre production, 2) production, and 3) post production.

Preproduction

This phase included drafting Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the dissertation. Collectively, the chapters include a review of literature, research question, filming locations, potential interviewees, and interview protocols. A valuable part of the documentary filming process was intended to capture educators and students in Ethnic Studies classes, particularly for the purposes of recording b-roll. As a result of COVID-19, it was not possible to visit school sites or film classes in-person.

As a novice documentary filmmaker, online research was conducted, along with virtual meetings with my dissertation chair to gain insight into the filming process and to find creative ways to produce a documentary during a pandemic. Research involved understanding how to frame the scene, position interviewees, and how to use the microphone and lighting in order to capture high quality footage. The final documentary includes a mixture of footage that was captured using a Panasonic 3MOS AVCCAM Full HD camcorder, Zoom recordings, archival footage, still images, and media published online that can be used under the Fair Use Doctrine.

Sample selection. Purposive sampling, the intentional selection of participants in order to understand a concept, was applied for the current study in order to generate useful data and insights to help understand the process of developing the model curriculum that is being studied (Creswell, 2012). A total of 22 participants were interviewed in this exploratory documentary research (*See Appendix B*). All student participants were either currently enrolled in an Ethnic Studies course or have

experience in advocating for Ethnic Studies courses to be offered at their school. Adult

participants consisted of teachers, administrators, teacher union leaders, and lawmakers

who were comfortable with being recorded on camera.

Members of the state's original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory

Committee were selected because of their involvement, as well as their contributions to

the field of Ethnic Studies as practitioners and scholars. Each of them are Ethnic Studies

teachers who have developed their own curriculum for their courses in both TK-12 and

higher education. Many of these practitioners led the development and implementation

of courses within their districts and local communities. They themselves have written

policy and championed for Ethnic Studies policy at the local and state level. Their

research and publications are used widely and referenced by other scholars in the field.[1]

Some have already developed their own organizations that support districts and

educators in developing their own Ethnic Studies programs. The selected participants

also curate and facilitate training for educators on how to successfully implement Ethnic

Studies within their communities.

Footage of 16 participants were used in the final documentary based on the quality

of the film and the clarity of their responses. The majority of participants were selected

from various cities throughout the state of California; they include but are not limited to

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[1] Cuauhtin, R. T., Zavala, M., Sleeter, C. E., Au, W., Tintiangco-Cubales, A., & Carrasco Cardona, G., et al. (2019). *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Tintiangco-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2014). Toward an ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research. *The Urban Review, 47*(1), 104-125. doi:10.1007/s11256-014-0280-y

– San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, Fremont, and San Francisco. Archival footage was also used for the purpose of b-roll, understanding the historical advocacy for Ethnic Studies, and broader community discussions that spoke explicitly about California's development of K-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. All participants' interviews were incorporated in the findings, which are included in Chapter Five.

Sample selection during COVID-19. Informal, off-camera, interviews began in June 2019. The initial goal was to begin filming in classrooms at the start of the new school year in August 2020. As a result of COVID-19, almost all schools in California went from in-person learning to online learning as early as March 2020. Almost all schools then began the following school year online with crisis distance learning. Per quarantine guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), traveling and in person gatherings were not permitted. Filming began online by way of Zoom in January 2021. Some interviews were conducted in person beginning in February 2021, and followed all CDC protocols. In person interviews were conducted one-on-one, outdoors, socially distant (6-feet apart), and masks were worn. Once the interview began, the participant removed their mask. Two interviews were conducted indoors and all protocols were followed, along with proof of negative COVID-19 test results. All participants were invited via email or phone.

One-on-one & focus group interviews: All interviews were conducted one-on-one; however, a selection of educators who were members of the State's original Advisory Committee were selected as a focus group for the purpose of better understanding the

experience through multiple perspectives and for consistency when recalling the processes and challenges when working to fulfill the legislative mandate to develop model curriculum for Ethnic Studies. The method of interviewing students, educators, administrators, and community leaders functions as evidence that offer explanations and insights that reflect participants' viewpoints in an authentic manner (Yin, 2018). After confirming an interview time and location (either in person or via Zoom), participants were sent a consent form *(See Appendix G)*, along with a set of questions in advance to assist in preparing for the interview. Each interview began with open-ended questions about the participant's own ethnic identity and experience in education as a student. The duration of all interviews were approximately 30 – 60 minutes.

Production

This phase included setting up interviews in advance, and once a time and location were established, setting up camera equipment for all in-person interviews.

Set-up. For in-person interviews, it was necessary to arrive at the location in advance to identify the best lighting and then set-up the camera to film the participant. A lapel microphone was used, which participants affixed the microphone to their clothing themselves in order to maintain safety guidelines.

Filming locations were selected based on convenience for the interviewee, safety, and background settings. School campuses and parks were the primary locations selected. Lighting, potential background noise, comfortability for the participant, and background aesthetics were all taken into consideration when setting up equipment. A

video tripod was used, along with one lapel microphone and one shotgun microphone in order to capture sound.

Filming interviews during COVID-19 quarantine. As a result of COVID-19, almost all schools in California went from in-person learning to online learning as early as March 2020. Almost all schools then began the following school year completely online with crisis-distance learning. Per quarantine guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), traveling and in-person gatherings were not permitted. Some in-person gatherings were permitted depending on which tier the county fell in, which was based on transmission rates and hospitalization. My resident county, Santa Clara, frequently moved in-and-out of the tier which would make in-person gathering possible. As a result, the safest means for conducting interviews were online via face-to-face conferencing platforms. I selected Zoom as the primary means of conducting interviews.

Zoom. Zoom is a popular online communication platform. Each interview began with the open-ended question, along with follow-up questions based on the participants' response. Follow-up questions were necessary for clarity or to aid the participant in completing their thought/idea. The duration of each interview was approximately 30-60 minutes. Zoom made interviews convenient and a useful tool for video recording. On the other hand, recording via Zoom presented challenges that include background aesthetics, eye contact, lighting, as well as sound quality and connectivity. Some footage from these

interviews could not be used because of technical glitches that were recorded and significantly interfered with the participant's response.

Face-to-face. In-person interviews were filmed using a Panasonic 3MOS AVCCAM Full HD camcorder. In accordance with CDC and county safety guidelines, all face-to-face interviews were conducted outdoors or in areas with proper ventilation. Masks maintained social distance of at least 6 ft apart. Two interviews were held indoors and in addition to following safety protocols, negative COVID-19 test results were also provided. Each interview began with the open-ended question, along with follow-up questions based on the participants response. Follow-up questions were necessary for clarity or to aid the participant in completing their thought/idea. The duration of each face-to-face interview was approximately 30-60 minutes. The limitations as a result of COVID-19, made it impossible to film b-roll with students and educators in action. For this reason, archival footage was used to enhance the film.

Data collection. Participants were divided into four categories: students, educators, administrators, and community leaders. Educators include classroom teachers in TK-12 and professors in higher education. Community leaders include lawmakers, teacher union leaders, school board members, and community organizers. Several participants fit into more than one category (i.e. an educator may also be an active union leader or be an elected school board member). Each participant was invited to participate through electronic means. Online interviews were recorded via Zoom, and all in-person interviews were filmed with a high definition (HD) video camera.

After each interview, memo writing took place as a system to keep record of key information. This method is useful in keeping a written record of the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Moreover, memos aid in storing ideas that can be organized and retrieved in ways that allow for new and recurring themes to emerge. At the close of the data collection process, memo writing is incredibly useful for reflecting, cross-referencing, and evaluating the study's progress (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). These memos were used during the data collection process in order to record key takeaways from the interview, my reflections, along with my potential biases that might influence the outcomes of the research, which supports objectivity in the data collection process (Corbin, 2004).

Post Production

This phase included analyzing, organizing, and editing to achieve the final exploratory documentary film. The process involved rewatching the interviews and organizing segments of the interview into the five categories that were used to create the plot line, editing footage to correct, sound, color, and framing and selecting appropriate archival footage. After, visual (b-roll), narration, and subtitles were added. Finally, the film was rendered to complete the production process.

Data analysis. In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine responses from participants during video interviews. The documentary film sought to gain perspectives from a wide sample of those involved in the movement for Ethnic Studies. This includes Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars, writers and members of the original Advisory Committee for California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, students who are

currently enrolled in or who are advocating for Ethnic Studies courses on their school campus, as well as writers of Ethnic Studies legislation and policy at the local and state level. The film footage was analyzed in accordance with the research question and organized into five major groupings: 1) the problem, 2) potential solution(s), 3) challenges, 4) resolution(s), and 5) next steps.

After creating the five major groups that served as the plot line of the story, I re-watched the film recordings of each interview prior to editing to gain a more clear perspective of what data would be most appropriate during the final editing process (Rapley, 2004). This process is necessary for developing cognitive ownership of the data (Saldana, 2011). This was incredibly valuable when interviewing members of the focus group, who were each recalling and telling the same story from their perspective. Ultimately, the consistency of their stories validated each of their vantage points. Rewatching the film also ushered in new insights that were not discovered during original interviews.

Editing. The plot line was organized around five essential themes which might help the viewer better understand potential answers to the research question: : 1) problem, 2) potential solution, 3) challenges, 4) resolution, and 5) what's next. Narration was written and recorded to create context for the interview responses and to fill in any gaps that were not adequately captured during the interview. Davinci Resolve 17 was used for editing. Within the program, five different bins were created – one for each of the five thematic groupings – for the purpose of organizing footage. Raw footage was then

uploaded to the project within the program. Subclips were created based on the five groupings. These subclips were then placed in their respective bin, and the subclips were trimmed even further based on the quality of the film itself and the clarity of response by the participant. Each subclip ranged from 30 seconds to 2 minutes that were then used in the final exploratory documentary film.

The script for narration was written to provide context and clarification between the selected clips, in accordance to the five different categories within the plot line. Footage from the interviews provided a snapshot of varying perspectives and experience with Ethnic Studies courses and curriculum. The final documentary was edited to answer the research question by exploring the historical and legislative significance of the need to develop a model curriculum, along with the challenges that came as a result of public controversy over California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Limitations

COVID-19 created significant limitations to exploring the experiences of students, educators, administrators, and community leaders. Almost all schools across the country, but specifically in California, transitioned to crisis-distance learning several months prior to the scheduled time for filming. This limited any ability to recruit and interview participants in a physical classroom environment. During this time, educators who were teaching online were primarily focused on re-writing their curriculum for an online platform, which meant that their availability to participate in the study was significantly

reduced. Participants in the exploratory documentary study depended largely on their availability during a global health crisis.

Positionality and Ethics

I am a classroom teacher in a Title I public school, elected leader in my teachers union, a Black woman, and an advocate for Ethnic Studies. I recognize that my own positionality could present limitations to the study, as my own identity and experiences may cause me to have biases towards the teaching profession, as well as Ethnic Studies as a discipline. For these reasons, data triangulation was used to support emerging findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The multiple sources of data include participants in the documentary – students, educators, administrators, and community leaders – who all have experience with Ethnic Studies courses and curriculum, either as a student, scholar, practitioner, developer, advocate, policymaker, or a combination of several of the aforementioned.

None of the participants were students or employees within my current school district, and I do not hold any position of power to assess their performance to assign a grade, evaluate their teaching practice, give input in the educator's hiring or firing process, or influence their employment status in any way possible. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and it was based on the genuine interest of the participant; it did not come from a place of fear of an authoritative figure.

As an elected leader within the California Teachers Association (CTA), I serve as the chair of the Civil Rights in Education (CRE) Committee on CTA's State Council, which

is the policy making body of the organization. As a member of CRE and the chair of CRE, I was automatically placed on CTA's workgroup that reviewed each revision of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for the purpose of providing recommendations for changes to the curriculum. The workgroup was led by CTA's Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) Committee, its chair and selected members, along with the chair of CRE and selected committee members. This study reflects my own research and findings and does not necessarily represent those of CTA. I began this study on my own accord, and in no way was I asked or encouraged to conduct research on behalf of CTA. This research study began in June of 2018. The CTA workgroup's review of the first draft of the model curriculum did not take place until the fall of 2019, and I did not become chair of CRE until the fall of 2020.

My positionality aided in establishing a rapport with participants that was genuine and reliable. Due to my position as an educator, elected union leader, as well as my identity as a Black woman, I was able to gain access to a broad range of viewpoints, which I believe enabled me to gain the trust of each of the participants so necessary in the documentary filmmaking process. If it were not for my positionality, participants may not have consented to an interview or opened up to share details of their experiences to the extent that they shared with me. As a result, their stories, experiences, and expertise have an opportunity to be shared in this study in a way that is accurate and authentic.

Chapter 4: Findings

Please see the exploratory documentary *Fidelity at the Forefront: The Fight Ethnic Studies*.

Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations, & Reflection

Introduction

This exploratory documentary research summarizes the process and challenges of California's development of an Ethnic Studies model curriculum for K-12 schools. It explores key legislation and the process through the lens of Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars who were contracted as writers and appointed to the state's advisory committee. This chapter provides an answer to the proposed research question, which sought to identify the criteria for developing an TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. It also discusses whether conclusions reached in the documentary support or contradict existing literature in the field, and implications for future research.

This study used documentary film methodology to explore criteria for developing Ethnic Studies model curriculum. Participants' perspectives regarding their experience and expertise are highlighted in the film. Additionally, it provides their insight on the benefits of Ethnic Studies, challenges to developing curriculum, and recommendations for what's needed to create and implement a successful Ethnic Studies course.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the exploratory study are demonstrated in the documentary film entitled *Fidelity at the Forefront: The Fight for Ethnic Studies*. Film footage includes participant interviews, b-roll, archival footage, and narration. The produced documentary addresses the research question.

What is the criteria for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum for TK-12 schools?

The state of California set out to fulfill the legislative mandate from Assembly Bill 2016, which required the State Board of Education to develop a K-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum, was passed and signed into law on September 13, 2016. On November 15-16, 2018, California's Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) recommended members for the Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (MCAC), who were appointed by the State Board of Education (SBE) on January 9-10, 2019. The MCAC then met for three, two-day sessions to draft the curriculum – sessions were held in February, March, and April. The first draft of the model curriculum was posted on the California Department of Education's (CDE) website for public comment from June 15, 2018 - August 15, 2018.

Once the first draft of the curriculum became available for public comment, the MCAC received public backlash from the California Jewish caucus and other segments of the Jewish community, who believed that the draft was anti-semetic. Some conservative organizations strongly opposed the draft as well. One comment states, in part (Grimes, 2021):

> Parts of the proposed curriculum read like a manual for future left-wing activists. A second on 'social movements' encourages students to study Black Lives Matter; the Occupy movement; the anti-Israel 'Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions' movement; and the LGBTQ movement. Conservative movements like the Tea Party are excluded.

The SBE and the IQC did not take any opportunity to support the work of the MCAC that it had recommended and appointed. Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is Jewish stated that he "recommended removing all language or content that can be perceived as anti-Semitic." After receiving over 57,000 public comments within the two month period, with a majority of the comments being in favor of the draft, the CDE relinquished its ties to the original MCAC. The CDE did not provide any explanation as to why the original members of the MCAC would no longer be involved in the development process beyond providing public comments; the perception was that the CDE gave into the political pressures. It is important to note that in higher education, Jewish Studies and Ethnic Studies are, and have always been, two different departments and disciplines. As a result of these political pressures, California's Ethnic Studies curriculum was not developed by practitioners and scholars in the field, but rather, those who hold political power. In this case, those who hold political power are the ultimate decision makers, which include, but are not limited to, the California Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Instructional Quality Commission. After the CDE disbanded the original Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, they continued to revise the curriculum, but did not disclose a complete list of their consultants who worked to make these revisions. It is public knowledge that the CDE received consultation from WestEd, a non-profit, non-partisan, education research agency, along with the Jewish Community Relations

Council (JCRC) and other individuals and groups. After the first draft, two more drafts were put forth to the public for comments.

On March 17-18, 2021, the SBE approved the third and final draft of an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. The approved curriculum no longer includes key components that are foundational to Ethnic Studies. Prior to the state's approval of the final draft, the original members of the MCAC sent an open letter that requested that their names be removed from the curriculum *(See Appendix H for a complete list of MCAC members)*. The letter to the CDE (2021) states, in part:

> Ethnic Studies knowledge, framework, pedagogy, and community histories have been compromised due to political and media pressure. Our association with the final document is troubling because it does not reflect the Ethnic Studies curriculum that we believe California students deserve and need.

This exploratory documentary film highlights the counter-narrative to those who hold political power, who have used their political power to marginalize the collective voices of racialized communities of color, and who have access to media in order to propagate their narrative to the general population in a manner that dominates and further marginalizes the voices of these communities.

In this exploratory documentary study, based on responses from participants, I concluded that there are at minimum, five criteria that must be met when developing a model curriculum for Ethnic Studies. They are as follows: 1) curriculum must be defined and written by Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars who collectively represent the four racialized communities of color, 2) units and lessons must include the guiding

values and principles of Ethnic Studies, 3) curriculum must include lessons for each of the four different standard grade level groupings for TK-12 schools, 4) all lessons and selected texts must be written by and must center the histories and experiences of the four racialized communities of color, and 5) pedagogy must be rigorous, culturally and community responsive, as well as reflective.

Criteria for Developing Curriculum

1. Ethnic Studies model curriculum must be defined and written by Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars who represent the four racialized communities of color – Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, Chicanx/Latinx, American Indians/Native Americans, and Africana/Black/African Americans. This includes Arab American Studies, which historically is housed within Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders. According to practitioners and scholars in the field, the working definition of Ethnic Studies is as follows:

> Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study that centers Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, Chicanx/Latinx , American Indians/Native Americans, and Africana/Black/African Americans who have experienced, survived, and resisted settler colonialism, racism, hegemonic systems and structures of oppression. Using Ethnic Studies epistemology, content and pedagogy, Ethnic Studies aims to educate students to be socially, politically, and economically conscious of their personal connections to local and (trans)national histories. Students in these courses study topics through the intersectional lenses of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, language, immigrant status, and class. They analyze indigeneity, aspects of decolonization, white supremacy, oppression and privilege, and work towards empowering themselves as anti-racist leaders who engage in social justice activism. Reflection, Naming, Dialogue and Action drives the learning and supports the belief that each person has important narratives, stories, and voices to share. Students will have the opportunity to cultivate intersectional solidarity with groups of people, locally and

(trans)nationally, to foster active community responsiveness, social engagement, radical healing, and critical hope.

2. Content must include the guiding values and principles of Ethnic Studies. The values are based on a double-helix, which represents the interdependence between holistic humanization and critical consciousness. Holistic humanization is rooted in the values of love, respect, hope, and solidarity, which are based on the celebration of community cultural wealth (Cuauhtin et al., 2019). Additionally, critical consciousness means having an understanding of the world's social and political contradictions, but also includes taking actions against such oppressive systems. In any lesson, regardless of content area, there are standards that must be met. These include, but are not limited to, *Common Core Standards, ELD Standards, and Modifications, Accommodations, and Resources for Multilingual Students.* Ethnic Studies lessons should include the aforementioned standards; however, in order to be considered an Ethnic Studies lesson, it must also include both the values – holistic humanization and critical consciousness – and principles. There is consensus among Ethnic Studies scholars, and according to Tintiangco-Cubales & Curammeng (2018), there are seven principles that include:

> 1) Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self- determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and People of Color;

> 2) Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and Communities of Color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth;

3) Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge;

4) Critique empire, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, racism, xenophobia, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression at the intersections of our society;

5) Challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels;

6) Connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on global and local levels to ensure a truer democracy; and

7) Conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for post-imperial life that promote collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing. (pp. 228-251)

3. Ethnic Studies model curriculum must include both units and lessons for each of the four standard grade level groupings for grades TK-12. These groupings include: a) TK-2, b) 3-5, c) 6-8, and d) 9-12. In school districts where Ethnic Studies courses are required, it is usually to fulfill a high school graduation requirement. As a result, there are numerous efforts to develop curriculum for grades 9-12, but primary, upper elementary, and middle school grades are often neglected. For example, California's model curriculum for Ethnic Studies does not include lessons for grades TK-8. A TK-12 model curriculum is not complete without providing lessons for every grade level grouping within TK-12.

4. All lessons and selected primary texts must be written by and must center the histories and experiences of the four racialized communities of color. Ethnic Studies

has its roots in self-determination theory, which essentially means that people will become self-determined when their need to feel competent, their need for connections, and their need for autonomy are met. (Deci & Ryan, 2012). CRT "draws on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives" (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Moreover, CRT stands in opposition to structures that leave out the stories and accounts of BIPOC communities. Due to its foundation, a model curriculum cannot fundamentally be considered Ethnic Studies when it is written about racialized communities of color, but fails to center their histories and stories from a first person point-of-view and forsakes their autonomy in the development process.

5. It is insufficient to create Ethnic Studies curriculum, and neglect pedagogy. Pedagogy has three basic components: 1) *curriculum*, which is the content of what is being taught; 2) *methodology*, which is the way that teaching is done; and 3) *techniques* that are used for the purpose of socializing children in a way that is appropriate for their cognitive and affective skills (Bowman, 2003). Ethnic Studies pedagogy must be rigorous, culturally and community responsive, and reflective. According to Cuauhtin et al. (2019),

> Ethnic Studies pedagogy is defined by its purpose, context, content, methods, and the identity of both students and educators, which includes:
>
> 1. Engagement with the purpose of Ethnic Studies, which is to address racism by critiquing, resisting, and transforming systems of oppression on institutional, interpersonal, and internal levels;

2. Knowledge about personal, cultural, and community contexts that impact students' epistemologies and positionalities while creating strong relationships with families and community organization in local areas;

3. Development of rigorous curriculum that is responsive to student's cultural, historical, and contemporary experiences;

4. Practices and methods that are responsive to the community's needs and problems; &

5. Self-reflection on teacher identity and making explicit how identity impacts power relations in the classroom and the community. (p. 25)

The findings in this research are supported by the review of literature summarized in Chapter 2. The criteria for developing a TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum that were identified through this study, which is outlined above, fundamentally refutes a deficit model thinking by recognizing and valuing the cultural wealth of educators and students. The criteria establishes that the histories, experiences, and stories of racialized communities of color be told from a first person point-of-view. The criteria and the process to develop such curriculum exemplifies several of the tenets of Critical Race Theory – it centers the voices and experiences of marginalized communities of color, it is intersectional, it is commitment in action for social justice, particularly within education, and it challenges the dominant culture.

The criteria for Ethnic Studies also takes an intersectional lens. When unpacking systems of oppression and their impact on communities based on race, there are also considerations for understanding points in which gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, ability, religion, and immigrant status intersect with race. This is embedded

within the definition of Ethnic Studies, as well as the guiding values and principles. The criteria for developing a model TK-12 Ethnic Studies curriculum includes culturally relevant pedagogy, and it adds that it is also community responsive and reflective. Understanding the needs for students' long-term academic "achievement," educators must forge meaningful relationships with students, as well as local communities of color, including students' families, in order to develop curriculum based on those cultivated relationships *(Cuauhtin et al., 2019)*.

Recommendations for Further Research

Going forward, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to test the viability of a model curriculum. Further research is needed to analyze the implementation of the curriculum, as well as the potential impact on various metrics used to assess student "achievement" within education. This includes, but is not limited to: attendance rates, overall student grade point averages, high school dropout rates, and student discipline data.

In order to teach Ethnic Studies, educators must first confront their own identities, biases, and internalized oppression(s) prior to teaching and then on an ongoing basis. Further research is needed to examine the initial and ongoing professional developmental supports that are needed for educators seeking to teach Ethnic Studies. This is especially important for school sites and districts where the pool of educators who are interested in teaching Ethnic Studies has little to no experience exploring their own identity when it comes to race, ethnicity, and culture.

Regardless of Ethnic Studies becoming a required course in schools, the course offerings of Ethnic Studies that currently exist in districts raise concerns about who is qualified to teach Ethnic Studies in TK-12. Will it require a single-subject credential or will it be embedded within a teacher preparation program, regardless of the credential that is being pursued? Further exploration is needed to identify the criteria, if any, for credentialing teachers to teach Ethnic Studies in TK-12 and the impact it has on teacher preparation programs.

COVID-19 has drastically impacted every sector across the globe. Within the field of education, the pandemic brought many of the inequities that have existed for decades to the forefront, which was evident when these inequities were a part of a national presidential debate during the 2020 election. The pandemic has also disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities, particularly when it comes to educational access. "Black and Hispanic or Latino families are more likely to live in remote-only school districts, but the least likely to have the resources to help their children to navigate online education" (Smith & Reeves, 2020).

Professionals state that there is a need to prioritize students' mental health and their social-emotional learning (SEL). The executive director of the National Association of School Psychologists stated that, "It's well worth the time, effort and resources to navigate these challenges. Paying attention to the SEL needs of students and educators alike will be essential as schools begin to open their doors" (Walker, 2020). Ethnic Studies is student-centered, cultural and community responsive, as well as reflective.

Further research is needed to examine the benefits of Ethnic Studies and its impact on the mental and social-emotional wellness of students and educators who experience trauma, much like the trauma caused by COVID-19.

Reflection and Conclusion

Based on the identifying factors for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum in this study, California's model curriculum does not meet this criteria, and therefore, should not be considered for use when developing and implementing Ethnic Studies courses within TK-12 schools. California's process to meet the legislative mandate for developing the model curriculum excluded and marginalized the voices of Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars. Furthermore, the state's curriculum leaves out the guiding values and seven principles of Ethnic Studies. Instead, it includes eight outcomes that have a basis in history and social science frameworks; not Ethnic Studies. There are no clear identifying units, and almost all of the lessons are geared towards high school, leaving out TK-8 grades. In conclusion, California's Ethnic Studies curriculum cannot be considered an Ethnic Studies model curriculum.

The original Ethnic Studies scholars and practitioners who were recruited, contracted, and appointed by the California Department of Education were relinquished from their roles in developing the state's model curriculum. In an effort to maintain the integrity of Ethnic Studies as a discipline, a number of the original members of the advisory committee took it upon themselves to continue working together for the purposes of developing a TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum that is curated by

scholars and practitioners in the field and maintains the integrity of the discipline. Together, they cultivated their own consortium of educators that work in various communities throughout the state of California in both TK-12 and higher education to form the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Institute (LESMC). The institute works to develop Ethnic Studies curriculum for every grade level in TK-12, serves as a consultant group for districts seeking to establish and implement Ethnic Studies programs, and provides ongoing professional development that supports Ethnic Studies practitioners and programs.

In conclusion, this exploratory documentary film study sought to identify the criteria for developing TK-12 Ethnic Studies model curriculum. This study identified five criteria for developing curriculum, along with the aforementioned areas for further research.

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Appendix A: Definitions

Term	Definition
Agency	the capacity of an individual to act freely and make independent choices in any given environment.
Asian and/or Pacific Islander (API)	An identity marker often used in the United States to describe people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent.
Chicana/o/x	A contested social and political identity chosen by people living in the United States with Mexican and indigenous ancestry. The term with the 'x' is pronounced with an '-ex' sound at the end of the word.
Class	a category and identifier that denotes a person or group's economic or social status.
Community	a social group of any size whose members either reside in a specific locality, share government, and/or have a common cultural background, struggles, views, or history.
Community Responsive Pedagogy	the practice of teaching with the objective to meet the needs of a community. It is an approach of teaching to recuperate the education and learning of often marginalized diverse students in order to improve themselves, their families and their respective communities.
Counter narrative	refers to the narratives that arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized. The idea of "counter" implies a space of resistance against the status quo.
Culture	the characteristics, creations, and knowledge of a particular group of people, place, or time. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, beliefs, customs, art, music, language, traditions, and religion.
Decolonization	the process of undoing colonialism. In the very literal sense, decolonization it is the act of formerly colonized countries working to establish their own independence. However, decolonization or decolonize is frequently used to describe the un-learning of hegemonic and oppressive systems, practices, and ways of being in the quest for self-determination.

Ethnicity	an identity marker based on ancestry, including nationality, lands/territory, regional culture, language, history, tradition, etc., that comprise a social group.
Filipina/o/x	an identity marker for people who identify as having ancestry in the Philippines. Instead of using Filipina or Filipino, the "x" renders the term gender neutral. The term with the 'x' is pronounced with an '-ex' sound at the end of the word.
Latina/o/x	terms used to identify men (Latino) and women (Latina) with ancestry in Latin America—Spanish speaking countries in the Caribbean and Americas. Latinx differs from Latina/o as the "x" renders the term gender-neutral and more inclusive. Thus, the term can be used by women, men, gender non-binary and trans identifying people. The term with the 'x' is pronounced with an '-ex' sound at the end of the word.
Self-determination	the process by which a person establishes their own agency and motivation with the hope of controlling their own life.
Transdisciplinary	research conducted by educators and scholars from different disciplines working together to create and innovate something entirely new that moves beyond existing disciplinary boundaries.
White supremacy	the belief that white people are inherently superior and represent the dominant race. It is an operationalized form of racism that manifests globally, institutionally, and through systems of power.

Appendix B: Documentary Participants

Name	Grade	Role in Education	Location	Filming Method
Guadalupe Cardona	n/a	Ethnic Studies Teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	Los Angeles, CA	In person
Rain Carter	11	Student	Fremont, CA	Zoom
Mary Jessie Celestin	4th year undergrad	Student, Harvey Mudd College Founder, San Jose Strong	San Jose, CA	Zoom
Artnelson Concordia	n/a	Coordinator, San Francisco Unified School District Writer, CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum	San Francisco, CA	Zoom
Toltka Cuauhtin	n/a	Ethnic Studies Teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	Los Angeles, CA	Zoom
Reynaldo Dulaney Jr.	n/a	High School Ethnic Studies Teacher, San Francisco Unified School District	San Francisco, CA	In person

Tricia Gallagher-Geurtsen, Ed.D.	n/a	Lecturer, University of California San Diego Chair, Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee, San Diego Unified School District	San Diego, CA	Zoom
Sam Geursten-Shoemate	10	Student	San Diego, CA	Zoom
Guillermo Gomez, Ph.D.	n/a	Ethnic Studies Professor, San Diego State University Writer, CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum	San Diego, CA	Zoom
Tomara Hall	n/a	Special Education Middle School Teacher,	San Jose, CA	Zoom
Cameo Kendrick	n/a	Chair, National Education Association Aspiring Educators	Louisville, KY	Zoom
Taslin Kimball, M.Ed.	n/a	Educator	Hayward, CA	Zoom
Mary Levi	n/a	Elementary Teacher	Alta Loma, CA	Zoom
Jose Medina	n/a	California State Assembly Member, District 61	Sacramento, CA	In person
Theresa Montaño, Ed.D.	n/a	Ethnic Studies Professor, California State University Northridge Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	Los Angeles, CA	Zoom

Tracie Noriega, M.Ed.	n/a	Assistant Superintendent, San Lorenzo Unified School District	San Lorenzo, CA	In person
Jorge Pacheco	n/a	Elementary Ethnic Studies Teacher President, Oak Grove School District Board of Education Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	San Jose, CA	In person
Denise Ross, Ph.D.	n/a	Chair, UW System Institute for Urban Education Associate Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning	Milwaukee, WI	Zoom
Samia Shoman, Ed.D.	n/a	Manager, English Learner & Compliance Program, San Mateo Union High School District Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	San Mateo, CA	In person
Alphonso Thompson	n/a	High School Ethnic Studies Teacher Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	Union City, CA	Zoom

Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, Ph.D.	n/a	Ethnic Studies Professor, San Francisco State University Member, Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee	San Francisco, CA	Zoom
Gladys Torres	12	Student	Union City, CA	In person

Appendix C: Student Interview Questions

	Question	*Follow-up*
1	Name, racial identity, role in school(s)?	
2	When was the first time you saw yourself at school? Either in one of your educators, in what you were learning, school activities, or elsewhere.	*Do you feel you're able to see yourself in this ES course? How/How not?*
3	Have you ever felt like you were treated differently by the adults on campus and/or your peers based on the color of your skin, gender, gender identity, faith, the language you speak, or where your family is from?	*What do you wish your teachers and/or peers knew about you?*
4	What does Ethnic Studies mean to you?	*Would you recommend others take a class like this? Why?*
5	How would you describe the classroom community in your Ethnic Studies courses?	*How does that compare to your other classes?*
6	How important is it for you to see your culture represented at school and why?	
7	How has this ES class impacted how you relate to people who don't look like you?	
8	How has Ethnic Studies impacted your perspective about school?	
9	Some people say that Ethnic Studies is too political, teaches hate, and is anti-American. What do you want to say to those who share those ideas?	
10	How important is it for teachers to talk about race?	*What do you wish your teachers understood about you?*

Appendix D: Educator Interview Questions

	Question	Follow-up
1	Name, racial identity, role in school(s)?	*How long have you taught Ethnic Studies?*
2	When was the first time you saw yourself at school? Either in one of your educators, in what you were learning, school activities, or elsewhere.	
3	What motivated you to teach Ethnic Studies?	
4	What are the impacts you see from this course on your students?	
5	How do you define Ethnic Studies?	*What does it mean to you? How does it impact or shape your life?*
6	What was your role in the state's development of K-12 ES model curriculum?	*How would you describe your experience?*
7	In your opinion, does it maintain the integrity of Ethnic Studies?	*Why or why not?*
8	What is necessary for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum?	
9	What advice would you give to educators and districts who are working to develop an Ethnic Studies program in their area?	*How might they ensure that they maintain the integrity of the discipline?*
10	Do you believe ES should require its own specialized credential (e.g. Math, English, Science, etc)?	*If so, what should an Ethnic Studies credential entail?*

Appendix E: Administrator Interview Questions

	Question	*Follow-up*
1	Name, racial identity, role in school(s)?	*How long have you taught Ethnic Studies?*
2	When was the first time you saw yourself at school? Either in one of your educators, in what you were learning, school activities, or elsewhere.	
3	What motivated you to teach Ethnic Studies?	
4	What are the impacts you see from this course on your students?	
5	How do you define Ethnic Studies?	*What does it mean to you?*
6	What Ethnic Studies program do you currently offer in your district?	
7	What are some of the challenges that you've experienced in developing and implementing the program?	*How have you overcome those challenges?*
8	What is necessary for developing an Ethnic Studies model curriculum?	
9	What advice would you give to educators and other districts who are working to develop an Ethnic Studies program in their area?	*How might they ensure that they maintain the integrity of the discipline?*
10	Do you believe ES should require its own specialized credential (e.g. Math, English, Science, etc)?	*If so, what should an Ethnic Studies credential entail?*

Appendix F: Community Leader Interview Questions

	Question	*Follow-up*
1	Name, organization, role, & duration of involvement?	*What is your ethnic identity?*
2	When was the first time you saw yourself at school? Either in one of your educators, in what you were learning, school activities, or elsewhere.	
3	What is the role [organization] plays in advocating for/against ES?	*How long have you been involved in this process?*
4	The advocacy for Ethnic Studies (ES) in our schools in CA is over 50 years old. In what ways have you participated in this movement?	
5	What motivated you to write/support legislation on Ethnic Studies?	*What impact do you hope the legislation will have?*
6	What were some of the biggest challenges that you face when working to get legislation on ES passed through the assembly?	
7	What are your thoughts on the state's K-12 ES model curriculum?	*In your opinion, does it maintain the integrity of ES? Why or why not?*
8	How do you respond to those who think that ES is anti-American, too political, and should not be taught in schools?	
9	What advice would you give to students, teachers, and districts who would like to see Ethnic Studies in their schools?	
10	What advice would you give to this generation of advocates and activists who are fighting for ES for all students in K-12 schools in CA?	

Appendix G: Consent Form

RELEASE FOR PARTICIPATION IN DOCUMENTARY FILM: FIDELITY AT THE FOREFRONT: THE FIGHT FOR ETHNIC STUDIES (A working title)

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the use of my name, physical image, and voice in the educational documentary, FIDELITY AT THE FOREFRONT: THE FIGHT FOR ETHNIC STUDIES (a working title) produced and directed by Taunya Jaco. This documentary is intended for use in the classrooms, by educational agencies and organizations and educational and PBS (Public Broadcast System) television stations. In giving this consent I hereby release Taunya Jaco of any proprietary rights that I may have in regard to this production. I do not expect to be paid for my participation.

NAME:_____DATE:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

_____

If under the age of 18, have parent or guardian complete the following:

NAME OF

PARENT/GUARDIAN:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

_____

Appendix H: List of Advisory Committee Members

Published on the California Department of Education website.

The following individuals were appointed by the State Board of Education at its meeting on January 9, 2019.

2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum
Advisory Committee Members Summary List

ID	First Name	Last Name	Position Title	Employer
411	Gaye Theresa	Johnson	Associate Professor, Chicana and Chicano Studies & African American Studies	University of California, Los Angeles
415	Jenna	Phillips	Teacher, Ninth Grade Social Justice and Eighth Grade History/English	Encinal High School (Alameda Unified School District)
424	Alphonso	Thompson	Teacher	Washington High School

427	Theresa	Montano	Professor/Vice President	California State University Northridge/California Teachers Association
430	Guadalupe	Cardona	English and Ethnic Studies Teacher	Augustus Hawkins High School (Community Health Advocate School)
434	Elizabeth	Arzate	Teacher	Jurupa Unified
437	Samia	Shoman	Manager of English Learner & Compliance Programs	San Mateo Union High School District
444	Stephen	Leeper	Teacher	San Francisco Unified School District

473	Angie	Fa	Chair Asian American Studies	City College of San Francisco
474	Aimee	Riechel	Teacher	San Francisco Unified School District
478	Dawniell	Black	Program Specialist	Elk Grove Unified School District
479	Melissa	Moreno	Ethnic Studies Professor	Yuba Community College District
500	Roselinn	Lee	Social Science Teacher	Santa Ana Unified School District - Santa Ana High School
513	Jorge	Pacheco	Seventh/Eighth Grade Ethnic Studies and Spanish Language Arts	Voices College-Bound Language Academy

			Teacher/Former Second Grade Bilingual Teacher	
521	Allyson	Tintiangco-Cubales	Professor	San Francisco State University
522	John	Gonzalez	Teacher	Coachella Valley Unified School District
531	R. Tolteka	Cuauhtin	Teacher	Los Angeles Unified School District
536	Vicky	Xiong-Lor	Teacher	Clovis High School