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Ethnic Studies Implementation in a K-8 District: Culture, Critical Consciousness and Collective Efficacy

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ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLEMENTATION IN A K-8 DISTRICT: CULTURE, CRITICAL
CONSCIOUSNESS AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

A Dissertation

Presented to

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by

Genvieve Dorsey

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ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLEMENTATION IN A K-8 DISTRICT: CULTURE,
CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

by

Genvieve Dorsey

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ABSTRACT

ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLEMENTATION IN A K-8 DISTRICT: CULTURE, CRITICAL
CONSCIOUSNESS AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

by Genvieve Dorsey

This research was a descriptive study in which the researcher explored the beginning
phases of Ethnic Studies implementation in a Kindergarten through Eighth grade (K-8)
school district in Northern California. Using a social justice lens, and through a review of
Ethnic Studies, Collective Efficacy, Critical Consciousness, and School Culture constructs,
the researcher attempted to capture and articulate a cultural profile of the school district and
the degree to which it aligned to the cultural typologies articulated among Ethnic Studies
scholars.

The study included the collection of several types of data, including: (1) archival
documents; (2) teacher focus groups; and (3) administrator interviews. Analyzing these three
types of data through the aforementioned constructs yielded six key findings. First, the
school board proposed Ethnic Studies through a resolution however, broader support for its
implementation appeared evident. Second, critical consciousness was defined by documents
and participants in terms of the adult work within the system and as student outcomes. Third,
Ethnic Studies in this district was still being defined; seen by some as a classroom or school
cultural element and as a discrete subject by others. Fourth, fear of public backlash while
implementing Ethnic Studies was felt by some educators. Evidence suggested that
administrative buy-in and supports were helpful in dealing with that fear. Fifth, a vision for
grassroots leadership with top-down support was beginning to take shape. Finally,
professional development needs for Ethnic Studies implementation were articulated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For my family who supported and encouraged me through this process.

Ben, Annabelle, and Leela, I love you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

x

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF – Administration for Children and Families

BIPOC – Black Indigenous People of Color

CAESMC – California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

CDE – California Department of Education

CRC – Critical Race Curriculum

CRP – Critical Race Pedagogies

CRT – Critical Race Theory

DEIB – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

EIC – Education Industrial Complex

LESMC – Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress

NCES – National Center for Education Statistics

SEAL – Sobrato Early Academic Language

PTA – Parent Teacher Association

PTO – Parent Teacher Organization

Chapter 1: Background

The Opportunity Gap

Since its inception in 1969, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has revealed significant gaps in student achievement scores, specifically for Black, Latinx, and low-income students (Poliakoff, 2006). The NAEP Long-Term Trend (LTT) Assessment Results indicate increases in the reading performance of 9- and 12-year-old students in all student groups from 1971 to 2020, yet no statistically significant change from 2012. The trends indicate that the scores between White and Black students and the scores between White and Hispanic students have narrowed since 1971 (NAEP, 2020). The average score for Black students was 22 points higher in 2020 than in 1971. The average score for White students was 8 points higher in 2020 than in 1971. The average scores for Hispanic students increased 18 points from 1975, and the average score for White students increased 6 points from the same year (NAEP, 2020). Despite these gains, there still exists a 25-point gap in the reading achievement when comparing the average scores of 13-year-old White students and Black students, and a 19-point gap between the average scores of 13-year-old White students and Hispanic students (NAEP, 2020). A slightly different story exists for the average Math achievement scores between White students and Students of Color. Compared to 2012, the White-Black score gap in Math widened in 2020. While the White-Hispanic score gap has decreased since 1978, the gap has remained steady since 1994 (NAEP, 2020).

Beyond achievement scores, similar patterns have been found when measuring dropout rates, graduation rates, advanced course opportunities, grades, and access to higher education. For example, the average total population dropout rate for 16- to 24- year old

students in 2010 was 7.4%, and in 2020 it decreased to 5.3% (NCES, 2022b). During this time the Hispanic student dropout rate decreased from 15.1% to 7.4%, yet still remained higher than the national average. The Black student dropout rate decreased from 8% to 4.2%. The Indigenous student dropout rate remains significantly higher than the other student groups, but decreased from 12.4% to 11.5% in 2020 (NCES, 2022b). That said, the data on the Indigenous student dropout rate in 2020 showed a significant coefficient of variation between 30 and 50%, so due to the high variance between samples, it should be interpreted with caution (NCES, 2022b).

BIPOC students also experience inequities in access to advanced course opportunities (Patrick et al., 2020). The findings of this Report show that Black and Latina/x/o students are successful in advanced courses when given the opportunity, however they are not fairly represented in advanced courses (Patrick et al., 2020). Latina/x/o students make up 25% of the overall population in 8th grade, but only 18% of the population enrolled in 8th grade Algebra (Patrick et al., 2020). The same trend is true for Black students enrolled in 8th grade Algebra courses. 15% of 8th grade students are Black, but only 10% are enrolled in 8th grade algebra. The trend extends into high school enrollment in AP courses. There, Black students make up 15% of the high school population, but only 9% are enrolled in AP courses, and Latinx students make up 24% of the population, but only 21% are enrolled in AP courses (Patrick et al., 2020). These inequities are largely due to two types of enrollment patterns. First, schools that serve primarily Black and Latinx students are not enrolling as many students in advanced placement as schools that serve fewer Black and Latino schools (Patrick

et al., 2020). Second, schools, especially racially diverse schools, deny Black and Latinx students access to these courses (Patrick et al. 2020).

Mirroring access, achievement, and dropout rates, there also exists a gap in high school graduation rates between White and BIPOC students. The graduation rate in the 2017-18 school year for White students was 89.1% where as 81% of Latina/x/o students graduated, 79% of Black students graduated, 73.5% of Indigenous students graduated, and 68.3% of students with limited English proficiency graduated (ED Facts Data Group 695, 2019). While the data shows gaps in achievement, as noted in the discussion of access to advanced course work, it does not tell the full story. Black, Latina/x/o, and low-income students consistently experience lower levels of achievement and access compared to their peers.

Statement of the Problem

There exists a persistent discrepancy in the achievement outcomes of BIPOC students and White students. The inequitable achievement outcomes of Students of Color observed over the past three decades has sparked a vast number of academic research studies into the causes of these inequities (Harper & Davis, 2012; Lee, 2004). As scholars began studying what was once called the academic achievement gap, systemic inequities like funding discrepancies (Baker et al., 2020; Rothstein, 2017), zero tolerance discipline policies (Bottiani et al., 2018), myopic pedagogical practices (Ladson-Billings, 2009), and curriculum rooted in the White settler colonial narrative (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Valdez, 2017) are just a few examples that contribute to the disparate academic outcomes of Students of Color. The acknowledgement of these systemic inequities led to a change in the terminology from the

deficit language of the achievement gap to the acknowledgment of a lack of fair access now known as the opportunity gap (Carter & Welner, 2013).

Yet, as K-12 educators enact policies and practices that have the potential to influence factors that contribute to the academic opportunity gap like Ethnic Studies (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020) there is public and political backlash which creates challenges for sustaining the work of addressing the systemic inequities in education (Theoharis, 2007). For example, seven states have passed laws banning Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) use in schools, with another 16 states with bills in congress (World Population Review, 2023). Indiana House Bill 1134 would have allowed parents to police teacher curriculum and lesson plans by requiring teachers to post their lesson plans for an entire year so that parents may vet and sue for any divisive or controversial topics (Cook, 2022; Herron, 2022; WBIW, 2022). Arizona's 2010 ban on Ethnic Studies, which banned curriculum promoting any sort of ethnic solidarity, is a third example of legislation that impedes the adoption of courses that support the advancement of BIPOC students. Because CRT has been such a polarizing topic across the United States, implementation of Ethnic Studies, which is rooted in CRT concepts, carries the potential for even greater challenges for effective implementation, even in states where these laws do not yet exist.

Since Ethnic Studies policies are aimed at centering the history, voices, and experiences of BIPOC staff, students, and community members, an analysis of Whiteness and White Supremacy and how these have shaped the educational system and educators' own educational journeys is needed. With this in mind, school district leaders at all levels need to adopt a critical lens for effectively operationalizing Ethnic Studies policies to ensure greater,

lasting systemic change. Without providing definitional clarity, education and public schools face the risk of a superficial, box-checking implementation models, or worse, using the language of these policies to veil unchanging conditions that contribute to these disparities in the first place.

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Socio-Political and Socio-Cultural Context

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In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the wake of several high-profile police killings, the socio-political conflicts led to what many have coined, "America's Racial Reckoning." Many saw this is an opportunity to also focus on a more socially just curriculum (Gilbert, 2021). School boards across the country adopted resolutions denouncing White supremacy and adopting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies.

In the fall of 2021, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 101, making California the first state to require Ethnic Studies in order to graduate high school. The law allows for Ethnic Studies to be implemented as a stand- alone elective or infused into History and/or Language Arts classes. The California *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (CAESMC) is written in a way that:

> is inclusive and supportive of multiple users, including teachers (single and multiple-subject), support staff, administrators, and the community, and encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality and equity, justice, race and racism, ethnicity and bigotry, indigeneity, etc. (CDE, CAESMC Preface, 2021, lines 22-27).

This bill is an attempt to center BIPOC, specifically African American, Chicana/x/o and Latina/x/o, Asian and Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American voices and perspectives. It provides guiding principles, course outlines, and provisions for teacher and administrative support. For example, the curriculum provides resources for professional development,

information for district and site administrators to support CAESMC and instruction, methods for Ethnic Studies instruction, support for a collaborative teaching model, and access to resources for instruction like lesson plans, curricula, and primary source material.

Meanwhile, 2021 and 2022 also saw seven states pass anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT) legislation with nearly another 20 that have introduced similar legislation. Opponents of CRT fear that it touts all White people as oppressors and all People of Color as the victims (Ray & Gibbons, 2021). Similarly, Arizona banned Ethnic Studies because of the fear that the development of ethnic pride over national pride and individualism would cause discord in the state and community. While these fears stem from a misunderstanding and/or the misapplication of the purpose and scope of CRT and Ethnic Studies respectively, public perception is a real challenge that educators contend with when adopting and implementing pedagogies aimed at achieving social justice, like Ethnic Studies.

Even as California has been the first state to adopt an Ethnic Studies requirement, provisions to allow for the policing of that curriculum have been written into the law. California's Ethnic Studies legislation contains "safeguards" including a requirement for school districts and charters to present their Ethnic Studies curriculum at a public hearing before adopting it (Fensterwald, 2021). While this specifically pertains to the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (CAESMC), this harkens visions of many states' proposals to require teachers to post their lesson plans prior to the school year to allow parents to give input and/or to opt their children out of particular units of study (Whiteleather, 2022). These proposals have many teachers wondering how much flexibility they will have to differentiate and adapt instruction and many others contemplating leaving the profession (Whiteleather,

2022). Additionally, in California, Ethnic Studies instruction and instructional materials should "not reflect or promote" any bias, bigotry or discrimination (Fensterwald, 2021). Even with these "safeguards," there continues to be pushback from some parents regarding Ethnic Studies implementation.

Parents in some communities are adopting courses that promote patriotism at the same time as restricting what can be taught about racism (Fensterwald, 2021). Despite the numerous studies that indicate the positive impacts of Ethnic Studies curriculums on positive identity development and student achievement of BIPOC students (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020), equity focused K-12 educators find themselves navigating the tightrope between what research shows is beneficial for BIPOC students and resistance on local, state, and national levels.

As a basis for this study, I am particularly interested in three facets of this complex problem. The first is the challenge of shifting the school or district culture to align with the vision of anti-racist policies, in this case, Ethnic Studies. White settler colonialism has been a major force that defines and sets the conditions of schooling as it appears today (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Centering BIPOC ontologies and epistemologies with the implementation of Ethnic Studies will surely demand a critical awareness and problematizing of these White supremacy conditions. The second is that the current educational workforce may not have academic, lived, or pedagogical experience with Ethnic Studies and the concept and development of critical consciousness. The third issue is the leadership challenge associated with implementing these policies amid the current socio-political climate regarding CRT.

Cultural Shifts

The first issue is the challenge of shifting school or district culture and climate to align with the vision of Ethnic Studies. School culture refers to the schools' values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, and symbols and stories (Muhammad, 2009), which facilitates the school climate, or the feel and perception of the school as described earlier (Olsen et al., 2018). DEIB policies are specifically targeted for addressing organizational culture. Ethnic Studies programs have the promise to influence students' engagement and connectedness to school (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020), therefore impacting school climate. However, given public education's history and resulting hidden curriculum measuring and describing the impact may be a little more elusive.

Schools are situated within the broader context of democratic life in the United States. Historically speaking, the United States educational institution has known its share of racial discrimination (Lynch, 2019). Even from the beginning of the European colonization of North America, schools were established to teach White colonial children to read the bible (Race Forward, n.d.). Later, public education was expanded at the behest of wealthy business owners to teach poor children the skills and dispositions, namely obedience and discipline, to prepare them for work in their factories (Race Forward, n.d.). Meanwhile, in the 1800s Native American boarding schools were established with the intent to force White culture assimilation, prohibiting them from learning in their native languages. (Kim & Winter, 2017; Noltemeyer, et al., 2012). It was not until 1990 that the Native American Languages Act passed, repudiating these policies, declaring that Native Americans are indeed entitled to use their own languages (Kim & Winter, 2017). In the south, laws were passed forbidding the

education of African-Americans and Jim Crow laws in the 1860s created an educational

system of segregated schools (Lynch, 2019). Finally, in 1954, Brown v. Board declared the

segregated schools were inherently unequal, yet as noted above, schools are still segregated

(Baker et al., 2020; Fry, 2005; Race Forward, n.d.). These are just some examples showing

that the historical foundations of public education in the United States point to the White,

Christian, colonial, and capitalist foundations of American education. These are the roots of

the hidden curriculum within schools. However, at the same time, we see hope for social

justice in education through the landmark decisions like the ones named above.

The history of Ethnic Studies can be traced back to the 1960s when the Third World

Liberation Front, comprised of the Black Student Union and a coalition of other student

groups, conducted a five-month protest on the San Francisco State University campus for the

purposes of: a) increased access to higher education for Students of Color; b) increased hiring

of faculty of color; and c) the establishment of Ethnic Studies programs and departments

(Diaz, 2023; Hu-DeHart, 1993; Morrison, n.d.; San Francisco State University, n.d.). The

first college of Ethnic Studies was established at San Francisco State University as a result of

the protest in 1969 (Diaz, 2023). Unity across racial, ethnic, and economic lines, the

increased consciousness of individual and collective histories, and increased engagement in

local communities were all the result of that original Ethnic Studies department (Bartlebaugh,

2008). The original focus of Ethnic Studies was on American communities of color,

explicitly focusing on race relations and ethnic identity from the humanistic, social-scientific,

and social-justice points of view (Morrison, n.d.). Drawing from traditions of anthropology,

sociology, history, English, art history, communications, and political science, Ethnic Studies

is interdisciplinary and intended to support the development of the tools to analyze, challenge, and dismantle forms of racism by centering the voices of BIPOC communities (Morrison, n.d.). The number of Ethnic Studies programs grew to over 700 at the university level by the early-1990s despite cutbacks in the 1970s and 1980s (Hu-DeHart, 1993).

A Progressive Education Connection to Ethnic Studies

John Dewey (1916) and later, Henry Giroux (1992) offer more progressive views of what education should be about in the United States. John Dewey (1916) offers that the aim of education is the continued capacity for growth. Further, he outlines that in a democratic society, this idea is applied to all the members of society. For this to occur, interchanges among groups must be mutual or arrangements must be made to collectively reconstruct the social habits and institutions for ensuring the equitable attainment of Dewey's aim. It is precisely these aims that DEIB policies and Ethnic Studies pedagogies target, emphasizing the need for institutional change rather than individual assimilation. Similarly, Giroux (1992), argues for a vision of schools as educators of democratic citizens that value freedom, equality, and social justice. This is achieved through more than the abstract classroom learning about these topics, but through the daily life and culture of the school, it's policy, operations, practice and language. Giroux (1992) contends that schools need to inspire their students by modeling the way to find opportunities for involvement in democratic life, make a difference, and critique inequity and injustice. Furthermore, the democratic system can be strengthened through increased and diverse participation (Camarillo, 2020; Meadows, 2008). Ethnic Studies helps all students, particularly BIPOC students, develop the capacity for democratic participation (Camarillo, 2020).

Ethnic Studies curricula are founded on principles that challenge the reproduction of essentialist categories like race, gender, and class, critiques and deconstructs structural forms of oppression, and recovers and reconstructs counter-narratives and cultures (Wells & Cordova-Cobo, 2021). Sleeter and Zavala (2020) describe the purpose of Ethnic Studies as "eliminating racism, decolonizing students' minds, [and] sustaining minoritized cultures" (p.3). In a system that was at least partially established as established as a colonizing entity (Kim & Winter, 2017; Noltemeyer, et al., 2012), this represents a shift from the hidden curricular aims of education. According to Sleeter and Zavala (2020), there are seven hallmarks to Ethnic Studies, two of which are curriculum as a counter-narrative and attention to criticality. Connecting to Giroux's view of the purposes of education, it is important that acts and analyses of democracy are de-centered from Aristotelian views to include BIPOC histories of democratic deliberation (Reedy et al., 2020).

While these views articulate broader notions for the purpose of public education, their goals are expansive. Standardized tests are still a gate-keeping reality that students must confront (Cabrera, Milem, Jacquette, & Marx, 2014, cited in Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Indeed, across much of the social justice literature, student learning is more broadly conceptualized as developing literacy as a right (Freire, 2010; Ttueba, 1999; Warner, 2020), recognition and critique of systemic power relationships and imbalances (Escayg, 2019; Shields, 2010), and tools for civic action. In other words, teaching in the social justice lens encompasses instruction for academic excellence *and* social responsibility (Kose, 2007; Santamaría, 2014; Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014; Shields, 2010). Managing the tensions between this reality and the goals of Ethnic Studies is a reality that educators contend with.

However, framing student achievement within this critical democratic view can provide a foundation for the critique of systems and a vision to support both pedagogical and curricular growth in this area.

The challenge of shifting school culture to align with the vision of anti-racist polices such as those being proposed by Ethnic Studies starts with understanding the historical roots of racism in the educational system. In defining a vision for the purpose and aims of these anti-racist policies, school and district leaders can begin to adopt practices that support progressive and culturally sustaining practices as well as develop the capacity to uncover the hidden curriculum that keep perpetuating White supremacy culture.

Whiteness of the Education Workforce

The second issue is that the current educational workforce consists of educators with largely privileged identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Nation-wide, 77.7% of school principals are White and 79% of teachers are White, whereas non-White Students of Color make up about 53% of the student population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). In California, non-White Students of Color make up over 70% of the student population, while 66% of principals (NCES, 2021) and 63% of teachers are White (California Department of Education, 2021). This is an important distinction because it points to a cultural gap in how White educators and their Students of Color experience the system.

The California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum's (CAESMC) guiding values include, "humanization and critical consciousness" (California State Board of Education, 2021, Ch. 1, line 259). The adoption of the Ethnic Studies curriculum calls teachers to engage with

students to help students develop that capacity. In other words, Ethnic Studies policies require educators to develop critical consciousness and engage in developing it with students.

Critical consciousness, a concept developed by Paulo Freire (2010) was "formulated as a developmental process among oppressed and marginalized people to address their own oppression" (Diemer et al., 2016). Using a dialogical approach, critical consciousness involves reflecting on oppressive experiences and conditions and developing the capacity to enact change on those conditions. While Diemer et al.'s (2016) review of the literature and measurement of critical consciousness development suggests that more privileged individuals can develop critical consciousness, due to the variety of studies articulating the shortcomings and successes involved with developing an understanding of institutionalized racism (Carter et al., 2020; Fernández, 2019; Kohli et al., 2015; Kose, 2005; Sacramento, 2019), it stands to reason that many in the current educational workforce have had very little awareness of, experiences with, or purposely and intentionally fostered awareness of institutionalized racism and oppression, let alone engage their students in that process. To focus on equity and social justice means that educators need to be aware of their own attitudes and biases to audit their current curriculum and practices.

Challenges of Social Justice Work

The third issue is the leadership challenges associated with implementing these policies amid the current socio-political climate regarding CRT. School leaders of social justice policies often feel unprepared to engage staff in the critical conversations and professional learning that lead to systemic change. In other words, when systems and institutions are factors in creating and perpetuating these inequities, then systemic and institutional solutions

13

need to be explored. As alluded to above, a school's systems, procedures, and the adults' ways of interacting should model what we value for and expect of students. This requires a collective praxis (Freire, 2010) approach for aligning systems assessment and professional development for social justice (Furman, 2012; Kose, 2007).

Literature associated with social justice, transformative leadership, and the promotion of anti-racist practices, has documented or acknowledged the tension and challenges associated with this kind of work. Both Shields (2010) and Theoharis (2007) acknowledged that leaders in this field live with the constant tension and challenge of reconciling the fact that they are both in a position of power within a system and challenging the system to effect change at the same time. Theoharis (2007) further articulated that school leaders constantly feel the tension of navigating the space between the needs of their school communities and the directives of the school district or state. In the case of Ethnic Studies policy implementation, leaders might have to navigate the tension present in the socio-cultural/political climate regarding this topic. In the same vein, DeMatthews (2018) notes,

> ...we must recognize that principals cannot control the broad range of social and political policies that impact schooling (Anyon, 2014; Lipman, 2013). For example, if the police or the community utilized restorative justice practices, Principal Eric would most likely have had an easier path in adopting such approaches rather than suspensions (p. 11)

This quote illustrates the challenges that can and do occur when implementing Ethnic Studies policies. These policies are focused on creating institutionalized changes for the benefit of public education's traditionally marginalized students. The impact of this kind of implementation amid cultural and political tensions regarding these very topics cannot go unrecognized. Successful implementation depends on proactive and intentional strategies for

engaging in staff development (Kose, 2007), staff and community deliberation (Benet, 2013; Johnson, 2014), and the development of individual and systematic coping strategies and responses so that the work may be sustained (Theoharis, 2007).

Respect for the challenges associated with implementing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) and Ethnic Studies policies amid a larger socio-cultural discord for this topic is an act of love for students and teachers. Educators leading the way need to develop proactive and intentional strategies for engaging in staff development, deliberation, and coping strategies so that the work may be sustainable beyond that of the individuals tasked to do the work.

Further Elaboration: Context of the Problem

A number of studies have pointed to institutional factors that contribute to student achievement (Lamb & Fullarton, 2002; Patrick et al., 2020). Institutional barriers to educational achievement can be defined as policies and practices that prevent participation in the educational setting. Examples of institutional factors can include disparate funding for schools with high BIPOC student populations (Baker et al., 2020; Rothstein, 2017) which lead to disparate learning conditions (Kozol, 2005), school climate (Olsen et al., 2018) and the environmental context for learning (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998), regimented instructional practices (Kozol, 2005), the use of "Zero Tolerance" discipline policies (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008) and the disproportionality of its implementation on BIPOC students (Bottiani et al., 2018; Monroe, 2005), and deculturizing curriculum and instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Everyone has a right to participate fully in society and the skills attained

through education strongly influences one's chances to do so (OECD, 2022). Understanding and addressing the institutional and systemic factors that contribute to or hinder individuals' or groups' attainment of these outcomes are of great importance.

One factor contributing to the opportunity gap are the systemic, institutionalized, and environmental aspects that further perpetuate achievement disparities (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Kozol, 2005; Lieberman & Hoody, 1998; Poliakoff, 2006). For example, disparate conditions, regimented instructional practices, and lack of teacher preparation are all conditions found in some of the lowest performing schools in the Nation (Kozol, 2005). Not all of these conditions are within the scope of control of school employees. The next section describes the conditions that are relevant to this study.

School Climate

School climate is an example of an institutional factor that contributes to student achievement. While there is no widely agreed upon definition of school climate in the literature, the National School Climate Center suggests that safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and school environment are all features that make up school climate (Olsen et al., 2018). The US Department of Education's School Climate Survey measures domains of Engagement, Safety, and Environment (Solomon et al., 2020). School Climate data suggest that non-Hispanic Black students have more positive views of engagement, safety, and environment than non-Hispanic students of two or more races, while non-Hispanic students of two or more races had more positive perceptions of cultural and linguistic competency and bullying compared with non-Hispanic Black students (Solomon et al., 2020). This finding illustrates the difference in racial and ethnic group perceptions of school climate. Similarly,

Voight et al.'s (2015) multilevel regression analysis of school climate data in middle schools showed that Black and Hispanic students reported less favorable experiences with relationships with adults, safety, and belonging at school than White students. Additionally schools that showed a greater racial gap in school climate indicators also showed greater racial gaps in academic achievement, indicating that school climate and student achievement are correlated (Voight et al., 2015).

Curriculum Perspectives

Another factor contributing to the opportunity gap is the lack of representation of BIPOC perspectives in textbook development and curriculum frameworks. Systematic analysis of curriculum frameworks and textbooks in the United States consistently reveal White, Euro-centric, narratives and themes, portraying Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous people, communities, and experiences as additions to those existing themes (Sleeter, 2011; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). While textbook publishers have added BIPOC perspectives in recent years, the vast majority centers on the White, Euro-centric perspective (Sleeter, 2011). In this additive approach, people of color tend to be represented in a decontextualized, ahistorical manner. Textbooks present racism as a thing of the past and frame racism as the deed of a few bad players rather than situating it within the systemic context which perpetuates it (Sleeter, 2011).

Even within state adopted curricula Sleeter's (2011) analysis of California's History-Social Science Framework revealed that 77% of the 96 examples given where White, 18% were African American, 4% were Indigenous, 1% were Latinx, and 0 were Asian American. Further analysis revealed that the dominant narrative within that framework was the story of

European immigration and their progress in the development of the United States (Sleeter, 2011). The result is that this curriculum perpetuates the narrative that racism was something that was overcome in the past, portraying a linear road for progress, rather than the understanding that the struggle against oppression is non-linear, messy, and on-going (Sleeter, 2011).

These and other observations point to institutional and environmental factors that both drive and sustain the racial, ethnic, and economic achievement gaps that persist in education in the United States and contributes to the complicity of youth and the deculturalization of BIPOC students. Racism within education is a symptom of racism in the greater society (Belfield, 2021) and the problems contributing to these systemic inequities are vast and complex. This dissertation will explore how teachers and school leaders can influence the learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lieberman & Hoody, 1998) and curriculum (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020) through the adoption of Ethnic Studies pedagogies as a means for addressing some of these systemic inequities.

Purpose of the Study

How does a particular K-8 school district implement the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum? Implementation of Ethnic Studies is an act of social justice. It is my view that district, school, and classroom leaders need to adopt a critical lens for effectively operationalizing anti-racist policies, in this case, Ethnic Studies, and ensuring greater, lasting systemic change to the pattern of inequality and disparate outcomes. The purpose of this descriptive study is to better understand how leaders at various levels contribute to the conditions to support the effective and lasting systemic changes called for by these policies?

Research Questions

Specifically, as a basis of this study I wanted to understand:

1. What was the collective understanding and culture of the selected district with regard to Ethnic Studies and its implementation?

    a. What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used that point to these cultural elements? That is, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation?

    b. How did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from?

    c. What other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

2. How did educators (teachers and administrators) talk about their connection and commitment to Ethnic Studies? What language and underlying assumptions about race were used to express these connections and commitments? What did educators see as barriers to Ethnic Studies implementation?

3. What leadership moves or perspectives did administrators and teachers think would support the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies? How was leadership for Ethnic Studies implementation be characterized by teachers and administrators?

4. What did professionals (teachers and administrators) view as professional development needs within the district for the Effective Implementation of Ethnic Studies?

5. What were the connections that teachers and administrators made between Ethnic Studies and curriculum and pedagogy?

Assumptions Embedded in the Research Questions.

Question one explored the district's culture, climate, and environmental conditions for learning, two of the institutional barriers contributing to the opportunity gap. Through exploring the language used to make the case for and talk through Ethnic Studies implementation, a general sense of the district's existing culture and environment was garnered. Understanding the district's environmental context of learning pointed to those elements that needed to be developed to facilitate Ethnic Studies on a district-wide scale. The assumption made with this question is that there existed one or more drivers for the voluntary implementation of Ethnic Studies in the selected district. Also, question 1b explored how this district conceived of Ethnic Studies, particularly at the Kindergarten through 8th grade (K-8) level. As noted in the CAESMC (California State Board of Education, 2022), it was recommended that each district outlines its own Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose which served to focus the work of the district. The assumption embedded within this question was that while some teachers, administrators, and community members came to the workplace with some experience or understanding of Ethnic Studies, there was still the need for professional development in the area and the need to develop a common understanding for what that looked like in a K-8 context. Question 1c what other actions were taken to initiate

attention on Ethnic Studies, assumed that the voluntary implementation of Ethnic Studies in this selected district did not happen in a silo. This question was also rooted in understanding the district's cultural context for choosing to implement Ethnic Studies. It sought to answer questions about the significance of the timing and purpose of Ethnic Studies implementation in this district. The methodologies for answering this question included understanding the context of how the Ethnic Studies conversation began in this district and any commonly used language, phrases, and ideas that pointed to the district's Ethnic Studies vision and to how well-prepared various participants felt about teaching or leading Ethnic Studies implementation. I explored district public facing documents to understand how leaders were positioning Ethnic Studies as a need and/or an answer for solving district and social problems. Additionally, I looked for Ethnic Studies Hallmarks (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020) that were alluded to or directly mentioned as well as support for those values with actions taken within the district. These questions sought to answer the degree to which the existing culture, climate, environmental context, and the collective understanding of the district was ready for Ethnic Studies implementation.

In asking how educators talked about their commitments to Ethnic Studies, the language and assumptions they made about race, and the barriers they saw as impeding implementation (question 2), I hoped to explore educators' interpretations of how they understood Ethnic Studies and how it impacted or changed the educational environment. This question assumed that there was some rationale educators will use for implementing Ethnic Studies and that some saw it as a necessary systems change, but that those ideas were not universally held throughout the educator and community space. It also assumed that Ethnic

Studies was a newer practice within the district so educators just started to think about what supports and/or changes might be needed. The methodologies for answering this question were to ask about experiences with Ethnic Studies and related concepts. I asked participants in focus groups and interviews about their understanding of Ethnic studies, their experiences and challenges with teaching or leading change efforts associated with Ethnic Studies, and the supports they perceived were necessary.

In asking what leadership moves or perspectives administrators and teachers thought would support the implementation of Ethnic Studies, I hoped to explore whether district and site administrators centered the values and practices outlined in Ethnic Studies pedagogies (e.g. culturally sustaining pedagogies, dialogic inquiry). Conversely, participant responses would reveal that no real shift was being made and that top-down compliance models for implementation were being employed. The assumption made with this question was that in implementing something radically new, something that required a paradigm shift, teachers needed to not only learn the content and pedagogies, but experience the shift that administrators were asking them to employ with students. In other words, with implementing something so different, the "do as I say and not as I do" yielded only superficial implementation. Much like the textbook inclusion of BIPOC histories as an additive approach to maintaining the White Euro-centric narrative, asking teachers to learn and implement Ethnic Studies curricula and pedagogies without adjusting school structure, goals, and polices to support that shift was futile.

Question four assumed that the majority of the teacher workforce did not have significant experience with Ethnic Studies content and pedagogies. While universities play an important

role in the development of teacher capacity in this area, it is typically the role of the site administrator or district office administrators to provide on-going professional development for teachers in the current workforce. As noted in the CAESMC, teacher collaboration was instrumental to the successful implementation of Ethnic Studies. From the teachers' perspective, collective efficacy is the teacher's analysis of the task and their perceptions of their colleagues' ability to be successful with the task. The methodology for answering this question included teasing apart these perceptions for the purpose of understanding the next steps needed in developing that capacity and sense of collective efficacy. From the site/district administrator perspective, this question sought to answer the degree to which administrators thought about systems to support ongoing capacity and collective efficacy development of the paradigmatic, pedagogical, and curricular shifts required when implementing Ethnic Studies.

Similar to question four, assuming that the majority of the current workforce (teachers and administrators) did not have significant experience with Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy, how did they address the historical deculturizing of curriculum and instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2011; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). This involved the development of a critical consciousness for teachers and administrators with specific regard to the curriculum and methods (pedagogies) used in the classroom. Understanding how critical consciousness was developed and taught was important for the implementation of Ethnic Studies. One cannot engage others in the development of the awareness of the conditions that perpetuate oppression, self-awareness, and the capacity to enact change without seeing their own conditions illuminated. The assumption here was that site and

district administrators needed to (1) facilitate opportunities for teachers to develop that critical awareness and tools for action as a means for developing the capacity to teach it to students, and (2) be prepared when the focus of that awareness is turned on curriculum and instruction. This question ultimately asked, how critically aware was the workforce, how did they understand Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogies as it pertained to K-8 classrooms, and how prepared were they to develop a responsive Ethnic Studies curriculum?

Positionality Statement

As I engage in a study of social justice, I was aware of my positionality as a White, middle class, raised Catholic, heterosexual, female, public school principal. I recognized that my sociocultural identities (Cho et al., 2013) are largely privileged identities. As a woman in a position of relative power with these life experiences that have shaped my perceptions, it is particularly important that I became aware of and sought out narratives and perspectives that differ from my own. Growing up, I was taught to understand that systemic injustice existed, yet I never made the connection to my own daily life experiences. It was something that happened to the "other." It was not until about my third year of teaching that I began to recognize inequities in my student's achievement scores that had little to do with their abilities to learn. It was then I started to explore critical pedagogies and began the journey of critical reflection and problematizing my own views and dispositions as well as systems that lead to inequity. All of this is rooted in deep care for all humans and situated in a disposition of hope that we can create humanizing and equitable conditions in education. As a principal, I applied this practice to a broader systems and community approach, but in a way that felt unfocused and scattered. With this literature review and study, I hoped to develop a deeper

24

understanding of leading for social justice and the challenges associated with this kind of work. How could I become more purposeful and intentional with developing and facilitating systems that promote critical examination, assessment, and alignment of our school's policy and practice? How could I facilitate professional development and align professional learning opportunities for developing critical consciousness and understanding of the broader goal of education for social justice? In other words, how could I work toward making schools a place where all students feel a sense of belonging and significance?

Key Terms

Anti-Bias Education – Anti-bias education is a way of teaching that helps students develop a sense of identity in a diverse society (Kuh et al., 2016). The four core goals of anti-bias education are to: (a) help children feel proud of themselves and their families without needing to feel superior to others; (b) develop a respect and love for and ease with the diversity of humanity; (c) recognize bias and unfairness, and d) develop the skills of empowerment to speak out against that injustice for themselves and others. (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019; Kuh et al., 2016).

Anti-Racist/Anti-Racist Education - Jamilah Pitts (2020) defines anti-racist work in schools as an exercise hope and practice of love. Anti-Racist education is a pedagogical approach concerned with dismantling systems of oppression (Lynch et al., 2017).

Collective Efficacy – Donohoo et al. (2018) define collective efficacy as educators' shared belief that their combined efforts positively influences student learning more so than any other barrier to learning. John Hattie adds to that notion to include that this is sustained by feeding it with evidence of that impact (Visible Learning, n.d.).

Critical Consciousness - The term critical consciousness is derived from Freire's

(1970/2010) work to mean "how oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyze

their social conditions and act to change them" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 44). Furthermore,

Watts et al. (2011) describe three components of critical consciousness; critical reflection,

political efficacy, and critical action. Critical reflection refers to cultural, social, systemic

analysis and the moral rejection of the inequities that hinder well-being and the ability to act.

Political efficacy is the ability to enact political or social change through individual or

collective activism. Critical action is the individual or collective action taken to change

inequitable systems, practice and policy.

Cultural Competence – Cultural competence can be understood on a systems level and on

individual levels. On a systems level, "cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors,

attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that

enables effective work in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, p. 13). Elements of

cultural competence at the individual level include: (a) the acknowledgement of cultural

differences; (b) understanding your own culture and how that forms your perceptions and

biases; (c) engaging in self-assessment and self-reflection; (d) ongoing development and

acquisition of cultural knowledge and skills; and (e) understanding and viewing behavior

within a cultural context (Durljanova & Jonanovski, 2019).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy – Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that Culturally

Relevant Pedagogy as comprised of three criteria: (a) students must experience academic

success, (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and (c) students

must develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo. Teachers use students'

culture as a vehicle to learning, with a particular focus on traditionally marginalized community culture.

Culturally Responsive Teaching – Coined by Geneva Gay (2010 b), culturally responsive teaching is defined as, "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them" (p. 31). Six key practices of culturally responsive teaching are: (1) high expectations for all students; (2) educating the whole child; (3) making connections between home and school practices; (4) connecting with students' cultural knowledges, experiences, practices, and perspectives; (5) identifying and leveraging students' strengths to transform the classroom and education; and (6) critically questioning normative assumptions and practices in schooling, content, and assessments (Gay, 2010b).

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy – Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) are asset-based pedagogies that are founded on the works of Culturally Relevant Pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995), funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and the Third Space (Gutiérrez, 2008). It seeks to sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as a part of school transformation (Paris & Alim, 2017; cited in Ferlazzo, 2017). It demands a critical and emancipatory view of education where cultural dexterity is seen as necessary and good (Paris & Alim, 2017). It takes on different forms across different contexts centering on community languages, practices, and knowledges, student and community agency and histories to develop a capacity to contend with internalized oppression. CSP are the ways that educators turn these features into curriculum (Paris & Alim, 2017; cited in Ferlazzo, 2017).

District Leaders - in this study, district leaders refer to the early adopters and participants in the district-wide planning and implementation committees for Ethnic Studies and DEIB. Examples of participants in these committees include parents, teachers, principals, coordinators, directors, and even assistant superintendents.

Intersectionality/Intersectional – Intersectionality is a term that is used to focus attention on the varied dynamics of differences and sameness of experience across multiple axes of identity, particularly with struggles of social justice (Cho et al., 2013). These axes might include race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, language, ableism, etc. It is considered more of a heuristic device to understand patterns rather than a categorical matrix (Cho et al., 2013).

Praxis - Freire (1970/2010) uses the term praxis to describe this process of *conscientização* (developing critical consciousness) which includes critical dialogue, reflection, and action. Furman (2012) identifies five dimensions of social justice leadership praxis as the personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological. This concept will be developed further in the literature review.

School Climate – Cohen et al. (2009) reported that there was no widely accepted definition of school climate, but generally school climate is the attitudes, feelings, perceptions, or the general atmosphere of the school. The National School Climate Center suggests that safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and school environment are all features that make up school climate (Olsen et al., 2018). Similarly, Solomon et al. (2020) define school climate in terms of perceptions of safety, student engagement, and learning environment.

School Culture – As noted above, school culture referred to the schools' values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, and symbols and stories (Muhammed, 2009), which facilitates the

school climate, or the feel and perception of the school as described earlier (Olsen et al., 2018).

Social Justice - Much of the literature supports the idea that social justice is centered around disrupting systems, policy, and practice that promote oppression, exclusion, and marginalization (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018; Bogotch, 2002; DeMatthews, 2018; Furman, 2012; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Hytten & Bettez, 2011; Kose, 2007; Warner, 2020; Welton & Freelon, 2018). Working for social justice is the critical examination of systems and policies and the problematizing the resulting inequity. It is situated in time and context (Bogotch, 2002; Hytten & Bettez, 2011) and more specifically defined *with* those who are traditionally marginalized by the system (Freire, 2010; Furman, 2012).

White supremacy – This dissertation uses the Challenging White supremacy workshop's definition of White supremacy (CWS, 2000), wherein it is "an historically based, institutionally perpetuated **system** of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples from the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending a **system** of wealth, power, and privilege" (emphasis added, p. 16). This situates racism as a system and institutional problem rather than individual prejudices or acts of discrimination (Martinez, n.d).

Whiteness – Whiteness refers to the way that White people and their beliefs and culture operate as a standard by which all other groups are compared (National Museum of African American History and Culture, n.d.)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Ethnic Studies implementation involves both structural and cultural shifts within Elementary Education. For this study, I wanted to understand where a particular school district was with regard to those shifts and how teachers, site administrators, and district administrators conceived of and addressed those shifts. To that end, this chapter opens with an examination of how praxis is applied across various dimensions associated with social justice leadership with a particular focus on praxis within the systemic dimension. Next, I defined and explored concepts of Critical Race Theory, its application to Critical Race Pedagogies and Curriculum with a closer look at Critical Whiteness Theory as it became important for me as a White educator to learn to deconstruct Whiteness. Those theoretical foundations framed a discussion of implementation and change theory. Next, I reviewed the literature on Ethnic Studies, it's foundations, pedagogies, application in K-8 settings, teacher dispositions, and learning environments in order to understand systemic changes that may need to occur. Then, I conducted a deeper dive into critical consciousness development, specifically as it pertains to the assessment of school systems, and professional development. The chapter concludes with a review on developing teacher self- and collective efficacy through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process. I shared an attempt to articulate an alignment between PLC characteristics and Ethnic Studies implementation.

Systems of Social Justice Praxis

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970, 2010)*, Paulo Freire defined a notion of conscientização as "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 35), a concept central to the

dispositions and practices of social justice and a goal of Ethnic Studies. Freire also used the term praxis to describe this process of conscientização, or critical consciousness, which includes critical dialogue, reflection, and action. This is a critically important concept in the fields of social justice, transformative leadership, and Ethnic Studies. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the majority of the nation's educators are White women. Critical Whiteness theorists argue that White people often do not see the power and privilege their Whiteness brings them as beneficiaries of colonization (Hook, 2012) and it's institutionalized manifestations. As such, these same White teachers may not have experience identifying and critiquing the system which privileges them, nor may they have the motivation to do so. This is not to say that White educators are the only educators needing to develop critical consciousness or that no White educators are doing the work of developing critical consciousness. The intent is only to note this is a significant group within the system that may need to do the work. The praxis cycle aids in developing that critical consciousness.

Drawing on the concept of praxis, Furman (2012) identified five dimensions of social justice leadership praxis as well as how to develop capacities for reflection and action in each dimension. These dimensions include: the personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological (see Figure 1). Similar to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Furman conceived of each dimension as both situated in and drawing from the other dimensions. J. W. Neal and Z. P. Neal (2013) conceive of these systems as networked rather than nested. They argue that individual development is influenced by interaction between and within systems with which the individual is situated (J. W. Neal & Z. P. Neal, 2013; Wheatley & Frieze, 2007; Wheatley & Frieze, 2006). Furthermore, a goal of Ethnic Studies is to help

individuals understand how their experiences are situated within a broader ecological context of oppression and to develop the tools and agency for reclaiming their own identity (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014), within the personal dimension (Furman, 2012) as well as enacting change in broader contexts.

Figure 1

Furman's (2012) Dimensions of Social Justice Leadership Praxis
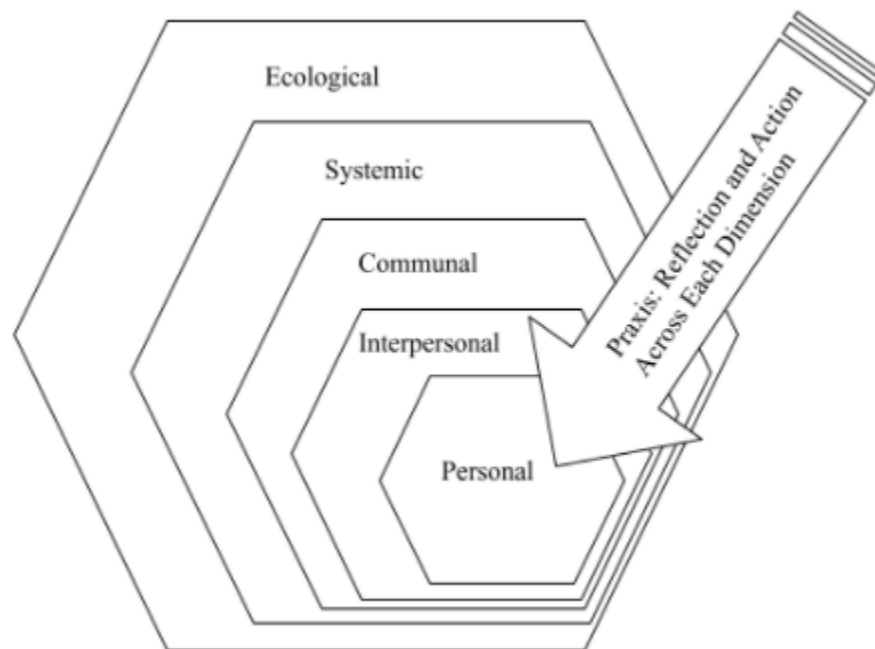
Furman recognized that each dimension or area requires a different unique style of praxis and that capacities for praxis will differ depending on the level in which the social justice leader is working. A brief summary of these dimensions is helpful in order to understand the gestalt nature of these domains. In other words, it is necessary to engage in the praxis involved at the personal and interpersonal domains to both support and effect change on the broader domains. Likewise, one has to understand the dynamics existing at the broader

domains and its influence on the more localized spheres (Furman, 2012; J. W. Neal & Z. P. Neal, 2013). For the purposes of this review, however, I chose to look at the systemic dimension in greater detail later in this chapter.

The personal dimension of praxis is the foundation for social justice work (Furman, 2012). This level involves "deep, critical, and honest self-reflection" in which the leader explores their own values, biases, and assumptions with regard to race, class, language, sexual orientation, among others, as well as how these affect their leadership practice. Self-reflection should address the aspects of leadership identities such as "competitiveness, need for control, and self-esteem concerns" (Furman, 2012, p. 206). The action component in this dimension requires a commitment to an ongoing process of self-development and transformation.

The interpersonal dimension of praxis builds upon the personal dimension to include critical exploration of how to build trusting relationships with colleagues, parents, and students across cultural groups, a central role of relationships in social justice work, particularly as teachers adopt culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) (Paris & Alim, 2017) and engage in developing Ethnic Studies curricula (Fernández, 2019). These both require a level of cultural competency development (Cross et al., 1989; Durljanova & Jonanovski, 2019). Reflection in this dimension involves three distinct areas of knowledge and reflection (Furman, 2012). The first is self-knowledge and reflection with regard to communication and interaction style and behaviors and how these affect the behavior of others, possibly contributing to silencing and marginalizing others. The second is the knowledge of others, especially students from diverse backgrounds for building authentic relationships (Cross et

al., 1989; Furman, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). The third is the knowledge of theories and models of interpersonal relationships to analyze and improve these skills (Furman, 2012; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). The action in this dimension calls for the purposeful, intentional development of interpersonal relationships grounded in care and respect (Baptiste, 2010; Furman, 2012, Tintiangco-Cubales et al. 2014) involving active listening and clear communication.

At the communal level of praxis, the leader actively works to build community across cultural groups through democratic processes (Furman, 2012). Reflection here involves development of in-depth knowledge regarding the community and cultural groups served by the school, the meanings of democracy and democratic community (Camarillo, 2020; Dewey, 1916; Giroux, 1992; Reedy et al., 2020) and the principles of inclusion. Action in this dimension involves proactively establishing democratic forums, processes for dialogue, and decision-making processes that are inclusive, especially of traditionally marginalized groups. As with the interpersonal level, this level requires competency with deep listening, dialogue, and cross-cultural communication (Furman, 2012). Paris and Alim (2017) push this concept further in their discussion of CSP to denote that to sustain traditionally marginalized cultures, reflection and action in this domain involves shifting the culture of power where the system informs the community, rather, the community informs the system.

The final two dimensions are the systemic and ecological dimensions (Furman, 2012). A brief overview of the systemic dimension, explored in depth later, involves assessing, critiquing, and transforming the system at the school or district level. This dimension requires a critical consciousness to critically examine structures, policies, and practices for

34

injustice. In the case of developing systems to support the development and implementation of Ethnic Studies, this involves an intersectional, critical race perceptive (Curammeng & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2017; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Action in this dimension requires transformative leadership practices to change the system and face resistance and barriers. Finally, the ecological dimension involves the knowledge that school-related social justice issues, like racism and the colonized curriculum are situated within broader sociopolitical, economic, and environmental contexts (Belfield, 2021; Furman, 2012). Action in this dimension includes designing teaching and learning experiences for teachers and students related to these broader issues.

The systemic dimension of social justice practice involves assessing, critiquing, and transforming the system at the school and/or district levels (Furman, 2012). The focus of this practice is in the interest of social justice and learning for *all* children, particularly those who are traditionally marginalized by the system. In the case of Ethnic Studies implementation, educators center the voices, experiences, and histories of BIPOC communities (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020) Systems analysis and implementation requires a knowledge of systemic social justice issues, like the impact of colonization on schooling (Khalifa et al., 2018), and a capacity to determine injustices in the school's systems, policy, and practice and serve as barriers to learning (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; Furman, 2012). Leaders for social justice are collaborative, democratic leaders (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018; Hytten & Bettez, 2011, Kose, 2011; Warner, 2020; Welton & Freelon, 2018). School and district leaders for social justice then, would work toward developing the collective capacity and efficacy (Donohoo et al., 2018; Goddard et al., 2000; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017) and leadership

(Quick, 2017) of their teacher leaders to conduct similar critiques in their localized systemic spheres.

It is helpful to understand the five dimensions of social justice praxis as each dimension both involves and builds on the knowledge, reflection and action of each of the other stages. Each domain is characterized by specific reflective and action practices for transformation stemming from dialogic interactions (Furman, 2012). Next, I applied the lens of Critical Race Theory and the practice of Ethnic studies to detail the particulars of how praxis was conceived in these forms of social justice praxis.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework for understanding the systems of inequity that contribute to the opportunity gap in the educational system (Griffen et al., 2022). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) contended that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the educational system. Using the CRT lens, race was defined as both a social construct and a normalized force in how the United States was and continues to be constructed (Griffen et al., 2022). Griffen et al. (2022) outlined five tenets of CRT that helped define how race is constructed and shapes inequality. The five tenets were used to examine human rights and promote social justice as they focused on the systems of inequality (Griffen et al., 2022).

The first tenet is the recognition that racism is ordinary (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This tenet explains that the dominant culture works to promote a universal and colorblind narrative that society is a meritocracy (Griffen et al., 2022). This view illustrates the "American Dream" notion that if you work hard enough, are creative enough, you will be

successful. These are the narratives of White dominance that the United States was founded on (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and negated the continued impact of policies on BIPOC populations in the United States.

Interest convergence, a term coined by Derrick Bell (1980, cited in DeCuir & Dixson, 2004) and the second CRT tenet, is the notion that "the interests of [B]lacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of [W]hites" (Bell, 1980, p. 253). It explained how corporations converge economic interests and social causes. For example, Bell's (1980) argument that Brown v. Board of Education is an example of interest convergence because it advanced White interests and helped the United States gain global political prestige during the Cold War (Shih, 2017). Bell's (1980) argument was that these gains should be interpreted lightly because at the same time as being granted these basic rights, Black communities saw losses in terms the dismissal of thousands of Black educators (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Will, 2022), school closures in African American communities, and access to high-quality curricula (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Now we see public schools becoming increasingly segregated (NCES, 2021) as policies such as redlining and public-school vouchers are implemented.

Jim Crow's one drop rule is an example of the third tenet of CRT, the social construction of race (Griffen et al., 2020). This notion, deeply seeded in American history and policy, illustrates how White culture, through slavery, colonization, and continuing policy, imposes and inflicts harm against BIPOC communities by maintaining structures of power based on race and privilege (Griffen et al., 2020; Khalifa et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). The social construction of race can be seen in schools when

statements like, "Asians are good at math" or "Black kids are good at sports" or "those families just don't value education." The normative measures that compare White student achievement to that of Students of Color are implicit examples of the social construction of race.

The fourth tenet is the tool of counter-narratives (Griffen et al., 2022). This is a tool of empowerment for BIPOC communities to center their experiences and speak against the normative and dominant narratives of the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This is also a useful tool in developing and promoting empathy across races and ethnicities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As I discuss later, the use of counter-narratives is a key methodology in Ethnic Studies (Curammeng & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). However, if it is a tool to progress the White agenda rather than as a culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017), the use of counter-narratives can become perverted to address the dominant, White agenda, turning it into a tool of interest convergence rather than a tool for empowerment and reclamation.

Whiteness as property is the fifth tenet of CRT (Griffen et al., 2020; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Historically speaking, the ability to define, possess, and own property has been a primary force of power in the United States (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As evidenced by slavery, as well as less blatant forms of subjugation, property rights have often become conflated with civil rights and human rights (Ladson-Billings, 2009). For the purposes of this dissertation, and to understand the contentious political atmosphere regarding CRT, Ethnic Studies, and education, I understand curriculum as representing a form of "intellectual property" (Orozco, 2011). As noted earlier, textbooks and curricula inclined toward favoring

the White colonial narrative where depictions of BIPOC figures in history tended to be additive and decontextualized (Sleeter, 2011).

Using CRT as a lens through which to analyze the disparate achievement between BIPOC students and White students can help educators understand its roots in structural racism. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) use Wellman's definition of racism to describe it as the "culturally sanctioned beliefs, which regardless of intentions involved, defend the advantages Whites have because of subordinated positions of racial minorities" (p. 55). The term, "Achievement Gap," the original term used to describe the disparate outcomes in student achievement, illustrates the notion of inherent rights to that dominance. The term achievement gap places the onus of these disparate outcomes on the students or on the race/ethnicity as a whole. "They" are not achieving at the same levels as the norm. However, using CRT to uproot the racist avoidance of institutional change, scholars and educators are now using the term "opportunity gap" to describe the policies, conditions, and institutional factors that contribute to and perpetuate these disparities.

Critical Race Pedagogy and Curriculum

CRT curriculum and pedagogy are experiential in nature (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Sacramento, 2019). An important distinction for Critical Race Pedagogues is that they situate that experiential knowledge within the racialized context that gave rise to it (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). In other words, Critical Race Pedagogy (CRP) operates from the viewpoint that experiential knowledge and understanding is developed through a pedagogical framing of the racialized contexts that prompted the experience (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). Counter-storytelling and counter-narratives are a key

methodology for engaging students (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Rodriguez, 2013; Sacramento, 2019; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Yosso, 2002). CRP is a discursive practice which begins with the lives of the students (Rodriguez, 2013).

In her discussion of critical professional development models, Fernández (2019) describes the need for critical pedagogies as, "educational praxis that is rooted in local struggles that connect to national and global histories" (p.4). In the case of CRP, this means connecting the local racialized experiences of the learner to the broader contexts which gave rise to those experiences. This is done through the use of interdisciplinary (Lynn, 2004) methods that illustrate the networked interactions (J. W. Neal & Z. P. Neal, 2013) between educational and societal inequality using historical and contemporary analyses (Yosso, 2002). CRP is a liberatory pedagogy that involves: (1) learning about the importance of culture, particularly for Youth of Color; (2) dialogical engagement in the classroom; (3) regular self-affirmation; and (4) challenging and resisting hegemonic practices and policies (Lynn, 2004).

Critical Race Curriculum (CRC) is characterized by social justice goals and commitments to educational equity (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). With the formal goals of uncovering the hidden curriculum and developing critical consciousness (Yosso, 2002), CRC highlights the intersectionality in the role of the -isms (racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.) in maintaining inequality (Yosso, 2002). This includes analysis and critique of the curricular content, structures, processes, and discourses (Capper et al., 2006; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). CRC challenges dominant societal and cultural assumptions of intelligence, language, capability, objectivity, and meritocracy (Yosso, 2002).

Critical Whiteness Theory

In the United States, almost 79% of the teaching force is White and in elementary education 89% of teachers are female (NCES, 2021) whereas over half of students in public schools are Students of Color (NCES, 2021). As educator attitudes and beliefs can imitate the larger problematic ideologies (color blindness, meritocracy, race as individually enacted) found in the dominant culture (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015), it becomes increasingly important for White educators to understand their own racial identities and the accumulation of racial privilege (Matias & Mackey, 2015). Critical Whiteness studies help White teachers and teachers of color who have internalized Whiteness ideology in order to be successful to understand how race impacts everyone (Matias & Mackey, 2015). In conjunction with other critical theories, like CRT, critical Whiteness studies are a framework for deconstructing the emotional, material, relational, and political power of Whiteness (Matias & Mackey, 2015).

In her study of Critical Whiteness Theory and the implementation of Aboriginal Indigenous Studies in Australia, Hook (2012) explains that critical Whiteness theory illustrates the social construction of White privilege (McIntosh, 1989). Whiteness is defined by Moreton-Robinson as the "invisible human universal, securing its dominance through discourse that normalizes itself as the cultural space of the West" (cited in Hook, 2012, p.112). This definition mirrors the CRT tenets of racism as ordinary and Whiteness as property. Critical Whiteness theorists argue that White people often do not see the power and privilege their Whiteness brings them as beneficiaries of colonization (Hook, 2012).

If teachers and schools do not critically examine the systemic perpetuation of White dominant ontologies and epistemologies and adjust curriculum, instructional practices, and

classroom and school environments to honor the onto-epistemological dispositions of their students, then schools will continue to perpetuate the status quo and alienate communities of color (Ledesma & Calderón, 2013; Khalifa et al., 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017). White educators who promote visions of social justice would do well to: (1) examine conceptions of Whiteness and White identity (Furman, 2012; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018; Vaught & Castagno, 2008); (2) become emotionally prepared (Matias & Mackey, 215) to adopt critical reflective strategies to continually examine unconscious bias (Furman, 2012; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Milner, 2017; Schwartz, 2019); (3) (re)examine policy and decisions through reflective, inquiry based, collaborative approaches (Furman, 2012; Sacramento, 2019; Vaught & Castagno, 2008); and (4) build relationships and work with others to name and disrupt oppressive systems and policy (Furman, 2012; Rodriguez, 2013).

Critical Race Theory, including Critical Whiteness Theory, is a framework for understanding systemic racism and a lens through which educators can understand the disparate achievement outcomes between White students and Students of Color as an opportunity gap rather than an achievement gap. The five tenets of CRT; (1) racism is pervasive and ordinary, (2) interest convergence, (3) race as a social construction, (4) counter-narrative, and (5) Whiteness as property can serve as both methods of critique and in the case of counter-narrative, a method of instruction. CRP and CRC, situated within experiential knowledge, is discursive and affirming. Using counter-narrative can be a method for uncovering hidden curriculum, recover identity, and develop agency. Educators engaging in critical race pedagogies, such as Ethnic studies, need to examine conceptions of Whiteness, adopt critical reflective strategies, examine policy and build strong relationships

with students, families, and other teachers as they work together to name and disrupt oppressive systems.

Change Theories and Implementation Processes

With the understanding that systemic praxis, or systemic change for social justice, involves assessing, critiquing, and transforming the system at the organizational level (Furman, 2012), and given that the purpose of Ethnic Studies is the critique of systemic racism and its impact on personal and social life (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014), it would be helpful to understand a framework for facilitating cultural change within education. While there are technical elements, like curriculum and pedagogy, associated with Ethnic Studies implementation, cultural change must precede technical change (Muhammad, 2009). In a discussion of systems change it is as important to understand how change occurs and whether or not people act on change initiatives (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998).

School culture is understood as the school's set of norms, values, and beliefs as well as its rituals, symbols, symbols and stories (Muhammad, 2009). It facilitates the school climate, or the feel and perception of the school (Olsen et al., 2018). Schein (2016) articulates the three levels of school culture as: (1) the basic assumptions and taken-for granted beliefs; (2) the values and norms of the staff; and (3) the artifacts and practices that illustrate levels one and two. While Schein (2016) focused on the power that school staff holds in shaping a school's culture, school cultures do not exist in isolation and are comprised key stakeholders including students, parents, and educators (Muhammad, 2009). Anthony Muhammad (2009) asserted that positive school cultures must articulate through their beliefs and behaviors that all students can learn and all students will learn because of what the school does, regardless of

student background. Each group comes to school with a set of predetermined beliefs about themselves and schooling. For example, educators come to school with a "perceptual predetermination" framed by their own socialization and the impact of that socialization on their practice in the classroom. This includes their expectations for student performance (Muhammad, 2009). Similarly, as alluded to in chapter 1, students come to school with "intrinsic predetermination," or a perception of their own probability for success (Muhammad, 2009). The final barrier to promoting a positive, egalitarian system, is that we have institutional predetermination or barriers within the traditional public-school system that makes achieving equitable outcomes very difficult (Muhammad, 2009).

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1998) offered an organic view of change, as opposed to more mechanical views of change, arguing that human organizations, like schools, are filled with living beings, so life's change processes can describe how change happens within these organizations. They offered a generalized description of how a living system changes to explain how people within organizations respond to change initiatives. First, some part of the system notices something, like a need, an utterance, a news report and they **choose** to be disturbed by it. That choice is the operative idea, according to, Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1998). When that happens, that part of the system takes the disturbance and circulates it through its networks. As it circulates it gets amplified by others. From there it grows, changes, and becomes distorted from the original disturbance but accumulates more meaning. Soon the disturbance gains such importance that it cannot be dealt with in the current system, so the system begins to change. This creates a state of confusion, uncertainty, and feelings of chaos as the system reorganizes around the new ideas and new interpretations

of the disturbance (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). For Wheatley & Frieze (2007),

large-scale change takes place during a process called, "emergence." It occurs in three phases

when networks, or tangled webs of relationships, take notice of something (Wheatley &

Frieze, 2007). Those networks then start to evolve into working relationships where new

knowledge, practices, and commitments begin to form, called communities of practice

(Wheatley & Frieze, 2007). Finally, through these efforts, systems emerge (Wheatley &

Frieze, 2006).

In this view, Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1998) contend that there are four maxims

regarding change in human organizations. First, participation is not a choice. Leaders have to

invite people to participate because people support what they create (Wheatley & Kellner-

Rogers, 1998). In this view struggles with implementation happen when change is delivered

to people rather than figuring out how to involve people in its creation. This often happens

because participation in this process takes longer and can be complex. The second maxim is

that life always reacts to directives, but it never obeys them. This means that anything that is

said or done with regard to a change is only an invitation to react (Wheatley & Kellner-

Rogers, 1998). This does not mean that we abandon standardization or procedures, but that

people need to understand the reasoning behind them and know that they can be changed if

circumstances change. In other words, people need room for input on these. Principle three is

that we each create our own interpretation of reality and we do not need to agree on

interpretations in order to agree on what needs to be done (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers,

1998). Here, the purpose is to seek out interpretations, not to determine who is right and who

is wrong. Learning about interpretations can help those in the organization be open to new

ideas. Finally, principle four stated that to create a healthier organization, more people need to be connected to each other. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1998) contend:

> To create better health in a living system, connect it to more of itself. When a system is failing, or performing poorly, the solution will be discovered within the system if more and better connections are created (p.8).

With this view of change, it is not critical mass that promotes change, its critical connections (Wheatley & Frieze, 2007). Here organizational leaders are weavers that focus on fostering connections.

Across the literature there exists a relatively common processes for facilitating cultural or systems change. The first step in the process is challenging the status quo (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Muhammad, 2009). As noted above, this can be seen as "noticing a disturbance" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). This refers to a leadership competency for identifying needs for systemic change. These needs might be identified through dialogue (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) or formal assessment (Meyers et al., 2012). In this stage, educators engage in a process for identifying and understanding the need and motivation for change (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad, 2019). This often starts with includes the use of data, narratives, and observations (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Creating experiences where those within the system can see and feel the need for change is the most effective way for creating that sense of urgency for change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). When these experiences are unpacked and processed as a team, educators start to build a cognitive investment for confronting the issues, challenging the status quo, and understanding the why behind the call for change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad, 2019; Wheatley & Frieze, 2007). Although a Quality Implementation Framework reads as if it might focus on technical changes or

innovations within an organization and a more top-down approach to implementation, one might call this first stage as conducting a needs assessment, fit assessment, and capacity readiness assessment (Meyers et al., 2012). In other words, these questions ask, what is the data saying about the need for change within the system? What problem are we trying to solve with the innovation? How well does the innovation match the identified needs, goals, and values of the organization? And to what degree is the community ready for the change? Do they have the will, skill, and means? (Meyers et al., 2012) While I noted that these are framed as a top-down approach, there is nothing to say that these assessments cannot stem from or be conducted by a combination of participants within the system as is often the case with transformative leadership practices (Shields, 2010) and DEIB initiatives. With a transformative lens, these questions can be modified to ask: how does the system need to change and what common practices and traditions are blocking change efforts (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016)?

The next step is to build the guiding team for the change implementation (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). This team demonstrates teamwork and is made up of individuals with the skills, leadership capacity, credibility, and connections to handle the kind of change being proposed (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Putting together the right team can establish trust within the organization with regard to the change effort because the guiding team can be involved throughout the change effort in terms of helping to create a common vision (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) and set a collectively developed clear and common direction for the organization (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). Members of the team can be more effective if they have established trust with their character, in other words they have demonstrated empathy for

those affecting and implementing the change, as well as competence, or established credibility within the organization (Muhammad, 2019). As mentioned, the team engages in collective decision-making processes to make decisions about how the change or innovation will be modified or changed to make it successful in the local context (Meyers et al., 2012).

As alluded to above, with the right team the next step is to get the vision right (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) and create a commonly owned plan for success (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). Kotter and Cohen (2002) explained that when the guiding team tries to see the literal possible futures for the change, they can create the right vision and strategies for guiding the action for the rest of the implementation phases. These teams should develop a vision that is so clear that it can be written up on one page or articulated in one minute (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). The vision should be a commitment to serving students. Strategies should be bold, set a clear direction for the organization, and move initiatives ahead quickly (Kritman & Fullan, 2016). Getting the vision right can help develop the collective focus on the purpose for the change (Muhammad, 2012). In the quality implementation framework, this might include developing strategies for obtaining buy-in, building organizational capacity for the change, and providing training for staff (Myers, Durlack & Wandersman, 2012). These teams and getting the vision right also outlines the structure for implementation including additional implementation teams, and the strategic implementation plan. Specific actions might include retooling meeting time to create a context for learning, determining professional development modules, determining how to remove isolation by promoting the sharing of instructional techniques, and establishing systems of support like mentorship (Muhammad, 2009; Muhammad, 2012).

With a clear vision, the next step in organizational change is to communicate the vision and action plan in a way that builds buy-in for the change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Meyers et al., 2012). Kotter and Cohen (2002) notes that the most effective way to communicate change visions and strategies effectively for understanding and buy in are to keep communication simple and heartfelt, focusing communication channels on the vison and change, and addressing the reasons why people within the organization might resist (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad, 2009). This stage deals with the concerns, questions, and resistance to change (Meyers et al., 2012; Muhammad, 2009).

Next, on Kotter's list for change implementation includes empowering action. For Kotter, the heart work of this phase involves dealing with obstacles that block action like lack of self-confidence, lack of information, the wrong performance measurements and feedback mechanisms. It is the stage where people participate in the actions outlined in the vision stage, give feedback about the process, and get feedback about progress (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). This might include having hard conversations with fundamentalists, addressing negative team attitudes, and responding to a lack of compliance (Muhammad, 2012). It is also the point at which teams and leaders are monitoring and addressing best practices, checking on progress, and dealing with the lack of investment (Muhammad, 2019). This is the third phase in the quality implementation framework: a) providing technical assistance, coaching, and supervision; b) evaluating process; c) providing supportive feedback and using an established feedback mechanism. In addition to empowering action and dealing with a lack of action, the implementation plan should create opportunities for short-term wins (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). These victories need to be visible, timely, meaningful, and directly

related to the change effort and outcomes (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Creating impromptu and systematic celebrations provide consistent reinforcement about what is valued within the organization (Muhammad, 2009).

The final two steps to effective change implementation include not letting up and making changes stick (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Not letting up deals with the concept of sagging urgency in the change process. A key component for this would be to delegate tasks, eliminate needless work, work that wears you down or work that was relevant in the past but not with the change (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). It means constantly looking for ways to keep the urgency up and use new situations to launch the next wave in the change process. This might coincide with phase four in the quality implementation framework which involves learning from experience and preparing for the next wave (Meyers et al., 2012). Making change stick involves broader organizational changes that support the change effort. This might involve making the change an essential part of orientation processes, promotion processes, and using the power of emotion to enhance the new norms and values and to ensure continuity of behavior and results that help the new culture to grow.

In this section I explored the technical and the heart work of change as well as how these connect to transformative cultural changes. The technical work, as articulated by the quality implementation framework can be understood in four main phases and fourteen steps (Meyers et al., 2012). The four phases include: 1) identifying the initial considerations for the host setting and need for change which include assessment strategies, decisions about adaptation, and capacity building strategies; 2) creating the structures for implementation; 3)

establishing on-going structures; and 4) improving future applications. Kotter and Cohen (2002) offers a heart-felt, humanistic approach to systemic change by offering an eight-step path to large-scale culture change which include: 1) increasing urgency; 2) building the guiding team; 3) getting the vision right; 4) communicating for buy-in; 5) empowering action; 6) creating short-term wins, 7) not letting up, and 8) making changes that stick.

Ethnic Studies

Drawing on Dewey's aims for education in a democratic society, Camarillo (2020), makes the argument that Ethnic Studies will help students to become better, more well-informed citizens in a diverse democratic society. A compelling number of studies have indicated that participation in Ethnic Studies courses or interventions had positive impacts on student achievement, engagement, critical thinking, sense of ethnic identity, self-concept, and sense of empowerment (Bonilla et al., 2021; Camarillo, 2020; Dee & Penner, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Ethnic Studies is articulated across the literature as a humanizing pedagogical approach that is guided by notions of decolonization and the aims of self-determination (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Ethnic Studies centers BIPOC voices and issues in the curriculum and uses culturally relevant (Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) to build solidarity across racial and ethnic differences with the aim of working toward social justice (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

The purpose of Ethnic Studies is to help students critique systemic racism and its impact on personal and social conditions and to challenge those conditions (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Within these purposes, goals include literacy development, learning to recognize

and critique systemic power relationships and imbalances, developing the tools for civic

action, the development of positive socio-cultural identity, and the development of a positive

intellectual/ academic identity. It has been argued that the educational systems, standards,

curricula in the United States reinforces settler colonialism (Calderón, 2014; Khalifa et al.,

2018) by devaluing and even pathologizing indigenous narratives (Khalifa et al., 2018) and

describing America as a "nation of immigrants" (Valdez, 2020). Settler colonialism is

marked by both the physical act of dominating people, land, and resources *and* the

psychological trauma that result from the violence associated from this domination (Khalifa

et al., 2018; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014; Valdez, 2020). Further, Valdez (2020) cites

Fannon (1963) who describes colonialism as a manipulative and perverted logic that distorts,

disfigures, and destroys the histories of oppressed people promoting self-loathing in the

minds of the colonized and the acceptance of colonialism as justified (Valdez, 2020). In an

effort to reclaim the BIPOC narrative and a sense of self-determination, Ethnic Studies

employs a decolonizing process to challenge those conditions (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020 &

Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

    In contrast to the process of the physical and mental forms of colonization,

decolonization is described as the physical freeing of a territory from the control of the

colonizer and "freeing the consciousness of the native from alienation caused by

colonization" (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). This critical, praxis-oriented approach to

developing critical consciousness is a liberatory process that is central to Ethnic Studies

because it allows for systemic critique of the traumatic history of colonization, healing from

that trauma, and learning to see oneself as academically capable (Tintiangco-Cubales et al.,

2014). As noted in the discussion of critical Whiteness studies, educators may have inherited

some of the colonial leadership structures and spaces (Khalifa et al., 2018) and may have

even internalized the values and messages within those structures. In this way, the process of

decolonizing education begins with the adult and on the systems level. In the classroom,

students learn to evaluate systems and institutions that determine and maintain control,

reflect on their personal contexts, and develop the skills for individual and collective action

toward social change (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

Ethnic Studies Pedagogies

Ethnic Studies curricula and pedagogies center BIPOC voices and issues in the

curriculum, uses culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies, and focuses on the

development of critical consciousness (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). The Ethnic Studies approach

to praxis employs a historical and contemporary analysis of race and racism, critical

reflection on the individual's context and experience within this analysis, and the

development of the tools for individual and collective social and civic action (Sleeter &

Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Tintiangco-Cubales et al., (2010) defines

pedagogy as:

> Pedagogy is a philosophy or education informed by positionalities, ideologies,
> and standpoints (of both teacher and learner). It takes into account the critical
> relationships between the PURPOSE of education, the CONTEXT of education,
> the CONTENT of what is being taught, and the METHODS of how it is taught. It
> also includes (the IDENTITY of) who is being taught, who is teaching, their
> relationship to each other, and their relationship to structure and power
> (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2010, p. viii)

This definition illustrates the relational, humanizing nature of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. It

illustrates the interconnection of the teacher and learner and their relationship to the purpose,

context, and content of what is being taught and the methods of how it is taught. Ethnic Studies methods draw on asset-based pedagogies (Yosso, 2005) that bridge the connection of school culture to home culture (Paris & Alim, 2017) particularly of historically marginalized students. It draws on culturally familiar, relevant and even tacit knowledge to make connections to new content (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020).

Sleeter and Zavala (2020) describe Ethnic Studies pedagogies as being rooted in socio-cultural theory. This theory asserts that learning is contextual and mediated by culture. In this case culture includes discourse patterns, interactional routines, text structures language, meta communication, and modeling (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). In the Ethnic Studies view, these are all seen as assets and potential pedagogical tools and resources for bridging school and home ontologies. Sociocultural pedagogical practices are constructivist in nature where learning is facilitated through "joint productive activity" and conversations with students about work (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). It is integrated throughout the school day. Language and literacy are developed across the curriculum and new information connected with home information (Arce, 2016; Fernández, 2019; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). It involves complex thinking and teaching (Arce, 2016) through a dialogic approach (Lynn, 2004).

The goal of Ethnic Studies pedagogies is to develop critical consciousness and increase student agency and students' sense of self-determination (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Ethnic Studies teachers use culturally responsive pedagogy to respond to students' cultures and needs, facilitate agency development, and place value on de-essentializing ethnic identities by acknowledging heterogeneity and multiplicity in epistemologies (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). This is done by building upon student

experiences & perspectives, developing critical consciousness and creating caring academic environments (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Ethnic Studies teachers center students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2001), use counter-storytelling (Yosso, 2005), and connect historical and current experiences of students and their communities to help students unlearn "hegemonic Eurocentric" culture (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Ethnic Studies teachers employ a praxis model, engaging students in the following process: (1) identifying a problem; (2) analyzing the problem; (3) creating a plan of action to address the problem; (4) implementing the plan; and (5) reflecting on the plan (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). This is part of a process for students to recover and reclaim themselves and their identities and develop a critical consciousness for understanding structural forms of subordination and domination (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

Ethnic Studies in P-8 Contexts

Ethnic Studies curricula and pedagogies in the early childhood education realm draws on children's value for fairness (Hughes et al., 2007). Studies at the early childhood level indicate that presenting students stories with characters from their own racial group with friends from other racial groups along with anti-bias instruction (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019) addressing and responding to prejudice and exclusion are among the most effective in producing changes in attitudes of young students (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Presenting stories with characters about ethnic or racial groups different from the students, while having some impact, were less effective than those mentioned previously (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020).

Classrooms and interventions that had a greater impact on student attitudes in the early childhood years focused more explicitly on addressing habits of stereotyping and bias

(Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Teachers addressed stereotypes and bias through counter-storytelling and models, calling attention to the multiple features of individuals including features like race, job, and gender. Teachers focused on within group differences and cross-group similarities (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). In this practice, teachers confront direct questions, assumptions, and attitudes about race, racism and differences. Importantly within modeling and counter-storytelling, students encounter examples of people, like themselves, who challenge racial discrimination (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). As noted in more mature applications of ethnic studies, this practice provides a foundation for acknowledging heterogeneity, de-essentializing ethnic identities, and ultimately providing the foundation for students to (re)claim their cultural identities and seeing each other in a positive light.

There is little research regarding Ethnic Studies and its impact on student achievement in the elementary grades. Generally speaking, multicultural curriculum implemented as a year-long course of study in elementary and high schools had a greater impact on students' racial attitudes than semester courses and extracurricular programming (Okoye-Johnson, 2011). Pedagogies at the elementary and secondary levels provided instruction that considered historic and cultural backgrounds and centered BIPOC perspectives in their curriculum.

In applying critical Ethnic Studies perspectives in her fifth-grade classroom, Valdez (2017, 2020) discussed the need for teachers to critically modify the approach to the scripted curriculum which reinforces colonialism and develop supplemental standards-based curriculum which problematizes systems, power, and conflict and promotes student self-determination. Valdez's approach to curricular critique and development included the following questions: "What perspective is being presented? Who or what is missing in this

presentation? What can I add to supplement the readings to challenge the colonial narrative?" (Valdez, 2020, p. 587). The K-8 teacher can use counter-narrative to spark inquiry and curiosity. From there, teachers can facilitate research projects, giving students agency to answer their own questions and decide on the forms of communication for which to share their learning (Valdez, 2020). Using a dialogic approach, teachers in the K-8 ethnic studies courses seek out student conceptions about race and challenge the dominant narrative. Through a decolonized curriculum, the elementary student can begin to understand the contrast between the narratives of change coming from within the government and the self-determination within communities (Valdez, 2017).

Ethnic studies curriculum development involves a critical analysis of the intersectional power relations that include critiques of how curriculum and practices privilege colonialism, Eurocentricity, heteropatriarchy and White supremacy (Sacramento, 2019). Centering experiential knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sacramento, 2019) and drawing upon counter-storytelling/narratives (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Rodriguez, 2013; Sacramento, 2019; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Yosso, 2005) are key methods used in Ethnic Studies. How teachers deliver curriculum and what they do to facilitate learning are as important in curriculum development as what is being taught (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). It is important to understand that the Ethnic Studies curriculum is centered within the daily and historical experiences of students (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020).

Ethnic Studies Teacher Dispositions

Effective Ethnic Studies teachers engage in personal and professional critical reflection, embody a deep commitment to continuous learning, and build caring relationships with their

students in order to engage them with history and facilitate exploration of their relationship with that history (Baptiste, 2010). One teacher participating in an Ethnic Studies Collaborative came to view history as, "'a continuum between oppression and resistance,' where hope and agency were key values within the students' world views" (Sacramento, 2019, p. 177). Ethnic Studies teachers have high academic expectations of their students, a critical awareness of historical and socio-cultural oppression and the current perpetuation of racism, an understanding of cultural epistemologies and the funds of knowledge their students bring, and integrate culturally responsive and community responsive content and pedagogies (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Because these teachers embrace critical reflection and action on professional and personal levels, they do not shy away from facilitating critical conversations in their classrooms (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020).

Ethnic studies educators engage in continuous reflection about race, culture, identity, and their connections to these concepts (Sacramento, 2019; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). This may look different depending on the race and experience of the teacher. Because Ethnic Studies teachers help students develop a critical consciousness, reclaim their ethnic identities, and help foster students' sense of agency and self-determination, they need to be connected to and examine their own racial identities (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). BIPOC teachers generally bring a greater degree of experience and commitment to Ethnic Studies implementation because they often personally connect to the content of the racial realities presented through Ethnic Studies curricula (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). That said, BIPOC educators, although they may have experience understanding that they have racial identities, they may carry with them internalized racism and anger, and still need to develop

58

critical consciousness of how that impacts their world-view (Kohli, 2013, cited in

Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). While BIPOC educators may have experiences that connect

them to Ethnic Studies topics, they are also the minority of the teacher population in the

United States (NCES, 2021). As noted above, there may be a cultural match between

teachers of color and the Ethnic Studies curriculum, often BIPOC teachers have experienced

some form of racism throughout their lives and K-12 education (Khalifa et al., 2018; Kohli,

2009). Teachers that may have internalized that racism may need to undergo the processes of

unlearning and healing from that internalized racism (Kohli, 2013 cited in Tintiangco-

Cubales et al., 2014). For those BIPOC teachers in Kohli's study, engaging in critical

dialogues regarding racism had significant impacts on their ability to apply Ethnic Studies'

racial justice framework (Kohli, 2013). Additionally, Ethnic Studies majors, who are

predominantly people of color, may have an even greater developed capacity for critical

reflection and a deeper degree of racial identity development. Teachers who have majored in

Ethnic Studies will also have greater firsthand knowledge and experience with content and

pedagogical processes (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). That said, there are multiple routes

to understanding Ethnic Studies curricula and pedagogies.

For White teachers, on the other hand, unpacking issues of racism first means unpacking

the impact of benefiting from racism and learning to recognize themselves as racial beings

(Hook, 2012). White educators may be able to connect to experiences of bias based on

gender discrimination, classism, ableism, etc. However, because Ethnic Studies centers the

experiences of those traditionally marginalized, particularly as it pertains to BIPOC

communities, one has to center the conversation on racial constructions of knowledge. Also,

Critical Whiteness Theory describes Whiteness as "the invisible human universal," which may be particularly difficult for White educators to understand in terms of systemic racism (Hook, 2012). As noted earlier, White educators may not have the experience or the motivation to see their racial privilege and power (Matias & Mackey, 2015). However, when White teachers engage in developing their racial identities and critical consciousness regarding racism's historical and contemporary impacts on education and schooling in the United States, they can develop a more critical approach to curriculum and pedagogical practices that align with the aims of Ethnic Studies (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). White teachers can examine their own identities and connections to the broader social and political context through the use of critical autobiography, critical story-telling, and critical life history (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). For teachers to be effective Ethnic Studies teachers, they must abandon the color-blind narrative that racism does not exist, learn counter-narratives of history, and problematize notions of power.

Learning Environments

Classrooms and schools that teach Ethnic Studies are spaces of love (Nasir et al., 2019), care (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014), and hope (hooks, 2003; Kuykendall, 1991/2009; Freire; 2021). It is conceived as a space of healing through its use of trauma informed practice (Fernández, 2019) as the class engages in disrupting colonialism's impact on systems and the individual. Because the Ethnic Studies classroom involves students in challenging and critical discourse that challenge and reframe conceptions of race, class, and gender, creating safe and caring environments is fundamental (Tintiangco-Cubales et al, 2014).

60

Asset Based Pedagogies

Teachers in these classrooms express caring through nurturing behavior, expressing high expectations of students, and respect for students (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Teachers in these classrooms bridge the home-school divide by structuring their classroom in a way that values the home and community of their students (Paris & Alim, 2017; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). This includes employing routines, creating spaces, and adopting methods that mirror and elevate that of the student's ethnic background (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Kuykendall, 1991/2009; Paris & Alim, 2017). These classrooms emphasize authentic reciprocal relationships where both the students and the teachers realize their humanity in relation to one another through discursive critique of curriculum and experience (Valdez, 2017; Valdez, 2020). This involves employing asset-based pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Paris and Alim (2017) carve out a space for culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) as it honors culturally responsive pedagogies (CRP) and asks the questions, "for what purposes and with what outcomes?" (p. 5). CSP is about employing CRP not as a mode for accessing White dominant schooling, but as a part of shifting the culture of schooling (Paris & Alim, 2017). A key distinction of the CSP framework is that it pushes against essentialism (Paris & Alim, 2017). Rather than assuming there is a static relationship between race, ethnicity, language, and cultural ontologies, researchers and practitioners should understand that engagement with culture is dynamic (Paris & Alim, 2017). In other words, sustaining cultural practices and cultural epistemologies while making room for how youth are customizing a new set of knowledges are equally important in the application of CSP (Paris & Alim, 2017). The development of criticality is also important as CSP is employed. Paris and Alim (2017)

argue that, "rather than avoiding problematic practices or keeping them hidden beyond the White gaze, CSP must work with students to critique regressive practices (e.g. homophobia, misogyny) and raise critical consciousness" (p. 10). Some culturally sustaining pedagogies, like Hip Hop pedagogies, are born simultaneously within White supremacy culture while also rejecting White supremacy culture and oppression. Raising critical consciousness helps practitioners, researchers, and students understand and critique this dynamic systemic interplay, keeping the critique on the systems of power and oppression. The CSP framework makes space for sustaining cultural practices, inviting youth's reworking of those practices, criticality of oppressive systemic influences (e.g. White supremacy) for the purpose of transforming schools, classrooms, and curriculum.

Trauma Informed Environments

Historical trauma, also known as generational trauma, is a rising area of study in academic research. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) defines historic trauma as "multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group. It is related to major events that oppressed a particular group of people because of their status as oppressed." Parents' experience of trauma may disrupt parenting skills, contributing to the behavioral problems of their children. Citing the prolonged oppression and marginalization of particular groups of people, historical trauma, can have marked adverse effects on the development of cultural identity (ACF, n.d.). Descendants who have not directly experienced a traumatic event can still exhibit the signs and symptoms of trauma such as depression, hypervigilance, low self-esteem, anger, self-destructive behavior and damaged cultural identity (ACF, n.d.; Sotero, 2006). For cultural groups who experience

historical trauma, daily reminders of racism and other forms of discrimination can trigger individual responses to trauma (Sotero, 2006; Henderson et al., 2019).

Similar to historical trauma is the concept of race-related trauma. Henderson et al. (2019) discuss institutionalized racism's role in contributing to race-related trauma. "Race-related trauma is an adverse interaction, either continuously or daily, with institutional, symbolic, and individual acts of racism" (p. 927). Henderson et al. (2019) conceptualize a framework for race-related trauma outlining connections between the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders -5 (DSM-5) definitions of trauma and the racial experiences of Black youth. Microaggressions, racial discrimination in school programs, policy, and curriculum, and the prevalence of violence towards black youth all contribute to increased levels of psychological distress (Henderson et al., 2019). Within the race-related trauma framework, these areas can be addressed through collaborative and restorative practices, de-escalation practices, and the integration of culturally responsive and culturally representative pedagogical and curricular models (Henderson et al., 2019).

The implementation of collaborative and restorative practices involves the cyclical practice of creating transparency and opportunities for school stakeholders to inform school policy (Henderson et al., 2019). Using data can promote dialogue about race and racism between school staff and families (Henderson et al., 2019). Implementing interventions rooted in ethnic, racial and linguistic realities of the student at school, as a result of the dialogue and data analysis are ways that schools can implement culturally sustaining practices (Henderson et al., 2019; Paris & Alim, 2017). Implementing restorative practices can ameliorate effects of alienation and violence by modeling de-escalation techniques,

emphasis on fair consequences, alternative learning activities where students and teachers can learn and model other ways of dealing with conflict, and focusing on positive behavior and interventions (Henderson et al., 2019). Conflict resolution that is both preventative and restorative involves giving students the opportunity to talk about conflict and educators the opportunity to address their own biases to respond in more culturally responsive ways (Henderson et al., 2019).

Preventative measures to conflict resolution include the use of de-escalation strategies (Henderson et al., 2019). Bias reduction and racial equity training as well as behavioral and emotional de-escalation training and support for staff can reduce perpetuation of racial discrimination and microaggressions (Henderson et al., 2019). Mindfulness strategies are effective for both staff and students (Henderson et al., 2019). Findings indicate that mindfulness practice can increase a teacher's efficacy at reducing discipline challenges in the classroom as well as increasing students' ability to manage and lower stress (Henderson et al., 2019). Schools that employ conflict management, problem-solving, and emotional regulation development as core curriculum and professional development are effective at creating positive outcomes for students.

Aligning school practice to the cultural realities of youth at the same time as promoting educational excellence is an element of culturally responsive and representative methodology (Henderson et al., 2019). Again, staff training on uncovering bias and employing culturally responsive teaching techniques reduces the chances of staff perpetuation race-related trauma in schools (Henderson et al., 2019). When these factors are in place and youth have positive cultural models and messages about themselves, they develop positive racial regard

(Henderson et al., 2019). Further, students who develop positive racial and ethnic identities are more likely to develop confidence, positive relationships, and perform better in school (Henderson et al., 2019).

Developing Critical Consciousness and Assessing School Systems

Reflection in the systemic dimension (Furman, 2012) involves developing critical consciousness regarding systemic issues of injustice. The term critical consciousness is derived from Freire's (1970/2010) work to mean "how oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyze their social conditions and act to change them" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 44). Three components of critical consciousness; critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection refers to cultural, social, systemic analysis and the moral rejection of the inequities that hinder well-being and the ability to act (Furman, 2012; Shields 2010). Political efficacy is the ability to enact political or social change through individual or collective activism (Furman, 2012). Critical action is the individual or collective action taken to change inequitable systems, practice and policy (Furman, 2012). Adding in the Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens, cultural critical consciousness is specifically concerned with reflecting on and developing knowledge about one's own race as well as the race of others (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). For school leaders and teachers aiming to implement Ethnic Studies as a systemic practice, this means that they must both recognize barriers to student progress and proactively create structures and systems to support student growth (Furman, 2012).

As one goal of Ethnic Studies is to engage students in critical consciousness development, school administrators need to develop critical consciousness, knowledge, and

practical skills and facilitate opportunities for teachers to develop in this way as well (Capper

et al., 2006; Furman, 2012). To accomplish this, Capper and colleagues (2006) say that

curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in preparation programs need to be oriented toward

social justice work. They also make explicit that student-leaders in these programs need to

experience the emotional safety necessary for risk taking. When each of these domains are

placed within a 3x3 matrix, a framework emerges for preparing educational leaders for social

justice. While it is not the purpose of this review to delve deeply into this content, I

summarize Capper et al.'s (2006) framework for educational leadership preparation in Table

1.

Table 1

Capper et al. (2006) 3x3 Framework for Developing Critical Consciousness

Emotional Safety for Risk-Taking	Critical Consciousness	Knowledge	Skills
Curriculum	Curriculum that raises student consciousness about power, privilege, and associated issues (e.g. white racism, heterosexism, and school structures that perpetuate power inequities).	Curriculum that focuses on specific knowledge about related theories, subject areas (e.g. special education law), and knowledge about evidence based practices (e.g. reallocating resources, second language acquisition, reading & math curriculums)	Curriculum about how to implement evidence-based practices or putting knowledge into practice for the purpose of erasing inequity in schools
Pedagogy	Methods for raising student consciousness about power inequities (e.g. neighborhood walks, surveys, cross-cultural interviews, equity audits, discourse using critical incidents, controversial readings, and structured group activities)	Teaching strategies to help students learn about evidence-based practices or related subjects and theories (e.g. critical reading strategies and activities to engage students in reading, action research, informal & peer learning strategies).	Teaching strategies that help students learn the skills necessary to lead social justice schools like role-playing , honoring divergent views, peer observations, and writing activist plans.
Assessment	Article makes note of student self-reports of critical consciousness, but calls for greater research in the area of assessing leadership preparation in this framework.		

For school and district leaders interested in helping to implement social justice systems, such as Ethnic Studies in schools and districts, this framework is a useful planning or assessment tool. The 3x3 model could be re-envisioned to conduct an equity audit for systems, policy and practice aligned to an Ethnic Studies framework. Perhaps the framework could be used by teachers in a professional learning community (PLC) (DuFour et al., 2005) data discussion as a guide for professional discussions, learning, and planning for social justice, to plan and facilitate staff development, or to aide in the creation of critical reflection opportunities for staff evaluation. For example, teachers, school and district leaders could use this to audit the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment for the development of critical consciousness, ethnic studies content knowledge, and skills for individual, collective, and political agency as appropriate to their students.

This 3x3 model is helpful in understanding another reflective component in the systemic dimension for social justice leadership praxis - the "accurate and comprehensive assessment of current school practices" (Furman, 2012). Critical systems assessment prioritizes decolonized curriculum (Fernández, 2019; Khalifa et al., 2018; Tintiangco-Cubales, et al., 2019; Valdez, 2017, Valdez, 2020), culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2017), and classroom community and instruction. According to these researchers and scholars, school leaders benefit from a solid understanding and knowledge of Ethnic Studies methods to engage in this kind of assessment. Furman (2012) suggests the following tools for school leaders:

- Equity audits specifically designed for schools to assess levels of equity and inequity (Scheurich and Skrla, 2003; Skrla et al., 2004, 2010)

- Protocols for analyzing school or district inclusion and access to high-quality programs (Capper, 2007)

- Assessing school wide values, assumptions, and norms related to cultural competence (Bustamante, Nelson and Onwuegbuzie, 2009)

- Assessing teaching staffs' awareness of socially just learning and teaching (Kose, 2007).

These tools are useful in assessing the school's culture, policy, and practices. While these processes do not assess the effectiveness of Ethnic Studies as a systemic implementation, they can help educators assess conditions and competencies as they relate to the goals, outcomes, and methods associated with Ethnic Studies. Additionally, these assessments could be adjusted to assess culturally relevant trauma informed systems (Henderson et al., 2019), the existence of culturally sustaining pedagogies in the classroom and school (Paris & Alim, 2017), and Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Professional Development

It is important to recognize that professional learning regarding structural racism has to develop *both* the critical consciousness at the systems and communal levels as well as at the individual and interpersonal levels. In their study examining teacher attitudes about the structural dimensions of racial inequality and its contribution to the achievement gap, Vaught and Castagno (2016) found that developing self-awareness of White privilege and Whiteness as property did not bring about systems transformation. They noted that,

> The self-awareness is limited, however, because it is not accompanied by a structural awareness. The very nature of legitimation is that it's deceptive. The formal equality that legitimates systems confuses superficial change at the individual level with structural transformation (p. 108).

They continue to argue,

> These districts' lack of action in creating institutional change in conjunction with the training allowed the structural dimension of racism to persist unchallenged (Gillborn, 2005), veiled as individual pathology (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, 1995; Omi and Winant, 1994) or worse, as formal equality. This suggests that barring structural transformation, racism adapts to any new ideology introduced, accommodating the discourse within a framework of continued racial identity (p.110).

Vaught and Castagno's (2016) findings and conclusions illustrate the necessity of praxis at the systemic level which leads to the identification of professional learning priorities and systems alignment (Kose, 2007). In the case of implementing Ethnic Studies within schools and districts, teachers and administrators must contend with the mismatch between the current dominant ideologies of schooling evident in the policies that perpetuate White supremacy and the pluralistic, discursive values of Ethnic Studies pedagogies.

As a mode for developing the capacity for teachers to learn the content and adopt critical dispositions for developing Ethnic Studies curricula and employing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, professional development methods must also align with those goals (Fernández, 2019; Sacramento, 2019). One goal of critical professional development is to develop a critical collective consciousness through shared reflection and collective action (Sacramento, 2019). Sacramento (2019) defines critical collective consciousness as a "group's shared purpose and perspective in efforts toward transformative change" (p.179). In the case of Ethnic Studies professional development, developing critical collective consciousness guides educators (Sacramento, 2019) as they develop frameworks that support the objectives of Ethnic Studies (Arce, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching requires that teachers develop a critical self-awareness and critical analysis of their own beliefs and behaviors and become critically conscious about what is taught, how and to whom (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Several practices supporting the development of critical consciousness emerge from the literature. First, teaching the language of power and inequity including the three forms of racism - interpersonal racism, institutional racism, and internalized racism (El-Amin et al., 2017) through critical reading and interactive dialogue can help teachers develop critical awareness. This can be done through critical analysis of literature, news, and/or daily experiences of educators and/or students (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019; El-Amin et al., 2017). Creating safe and brave spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013) to interrogate identity norms, oppression, and racism at developmental levels is essential as this requires vulnerability. Promoting critical reflection to unpack feelings, thoughts, attitudes, ideas, worldviews, cultural understandings, taken-for granted beliefs, and values and how these affect behavior including curricular and methodological choices (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Finally, facilitating process that empower teachers in how to take action when they perceive these injustices (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019; El-Amin et al., 2017) like adjusting curriculum and methods.

Teachers may come to critical professional development for Ethnic Studies with limited content knowledge, different understandings of Ethnic Studies, and varying degrees of critical consciousness and critical pedagogy development (Sacramento, 2019). Sacramento (2019) describes the praxis-oriented approach taken by The Ethnic Studies Collaborative to respond to teacher variation in content knowledge and develop critical collective consciousness based on the groups' shared understandings of race, power, and privilege.

Through this process participants in the Collaborative recognized that political education, including understanding White supremacy, White privilege, and its impacts on schooling, was key to addressing differences in critical consciousness (Sacramento, 2019). Employing critical race dialogue (CRD), teachers in the collaborative participated in an interactive lecture on readings about White supremacy and White privilege and discussed their meaning in institutional, interpersonal, and internal contexts (Sacramento, 2019). They then connected dialogue to implications of White supremacy on learning, teaching, the classroom, the community, and within the collaborative (Sacramento, 2019). The dialogic process engaged participants in sharing their lived experiences, reflecting on the sociopolitical conditions that preserve inequities, and developing strategies that deal with those conditions on school, local, state, and national levels (Sacramento, 2019). In this way, the Collaborative facilitated professional development that models the goals and processes called for in Ethnic Studies pedagogies.

While Ethnic Studies centers the experiences, voices, and histories of BIPOC communities, the current teacher workforce is still predominantly White (Fernández, 2019). To ensure a professional development learning environment that is productive and responsive, Fernández (2019) describes that the Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO) offers community agreements to its participants acknowledging that tensions may arise when engaging in critical professional development. As Ethnic Studies calls for a decolonizing pedagogy, these agreements center Mexica indigenous philosophies. *In Lak'Ech*, the first agreement, translates to "you are my other me" (Fernández, 2019, p.5). This is the philosophy that if we do harm to others, we do harm to ourselves. In contrast,

when we love and respect others, we love and respect ourselves. In reading the poem, *In Lak'Ech* by Luis Valdez, participants come to understand this philosophy (Fernández, 2019). The second agreement, *Panache Be,* is a Mayan concept that encourages critical consciousness through the study of accurate historical foundations. It means, "to seek the root of truth" (Rodriguez, 2014, cited in Fernández, 2019). This agreement calls attention to the discomfort and disequilibrium that comes when new perspectives of history are learned. *Panache Be* names that discomfort, gives value to it, and celebrates it as it leads to a learning moment (Fernández, 2019). The third agreement, *Xipe Totec*, is the Mexica Indigenous concept for the process of transformation. For this transformation to occur, Fernández (2019) explains, "we must have trust in ourselves and approach this process with our hearts" (p.7). A method for beginning the process of *Xipe Totec* is the process of developing individual and community goals for embedding what they learn at the XITO institute back at work and in their homes. For example, as a way of combating neoliberal ideologies of individualism, competition, and colorblindness, members develop goals that promote solidarity, the sharing of ideas, and collaboration (Fernández, 2019). By adopting community agreements centered in indigenous protocols, XITO models the type of culturally sustaining methodologies that decolonize the professional learning environment.

Developing Collective Efficacy: Roles for Teachers and Administrators

Collective efficacy is defined as educators' shared belief that their combined efforts positively influences student learning more so than any other barrier to learning (Donohoo et al., 2018). John Hattie (n.d.) adds to that notion to include that this shared belief is sustained by feeding it with evidence of that impact. Collective efficacy is a construct that stems from

the construct of teacher self-efficacy both of which evolved from locus of control theory (Rotter, 1966, cited in Goddard et al., 2000) and Bandura's social cognitive theory. Gaining in popularity in the early 2000s studies indicate that the development of collective efficacy in schools have a moderate (Goddard et al., 2000) to large influence (Donohoo et al., 2018) on student achievement.

Bandura describes four sources that contribute to self-efficacy; mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion, and psychological/ emotional arousal (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018; Chu & Garcia, 2014; Goddard et al., 2000). Teacher self-efficacy is context specific (Goddard et al., 2000), and like Bandura's construct includes vicarious observations, teacher experiences, feedback, and individual emotional states as the four sources that influence teacher efficacy (Chu & Garcia, 2021). Evaluations of collective teacher efficacy involves the analysis of the teaching task and the teachers' assessment of the competency of the faculty to teach the tasks (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). In this way, the constructs of teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy are distinct constructs but they influence each other in that individual teachers make up the collective culture of the school. Self-efficacy stems from experience, feedback, and state of mind and collective efficacy stems from the specific analysis of the task and perceptions of the collectives' ability to be successful with a specific task. As individuals in the system experience more successes and see the successes of their peers, their assessment of their peers' competency in the teaching task is likely to increase (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018; Chu & Garcia, 2021).

School leadership behaviors, in addition to teacher self-efficacy were found to be significant predictors of collective teacher efficacy (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). Context factors

like school environment influence the relationship between self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). Therefore, attuning to the relationships and the cultures of the staff as they engage in a collective task is essential to developing both self-efficacy and collective teacher-efficacy (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). School leaders can strengthen teacher efficacy beliefs by providing opportunities to have mastery experiences, engage in vicarious observations, provide data rich, encouraging feedback, and attune to teacher emotional states. One way to provide mastery experiences for teachers is to facilitate school and classroom visits (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018) where teachers can observe the task being implemented successfully.

School leaders can emphasize and reinforce common objectives among the staff, forming a strong vision for the school (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). Engaging staff in developing a strong collective vision and including staff in the school's decision-making process are other important factors in the development of collective teacher efficacy (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). Schools with high degrees of flexibility and collaboration rate higher on the collective teacher efficacy scale (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). School leaders can encourage flexibility and collaboration by providing staff with a variety of resources (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018) and providing structured time for teachers to meet with one another during the school day (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). These democratic, shared-decision making styles of leadership are also reinforced throughout the Ethnic Studies scholarship (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). In their study of Culturally Responsive Teacher Efficacy, Chu & Garcia (2021) tie in the tenets of CRP (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2009) with Collective Efficacy. They note that foundational to any teaching task is the centrality of student prior knowledge, student

74

experience, and students' personal stories. It considers the cultural backgrounds, languages, learning styles, values, and home and community knowledge. Culturally Responsive Teacher Self-Efficacy is defined as:

> Teachers' perceptions of their ability to execute specific teaching practices associated with Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsive Teaching outcome efficacy. [It includes] teachers' perceptions that engaging in CRT practices will yield positive classroom and student outcomes (Chu & Garcia, 2021, p. 1523).

Since Ethnic Studies employs culturally responsive and sustaining practices, this concept of collective efficacy could be applied to this specific implementation context.

As teachers develop Culturally Responsive Teacher Efficacy, they showed an increased in persistence and effort (Chu & Garcia, 2021). Teachers played with different teaching strategies, shared responsibility for student achievement and remained undiscouraged by temporary setbacks. As alluded to above, teachers created meaningful and supportive learning environments that responded to students interests, needs and backgrounds (Chu & Garcia, 2021). These teachers also had high expectations for student performance and a belief that all students can learn. Instructional experimentation, a mindset needed in any discursive, critical pedagogy including Ethnic Studies, is a mainstay in teachers with high culturally responsive teacher efficacy (Chu & Garcia, 2021). These teachers exhibited a willingness to test a variety of materials and approaches in an effort to find better ways of teaching.

As noted earlier in this discussion, collective efficacy can be developed through leadership practices that support the development of a collective vision and goals through collaborative decision-making, structured time for collaboration, and feedback. The concept

of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is a promising process that develops collective efficacy by facilitating a collaborative culture that celebrates success and increases student achievement (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) found a high positive correlation between PLC implementation and ratings of collective teacher efficacy. In their study, higher levels of perceived implementation of the PLC variables predicted high levels of collective efficacy which also predicted significant increases in student achievement measures. PLC can be defined as, "a school organization in which a group of teachers share and question their practice from a critical point of view. This questioning happens in an on-going, reflective, collaborative, and inclusive way" (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017, citing DeNeve, Devos, & Tuytens, 2015). So, a PLC has collectively defined, shared goals with collective action toward those goals with a focus on results to ascertain whether the actions are effective in meeting those goals. Common to PLC practice are shared values, focus on student learning, collaboration and collective action, and sharing practice and helping one another (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). When teachers engage in PLCs they gain a shared knowledge through collaborative inquiry.

A PLC is a shared practice with the potential to affect and be affected by Ethnic Studies Goals. Overlaying the constructs of PLCs and Ethnic Studies could provide a useful framework for one who is interested in developing capacity and efficacy towards the implementation of Ethnic Studies. In Table 2, I summarize how these frameworks might support one another. This helped with understanding Findings and the data analysis described in the next chapter as well as with those wishing to implement PLCs supporting Ethnic Studies. As noted within the table above, there are several major themes and constructs like

community cultural wealth, critical consciousness development, and counternarrative that could be even further developed in detail.

Constructs Review

There are three main constructs situated within implementation and Ethnic Studies that this study will focused on: critical consciousness, school culture, and collective efficacy. This next section briefly outlined and summarized these constructs. They were briefly reviewed again within the research methods section as they pertained to instrumentation, data collection, and analysis.

Table 2

PLC Characteristics and Ethnic Studies Values

PLC Characteristics	Ethnic Studies Goals & Values
Shared vision and values	Holistic, humanizing, focused on love, respect, hope & solidarity
	Community Cultural Wealth
	Center, value, celebrate, honor BIPOC successes, experiences & knowledge (i.e. counternarrative)
Focus on student learning	Developing Critical Consciousness – identify and challenge oppressive and racist systems and constructs
	Critique of empire building, White supremacy, power, and oppression
	Civic engagement – social movements, goals for an equitable democratic society
	Development of positive social and intellectual identity
Collaboration and collective action	Aligns with goals for personal empowerment and civic action
Sharing Practices, helping each other	Community cultural wealth – developing the home to school bridge
	Community involvement – involving the voices of the most marginalized, parents and students

Critical Consciousness

Ethnic Studies moves beyond multicultural curricula in that it promotes critical consciousness development. Critical consciousness (CC) consists of critical reflection and critical action (Diemer et al., 2017). Diemer et al. (2017) define critical reflection as the critical analysis of perceived social inequities with the advocacy of social equality, or as they name it, egalitarianism. Critical action is defined as the participation in individual and or collective action to produce socio-political change. Since critical consciousness is comprised of the critical reflection and critical analysis of perceived social inequities, those practicing, teaching, and/or facilitating the development of critical consciousness need to develop a deep understanding of their own cultures and the cultures of different groups (Gay & Kirkland, 2003) as well as how this impacts their behaviors and interactions. As Freire notes in his discussion of critical consciousness, as people's thinking and understanding of their social conditions develop, then their views of themselves in relation to those conditions also develop and they become less constrained by their conditions. They develop the agency and capacity to change the conditions and resolve challenges (Diemer et al., 2016). Applying this to the classroom and school culture, people in positions of power like teachers, principals, district leaders, should simultaneously know and expect that practice and policy in these realms will be challenged and adopt and welcome practices where students' and families' critical awareness and agency are welcomed, invited, and enacted.

School Culture

School culture can be both shaped by the implementation of Ethnic Studies as well as support the development of Ethnic Studies. Schein (2016) classifies three layers of school

culture. At the core of the school culture are the basic assumptions, the taken-for-granted beliefs, held by the staff. This includes assumptions about their relationship to the environment, the nature of reality, the nature of human nature, the nature of activity, and the nature of human relationships. As staff and students engage in developing their critical consciousness, these often unconscious, basic assumptions may be challenged.

The second level of school culture consists of the values and norms (Schein, 2016). Values are what educators believe to be good or desirable (Maslowski, 2006). Norms are the unwritten rules of behavior that are informed by the organizational values (Maslowski, 2006). As schools look toward implementing Ethnic Studies curricula and pedagogies, the existing values and norms of the school may be tested. The California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (CSBE, 2021) states that the foundational values of Ethnic Studies are housed in holistic humanization and critical consciousness. As outlined in this overview, holistic "humanization includes the values of love, respect, hope, and solidarity which are based on celebration of community cultural wealth" (CSBE, 2021, lines 257 - 258). To what extent do these values align with the foundational and practiced values that exist in the current educational system?

The third and most visible level of school culture are the artifacts and practices that exist at the school (Schein, 2016). These are the visible structures and processes, the observable behavior, within an organization. While it may be readily visible, these expressions of values and basic assumptions may not be entirely discernable (Schein, 2016). As schools engage in Ethnic Studies implementation, these visible artifacts and practices may change. Since Ethnic Studies critiques forms of power and oppression, centers value on community cultural

wealth, and builds the capacity to enact change. The opportunity gap illustrates just how schooling both underserves and alienates BIPOC students in the United States. Focused on testing and achievement of the common core standards, are schools and districts designed to support dialogic, collaborative, and community-oriented models and definitions of success? As schools and districts across California actively adopt K-8 Ethnic Studies initiatives, it becomes important for school leaders to adopt the mindsets, habits, and systems that promote the ideological and pedagogical shifts articulated in Ethnic Studies frameworks.

Collective Efficacy

I chose to explore the concept of collective efficacy within this project because it is specific to the experiential and historical context of the setting in which this study is being conducted. Collective efficacy refers to educators' shared belief that their combined efforts positively influence student learning more so than any other barrier to learning (Donohoo et al., 2018). John Hattie (n.d.) adds to that notion to include that this is sustained by feeding it with evidence of that impact. School leadership behaviors and teacher self-efficacy were found to be significant predictors of collective teacher efficacy (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). Furthermore, higher levels of perceived implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) predict higher levels of collective teacher efficacy (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017).

While PLC is a ubiquitous term in the field of education, in their review of the literature, Stoll et al. (2006) define PLC as "a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way" (p. 223). Because the adoption of Ethnic Studies involves ideological and

pedagogical shifts from current educational values and practices, there is potential for teachers to become overwhelmed. Principals can support teachers to develop a sense of self efficacy and collective efficacy by centering Ethnic Studies implementation within the PLC process. This study will explore ways in which teachers conceive of their own senses of self-efficacy as well as the ways in which their administrators support or could support teachers' personal and collective capacity and efficacy development.

Conclusion

The implementation of Ethnic Studies requires a paradigm shift. Whereas the current paradigm encourages and reinforces individualism, competition, and the maintenance a White, Euro-centric narrative, the Ethnic Studies paradigm encourages community, collective action, the centering of BIPOC narrative, and the critique of the White, Euro-centric narrative. These represent stark differences in the way educators think and act. Because it is a paradigm shift from schooling as sorting to schooling as a source of empowerment, culture, curriculum, and pedagogies need to be revised and/or replaced to support the development of school and district culture to support the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research was a descriptive study that employed qualitative and narrative methods in order to understand how one K-8 district implemented Ethnic Studies. In this section I reviewed the problem that led to the development of this study. I then explained how my positionality potentially impacts participant responses and my interpretations of their responses. From there, I described the methodology, described context and population and context, and summarized the constructs explored through this study. Next, the sources of data were described. This section included materials, equipment, data collection and data analysis procedures that were described for each source. The chapter ended with a summary and table of data collection and analysis procedures as they pertain to each research question.

Systemic inequities within the school system and beyond contribute to opportunity gaps that influence the disparities found in the achievement of Black and Latinx students. Ethnic Studies is one way in which teachers and students come to understand the historical and systemic roots of these opportunity gaps. Further, Ethnic Studies addresses some of the systemic factors contributing to the opportunity gap by centering BIPOC history, culturally sustaining and responsive pedagogical and instructional practices, bridging home - school communities, and celebrating and honoring BIPOC successes and community.

For this study, I was interested in understanding how the paradigmatic shifts required by Ethnic Studies was supported by its implementation as well as how the adjustment of systems within the school and district supported those shifts. In other words, since a core goal of Ethnic Studies was critical consciousness development along with the skills to enact change, I believed that the process was discursive – implementation supported systemic change and

systems needed to change to fully support implementation. As a basis for this research, I was interested in:

1. What was the collective understanding and culture of the selected district with regard to Ethnic Studies and its implementation?

   a. What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used that point to these cultural elements? That is, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation?

   b. How did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from?

   c. What other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

2. How did educators (teachers and administrators) talk about their connection and commitment to Ethnic Studies? What language and underlying assumptions about race were used to express these connections and commitments? What did educators describe as barriers to Ethnic Studies implementation?

3. What leadership moves or perspectives did administrators and teachers think supported the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies? How was leadership for Ethnic Studies implementation characterized?

4. What did professionals (teachers and administrators) view as professional development needs within the district for the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies?

5. What were the connections that teachers and administrators made between Ethnic Studies and curriculum and pedagogy?

Research on school-wide implementation of Ethnic Studies is rare but emerging in the K-8 setting. This research explored the preconditions for Ethnic Studies implementation.

Researcher Background

I came to this study with largely privileged identities in a position that holds a fair amount of power. As a teacher, I adopted a relational and humanistic approach with my students. As I explored critical pedagogy, I understood that my identities and position of power impacted both the ways in which I approached things as well as how others perceived me. I carried this awareness with me as I entered the principalship. At the time of this study, I worked at a diverse school in a suburban section of a large city in California. The population of the school was diverse with no ethnicity representing over 50% of the population. The school was a parent participation school that focused on whole child development, fostering curiosity, and Positive Discipline (Nelsen et al., 2013).

The outward facing identities influence how others perceive me. In this study, participants may have known that I was a principal within the district. Some may have experience working with me and some may not. These positions may influence the degree to which people were honest within the study. In other words, teachers who knew me and/or have worked with me will have known that I am consistently and ardently committed to the

pursuit of equity within education. Some may be surprised to see a White woman administrator interested in Ethnic Studies. For teachers, being a principal in the district may evoke feelings or memories of their experiences with their principal. For principals or district leaders, the political and relational dynamic of the leadership team and the researcher being a colleague may have influenced what they were willing to share with me. Most of the district and site administrators knew that I worked at a school with a different instructional design. This was important because on one hand, these administrators may have perceived me as a colleague; on the other hand, I may have been seen as an outsider who did not understand what it was like to lead in a traditional setting. For these reasons I chose methodologies that supported teachers and principals to feel safe in disclosing information to someone who was also a participant in the implementation of Ethnic Studies.

At the time of the study the focus at my school was the adoption of the Critical Practices of Anti-bias Education (Teaching Tolerance, 2015) which outlined pedagogical and institutional practices for engaging with the Social Justice Standards (Learning for Justice, 2022). In the 2020-2021 school year, teachers explored concepts of self-awareness, cultural competency, intersectionality, and implicit bias. In the 2021-2022 school year, teachers received professional development for understanding the concepts of anti-bias education and ways to build a unit and respond to emergent issues with an anti-bias approach. This work was driven by interest within the parent and teacher community at that school. I noted this focus because it framed my local interest and experience with leading and adopting social justice policies and pedagogies at the site level.

Research Design and Procedures

Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive study in which the researcher is also a practitioner working within the study's setting. This study explored the cultural-discursive (sayings), the material-economic (doings), and the socio-political (relatings) conditions (Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2014) of one particular district interested in implementing Ethnic Studies in the K-8 setting. In other words, I attempted to capture and articulate a cultural profile of the school district and the degree to which it aligns to the cultural typologies articulated in Ethnic Studies (Gannon & Pillai, 2016).

Population and Sample

The study took place within one urban/suburban school district in California serving about 9,500 students. The school district operated 15 elementary schools and three intermediate schools. There were more than 600 teachers and about 30 district or site administrators. At the time of the study, there was one teacher under my direct supervision that participated in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) committee. No teachers under my direct supervision are currently on the Ethnic Studies committee, but one participated in the first cohort of Ethnic Studies training.

In 2020, amid the pandemic and the summer of racial discord that followed the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, the school board within this district passed a resolution to establish a district-wide Ethnic Studies task force and a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) committee. At the time of the study, I was a co-facilitator of the Ethnic Studies Committee, coming to it with an understanding that Ethnic

Studies is the curricular application of DEIB values. It is worth noting that I was also a co-facilitator of the DEIB committee where I helped organize the work of the professional development committee and collaborated with the anti-racist school climate committee. As these themes overlapped and converged within the school experience for children, it is important that curriculum, pedagogy, school climate, and professional development themes were aligned and cohesive.

The Ethnic Studies committee was implemented in the 2020-2021 school year. It consisted of parents, teachers, coaches, district administrators and site administrators who attend these meetings voluntarily. Meetings were 90 minutes, convening 4-5 times annually. At the time of this study, the goal of this committee was to explore Ethnic Studies curriculum, materials, and adoption scope and timeline. There was no requirement for teachers to adopt or teach Ethnic Studies within the district, however there were several teacher-leaders who were either currently teaching ethnic studies and/or were interested in teaching it. At the time of the study, all three middle schools had at least one Ethnic Studies elective offering. I was a participant and then a co-facilitator in this committee and taught and/or worked with many on the committee. In the 2021-2022 school year, there were three parents and no teachers from my school on the Committee. Some of the teachers, administrators, classified school staff, parents and community members participating in the Ethnic Studies committee were also participants in the DEIB committee. However, unlike the Ethnic Studies committee, the DEIB committee was an adjunct/paid committee for teachers. One teacher at my school participated in the district DEIB committee and a different teacher participated in the site-level DEIB committee.

Participants

This study employed a judgment sampling technique (Marshall, 1996) in which participants in focus groups and interviews were invited to participate based on their participation in the Ethnic Studies and/or DEIB committees within one particular school district. When more participants were needed a snowball sampling (Noy, 2008) was used to garner participants with interest in or experience with Ethnic Studies. As it became difficult to find the number of participants I wanted in the study I asked participants and site and/or district administrators for recommendations for educators who employed culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies or developed multi-cultural curriculum as these were close and discrete elements of Ethnic Studies.

I planned to hold 4 separate focus groups of 4-5 teachers each for a total of 16-20 teachers either teaching Ethnic Studies or interested in teaching Ethnic Studies. There were 32 teachers and instructional coaches on the DEIB committee and 23 teachers or instructional coaches on the Ethnic Studies Committee in the 2021-2022 school year. Two teachers and one instructional coach were on both committees for the 2021-2022 school year. For the 2022-2023 school year, the district hoped to identify 4 – 15 critically conscious teachers to participate and collaborate in deeper Ethnic Studies development work and professional development. These participants as well as the participants on the 2022-2023 DEIB and Ethnic Studies committees received the first invitations to participate in the Focus Group portion of the survey.

Despite efforts to gain the insights of 16-20 teacher participants, only five ultimately agreed to participate. Some teachers gave reasons for declining to participate. These reasons

included focusing their efforts on teaching at a new grade-level or school, lack of time due to work and life commitments, and not feeling they had enough insight to offer to the study. Even when I told participants that their perceptions and interpretations were just as important as expertise, they still declined. The lack of willing participants for this study may have implications for understanding perceptions and challenges related to the implementation of a major change like Ethnic Studies.

I hoped to interview 8-10 site and/or district administrators regarding Ethnic Studies implementation from the perspective of their role(s). In 2021-2022, there were 12 principals or district administrators on the Ethnic Studies Committee and 13 on the DEIB Committee including myself. Four of the 25 total served on both committees in 2021-2022. The district implementation plan for 2022-2023 stated that all district and site administrators will be trained on the Ethnic Studies' guiding principles, standards, purpose and foundations twice within the 2022-2023 school year. At the time of this study, that training had not yet occurred. The district and site administrators that were on these committees received the first invitations to participate in the interviews. As more participants were needed, the invitation was extended to all district and site level administration. Ultimately five administrators agreed to participate in interviews.

Instrumentation Constructs

The three main constructs explored in this study were critical consciousness, school culture, and collective efficacy. These constructs served as the basis for the design of the Focus Group and Interview questions as well as for the a priori coding for data analysis.

Critical Consciousness

As noted earlier, Ethnic Studies moves beyond multicultural curricula in that it promoted critical consciousness development. Two core elements of critical consciousness (CC) were critical reflection and critical action (Diemer et al., 2017). Diemer et al. (2017) defined critical reflection as the critical analysis of perceived social inequities with the advocacy of social equality, or as they name it, egalitarianism. Critical action was defined as the participation in individual and or collective action to produce socio-political change. Focus group questions with teachers asked for a narrative regarding how teaching Ethnic Studies has or may have changed practice and/or relationship to students. Interview questions with district and site administrators asked about their perceived roles and experiences with systemic change. Within these questions, I looked for critical reflection and critical action elements. For example, were the participants aware of their positionality and power? Were they aware of the larger systems that perpetuate inequitable outcomes? How were they engaged in transformative action?

School Culture

School culture can be both shaped by the implementation of Ethnic Studies as well as support the development of Ethnic Studies. Schein (2016) classifies three layers of school culture. The foundational level of school culture includes the basic assumptions, the taken-for-granted beliefs, held by the staff. This level includes assumptions about their relationship to the environment, the nature of reality, the nature of human nature, the nature of activity, and the nature of human relationships. The second level of school culture are the values and

norms held within the organization. The third, most visible level of school culture are the artifacts and practices.

With regard to data collection and analysis, the focus group questions (Appendix B) and Interview Questions (Appendix C) contained the participants perceptions of school culture as articulated by the artifacts and practices they describe in their narrative examples. The deeper levels of school culture were inferred using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2021; Saldaña, 2022) using the participants' language to infer various cultural dimensions (Gannon & Pillai, 2016). That said, the researcher was careful in her interpretations to not overly ascribe individual participant utterances to the existence of school or district culture as each participant also carries their own individual and outside cultural and social frameworks. For that reason, the researcher also conducted a document analysis of the founding presentations and policies as it pertained to Ethnic Studies implementation within this K-8 school district. Those documents along with the Ethnic Studies Steering Committee agendas and supporting documents and leadership team documents, like agendas, discussing PLC, Ethnic Studies, or Anti-Racism helped to triangulate assumptions and claims made regarding district culture.

Collective Efficacy

I chose to explore the concept of collective efficacy within this project because it was specific to the experiential and historical context of the setting in which this study was being conducted. Collective efficacy referred to educators' shared belief that their combined efforts positively influences student learning (Donohoo et al., 2018). It is fueled and sustained by feeding it with evidence of that impact (Hattie, n.d.). Within this study, the primary focus was on how leaders' developed a sense of collective efficacy and teacher perceptions of self-

and collective- efficacy. I asked teachers questions regarding how administrators and/or colleagues supported the development of collective efficacy. Similarly, I asked district and site leaders how they contributed to developing the capacity and collective efficacy of teachers regarding the implementation of Ethnic Studies. Analysis in this theme started with the elements articulated in Table 2. A deeper discussion of analysis continues in the "Analysis Procedures" section.

Sources of Data

Three sources of data were used in this study to understand the conditions that gave rise to Ethnic Studies implementation in the school district. These sources included archival records,, focus groups, and in-depth interviews (Gournelos et al., 2019). Archival records were analyzed using discourse analysis. I conducted an analysis of both archival records from Ethnic Studies meetings, the board proposal of Ethnic Studies, the board resolution, and public facing documents. The second source of data were interviews with principals and district leaders used to gain an understanding of their conceptions of and experiences with Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Studies implementation. The third source of data were the focus groups used to better understand their perceptions of efficacy and conceptions of these perceptions may be better supported to implement Ethnic Studies. In the next section, each of these data sources are discussed in more detail

Archival Documents

For this study, I collected different kinds of texts in order to discuss the ideological perspectives that existed in the organization (Gournelos et al., 2019) with regard to Ethnic Studies implementation. Analyzing various documents produced by the school district was

helpful for understanding the broader organizational context (Gournelos et al., 2019) for understanding the zeitgeist for the establishment of the Ethnic Studies task force as well as the ways in which Ethnic Studies and implementation was being discussed within the organization. Because the discussion of Ethnic Studies within the district was within its first few years of conception, it was important to understand how it was discussed, documented, and implemented.

Data Collection Procedures Used for the Document Analysis. Some documents were obtained via the districts' public website which housed the initial Ethnic Studies presentation by the board, the resulting policy, and subsequent Ethnic Studies Steering Committee updates given to the board. Additionally, I made a written request to the superintendent to procure and use other supporting digital documents such as Ethnic Studies Committee Agendas, resources, and Leadership Team agendas that reference PLC, anti-racism, and/or Ethnic Studies. I was granted access to Ethnic Studies Committee Agendas and resources. These digital documents were uploaded to Dedoose for subsequent analysis.

The content analyzed included Ethnic Studies meeting notes and supporting documents. I reviewed the board presentation and resulting resolution to understand the foundations and charge set forth by the school board. I reviewed archived Ethnic Studies Steering Committee meeting agendas and notes to get a sense of the progress and discussions of the committee.

Data Analysis Procedures for the Documents. With these texts, I looked at how the district was speaking of Ethnic Studies and its implementation. First, I surveyed the content using Jakobson and Sebeok's (1960) communication elements. These elements include identifying the addressor, addressee, the context, message, contact medium, and code are

described. Second, within Dedoose, I looked at what elements of Ethnic Studies were being explored and discussed within the content. This included, but was not limited to discussion of values, purpose, methodology, curriculum, and dispositions. Finally, within those broad codes, I analyzed the semantics (Van Lier, 1995) and metaphoric framing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to determine the linguistic semiotics presented within these documents. A word cloud of these and other in vivo (Saldana, 2021) coding techniques are shown in figure 2. Because Ethnic Studies courses were designed to be context specific, it was likewise important to discover how each particular context conceived of Ethnic Studies as those individual and collective experiences (Schein, 2016) and vision (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) provided the framework for effective implementation (Riessman, 2008).

Focus Groups and Pre - Survey

To develop a deeper understanding of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (Morgan, 1996) with regard to implementing Ethnic Studies, I conducted three separate focus groups consisting of 1-2 teachers each. Focus groups are defined as a specific research methodology in which formal group settings are established to conduct directive and structured questioning for the purposes of developing deeper understanding of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 1996). I chose to conduct focus groups for two main reasons. The first reason stemmed from the ethical considerations that arose from my positionality as a principal in the district. Although teachers who opted into focus groups were not be the teachers I directly supervise, three of them know me as a former colleague or principal in the district with connections to their principals. While the content of and participation in the focus groups was advertised as and remained confidential, the ethical

consideration here was to create a sense of safety in numbers. Additionally, focus groups have been used in settings where there is a difference of perspective between the researcher and participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 1996), in this case the researcher-practitioner-principal and the participant-teacher. It was an attempt to give a fair degree of power and control over the interactions of the participants (Morgan, 1996). In this way, participants were more likely to pay attention to what their peers are saying and often asked each other's opinions rather than to what they think the researcher-practitioner-principal wants to hear. This was an exception in one focus group where the second participant did not attend, so with the participant's permission we continued with the one on one conversation. The second reason I chose to conduct focus groups was that wanted to understand the range of experiences and perceptions that existed within the district with regard to Ethnic Studies understanding and implementation (Gournelos et al., 2019).

Figure 2

Word Cloud of Codes used for Document Analysis in Dedoose

Limitations of the Focus Groups. The limitations for using focus groups included the tendency for response bias, group think, and social desirability bias (Gournelos et al., 2019). That said, because this is a discursive study, these moves to establish identity, cultural discourses and political maneuvering were of interest in the study. In order to limit the effects of these biases, I used a pre-survey (Appendix A) to help sort participants into focus groups according to the following demographics:

1. Transitional-Kindergarten - sixth grade teachers who have an Ethnic Studies background or education and/or are currently teaching Ethnic Studies units or themes in their classrooms.

2. Transitional-Kindergarten - sixth grade teachers who do not have Ethnic Studies backgrounds or education and/or are not currently teaching Ethnic Studies units or themes but are interested in doing so.

3. Seventh - eighth grade teachers who have an Ethnic Studies background or education and/or are currently teaching Ethnic Studies units or themes in their classrooms.

I chose the preceding categories because the school district consisted of elementary schools serving students in Transitional-kindergarten (TK) through 6th grade and middle schools serving students in seventh and eighth grade. Each instructional setting was uniquely different. Teachers in the TK-6 setting generally served students in self-contained classrooms whereas 7th and 8th grade teachers generally taught content specific courses. Each set of groups focused on individuals who either have backgrounds in Ethnic Studies, taught Ethnic Studies, or were interested in teaching Ethnic Studies. This design was intentional because the concept of Ethnic Studies in K-8 settings was a relatively new concept and one that was not discussed broadly across the district before 2019. Segmenting groups in this way assisted with the flow of ideas and understanding as it controlled for most wide-ranging differences (Morgan, 1996) that existed among teacher-participants with regard to Ethnic Studies and implementation.

Preparation and Video Conferencing for the Focus Groups. Focus group conversations were conducted and recorded using Zoom video conferencing platform. Recordings were transcribed using a transcription service, reviewed by the researcher, and uploaded to Dedoose, a cross platform application that allows for the qualitative and mixed

method analysis of text, video, and audio data. Notes were taken by hand using a notebook stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Data Collection Procedures for the Focus Groups. Each focus group lasted 60 - 90 minutes and took place once during the research window. As the moderator of the focus group, I took a more-structured approach to the questioning and a moderately-structured approach to moderating group dynamics (Morgan, 1996). For example, I had a prepared list of questions (Appendix B), however I allowed the conversation to unfold somewhat flexibly. For the most part, I was able to compare responses across groups, but it was more important to capture each groups' line of thinking. In terms of moderating the group dynamics, I presented the courageous conversations agreements (Singleton, 2005) as the district already uses this framework, and the potential to uncover issues of race and power are high in conversations about Ethnic Studies implementation, but the size of the groups were so small that group dynamics did not emerge as an issue. As the groups proceeded through their conversations, I paid attention to whether teachers are dominating or withdrawing from the conversation and invited individuals to join the conversation by name.

Data Analysis – Focus Groups. As with the discourse analysis described earlier, I started a thematic analysis using a-priori themes generated from Ethnic Studies, school culture, and teacher efficacy frameworks. Then I reviewed the recordings again using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2022) to determine which other pertinent and emergent themes arose (Renner & Taylor-Powell, 2003). Those analyses are presented in narrative formats in the next chapter.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with moderately open questions (Gournelos et al., 2019) was the third method being employed by this study. For this portion of the study I was interested in how school principals and district administrators were thinking about Ethnic Studies implementation. In depth interviews allowed participants to tell their stories and/or explore concepts in greater detail (Gournelos et al., 2019). I chose this method to employ with site and district administration because I was considered a peer within that context and I wanted to dig deeper into understanding the elements of school culture and teacher efficacy that principals and district administrators were thinking about and/or are engaged in developing with regard to Ethnic Studies. The limitations associated with Interviews were that the sample size was small. However, since this is a highly contextualized, descriptive study, it is important to recognize that the narratives (Riessman, 2008) produced by this sampling were specific to the context and the small number of participants allowed for great depth in the questioning and responses. There is also no reason to believe that any specific narratives or perspectives were missed or ignored, based on the researchers prior knowledge of these administrators.

The adoption and implementation of Ethnic Studies within this K-8 school district represented a significant change to that district. Interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of how district and site administrators are making sense of the implied changes to teacher and leadership roles and practices and thinking around how administrators might influence systemic factors for effective implementation. These interviews adopted a relatively discursive stance (Langley & Meziani, 2020; Riessman, 2008). Because this is a

study describing the organizational and individual changes associated with the implementation of Ethnic Studies, this storied approach to interviewing and interview analysis was appropriate to meet those ends. Additionally, Ethnic Studies is concerned with identity work, cultural discourse and political maneuvering, all phenomena of interest within the discursive genre of interviewing (Langley & Meziani, 2020).

For those with greater experience implementing Ethnic Studies at the school site or within school districts, the questions may have been more discursive in nature, providing a narrative account of the experiences and conceptions of the site or district administrator. For those with emerging experience or interest in implementing Ethnic Studies, the questions may have served to generate reflexivity in thinking about how one might implement Ethnic Studies more effectively. This approach to interpretive interviewing is coined the Interventionist Genre of interviewing by Langley and Meziani (2020) in their paper, *Making Interviews Meaningful*. According to Langley and Meziani (2020) the interventionist genre of interview is "aimed at stimulating reflexivity: the goal is to help individuals think through the situations in which they find themselves in order to consider pathways towards positive change" (p. 5). Because Ethnic Studies implementation was so new within the district, questions regarding systems, approaches, school culture and collective efficacy tended to lie beyond what administrators were currently doing or thinking. In this way, the researcher-practitioner generated knowledge about how individuals processed and anticipated these changes and the participant could improve their effectiveness with potential implementation.

Limitations of the Interviews. Another limitation regarding using interviews in this particular study was that the researcher was a colleague of the participants. Participants may

not have been willing to share honestly with the researcher particularly when it came to their own critical consciousness or true understanding of Ethnic Studies frameworks. They may have been reluctant to share information that they thought would make them look bad in the eyes of the researcher. For this reason, the researcher masked the true intent of the study, particularly with regard to critical consciousness. In this way, respondents may have been more willing to share successes, challenges, and reluctance of others.

Data Collection Procedures for Interviews. Interview questions were designed with the research questions and discursive and interventionist goals in mind (Appendix C). Interviews were conducted in two 45-minute sessions or one 90-minute session depending on the needs of the participant. Four were conducted and recorded via the zoom video conferencing platform. One participant requested an in-person interview, so the interview was audio recorded using a digital voice recorder so that the audio was be directly uploaded to the transcription service. Recordings were transcribed, reviewed by the researcher and uploaded to Dedoose for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures – Interviews. As with the discourse analysis and focus group methods described above, I started a thematic analysis using a-priori themes generated from Ethnic Studies, school culture, and teacher efficacy frameworks examples of those themes are included in Appendix C. Then I reviewed the recordings again to determine which other pertinent and emergent themes arose (Renner & Taylor-Powell, 2003).

Analysis Procedures

Several qualitative and narrative analysis methods were described in the previous sections. This research is grounded in critical theory. As such, it was dialectic in nature and

sought to understand the reality of Ethnic Studies implementation in one particular school district.

Using discourse analysis, I looked at how the district was speaking of Ethnic Studies and its implementation. First, I described the content using Jakobson and Sebeok's (1960) six communication elements to identify the addressor, addressee, the context, message, contact medium, and code. Second, I looked at what elements of Ethnic Studies were being explored and discussed within the content. This included, but was not limited discussion of Ethnic Studies values, purpose, methodology, curriculum, and dispositions. Within those broad codes, I analyzed the semantics (Van Lier, 1995) and metaphoric framing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to determine the linguistic semiotics present within these documents. These analyses provided the broad context for why and how Ethnic Studies is being implemented in the district.

As with the discourse analysis described above, I started the focus group analysis with a thematic analysis using a-priori themes generated from Ethnic Studies, school culture, and teacher efficacy frameworks. Then I reviewed the recordings again, using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2022) to determine which other pertinent and emergent themes arise (Renner & Taylor-Powell, 2003). Those analyses are presented in narrative formats. A summary of the scope and sequence of analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Research Questions, Corresponding Sources and Analysis Procedures

Research Questions	Corresponding Sources of Information	Corresponding Data Analysis/Reporting Procedures
RQ 1 (1-c); 2, 3	Document Analysis: board resolution, agendas, developed materials, implementation plan, professional development materials Focus Group Questions: 5, 6 Interview Questions:6, 7, 8	Qualitative Analysis: ***Document Analysis*** 1. Upload to Dedoose 2. Code using Jackobson's (1960) communication elements to describe purpose of document 3. Code for Ethnic Studies themes directly mentioned or alluded to starting with a priori themes like values, purpose, methodology, curriculum, dispositions 4) Code for implementation themes 4) Identify and code for generative themes evident in the document (inductive analysis). 5) Code for semantics (Van Lier, 1995 and metaphoric framing looking for linguistic clues that indicate cultural elements. ***Focus Groups:*** 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman). *Dialogic Analysis* 3) Code for dialogic dynamic between participants and between participants and researcher, if applicable. Narrative as it intersects with history, race, gender, education. *Thematic Analysis* 4) Code for systems to support implementation, challenges, collective/shared effort. 5) Code for generative themes using in vivo codes ***Interview*** 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman) *Thematic Analysis* 3) Code for systems, culture, implementation strategies to support ES 4) Code for implementation themes ** (Kotter, Schein, Fullan) 5) Code generative themes (inductive themes) using in vivo codes

(table continues)

Table 3 continued.

Research Questions	Corresponding Sources of Information	Corresponding Data Analysis/Reporting Procedures
RQ 3, 4, 5	Interview Questions: 5, 6,7,8 (Appendix C) Focus Group Questions: 3, 5, 6 (Appendix B)	**Qualitative Analysis:** *Interview* 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman) *Thematic Analysis* 3) Code for capacity and collective efficacy themes (e.g. vision, professional development/learning, belief in ability to make a difference, belief in colleagues' ability, use of data, PLC) 4) Code for implementation themes ** (Kotter, Schein, Fullan) 5) Code generative themes (inductive themes) that come up ***Focus Groups*** 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman). *Dialogic Analysis* 3) Code for dialogic dynamic between participants and between participants and researcher, if applicable. Narrative as it intersects with history, race, gender, education. *Thematic Analysis* 4) Code for capacity and collective efficacy themes (e.g. vision, professional development/learning, belief in ability to make a difference, belief in colleagues' ability, use of data, PLC) 5) Code for generative themes
RQ 4; 5	Document Analysis; agendas, supporting materials, developed materials, implementation plan, professional development materials Focus Group Questions: 3, 4, 5, 6 Interview Questions: 6, 7, 8	**Qualitative Analysis:** ***Document Analysis*** 1. Upload to Dedoose 2. Code using Jackobson's (1960) communication elements to describe purpose of document 3. Code for critical consciousness themes directly mentioned or alluded to starting with a priori themes like power, privilege, systems, racism and/or other "-isms." 4) Identify and code for generative themes evident in the document (inductive analysis) using in vivo codes. 5) Code for semantics (Van Lier, 1995 and metaphoric framing looking for linguistic clues that indicate cultural elements. ***Focus Groups:*** 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman). *Dialogic Analysis* 3) Code for dialogic dynamic between participants and between participants and researcher, if applicable. Narrative as it intersects with history, race, gender, education. *Thematic Analysis* 4) Code for elements of critical consciousness like power, privilege, systems 5) Code for generative themes using in vivo codes ***Interview*** 1) Upload transcriptions to Dedoose. *Structural Analysis* 2) Code for Narrative Analysis (Labov in Riessman) *Thematic Analysis* 3) Code for systems, culture, implementation strategies that are either critiqued (shows CC) or adopted that promote CC 5) Code generative themes (inductive themes) using in vivo codes

As with the discourse analysis and focus group methods described above, I started a thematic analysis using a-priori themes generated from Ethnic Studies, school culture, and teacher efficacy frameworks examples of those themes are included in Appendix C. Then I reviewed the transcripts again to determine which other pertinent and emergent themes arose (Renner & Taylor-Powell, 2003). Identifying the cultural metaphors (Gannon & Pillai, 2016) as represented through language and anecdotes was important to understanding the systems and cultural alignment of the organization with regard to the values and goals of Ethnic Studies implementation.

Interviews and focus groups were coded and analyzed both in Dedoose and by hand. A word cloud of codes generated in Dedoose for interviews and focus groups is included in Figure 3.

Conclusion

This study attempted to capture the cultural-discursive (sayings), the material-economic (doings), and the socio-political (relatings) conditions (Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2014) of one particular district interested in implementing Ethnic Studies in the K-8 setting. The three main constructs situated within implementation and Ethnic Studies that this study focused on were critical consciousness - a sub-construct of Ethnic Studies, school culture and change, and collective efficacy. School culture was chosen as a lens through which Ethnic Studies implementation was explored because the shifts toward decolonizing curriculum and pedagogies called for in the Ethnic Studies literature indicate the need for culture shifts within the organization. Collective efficacy was the third lens chosen because much of the current educational workforce do not have formalized training in Ethnic Studies, teaching

Ethnic Studies, and/or fostering critical consciousness. Effective implementation depended

on developing the capacity of the workforce to recognize, adopt and employ the values,

strategies, and content outlined by the Ethnic Studies literature as well as their belief (sense

of efficacy) in their individual and collective capacity to make a difference in the educational

outcomes of their students.

Figure 3

Word Cloud of Codes used for Interview and Focus Group Analysis in Dedoose

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

Introduction

This chapter is intended to present the findings and results of this study. This study is a descriptive study conducted in one urban school district in California. The findings in this study represent this particular district's journey with Ethnic Studies implementation in a Kindergarten through 8th grade (K-8) setting. In order to understand the systems and conditions that help or hinder Ethnic Studies implementation, the following research questions were considered:

1. What was the collective understanding and culture of the selected district with regard to Ethnic Studies and its implementation?

    a. What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used that point to these cultural elements? That is, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation?

    b. How did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from?

    c. What other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

2. How did educators (teachers and administrators) talk about their connection and commitment to Ethnic Studies? What language and underlying assumptions about

race were used to express these connections and commitments? What did educators see as barriers to Ethnic Studies implementation?

3. What leadership moves or perspectives do administrators and teachers think will support the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies? How might leadership for Ethnic Studies implementation be characterized?

4. What do professionals (teachers and administrators) view as professional development needs within the district for the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies?

5. What were the connections that teachers and administrators made between Ethnic Studies and curriculum and pedagogy?

There were three types of data collected for these findings: documents, administrator interviews, and teacher focus groups. Within the documents there were public facing and internal documents associated with Ethnic Studies. The public facing documents include board resolutions, board presentations, and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The internal documents include Ethnic Studies agendas and associated links. The links led to sub-committee reflections, presentation slides, and supporting outside documents like book chapters, a lesson plan template, and the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (CAESMC).

Five administrator interviews were conducted. Ms. Swift and Ms. Darla were central office administrators who help facilitate the Ethnic Studies Committee Meetings. Mr. Rizal, Mr. Allen, and Ms. Flowers were site administrators. Mr. Rizal and Mr. Allen were participants in the Ethnic Studies Committee and Ms. Flowers supports Ethnic Studies

implementation at her site. Five teachers participated in 3 focus groups (Table 4). All

teachers who participated in the focus groups also participated in the Ethnic Studies

Committee.

Table 4

Position, Location, and Grade Range of Participants

Teacher	Grade Range/ Subject	Administrator	Location
Mr. Edwards	K-2 Teacher	Mrs. Swift	District office
Mrs. Neal	4-6 Teacher	Ms. Darla	District office
Ms. Gamri	4-6 Teacher	Ms. Flowers	Middle School Administrator
Mr. Macias	Middle School Ethnic Studies Teacher	Mr. Allen	Elementary School Administrator (non-Title I)
Mrs. López	Literacy Coach	Mr. Rizal	Elementary School Administrator (Title I)

Findings

Research Question 1

What was the collective understanding and culture of the selected district with regard to

Ethnic Studies and its implementation? As a means for inferring the collective understanding

and cultural elements, this question was addressed through three sub questions: a) What

culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic

Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used

that point to these cultural elements? In other words, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation; b) how did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from; and c) what other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

Research Question 1a

What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used that point to these cultural elements? In other words, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation?

The Call to Action: How the Ethnic Studies

Conversation Began

Ethnic Studies implementation in this district began with a formal, publicly shared, board resolution to establish an Ethnic Studies adoption committee. This formal resolution was accompanied by a presentation from the board President at the time. This resolution adoption occurred at a December, 2019 board meeting prior to California's adoption of AB101 which occurred in 2021, but following AB 331 and AB 1460. AB 331 outlined a plan adding an Ethnic Studies course as a requirement for high school graduation starting in the 2023-2024 school year. AB 331 was vetoed by California Governor Newsom and later replaced by AB 101. AB 1460 required California State Universities (CSU) to provide courses in Ethnic Studies at each of its campuses. AB 331 and AB 1460 were both supported in a previous board resolution and named in the resolution establishing an Ethnic Studies Adoption

Committee in the district. This district's board resolution points to a voluntary adoption of Ethnic Studies in this district since the California Assembly Bills require courses to be offered at the state college and university level and require Ethnic Studies as a course for graduation at the high school level. No state mandate currently requires Ethnic Studies at the K-8 level.

The resolution began with a description of the student demographics in California and the school district and connected it to the district's mission statement stating:

> The [School] District is representative of these diverse demographics that make our State great and that we have a commitment to serving all students as well as staff from all backgrounds driven by our mission "to ensure that every child's potential is achieved" ….

The three-page document quoted various phrases, policies, and values that existed within the district prior to this resolution. It also explicitly connected the district's demographics, achievement data, vision statements, and commitments for providing culturally relevant instruction to the relevant Ethnic Studies research. For example, the board resolution explained one of the benefits of Ethnic Studies:

> **WHEREAS**, incorporating Ethnic Studies courses and content into standard elementary, middle school, high school, and post-secondary/university curriculum is a means to accomplish equity, justice, and academic rigor and excellence, as well as promote diversity, inclusion and a sense of belonging:

A few paragraphs later, the board resolution outlined the districts' goals as a parallel:
> **WHEREAS**, the [School] District recognizes the need and importance for culturally relevant instruction and curriculum for students in regards to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as well as race, class, ethnicity, class privilege, implicit bias and systems of oppression.

The document continued to outline five more parallels between Ethnic Studies benefits and how they align with the districts' vision and goals before concluding with the resolution to

consider new curricular content, establishing an Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee, a call to regular presentation to the board about its progress, and the inclusion of Ethnic Studies in the 2020-2023 Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Beyond connecting the research and practice of Ethnic Studies to the district vision and core values, the Ethnic Studies Resolution also used repeated language, phases, and ideas throughout the document. Connected to those phrases the author made explicit use of phrases that either added value to or condemned the repeated ideas. The document cited the district's mission statement, "to ensure every child's potential is achieved," four times within the three-page resolution. It also explicitly stated "diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging" four times within that document. In speaking about diversity and Ethnic Studies, the author of the resolution used phrases such as "make our State great" and "vital." In discussing racial and ethnic achievement and opportunity gaps, which is one of the driving arguments for the need for Ethnic Studies in education, the author made use of phrases like, "disturbingly large and stubbornly and historically persistent" and "eradicating these large and stubbornly and historically persistent achievement and opportunity gaps." Here the use of the phrase "achievement and opportunity" gaps pointed to the author's distinction that the disparate performances of Students of Color is better framed as a school and social problem, a systems problem, rather than situated in the control of the individuals, groups, or children.

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of
Existing Cultural Elements

Discussions with teachers and administrators uncovered hopeful and skeptical attitudes towards Ethnic Studies implementation in this district. At some levels individuals personally

felt prepared to do the work of Ethnic Studies. That said, many felt they were still experimenting and/or needed work with certain Ethnic Studies elements. While the participants in the committees, focus groups and interviews all discussed Ethnic Studies as something that was doable with some training, resources, and time, they did not always see colleagues as able or willing participants. While each of these topics are discussed in detail throughout the rest of this chapter, it is helpful to provide an overview here of teacher and administrator feelings and beliefs here, as it points to culture and climate elements relevant for the implementation of Ethnic Studies.

Feelings of Personal Preparedness. Some teachers and administrators felt that they were primed for Ethnic Studies implementation. While all had varying degrees of understanding regarding Ethnic Studies, and no common definition was shared by all participants, several indicated that they felt they practiced some level of Ethnic Studies work, even when they all felt they needed more training, support, and time to get to their desired levels of implementation. All of the teachers in the focus groups felt that they were student-centered in their classrooms, meaning they invited students to be active co-creators of the classroom environment. Teachers in these classrooms focused on community building and relationship building through identity-based projects where students shared family/home histories and stories. For example, primary teacher, Mr. Edwards, explained:

> We do activities early on where I get a little glimpse into their home life. Like what languages they speak at home, what types of food they like to eat. You know, things that bring themselves into class that I can address and talk about and highlight and spotlight. Those are key things we can do in any grade. But I always think if I can set the foundation [early] that we're an empathetic group, that's caring and open, then that can carry forward and it plays out on the playground and so forth.

113

Many teachers and administrators cited the "Welcoming and Affirming Toolkit" offered by Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL, n.d.) as tools they thought were helpful additions to their community building units. Additional ways that teachers felt they were student centered was by bringing in representation in the curriculum through read aloud texts and guided reading texts and background information that included some cultural, familial, or racial connection to the students in the classroom. These teachers described creating caring and empathetic classroom culture facilitated by units like the one mentioned above coupled with modeling empathy and an openness for learning about others.

All teachers also felt that they were and have been engaging in culturally responsive pedagogies and to some extent, as mentioned above, coupled that with culturally relevant content. All the teachers in the study had five or more years of experience in the classroom and they all saw themselves as learners and dedicated to the practice of culturally responsive pedagogies. Most of the teachers indicated that they understood that culturally responsive pedagogies did not equate to Ethnic Studies (Zavala, Henning, Gallagher-Geurtsen, 2019), however they all discussed culturally responsive pedagogies as a core classroom practice. For example, Mrs. López explained her perspective:

> Having done culturally relevant instruction all this time, I feel like that's kind of what I've always done – before I even knew that's what it's called. Because if you truly teach in response to your students who's in front of you, you're gonna seek out the resources that you need so that kids can see themselves in what it is that you're teaching.

For these teachers, culturally responsive pedagogies were coupled with culturally relevant content. Both teachers and administrators expressed concerns regarding how widely or consistently culturally responsive pedagogies were practiced throughout all the schools in the

114

district. Some teachers felt that their colleagues either decidedly and actively choose not to employ culturally relevant teaching practices or that they did not have the skill to do so.

Experimentation in Schools and the Classroom. Teachers and two administrators mentioned three areas they were experimenting with in their roles with regard to Ethnic Studies. Teachers and administrators discussed Ethnic Studies as equity work. For those participating in the committee, focus groups, and interviews, part of that equity work had to do with raising their own critical awareness and capacity to encourage change. To some extent, some teachers described attempts to facilitate that process with students as well. A second area of experimentation included curriculum curation and development. The third area focused on developing administrator's leadership capacity at the site level.

All teachers talked about the challenges of teaching and naming issues of racism. At the K-2 level, Mr. Macias described it as confronting biases. In the upper grades, teachers talked about more systemic issues like racism and gun reform. Mrs. Neal explained:

> …the only time I've ever been in a situation where I got pushback about something I taught or did was after a school shooting, we did a walkout and the parents were furious. They thought we were taking a stance on gun violence. And I didn't care because I was like, "you are literally going to have me put my life in front of your child's life, which I will do. But don't tell me I don't get to, like, even have the conversation."

Even more nuanced, Mr. Macias, a middle school Ethnic Studies teacher discussed how he grappled with getting students to simultaneously check their own biases as well as helping students to understand that problematic behaviors and viewpoints are a result of what he described as customs. Still other classroom teachers worked on challenging issues of social justice but felt challenged for how to do so in an inclusive way. For example, Mrs. Gamri noted:

115

I think that COVID year really taught us a lot about our human interactions. How are we addressing others? How can we be better? What can we do better moving forward? I think that's a whole piece on empathy too, like just teaching kids to interact with each other and see strengths in other people and their own strengths.

The discussion from these teachers outlined a potential for students to learn about and become aware of biases and unfair systems. However, the main source of conversation in the area of critical consciousness was centered on the belief in the adult capacity to do the work. Some felt that this would take training, coaching, modeling, and time. Mrs. López described how at a site based professional development, she helped facilitate that critical analysis:

We brought out different books that were exhibiting stereotypes that if you don't really look at it with a critical eye, we're just teaching these books and how is that making the students feel? And then we have some videos on stereotypes like the model minority. And so we're just embedding ourselves in that right now.

Even so, all five of the teachers questioned the current capacity of some of their colleagues to willingly engage in this level of self-reflection and exploration.

Ethnic Studies curriculum was a topic that was discussed on many levels including who should develop it, the time it would take to develop a cohesive K-8 Ethnic Studies "pathway," the types and availability of resources, and even the teachers' buy-in. During this study, individual teachers were experimenting with lessons and/or units that they considered either Ethnic Studies or a precursor to Ethnic Studies. Many described being purposeful about providing texts that were representative of students in their classroom and/or challenged preconceived notions about a particular topic. Only one teacher discussed presenting local history in a way that contrasted missionary perspectives and indigenous perspectives. For example, Mr. Macias explained how a class field trip illuminated the difference between these perspectives side by side:

> When you walk around, there's signs posted and they talk about the Ohlone legend, 'cuz it has to do with the spring that's there, which is now named Dottie's Pond. A lot of people call it Dottie's Pond 'cuz there's a whole other folklore that's a bit more like, an American one…And so, Bernal heard that, and he was a Spanish soldier. He got so much of the land in a land grant…and when he heard the legend it reminded him of the patron Saint of Healing. So he named it Rancho Santa Teresa.

Other primary teachers saw Ethnic Studies as teaching about systems of racism, but mostly approached that topic by exploring current events, particularly between the years of 2020 and 2022. Teachers and leaders, particularly in the K-6 setting described supplementing the existing curriculum with resources that presented multiple perspectives regarding the topic of exploration. Teachers and leaders were still exploring concepts of Ethnic Studies and did not have a clear, unified vision for what Ethnic Studies is, especially in a K-8 environment.

A third component that came up in the experimentation category was leadership. One teacher described her principal's hesitancy and willingness to lead and model anti-racist, anti-bias work in her school community. The teacher explained that her principal articulated her reservation about leading the work because of her lack of experience in the field but ultimately deciding to support the coaches and co-facilitating the professional development because it was important for teachers to see her lead by example. Mrs. López described her appreciation for her principal's vulnerability in leadership:

> I feel super thankful to be at a site where my principal was so vulnerable in saying, I know we have to do this. I don't know how to do it. And then we pushed against her, she was like, "Okay, I'm gonna do it." And she's up there with us and she's just as nervous. But there's so much learning happening.

For Mrs. López, that willingness to engage in this way was encouraging. Another principal, Mr. Rizal, described his experimentation with a more authentic leadership style which he described as being met with a combination of engagement and anger. He discussed

117

employing a leadership style that centers human-centered, collectivist values. He explained that some on his staff were uncomfortable and even "pissed off" by not following what he called the script. He noted:

> I'm about systems, when it makes sense because we have to implement things, you know. But the collectivist in me, doesn't limit what I do based on these processes. An example of that is when we have staff meetings or professional development where the agenda precedes the goal or objective of why we're meeting in the first place…if the engagement is there, and if we're talking about the objective of this conversation, but we worship the agenda, you know, everything is agendas. It pisses people off and makes them uncomfortable because I'm not always following the script.

In other words, he sometimes choses to value the conversation and discussion over the agenda, which he explains makes both his staff and some of his administrator colleagues uncomfortable.

Participant Perceptions of Areas that Need Work. In nearly all interviews and focus groups, teachers and administrators agreed that in order to implement Ethnic Studies at a K-8 level there needed to be a clearly defined vision and common understanding for Ethnic Studies so that it could be strengthened at the site level by site administrators. All teachers and administrators noted that there needed to be professional development for everyone in this area, some even discussed wanting that professional development to be differentiated. The majority of the teachers and administrators noted that ongoing coaching and collaboration, particularly cross-school collaboration would be needed to sustain implementation by building a sense of collective efficacy.

Questioning the Longevity of Ethnic Studies. Some described educators as fearful of Ethnic Studies, surmising that the fear came from not having a clear understanding of Ethnic Studies or fear from parent or community backlash. Those who participated in the Ethnic

Studies committee, interviews, and focus groups generally viewed Ethnic Studies as a pathway toward attaining educational equity, but some in the committees, focus groups, and interviews worried that their peers would see it as another "thing" that, given time, will pass. For example, Ms. Darla explained, "It has to be **the thing**. And how many things do we have right now?" Additionally, in the "Glows and Grows" Ethnic Studies Committee documents from year one documented, "We need to stay the course and make sure the importance of Ethnic Studies message is known district-wide and intact... Ethnic Studies is not another thing on the plate, it IS the plate!"

Research Question 1b

How did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from?

Language Most Often Used in Discussing Ethnic

Studies within the District

The board resolution establishing the adoption of the Ethnic Studies Committee as well as the presentation given at the December 2019 board meeting by the board president at the time explicitly named the country's diversity as a strength to the nation's prosperity. The presentation named "indigenous peoples of this land who were here before Europeans came, Africans and their descendants who did not come willingly and immigrants from countless nations" as essential to that diversity. The presentation also articulated that the state adopted curricula was missing the languages, history, and accomplishments of many of these heritages and named Ethnic Studies as a way of addressing that absence. It named the inclusion of histories and contributions from people of all backgrounds that have been

119

traditionally left out of school curricula as a central goal of Ethnic Studies. The board

resolution recognized the district's pre-existing commitment to "equal opportunity for all

individuals in education," and stated in two separate sections that the commitment extended

to all without discrimination based on "gender, sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national

origin, ethnic group identification, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability,

sexual orientation or the perception of one or more such characteristics." Inclusion of all

socio-cultural identities is outlined within the resolution with particular attention paid to

"underrepresented and minoritized communities." In particular, the board resolution states:

> [The School District] supports the creation and implementation of Ethnic Studies
> and culturally relevant curriculum across all districts and grade levels and
> supports diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts that support both
> students and staff of all backgrounds, but especially of underrepresented and
> minority communities.

Diversity as an Asset. The focus on diversity as an asset is central to this district's vision

for Ethnic Studies implementation as it is explicitly stated in both public facing documents

and the internal documents provided from the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee

discussions. For example, the Ethnic Studies Committee developed an "Ethnic Studies

Statement of Purpose" published along with a one-year implementation plan at the end of its

second year:

> The [School District] Ethnic Studies model promotes respect and understanding
> among races, while cultivating empathy and solidarity. Through asset-based,
> culturally sustaining pedagogy and multiple perspectives, students connect to one
> another, the rich history and untold stories of the people in our community, and
> the world around them. The focus of our model is identity, empowerment, and
> social consciousness.

The use of words like "rich," and "assets," are used when documents discuss the diversity of

the district. There also existed documentation in the LCAP plan regarding an intentional

focus on "collecting diverse stakeholder input." Throughout the Ethnic Studies Committee documents, including sub-committee reflections, words and phrases like asset, strengths, valuable, and rich were used to describe diverse student populations within the district. In these documents these words alluded to or were directly describing communities of Color, the local community demographics, and "traditionally underserved" communities.

The teachers who participated in focus groups were focused on promoting the "respect and understanding among races and promoting critical thinking" mentioned in the board resolution. For example, in describing his Ethnic Studies elective, one middle school teacher alluded to spending a substantial amount of time in that class building community. Mr. Macias described a unit that he and his planning partner did with their classes to create the caring and respectful community needed for talking about issues of power and race:

> We did a lesson about community and what communities they're involved in because we really wanted them to look at themselves and be like these are the communities I'm a part of. We originally wanted to do like a traditional family tree. And I said, "No, let's not do that. Because some students don't know their background. They could be adopted...." I was like, "let's be sensitive about that. Let's make sure that we say these are communities you're a part of."

Mr. Macias explained that he and his colleague took more time in their Ethic Studies courses to develop those connections and relationships because:

> I really focused on [the] need to build community amongst each other first. So, I would take my time on the get to know you stuff…And you know…that class is different from my other classes 'cuz they have this sense of community in there. Like they're cool. We all know each other…. I knew we were gonna be talking about some really heavy things in Ethnic Studies, like talking about race and talking about inequalities, inequities. It's a lot easier for students to handle. So I wanted to make sure we had a comfortable, I mean, I do in my other classes too, but this class in particular, I was even more focused on making sure we were all good.

121

Attention to relationship building were evident throughout the teacher focus groups and some of the administrative interviews. One elementary teacher, Ms. Gamri described a similar unit in her classroom called, "What Makes You You?" In this project, students brought in artifacts that represented who they were. She explained how, in her view, these presentations promoted interpersonal relationships in her classroom stating, "And then, just the comments that the students make after, and kind of sharing are always so positive and they wanna learn more." For them, respect and understanding for diversity came from building empathetic interpersonal relationships within the classroom.

Another elementary teacher, Mrs. Neal, who did not see herself as well-versed in Ethnic Studies, but dedicated to learning more and practicing culturally responsive teaching in her classroom described a similar focus on developing a classroom community. Modeling the concept of "respect and understanding among races," Mrs. Neal described engaging her students in creating a welcome wall where students wrote, "hello" and "welcome" in their own handwriting in their native languages. She also reported having no proficiency in any other language than English and discussed using google translate to translate her class agendas and slides into Spanish so that her students who had just arrived from Columbia could have some context for what was happening in class. Mrs. Neal explained how important getting to know her students was to her for building classroom community and knowing how to tailor lessons:

> Student interviews are so important. You don't know what students are going through or whatnot. I mean, what their background is even. Like you were saying, if you were sitting in my classroom, I might not know anything about your culture if I don't deliberately, intentionally find out. That's why I think it's really important to make sure you know your kids at the beginning of the year, you know who they are.

All the teachers in the focus groups talked about respecting who the students were as well as promoting respect between students as an essential piece of the classroom environment. They discussed how they facilitated activities to promote that respect and understanding between students as well as how they modeled that respect and understanding by changing the way they did things in their classrooms based on the students in front of them. For these teachers, relationship building was essential to establishing an inclusive classroom environment and responsive curriculum.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogies. From the review of the public facing documents, several cultural, curriculum and pedagogical elements were present or being cultivated as the district prepared for the implementation of Ethnic Studies. For example, a focus on educational equity existed as evident in the equity board policy and the resolutions denouncing racism and White-supremacy, supporting traditionally marginalized communities, as well as the resolutions establishing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee and the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee. The focus on Ethnic Studies as outlined by the board presentation and resolution was "to promote respect among races, support student achievement, critical thinking, civic engagement, and citizenship through the use of intersectional and counter-narrative perspectives that have been traditionally left out of the mainstream curriculum." The 2021-2022 LCAP explicitly stated:

> …a focus on culturally relevant curriculum resources to teach with a diverse, equitable, and inclusive lens is a priority, especially in conjunction with all that is going on in the world of our students and communities right now. As we develop criteria for future curriculum pilots and adoption, this will be a necessary component.

The district continued to publicly state the data, purpose, values, and vision for this focus and supported it with financial and human resources by allocating funding for training, establishing a committee, and purchasing resources. The 2022-2023 LCAP plan allocates $250,000 from the Educator Effectiveness Plan for Ethnic Studies planning, professional development, and coaching, $30,000 from that same budget to implement and increase learning around implicit bias and culturally responsive environments, and $200,000 to develop recruitment and retention plans and practices supporting teachers of color through training and professional development. According to the CDE website, this district was allocated about $1.9 M in "Educator Effectiveness" one-time funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Additionally, the 2022-2023 outlined an action of "diverse and inclusive books and programs" for a total expenditure of $95,444. The total LCAP budget during that year was about $6.9 M.

The LCAP only mentioned Ethnic Studies once in the 2021-22 plan and three times within the 2022-23 plan. However, several Ethnic Studies Hallmarks (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020) were noted such as the use of culturally responsive or culturally sustaining pedagogies. Both LCAP plans repeatedly mention culturally relevant curriculum and responsive pedagogies as a core instructional practice, a pedagogical element needed for Ethnic Studies implementation. Similarly, the district's Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose outlines culturally sustaining pedagogies as a key practice for Ethnic Studies implementation and content delivery. While culturally mediated, culturally sustaining, and culturally relevant pedagogies were all used somewhere throughout the district's internal and public facing

documents, the culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies were the most often used terms.

Culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining were all repeated vocabulary throughout the public and private documents. Sometimes, the terms were used interchangeably; other times they were used to describe different aspects of the workplace. Culturally relevant was most often reserved for describing curriculum content while culturally responsive and culturally sustaining seemed to refer to pedagogies and environments. While culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies were not defined in the documents, they did include language that alluded to a definition as well as sample practices. As noted previously, culture and ethnicity were described to as an asset. The documents associated with the Ethnic Studies Committee recognize that Ethnic Studies pedagogies, "supported a community focus," and included learning goals in the areas of, "Mind – content, Body - skills, Soul -Relevance, and Leadership - Both Individual and Community" (Community Responsive Education, n.d.). The latter was part of a planning tool found in an Ethnic Studies Committee link which cited Tintiangco-Cubales as a source, but no date was found on the reference materials. That document made explicit reference to culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies, and referenced relevant studies (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017), as well as referenced Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Other documents referenced culturally responsive pedagogies as connecting to student culture, responsive and inclusionary practices and de-escalation strategies. Culturally sustaining pedagogies within the documents were associated with phrases and practices such as including multiple perspectives, providing translators for

parents, and addressing or "dismantling systemic racism." Citing these resources indicated that the committee was reviewing relevant Ethnic Studies research and scholars.

One more potential framework for culturally relevant pedagogies show up throughout the documents. "Courageous Conversation Norms," (Singleton, 2005) were present within each of the Ethnic Studies Committee Agendas. Referring to and centering conversations about race, courageous conversations was a framework and a set of norms for discussing race and racial injustice (Singleton, 2005). Courageous conversations and brave spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013) were mentioned within those committee reflections and were also touched upon by teachers and administrators during interviews and focus groups. Generally considered facilitation techniques within the context of this district's Ethnic Studies discussions, several teachers in the focus groups also discussed facilitating courageous conversations in their classrooms. For these teachers, courageous conversations referred to conversations regarding race, systemic injustices, or discussions regarding socio-political current events such as the Black Lives Matter Protests, school shootings, or the January 6th insurrection. One teacher, Mrs. Neal, discussed a wish for training regarding the facilitation of courageous conversations in their classrooms explaining, "I think that we're not always given the resources that we need to carry on some of those conversations…I think that's a big struggle." In the Ethnic Studies Committee reflections one group noted that a growth area for the district was a need to have teachers, "feel comfortable to have these conversations with students." Courageous conversations were referred to with regard to the adult dialogue and systemic change as well as in reference to helping students process current events or history.

One document stated that a pre-existing district thematic unit that could be used as a spring board for courageous conversations was an area of strength.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum. Culturally relevant curriculum was referred to the most often within the documents. Within those documents culturally relevant curriculum involved teachers adjusting their content from their favorite units to teach or their favorite books when they were kids. Committee members named Ethnic Studies and anti-racism as examples of culturally relevant curriculum. It was referred to as representative of all students. They stated that content should be diverse, equitable, and inclusive. One group described culturally relevant curriculum as content that was important to students, something they felt connected to. For example, the Glows and Grows document from the committee's first year's reflection documented:

> Teachers are aware of the need for student representation in the curriculum and are working independently to find the curriculum. They are finding ways in the classroom to connect with students through culture.

That same document also noted:

> Need to bring more curriculum into the classrooms that represent all students…Make sure our students [are] reflected in our classrooms.

Finally, when reflecting on Ethnic Studies principles, one group noted:

> When one's culture is not recognized it is unwelcoming. It can push students away from school.

Student population representation in books and curriculum were prominent in the Ethnic Studies Resolution, documents, and conversations regarding Ethnic Studies. The LCAP plan allocated funding for the purchase of "inclusive books to represent our diverse community," and toward "diverse and inclusive books and programs." The counternarrative was discussed throughout the Ethnic Studies reflections where statements like, "giving voice to stories long

silenced…include systemic racism and overcoming inequality… to inspire culture change."

Another group, citing the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (2021) highlighted

that the curriculum calls for:

> centering/acknowledging communities that have been marginalized… center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral knowledge, narratives, and communal experiences of Native People/s… multiple perspectives and diverse perspectives within ethnic groups….

While this group did not specifically call for a need for new texts, it did outline the kind of

representation the committees were looking for in curriculum and texts that support Ethnic

Studies implementation.

Criticality. Language regarding criticality and critical consciousness was evident

throughout the district conversations regarding Ethnic Studies. A broad sweep of the

documents, focus groups and interviews that the use of the words critical and criticality

showed up in two distinct ways. First, had to do with developing the critical awareness or

critical consciousness of the adults in the system for being more self-aware and cognizant of

curriculum, environment, and systems. The second involved goals regarding developing

students' critical awareness of preconceptions, intersectionality, social structures, and

inequity in society. While the purpose and driving forces behind the development of

criticality in this district will be discussed throughout the remainder of this dissertation, it is

important to understand the language and the context surrounding the conversation here.

For the adults in the system, criticality was largely discussed in terms of critical analysis

of content and curriculum to ensure representation and accurate history. Developing a critical

lens for curriculum was discussed in the documents, focus groups, and interviews. The

primary focus of that criticality centered around auditing the curriculum for fair, equitable,

and accurate representation of students in the classroom, particularly centering the knowledge and narratives of Students of Color. For example, evaluating books and curricular content was a focus for a district coach and the site she supported. "We brought out different books that were exhibiting stereotypes that if you don't really look at it with a critical eye, we're just teaching these books and how is that making the students feel?" Within the curriculum and content, criticality or critical awareness was described in terms of teaching about racism, social movements, and critiquing empire and its relationship to oppression and power. Because this curriculum did not already exist, teachers and administrators discussed the need to develop teachers' own sense of racial and cultural awareness, understanding of critical race theory, anti-racism, and truthful history. The Ethnic Studies Committee noted that the adults in the system should be, "looking at systemic racism and inequities that we face in education and how we uproot those to change [the system]. Empower us as change agents." This statement was applied to both classroom teachers as well as adults throughout the system as they discussed system changes such as equitable hiring practices.

Goals for the development of student critical consciousness primarily came from supporting documents that were associated with the year one Ethnic Studies Committee documents. Transformative resistance was mentioned in these documents. In that section, transformative resistance was defined as developing a strong sense of self-worth, questioning everything with purpose, the development of critical hope, and the skills to confront racial inequality. In another document criticality was discussed in the context of developing racial pride, agency and self-empowerment, and the language and understanding for the reasons behind inequality. This document highlighted the need to develop the skills to evaluate and

create change. The district's Ethnic Studies Purpose Statement noted, "The focus of our model is identity, empowerment, and social consciousness." That said, Mr. Macias did discuss his attempts to help his students have empathy for individuals by reinforcing that individuals were products of their environments.

> …because they'll see it and be like, 'oh, they have this kind of custom, they're a bad person.' It's like, 'no, they're not a bad person. That's just how their customs are. It's similar to one of your customs.' And so that's something that's kind of tough. It's really hard to tease out and find the resources to prompt those kinds of conversations and understandings.

The Progression of Ethnic Studies Definitions

Through the Guiding Team

The Ethnic Studies Adoption committee was a committee of teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and two school board members. The first Ethnic Studies Committee met during the 2020-2021 school year and was comprised of 50 members. This first year was focused on identifying curricular entry points for the district's existing adopted curriculum. The committee also explored where the district was doing well with adopting Ethnic Studies as well as opportunities for growth. The committee then explored the principles of Ethnic Studies from the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium (LESMCC, n.d.) and a potential lesson planning tool from Community Responsive Education (n.d.). Finally, the committee's subgroups outlined two proposals each and voted on three for the following year. While a voting form was linked to the agendas, the results of the vote were not documented within the supplied documents and resources. The proposals included:

- Start a running "watch out for this" document and supplemental list that teachers can refer to by grade level on core curriculum.

- Ensure that future materials/curriculum are culturally relevant, responsive, and accurate.

- A district Continuous Equity Improvement Team (CEIT) Group that aligns to school CEIT group – similar scope and sequence of topics – includes certificated, classified staff and parents.

- Systematic PD for teachers and parents through modules throughout the year.

- Provide PD to teach teachers foundational knowledge of how to have a critical lens. "Reduce the Harm."

- Expand work with Partners in School Innovation (Transformation Network). Focusing on Equity, Mindsets, Systems, Professional Development

- Courageous Conversations PD: Site teams consisting of parent community member, primary and upper grade teacher; to bring back to the sites. In order to equip sites to have conversations leveraging the four quadrants

- Parent Community Education – What is Ethnic Studies? Why is it important for all? What do we already have? How is it addressed in all content areas?

Each proposal contained the overall idea of the group and a template which outlined a time-frame for measurable outcomes and the details for each action such as identifying the point person, budget estimates, duration, and design ideas among others. Some plans were more completed than others.

The year one committee met during a year of distance and hybrid learning. In January 2021, mid-way through that first year, California adopted AB 101. The committee's documented conversations reflected themes evident within the social and political climate at the time. It did not, however, cite or reference legislation pertaining to Ethnic Studies. During this first year, the committee explored and evaluated Ethnic Studies Guiding Principles. Within these documents, the source of these principles was not cited, however at the time of this study, they could be found on the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium (LESMCC) website (LESMCC, n.d.). The team broke into subcommittees to reflect on each of the seven guiding principles. Each team reflected on the first and second guiding principle and one of the remaining five. Principle one and two focus on cultivating positive social and cultural identity and self forth and celebrating the stories and intellectual and cultural wealth of Indigenous communities and communities of Color. The language of these two principles show up in the district's Ethnic Studies statement of purpose developed by the year two committee. Less evident in the later conversations and within the statement of purpose are some of the themes presented in the other five principles. For example, connecting to past and contemporary resistance movements, challenging imperialist, colonial, hegemonic beliefs and practices, and conceptualizing new possibilities of post imperial life seemed to be shied away from in that statement of purpose.

During the 2021-2022, the committee had 51 members. These meetings were held virtually, though the primary mode of instruction during this school year was in-person learning. That year's committee was largely focused on learning about Ethnic Studies through an exploration of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (CAESMC) and

132

other supporting documents, participation in webinars featuring school districts and universities doing Ethnic Studies work, and drafting an implementation plan for the 2022-2023 school year. The culminating documents from this team included a statement of purpose, the approval of a one-year implementation plan, and an outline for a three-year plan. The district's Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose was presented above.

The first agenda outlined five goals for the committee during the year. These goals included:

1. Design a Common [school district] Lesson and/or Unit Plan Outline

2. Provide Common Collaboration Time and Professional Development to our Middle School Teachers of Ethnic Studies

3. Review the 6th Grade Expeditionary Learning ELA Scope and Sequence for Extension Units to Widen Learning to Diverse Cultural, Ethnic, Linguistic and Socio-Economic Experiences

4. Review the 6th grade Discover HSS Scope and Sequence for Extension Units to Widen Learning to Diverse Cultural, Ethnic, Linguistic and Socio-Economic Experiences

5. Design Considerations for Current and Future Curriculum Adoption Committees that vet for diversity and inclusion of students' backgrounds and experiences

The 51 participants then had an opportunity to decide which sub group they wanted to participate in using a google form to indicate their preference. Sub-committee work was included on the subsequent agendas, however documents and links to that subcommittee work were not supplied with the documents or linked within the agendas. A significant

portion of the agendas included links to documents and "note catchers" that focused the team on deepening the group's collective understanding of Ethnic Studies, the CAESMC (2022), and develop a statement of purpose using a Jigsaw teaching technique (Aronson, 1971).

Both the public facing documents as well as the internal documents from the Ethnic Studies Committees offered a documented context for the sequence for Ethnic Studies conversation and implementation began in the district. Focusing on diverse student representation in the curriculum, the resolution called for promoting respect and understanding among races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Diversity as a strength and respect in the classroom were mirrored in both the Ethnic Studies Committee documents and in teacher focus groups. The Ethnic Studies Committee documents mentioned an awareness and need to address the lack of representation of diverse communities in the curriculum as well as to address the racist rhetoric occurring in the national socio-political climate at the time. Criticality was discussed as something that needed to be developed by the adults in the system as well as by the students. For the adults, conversations regarding criticality included the development of self-awareness; awareness of racism, bias, and representation, or lack of representation in the curriculum; ensuring school and classroom environments that sustain minoritized cultures; and systems to support that work. For student critical consciousness development, it was discussed in terms of addressing preconceptions, highlighting intersectionality of experience, and critiquing social structures and inequity.

Research Question 1c

What other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

Factors that Increased the Urgency of Ethnic

Studies Adoption in the School District

Within the public facing documents, there were two groups of documents that served to increase the urgency of Ethnic Studies adoption as well as supporting its implementation. The first was a group of board resolutions denouncing various hate crimes events that targeted various racially and socially marginalized populations. The second document was a resolution establishing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) committee with mandatory teacher attendance. The first set articulated public support for the racially and socially marginalized populations whereas the second document established a committee to ensure efforts for systemic change within the district.

Denouncing Hate Crimes. The first set of documents were collected from public school board documents posted on the schoolboard website. A search for mention of "Ethnic Studies" yielded documents from twenty-three out of the fifty-six "current meetings" posted on the website. Eighteen initial agendas and supporting documents were studied for content mentioning Ethnic Studies. Five of those eighteen documents did not directly mention Ethnic Studies, but included Ethnic Studies themes, like centering BIPOC voices. These documents included resolutions denouncing racism, Latinx hate, AAPI hate, the condemnation of the Capitol attack on January 6, 2021, supporting LGBTQIA students and families and a board policy outlining the district's philosophy, goals, and comprehensive plans to promote equity.

The documents denouncing hate-crimes, White supremacy, and supporting marginalized communities point to the socio-political context of the district and mindset of the school board. The explicit top-down support of traditionally marginalized communities, the four

major communities also mentioned in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (2021) – African American, Chicano/a/x and Latino/a/x, Native American, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities – sent a public message about the school board's dedication to and outward support for families, students, and staff from these communities. That dedication was noted within the Ethnic Studies Committee's "Glows and Grows" document where school board and school district support were noted as a strength within the district. The group wrote:

> very supportive district of Ethnic Studies, connected to the country and state, admin, the board and the exec team all support the work. It is so helpful to have that backing as some parents may resist the work. It gives courage to do the work knowing that we have the backing.

DEIB Resolution. The school board adopted the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee resolution and the Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee resolution at the same board meeting in December of 2019. Each resolution started with the same context of outlining California's and the district's diverse student demographics and the district's mission statement. The DEIB resolution followed a similar pattern articulated in the Ethnic Studies Resolution analysis; connecting the research on DEIB initiatives to district goals and vision. The purpose of the DEIB committee was to outline governance decisions and policy change. It is an organizational decision-making group outlines goals and drafts equity policy and goals within human resources, business services and educational services within the district. Ethnic Studies is also mentioned in this document.

The overlap in language and the timing of the adoption of these two resolutions seemed intentional. In one document presented at the first Ethnic Studies Steering Committee, the discrete as well as overlapping goals of these committees were outlined. While the Ethnic

Studies Committee and adoption pertains to culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, and professional development, the DEIB Committee could outline policy, recommendations, and services that support the Ethnic Studies work. Each committee was focused on improving student learning outcomes students in the district with the "goal of students seeing themselves mirrored in the teaching staff, administration, curriculum, community, and holiday celebrations." The DEIB Committee description was focused on adopting policies which require the district and schools to participate in certain actions like the adoption of a DEIB policy which outlined hiring practice goals, established an LGBTQIA subcommittee, and focused on other areas of inclusion and representation in schools.

Research Question 2

How did educators (teachers and administrators) talk about their connection and commitment to Ethnic Studies? What language and underlying assumptions about race were" used to express these connections and commitments? What did educators see as barriers to Ethnic Studies implementation?

Educator Interpretations of Educational Spaces

In discussing the motivation and the challenges for implementing Ethnic Studies, interviews with district and site administrators as well as focus groups with teachers revealed a common view that school is a traditionally "White space." The term "White space" was used by a participant to describe her understanding of who holds the power in schools, shaping the culture and curriculum. Comparing Title I schools and Non-Title I schools, one district leader, Mrs. Swift, noted that in Title I schools she saw a greater racial diversity in the teaching staff. She described that generally teachers wanted to talk about race and social

justice at Title I schools. Title I refers a school with 40% or more of its students classified as low income. However, the percentage of students who attend high poverty schools is highest for Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Pacific Islander students (NCES, 2022a). Mrs. Swift described non-Title I schools as a Whiter space where teachers were more timid talking about race, social justice issues were seen as taboo, and staff feared parent backlash for approaching racially significant topics. In both schools, Mrs. Swift recognized that the PTAs and other school parent leadership tended to be White. Mrs. Swift noted:

> School is traditionally a White space. So even if the student population isn't majority White, that often times it can still be a White space because the PTO or PTA leaders are White. The majority of teachers are White. And so the dominant culture and the dominant ideals and philosophies come from White schooling.

Articulating a similar sentiment from his perspective as an experienced black, male teacher, Mr. Edwards discussed how he does not always feel welcome in teacher spaces across the district, even with eighteen years of experience and a Master's degree in education. He states:

> [I'm] just fearful that, well, I could only imagine if I'm treated this way and I'm a colleague and they're here, and you know that I'm a teacher because I'm in a teacher's space, right? How are you treating the six-year-old or the seven-year-old, the seventh grader with a hoodie on? Right? Those are real biases.

A district literacy coach, Mrs. López, at a Title I school described parent focus group responses regarding how welcome they felt at their school remarking, "…and surprisingly, as much as we think we're welcoming, not everybody feels welcomed."

Two principals within the study noted similar themes regarding the Whiteness of the school system. One principal, Mr. Rizal, who identifies as an immigrant, discussed how those educated within this system can become conditioned by the system that supports what he calls White supremacy values. He noted, "We've all grown up in this society. We've been

138

educated in this society, and we have to decolonize our own self, right? Because otherwise, if you're not doing that, then you will continue the systems." Similarly, another principal, Mr. Allen mentioned his challenges with his mostly White staff who defer to him to speak on ethnic perspectives because of his diverse ethnic background. To this administrator, his staff deferring to him to speak to the experiences of "ethnic people," spoke to the White majority in the teacher work force and the Whiteness of the values taught within the system, which he called the "Whitestream" culture. He noted that these values, when left unexamined, become transmitted to the students because teachers can unintentionally or intentionally add value to particular content.

Explaining how these values were transmitted in his own education, Mr. Rizal describes his attempts to embrace a more authentic leadership style for him. He describes his leadership style as grounded in collectivism, focusing on interconnectedness and belonging over the values of efficiency and consistency. Mr. Rizal reflected on the discontinuity between the current paradigm of leadership and a more collectivist style of leadership:

> [the] formulaic way of leadership isn't the way to go. But, that is what this society worships. Because it worships efficiency and consistency... and in a collectivist society it is about human relations and interactions, right? And if we're talking about people, which is education, we have to prioritize that, you know? It's not the business of generating profit, right? You know, were' talking about people. So how do we then, put the value of efficiency and consistency over collectivism? And that's what's happening.

Turning toward the district's published implementation plan and comparing it to the essence of Ethnic Studies values, Mr. Rizal articulates an understanding regarding the need for systems and plans, but that to him, it cannot limit the work that needs to be done with the people within the system.

Ms. Flowers, a White administrator, described how challenging and uncomfortable it was to learn that her racial experiences influenced her perceptions and biases:

> I said, "I don't see color. People are people." And I remember getting schooled constantly. I always thought I had good intentions. I always thought I was doing what was best for my students and my families. But the more time I spent on these committees and in these meetings, the more I learned I wasn't. It took me a very long time to see that. So I served on the committees and did the work, but I would never have said I was a racist. But the deeper you go into the work, the more you see that you are. That your experiences, you can have good intentions, right? You can want what's best for everybody, but you have to acknowledge the fact that you come with biases. So that took me a very long time.

This sentiment reflects this individual's acknowledgment that her experiences within the system have shaped her perceptions. She thought of herself as "not racist" and "well-intentioned." As she listened to the stories of her colleagues of color and explored the systemic causes behind what was then called the achievement gap, Ms. Flowers articulated how she began to see that her biases were shaped by the same system that her colleagues of color were describing as unfair and hurtful.

In several focus groups, teachers noted their motivation for either joining the Ethnic Studies Steering committee or teaching Ethnic Studies courses. All teachers discussed feeling a lack of representation for their own personal cultural and ethnic identities and histories in their own schooling. One teacher, Ms. Gamri, a self-proclaimed White presenting teacher with a Syrian and Armenian heritage explained that she joined the Ethnic Studies Steering Committee in its first year because she wanted to learn more and find ways to make her classroom more representative of her students. She noted that while she felt secure in her ethnicity as a child, she certainly did not see that aspect of her identity represented in the

curriculum. This fact was compounded around 9/11 when terrorism became the central

narrative about Middle Eastern cultures. She describes navigating those tensions as a child:

> The first time growing up hearing about Middle Eastern culture happened to be when September 11th happened. And so there was a stigma, you know, around being Middle Eastern and Arab and being grouped to grouping everyone together. I think it affected my mom more than me because I kind of come off looking as a European American or Anglo American. But really that's not who I am. And so for a long time I didn't understand kind of the fear that my mom had during that period. And it was just really sad, you know to see that how Middle Easterners were [portrayed], in the years following 9/11. And I was very confident in my identity and who I was. And I would tell people I'm half-Armenian, half-Syrian and be really proud of the fact.

The first opportunity she had to discuss her culture with her classmates was to counter the

narrative being told in the media of the time. While the curriculum did not contain the

content she felt compelled to counter, it did not supply teachers or students with alternative

narratives. She recalls the first time she learned about Middle Eastern contributions to

society:

> But it wasn't until middle school where I got to experience in history class learning about Armenians and what Middle Eastern people contributed to society. So it wasn't until that time frame where I finally got to see people that were from my culture and my ethnicity being represented in a positive way.

Mr. Macias describes a similar story about feeling alienated by his lack of representation in

school curriculum:

> I always tell the story that I didn't read an entire book when I was in school, because none of the books had characters that were like me. They just didn't. Until I was a junior in high school and I read this book, it was called "Always Running" by Luis Rodriguez. And it was about this guy. And he wasn't even exactly like me. He was just a Mexican American guy that grew up on the streets of East LA…But I could just relate to this guy, you know, the way the dialogue was written…there was some Spanish slang words in there, even though I don't speak fluent Spanish, but I could just relate…but I was already a Junior in high school. I hated reading. I didn't wanna read, you know? And for me it's like why is that? Why didn't I like to read? Well, I figured it is because I didn't care….

141

For Mr. Macias., this realization fueled his dedication to Ethnic Studies implementation and his identity as to the type of teacher he wanted to be:

I wanted to teach Ethnic Studies [because] I want the curriculum to reflect the students.

And so, me personally, going through school, I hated, hated history, you know because it was all European history when I was a kid. It was all about the King and the Renaissance and I didn't really care. I was like, "this is so foreign to me… it didn't relate to me," you know? And then when I finally started learning US history, I'm a third generation American, I was like, "oh okay. I like this." And then I really got into it and that's why I became passionate about it.

These teachers described how seeing themselves in the curriculum had profound impacts on how they saw themselves as learners and later developed their sense of purpose as educators.

Further, Mr. Edwards discusses how biases show up in the classroom and on the playground. He describes experiences where his kindergarteners say things like, "boys can't wear pink." Mr. Edwards is firm in addressing even the most innocent assumptions and biases.

Let's tie it to Ethnic Studies, but culturally relevant is addressing things when they happen. Like there's gonna be things that are said out on the playground. There's gonna be conversations you overhear and you can choose to address it, right? That's the whole, "I'm not racist" or anti-racist meaning – you're leaning in. So I gotta lean in and not saying they're saying racist things, but I mean that element of you have to be proactive. So when you hear something or notice something in your classroom you ignore it, you're validating it. And so it's really important as teachers, up we own this space and we make sure we address all those things because when we let biases show up in our classroom and we do nothing, then we validate those biases.

These teachers and administrators articulated how the system shaped their value systems and perceptions of self as students, teachers, and leaders. The teachers spoke of how their lack of representation in the curriculum growing up and then finally having the opportunity to connect to the content were driving factors in their motivation to do the work as teachers.

Two of the administrators spoke of how they developed an awareness of how that system shaped those beliefs and how they worked or are working on deconditioning themselves from this "Whitestream" culture. Finally, Mr. Edwards's discussion of how he sees the "White Space" play out on the playground and in the classroom, began the discussion of recognizing and disrupting previously held beliefs and assumptions.

Disrupting the Status Quo

In this particular district, beyond the Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose, there is not a common agreement on what Ethnic Studies is and what it is not. Several administrators noted, "we have to define what it is and what it isn't." Throughout the documents, interviews, and focus groups there were two main ways that educators discussed Ethnic Studies. Some saw it as a discrete subject and some saw it as a lens or framework to be woven throughout the curriculum and environment. Generally those who spoke about Ethnic Studies from an upper-grade and middle school perspective saw it as its own discrete subject. In this view, Ethnic Studies was seen as a semester or year-long elective or easily woven into United States History courses at the middle school level. This group talked about exploring anti-racism from a more historical and systems standpoint. The other perspective was that Ethnic Studies is a layer that exists on a continuum partially encompassed by content which focused on "local history" and "untold stories." But for these educators the content was only a piece of the puzzle. These individuals talked about Ethnic Studies as an interdisciplinary approach that influenced classroom and school culture and framed teacher's thinking around curricular and pedagogical decisions. This group tended to talk about anti-bias, anti-racism, and the social justice standards as these concepts show up in the daily lives of students and as

a description for the kind of classroom and school community they wanted to establish with their students. Both groups brought up themes of disruption.

Some teachers, administrators, and Ethnic Studies committee documents discussed the need for and attempts to disrupt the traditional White space of schooling. Disruption in this context refers to providing greater opportunities for multiple voices in decision making, shaping the school culture, and within the curriculum. Most of the administrators and the upper-grade and middle school teachers in this study described Ethnic Studies as an approach to teaching multiple perspectives in history, particularly the perspectives and values of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx peoples. Many of them talked about how these perspectives and values were not well known by the current teaching force, so one key element for them was to provide experience and training to help people to unpack their hidden biases so that they could create inclusive conditions and curriculum that value and reflect the cultures and values of all of their students. They spoke about these from leadership perspectives, developing self-awareness and critical pedagogical lenses, classroom conditions, and curriculum.

Collaborative Disruption. All of the district and site administrators interviewed described the need to challenge and disrupt the inequities perpetuated by the current educational paradigm, citing collectivist values such as relationship building, community orientation, and collaboration. One district administrator, Ms. Darla, describes the power of collaboration in developing units that align content and pedagogy. At a unit development day for the district's English Language Development model, teachers were designing a thematic unit entitled "Conquered vs. Settled." One key strategy used by this group was the use of

144

chants to teach vocabulary. Ms. Darla noted the Ethnic Studies and DEIB work happening in

the district as well as the racial unrest happening in the United States as the context for the

conversation. When one teacher spoke up and said, "Well, perhaps our Native American

chant should not be to a military cadence." Ms. Darla described the team's response:

> And we went, "how did we do that?!" ... But it goes back to, you know, when we
> know better, we do better, and it's honoring the voice of the teachers. It's
> honoring those voices who are saying, "Yeah, I'm not comfortable with this."
> And, you know, when we're talking about such a delicate issue, and particularly
> around Native American peoples, why don't we look at poetry? Why don't we
> look at, you know, other things that are authentic? ... It's being okay with saying,
> "Yeah, it doesn't work here. I'm not sure what does, but for sure that doesn't
> work here."

Ms. Darla's musing and the team's response is an example of the teacher's and team's

critical awareness for the alignment of content and pedagogy as a part of Ethnic Studies.

Through collaboration, looking at the curriculum through multiple perspectives, and

challenging the prescribed paradigm, the team was able to recognize the mistake in their

initial planning phases and "did better." In that moment, a teacher challenged the

conventional practice and the program leaders acknowledged their mistake. The combination

of these actions, challenging the paradigm to promote greater authenticity between content

and pedagogy and leaders validating the point of view and acknowledging mistakes, led to

further dialogue within the team. This same team later challenged how the curriculum

glanced over the Triangle Trade routes where European ships made "pit stops" in Africa. Ms.

Darla described how the team grappled with presenting both the tremendous technological

advances of the time as well as the horrific subjugation of an entire race of people for

economic gain. The story Ms. Darla mentioned that was missing for them was the narrative

of innovation and resilience displayed by the African communities at this time.

145

Need for Consistency in Culture and Practice. In her discussion of how we might

create the conditions to change the system for alignment to Ethnic Studies values, Mrs. Swift,

a district administrator noted, "How are folks across the system, showing up as leaders for

equity and willing to challenge and disrupt inequities in the system…We gotta go deeper

with equity. We have to roll up our sleeves and do more." Mr. Allen, a site administrator also

articulated the need for the allowance for mistakes beyond the superficial:

> …really creating a space where people are challenging things, and challenging
> paradigms, is gonna be really where we're gonna need to go. I think the other
> piece that goes along with it is that understanding that this is complex, right? And
> so, I feel like even though we're told, "learning is all about making mistakes," and
> it's great in theory to say that, but in practice, what it sounds like is, "you made a
> mistake." …How can we really allow for a disruptive initiative to take hold if
> where saying on the one hand, "it's all about learning," and then on the other hand
> we're saying, "you're not following the rules. You're not doing what you're
> supposed to be doing," that kind of thing. So you're getting chastised for trying
> things, for innovating. So you can't have it both ways. So you have to be able to
> bear the brunt of making mistakes.

Mr. Allen articulates a tension that several administrators alluded to as it related to

challenging the current paradigm. He and Mr. Rizal explained that one has to be willing to

not only question and call out the issues, but that they have to be willing to act and try

something that may be considered taboo. However, while there is general acknowledgement

that things have to change within the system, Mr. Allen articulates that he feels sometimes

mistakes are approached with chastising rather than with the element of learning and

reflecting. Mr. Rizal notes that challenging the paradigm through action sometimes "pisses

people off. They're uncomfortable." For them challenging the current paradigm involves

taking risks, and the concern is how it will be received by constituents, parents, colleagues,

and superiors within the system. As noted with Ms. Darla's experience, the second part to

this equation is an authentic allowance for mistakes. The difference in the two examples is that in Ms. Darla's example, the group had time to discuss and deliberate on the issue, in other words seeking to understand perspectives, while Mr. Allen's example indicates a dedication to compliance. In Ms. Darla's example, mistakes are opportunities to learn through dialogue, exploration, and unpacking whereas in Mr. Allen's example mistakes are a point of disciplinary action.

The administrators in this study also described the tension of balancing agendas and sets of rules with prioritizing authenticity and relationships. Mr. Rizal noted that people within the system can be uncomfortable with an "off the script" approach. Mr. Rizal notes that systems should support the work of implementation but the agenda should not limit the process of engaging people. He recalls how people in both his staff meetings and district leadership meetings start to panic when the group is running low on time. In those instances two types of tensions arise. The first instance he describes is those facilitating the meeting can "panic" and cut the dialogue short in order to attend to the other agenda items, cutting off engagement toward the objective. The second instance he describes from his own staff meetings where he does not always "follow the script." He notes that he values the conversation because he learns from others, but that "it pisses people off and makes people uncomfortable. Because, you know, I'm not always following the script." He describes a deep connection to the objectives and goals for the purpose of the meetings, but it's more important to him to see where the community is going to take it.

Backlash: Fear and Urgency within the School

District Amid Social Contention with Ethnic

Studies

Some awareness of the broader social contention with Ethnic Studies was evident in the board resolution. The Ethnic Studies Committee notes, teachers, and administrators all expressed some concern with socio-political challenges associated with Ethnic Studies and the vilification of CRT and Ethnic Studies in the media in the time leading up to and during the study. The board resolution discussed Ethnic Studies as a model that "promotes respect and understanding among races, supports student success and teaches critical thinking skills, civic engagement skills, and build citizenship for all students," clarifying the school board's vision for Ethnic Studies.

The social contention was mentioned as a challenge by several site and district administrators, within the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee notes, and by teachers in focus groups. One document from the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee stated, "Not all parties see the value of this. How can we bring diverse experience to communities and parents who may resist?" Another group documented their idea that "some foundation work [is] needed for parents to develop their anti-racist lens and mindset." Ms. Darla, a district administrator discussed that fear existed for staff when it comes to Ethnic Studies and DEIB work. Mr. Allen, a school administrator noted, "From my vantage point, as a principal, there are lots of concerns and a lot of them stem from the community." Teachers and Ms. Flowers, a school administrator, articulated an anticipation for some internal resistance toward district-

wide implementation of Ethnic Studies as well. Mrs. Swift, a district administrator, explained her experience:

> You're not teaching anything controversial, but they see that because of what it's called. It's diversity. It's inclusion. And because of all the tension across the country with Critical Race Theory, they're [educators] afraid that the parent or the community's going to interpret them as teaching Critical Race Theory. I don't even know if anybody knows what it is, but it's got the word race in it. And so they're like, "if I'm teaching race in the classroom, I'm gonna get backlash and end up on the news." So there's some fears, and in some ways, legitimate fears because of, you know, what's gone on across the country and teachers getting fired.

All five school administrators interviewed in this study described the fear they sensed within the system with regard to Ethnic Studies and conversations about race. Ms. Darla, a district administrator, interpreted that fear as stemming from the political atmosphere combined with not having clear parameters for how to teach Ethnic Studies throughout the grades. Mr. Rizal and Mr. Allen, site administrators, asserted that the fear comes from a lack of experience and lack of self-understanding when it comes to cultural competency and racial identity. Even with these hypotheses regarding the source of fear and contention, both Ms. Darla and Mrs. Swift explained that much of the current workforce would need more training because they thought embarking on this work district-wide, without training, vision, and clear parameters could "do more harm than good."

On the other hand an urgency to scale up the culturally responsive, anti-racist work clearly existed within the committees. One group, reflecting on the district's status in 2020-2021, acknowledged, "Not doing this work is harmful." The same group documented, "There will be resistance to change but we need to provide the background information as to why the work is so critical and important." Still another sub-group within the Ethnic Studies

149

committee cited the need for bodily autonomy for Black girls as a call for urgency. Several

teachers also discussed the sense of urgency they felt for their motivation in doing Ethnic

Studies work. Mr. Edwards, a classroom teacher, explained:

> There's gotta be a sense of…urgency. That's how I look at my class every single day. I don't do this work out of fear. Or I guess I do do it outta some elements of fear. The fear that this [racism] will continue. That the world we live in is not the world that I want. So there's a sense of urgency that I'm trying to, in my classroom, create a space…that will change the world for the better. So I think with all teachers, if they have biases like you asked earlier, then they need to address those ASAP.

This discussion of a sense of urgency, documented in all three methods of data collection

covered areas of school culture and climate, curriculum, professional development,

professional evaluation, and parent education.

Research Question 3

What leadership moves or perspectives do administrators and teachers think will support

the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies? How might leadership for Ethnic Studies

implementation be characterized?

Grassroots Leadership Perspectives

During the district's Ethnic Studies Steering Committee's first year, the group studied the

initial Ethnic Studies Guiding Principles (LESMCC, n.d.) which later turned into what is now

described as the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. As they studied those

principles they also reflected on where the district had strengths and areas for growth. One

growth area included opportunities for teachers to both have and lead conversations. One

group documented:

> There can be more at our site level. Being at parts of the district that are more privileged, the teachers don't get the same opportunities for professional

development to have the conversations – especially with colleagues. The information is not trickling down fast enough.

Still another group wrote:

Acknowledging that there are a lot of teachers in the district doing the work. We need to acknowledge this. A few names that are mentioned. Others are more modest. Recognize those teachers who are already doing it. How can we get more teachers of color and culturally proficient teachers in the adoption committees?

These quotes outlined the fact that there are pockets of teachers throughout the district who are either doing the Ethnic Studies work or primed to be able to make that shift. It points to a district community of grassroots teacher leaders that already exist in the system.

Grassroots versus top-down leadership was a tension that was evident throughout the focus groups and interviews as well. There were simultaneously acknowledgements for the need to learn from and uplift voices and practitioners from the district and community. However, there was acknowledgement that district and teacher's union leadership were powerful influencers. Three types of grassroots leadership became evident: learning from the community, those traditionally marginalized, and becoming accountable to community members; building upon the expertise and knowledge of the collective workforce; and student voice in the classroom. Throughout the interviews and committee documents, a theme of "space to honor voices closest to the issue." At the same time, these committees, administrators and teachers all discussed the importance of state, district, and teacher's union influence and support.

Ms. Flowers shared that her knowledge of Ethnic Studies came from supporting a middle school teacher who was interested in teaching it as an elective. Mr. Rizal, describing how decolonized school leadership focuses on uplifting and integrating the voices of the

community into school community and practice, advocated for highlighting the stories of those in our communities like the bus driver who had to cross the Rio Grande and was held in a holding house or the community liaison who immigrated from Mexico and started working in our school district supporting students and families who have recently immigrated, teaching them to navigate the system, find resources, and feel connected to school. Mr. Rizal explains:

> I'm always about learning from the people in the local community. Perhaps accessing the stories of the local communities that represent what it is that they say they're doing. Accessing the stories of the elders, accessing the people that know this topic best, regardless of their educational degrees, 'cuz we put so much value on that, right?…the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.

Identifying this as a collectivist, decolonizing approach, Mr. Rizal articulates a deep connection for him and his staff to learn, highlight, and build on the multiplicity of experiences of those in the community his school serves. In particular, he discusses how this relates to curriculum:

> I think we have to find resources, you know, that will connect us to the curriculum based on lived experiences. And that's easy enough to do. If we're not lazy. But it's talking about the Mexican immigration in California, talk to [the community liaison]. We have those community resources.

While Mr. Rizal talks about the experiences of all in the local school community, Mrs. López discusses grassroots leadership on the professional side of the work. Mrs. López, explains how her team uses grassroots leadership to create ownership of the cultural movement the school was attempting:

> I would have conversations with them and say, "Hey, what do you know about this work?" And then they're shooting me resources. And so just really paying homage to everybody who has contributed to the work we're doing. Like we're saying, "Hey, Rachel sent us this resource, we thought everybody would want it,"

> so that it's a collaborative effort. It's not just the principal and the two coaches saying this is what you have to do now.

Teachers in the focus groups indicated their passion for this work, a sense of urgency, and a willingness to share their practice. Mr. Edwards, a kindergarten teacher, and Mr. Macias, a middle school Ethnic Studies, former Social Studies teacher, both offered to open their classrooms to observations and dialogue with other teachers. Both felt a drive to share what they have found to be successful at their grade levels regarding Ethnic Studies implementation.

A third form of grassroots leadership was alluded to in both the administrative interviews and teacher focus groups, that of student voice. Several administrators noted that Ethnic Studies curriculum should be focused on "the students in front of us." However, it was Mrs. Neal, Ms. Gamri and Mr. Edwards who mentioned the importance of student involvement in developing the classroom culture and climate and getting to know the students well enough to be able to adapt the curriculum to their particular interests, identities, and needs. Student leadership was not discussed directly within the interviews, focus groups, and documents, except for within Ethnic Studies Unit Development document provided by one of the Ethnic Studies subcommittees. That said, the concept of centering the students in the classroom as a driving force for culturally relevant curriculum and culturally sustaining pedagogies was a theme that occurred throughout the documents, focus groups, and interviews.

Top-Down Leadership Moves

At the top of this section, I discussed that there existed a tension between grassroots leadership and top-down leadership. The Ethnic Studies Steering Committee reflections, teachers, and administrators all discussed the importance of having a common vision,

153

language, and framework to progress the work forward. Hiring practice, evaluation practices and professional development were all cited examples of top-down leadership. The discussion regarding hiring throughout the documents included hiring staff, teachers, and administrators who are representative of the student population and are dedicated to the mission to make schooling a more culturally sustaining and inclusive space. Professional development was discussed in-depth. Evaluation practices were discussed in terms of both the teacher's union involvement and as a means for vetting and coaching new and permanent teachers.

The role of top-down leadership was discussed regarding the level of investment it will take to address the cultural needs for systemic implementation of Ethnic Studies in K-8. Mr. Edwards states that it cannot be sustained with one, two or even three professional development sessions a year.

> I really do think the principals have to own it. Because they're the ones that help model what is at the school…if principals are really invested in this, right? Not just for the checklist scenario, but for the impact it'll have, which will be better for the kids…. Then it's gonna have to be an ongoing conversation and it's gonna have to be PLCs and so forth to see where, looking at the curriculum or looking at what's being handed to us or what we're already doing and how we're developing within our own classrooms so that it's a part of the culture and part of the environment at the school.

He continued to explain that he thought principals will need to know what Ethnic Studies looks like across the grades in practice, so continuous classroom visits, in his view, were essential. Classroom visits for administrators to develop this professional understanding of what Ethnic Studies looks like in practice was one way in which he thought visits were important. Within that focus group Mr. Edwards and Mrs. López also discussed the importance of classroom visits for administrators and coaches to give feedback, fine-tune, or

have the hard-conversation regarding the district vision and the individual's professional

goals regarding Ethnic Studies implementation.

Interviews, focus groups, and documents all expressed and understanding that that it

would take significant time and effort for teachers to learn how to become critically aware,

learn Ethnic Studies foundations, critique existing curriculum, and find more appropriate

content. Mr. Edwards discusses his wish for the teacher's union support in that effort:

> …because teachers are complaining about having more work and it's related to
> Ethnic Studies, right. And they're going to give power to that group, and then it's
> gonna become a much bigger group than it needs to be. So if they're gonna
> support this then they need to give good advice to those that are saying, "but I
> wanna push back because this is just another thing." Uplift the work and say why
> it's necessary. So I think that's where the union can play a part. Supporting this or
> giving power to people that shouldn't have power in that space…

Even as Mr. Edwards talked about the top-down guidance that the teachers' union leadership

could provide for its members, he continued discussing the grassroots leadership needed

from the teacher's union general membership:

> …it's gotta be a non-negotiable. And it's really hard to say when things are non-
> negotiable. It's really hard for them to say that. And that's why if it's gonna be a
> non-negotiable we need to get the union to back it up. Because if we don't get the
> union to back it up, then we're gonna have those loud people who are gonna be
> like, I don't wanna teach that or why do I have to teach that? Well then as a union
> we need to say, "no this is for our students and our students are our biggest
> interests. And so we need to make sure that we as a union stand, stand very firm
> in that.

Within the Ethnic Studies Steering Committee "Glows and Grows" document, one team

reflected on the need to, "start a conversation with OGEA and District Leadership" around

teacher interview procedures and/or evaluations.

Both grassroots leadership and top-down support were discussed when it came to Ethnic

Studies implementation. Care and respect for the community and cultural wealth that existed

within the system was highly evident in some interviews, focus groups, and documents. Recognizing the professional capital within the organization of teachers who are doing the work was also important to those within the interviews and focus groups and mentioned in the documents. Students and student culture and identity were a focus for those who participated in the study. Participants and documents noted the importance of top-down administrative and union leadership to hold and reinforce the space for the shifts needed for Ethnic Studies implementation.

Research Question 4

What do professionals (teachers and administrators) view as professional development needs within the district for the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies?

Professional Development: Content and Pedagogy

Professional Development was discussed throughout the documents, interviews and focus groups as a need for Ethnic Studies implementation in the district. Several discrete topics of professional development were discussed. Developing teachers' cultural competency, anti-bias lens, and critical consciousness was one topic that was discussed in-depth. The second topic discussed included teacher facilitation skills including how to facilitate courageous and difficult conversations in the classroom and how to hold restorative practices. Finally, modeling the expected classroom pedagogical shifts within the structure of professional development delivery was important in the views of both teachers and administrators in this study.

Mindset and Foundations. Within the Ethnic Studies Committee documents, a focus on anti-racism, implicit bias training, and criticality as the content for professional development

was focus that was repeated throughout multiple documents. The following were identified within several different documents:

- Tools and training/professional development to help grow teachers' shifting mindsets, identifying our biases.

- Teach teachers how to have a critical lens. More anti-racist PD at site.

- Anti-Racist training for new teachers

- Teach teachers for foundational knowledge of how to have a critical lens.

- Understanding critical race theory.

Anti-bias curriculum concepts were also linked in the curricular resources associated with the first year Ethnic Studies presentations.

Mrs. López, a participant in the Ethnic Studies Committee and a coach within the district explained that a fellow coach at her school site and her principal decided that they were going to embark on doing anti-bias, anti-racist professional development because they saw it as foundational to Ethnic Studies. She explained that the staff started by reading a book called, *Start Here, Start Now* (Kleinrock, 2021). Mrs. López described how staff was responsible for reading a common chapter, trying some of the strategies in that chapter, and then sharing at their next convening how things went. She explained how the coaches and the principal prompted teacher reflection on their own biases, on common texts, and eventually on curriculum. She reflected:

> They're responsible for reading that chapter, trying to at least put into practice some of the strategies. Then coming back and sharing, "How did it go? What are some things that are coming up for you?" All at the same time as we're addressing our biases and addressing what does racism look like and what does it mean to be anti-racist? All at the same time as we are building trust…it's gonna make some people uncomfortable. And it has. But for the most part, everyone has

157

shown up. All of the teachers have shown up prepared. They've participated. We don't always agree on things, but that's what makes us grow. Like that's what helps make this work much more powerful…We're all learning and we're all human. And in order to grow, we need to be uncomfortable because if we're not uncomfortable and thinking about our thinking, then we're not growing.

For Mrs. López and her colleagues, their ultimate goal was to teach teachers how to be critical thinkers when it comes to curriculum and pedagogy and model that with their students, allowing students a place to be critical of the information they are receiving.

So how are we gonna look at that curriculum and present it to the teachers and say, "What's wrong with this picture?" And that's our end goal, to teach teachers how to do that. Give them the tools that they need. Those that don't feel like they know how, give them the tools that they need to be able to look at the curriculum critical to be able to teach our kids how to see multiple perspectives and question what's being presented to them. We're not the end all be all of knowledge…I want them to feel empowered enough to say, "Hmm Ms. M, I'm not sure that's true. Let me go and investigate then I'll come back and we can have a conversation."

This notion of developing teachers' anti-bias lens and cultural competency was discussed indirectly by Ms. Darla earlier in this chapter when she reflected on how teachers questioned the alignment of the content and pedagogical moves as well as whether they were presenting the whole picture to students. Ms. Darla noted, "we went, 'How did we do that?' But it goes back to when we know better, we do better. And it's honoring the voice of the teachers."

Facilitating Courageous Conversations. A second focal area for the participants and articulated within the documents collected for this study included professional development in the area of facilitating restorative practices and courageous conversations. Beyond the classroom, courageous conversations were seen as a professional interaction model where critical dialogue could be held between colleagues about actions, policies and curriculum as we saw from Mrs. López's facilitation of anti-racism conversations and analyses. Multiple

sources cited anticipation and experience with discomfort for teachers when engaging in anti-racism and implicit bias training. Some teachers in the study also expressed a lack of confidence in facilitating courageous conversations in their classrooms. Courageous conversations were articulated as a protocol that could help facilitate those conversations. In their study of the CAESMC, one group reflected, "Ethnic Studies requires commitment from teachers and the school community – from deep content knowledge to professional development to sitting with the discomfort of difficult conversations."

Courageous conversations were discussed within the context of developing a caring and supportive classroom and school community. Within the Ethnic Studies Committee documents the following examples were documented:

- Spaces to have push and pull courageous conversations.

- Courageous Conversations PD

- Restorative Justice Practices in every school

Further, within a set of resources linked in the curriculum documents from the Ethnic Studies year one presentations, restorative practices were directly mentioned:

> Restorative practices in schools are based on restorative justice principles instead of punishment. They aim to build classroom communities that are supported by clear agreements, authentic communication, and specific tools to bring issues and conflicts forward in a helpful way.

Within the majority of the interview and documents, courageous conversations and restorative justice were not directly named but alluded to. For example in one of the resources linked in the year one committee documents included a resource called "Tribes Learning Community," outlined the Tribes curriculum as a democratic group process, not just a curriculum or cooperative activities. Tribes Learning Community is described as:

The "process is a sequence of events and activities that develops a positive classroom environment using five agreements among the students and adults. Tribes is a process that intentionalizes the teaching of social-collaborative skills within the academic context of the classroom. Tribes classrooms and schools are predicated on 4 Mutual Agreements:

- Active Listening

- Mutual Respect

- Appreciation/No Put Downs

- Rights to Pass/Participation

Active listening and mutual respect are both foundational components to both restorative practices and courageous conversations. One Ethnic Studies Committee group noted that Ethnic studies is about, "Teaching US history truthfully—teaching students to question." They then followed up that statement with a curricular suggestion which involved facilitating courageous conversations, "We have SEAL theme units to use as a springboard for courageous conversations."

One Ethnic Studies sub-group noted, "we are having a lot of conversations about equality. Teachers are having conversations with students and parents about why Ethnic Studies and anti-racism is important for the family." Ms. Gamri described giving her students time to process the January 6th Capitol insurrection through the use of journaling. She recalled:

> That moment for me was very eye-opening because you don't know the conversations that are being had at home and you wanna know the students' stories, but again you wanna be mindful and respectful of their experiences, but you also know that there are going to be conflicting views with others. And so how do you go about that. I think that's really difficult to navigate from where we stand in the classroom.

She described the importance of having students journal their raw thoughts and feelings about that event. Yet, for the whole group conversation, she reframed the conversation to focus on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, tied it back to the election, spent time discussing what those rights meant for all humans, and facilitated a conversation about what the students thought we could do to be better human beings. Mrs. G described a success she had with facilitating the courageous conversation in the classroom, but that it took a lot of preparation, courage, and self-awareness. Courageous conversations professional development was one of the proposals for next steps outlined by the year 1 Ethnic Studies Committee.

Pedagogical Alignment. The alignment of content and delivery of professional development was evident throughout the data. For example, if professional development is teaching about culturally sustaining pedagogies, then culturally sustaining pedagogies must be modeled throughout the delivery in addition to exploring the concept academically. Similar to the pedagogical alignment Ms. Darla's team discussed, Mrs. López also reflected on her team's process with teachers:

> We've talked it out with teachers. We just wanted to make sure were going in the right direction. Because if teachers are the ones who are our audience, we wanted to make sure that we have them there with us. And it's not just us speaking to them. We wanted it to be a dialogue and have them be a part of it.

Mr. Macias reflected on his participation the district's Ethnic Studies training with *Ehecatl* Wind Philosophy, an Ethnic Studies consulting team. He described that at each session, teachers were active participants in the training. Teachers participated in creating the content of the professional development at the same time as learning pedagogical skills and content to apply in their classrooms. For example:

161

> We had to pick a song that we thought was a revolutionary song or just a song that had to do with like your culture. A song that was like a protest that was standing up for something. So we did that in our training and then [my colleague] had the kids actually do it. So they did their own revolutionary songs, which was pretty cool.

Professional development that validates the participants' experiences and developed understanding and skill was also indirectly discussed by Mr. Rizal as he discussed his experiences. Mr. Rizal, questioned the Ethnic Studies implementation plan notes:

> District and site leader training at C&I. I don't know what that means. But who's going to do that? You're gonna tell me the experience of an immigrant, an English Learner?

This notion of having to learn about his experience from others while in the same room as those who need to learn about that experience was a challenge that seemed to come up in the Ethnic Studies Committee documents when they discussed recognizing teachers who are doing the work.

Research Question 5

What were the connections that teachers and administrators made between Ethnic Studies and curriculum and pedagogy?

Curriculum Challenges

One of the most talked about challenges as it pertains to implementing Ethnic Studies was the challenge of finding or creating curriculum. In several documents, themes such as adopting culturally relevant curriculum and "pushing curriculum developers to be more inclusive," indicated the perception that the existing curriculum did not meet the district needs in terms of its Ethnic Studies goals. Several administrators noted that the current history/social studies curriculum does not provide enough in the way of the counter narrative

162

in history. Ms. Flowers stated that the district's current adopted curriculum, "does not lend itself to any type of Ethnic Studies," while Ms. Darla noted, "it's knowing our standards…How does the curriculum I have address it, and how do I as the teacher bring that Ethnic Studies piece." Mr. Allen remarked, "…where is all of that history? And where is the understanding of how they envision themselves within that history?" These observations by administrators speak to the challenge of the availability of the counter narrative in the existing curriculum as well as the teacher's ability to know to how and what to look for in terms of balancing out the curriculum.

The Ethnic Studies Steering Committee notes articulate a similar focus of developing curriculum and developing teachers' pedagogical skills and mindset. Within the "Glows and Grows" reflections form the Ethnic Studies' first year, one group mentioned, "teachers are aware of the need for student representation and are working independently to find the curriculum." Additionally, by the end of the Committee's first year, one of the proposals for next steps included creating a "watch out for this" document. The committee included an image from their current adopted curriculum where in a White male social scientist was sitting in a chair with a clipboard looking down upon a Black man, wearing robes, sitting on the floor looking up at the White man. This image was used to prompt a discussion regarding the critical analysis of an adopted curriculum. The "watch out for this" document would call attention to problematic curriculum by grade level and include more "positive resources" to supplement curriculum and enhance lessons to me more culturally responsive and relevant.

While there is no evidence within the Ethnic Studies Committee year one or year two documents that such a document exists or is being widely used on a district scale, there

remained an on-going documentation of the committee's desire to closely examine current resources and existing curriculum for evidence that it provides all students with positive, asset-based representations in both year one and year two documents. In the year two Ethnic Studies Committee documents, subcommittees reviewing the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (CAESMC) noted that the curriculum should, "work toward greater inclusivity: Be inclusive of all students but you have to make choices: while maintaining priority to the four main Ethnic Groups whose histories have not been represented." The LCAP also mentions that it used survey results to prioritize the adoption of culturally relevant curriculum and to finalize the adoption of a culturally relevant and engaging science curriculum. These documents largely focused on critiquing existing curriculum, finding supplementary resources, and/or adopting new curriculum that is suitable for teaching from an Ethnic Studies lens. Only one meeting documented meeting presented resources for curriculum development.

Curriculum Development and Curriculum Adoption

There exists a tension in the area of who and to what extent teachers should create curriculum. On one hand, the documents, teachers, and administrators all noted that Ethnic Studies starts with the "students in the seat in front of us." On the other hand discussions seem to center around curriculum adoption and/or supplementation rather than creation. Perhaps the focus on supplementing curriculum stems from the district's recent and on-going participation in the development of an English Language curriculum though a rigorous multi-year professional development and implementation cycle described by three of the

164

administrators interviewed. That process was described by these administrators as a success with system-wide implementation. The Ethnic Studies Committee presented some of these modules as examples of culturally responsive lessons that the district could use within the K-6 adoption of Ethnic Studies. In that same presentation, possible entry points for presenting the counternarrative were highlighted within the district's Language Arts scope and sequence. Three of the elementary teachers in the focus groups named one of the modules as an example of curriculum that supported Ethnic Studies in their classrooms. Yet they all shared the sentiment that better curriculum was needed. While they all shared how they developed more inclusive curricula in their classrooms, the elementary teachers in this district did not agree on whether or not they should be the creators of the curriculum. One teacher noted, "We are not curriculum makers," while another described his curriculum development ventures.

Even within the Ethnic Studies committee notes, there existed these two approaches to curriculum: adapting and creating. The first approach focused on adapting the existing curriculum. As mentioned above, one of the year 1 Ethnic Studies Committee agendas presented and highlighted possible entry points for Ethnic Studies content within the existing English Language Arts (ELA) and English Language Development (ELD) curriculums. Although it was mentioned and a sub-committee was dedicated to it on the Ethnic Studies year 2 documents, less attention was given to the social studies curriculum. One Ethnic Studies group reflecting on the districts' social studies curriculum documented, "What units fall short and how can me develop them to be more inclusive, diverse and anti-racist?" In other words, there were committee reflections, but there were no curriculum maps or

standards linked with highlighted content. That said, much of the ELA and ELD curriculums did include science and social studies themes. Ethnic Studies at the K-6 level did, however, focus on developing anti-biased classroom communities as well as content. The majority of the conversation and documentation focused on ensuring culturally relevant and responsive core curricula were more readily available for teachers.

Teachers within the study discussed several ways that they adapted the curriculum in their classrooms to be more representative of the students in their classroom. Several teachers mentioned using read-aloud texts to highlight key concepts and represent multiple experiences, cultures, and languages. For example Mrs. López recalled her intervention reading group was reading a book about silly inventions:

> I'm also trying to embed a little bit…I'm going home that night cuz I know that's the book I'm reading the next day and I'm looking up silly inventions. What are some silly inventions made by people of color so that I can highlight those things in addition to what they're reading about.

Other teachers described supplementing their curriculum using current events and standards as their guide. Mr. Edwards discussed adapting his kindergarten writing curriculum to uplift student voices:

> One thing towards the end of the school year related to Cesar Chavez, where kids do a little protest with the cafeteria. It's staged, it's not real. And the kids know it's not real and the cafeteria workers know it's not real. But we protest against this idea of always having milk. We write a letter to them and they reject it, right, reject this idea of having something other than milk. But then they agree to our terms and on a Friday we have orange juice available at the school site.

Supplementing curriculum was primarily discussed by teachers in the elementary grades or in spaces where Ethnic Studies was viewed as something to be integrated throughout the day or curriculum.

The second approach focused on curriculum or unit development. As mentioned previously, one of the documents linked in the year one committee notes included an "Ethnic Studies Curriculum Development Protocols/Guide." While this source did not contain a citation from its original source, Tintiangco-Cubales and Community Responsive Education were noted within the document. This document outlined both unit development and lesson planning templates and guidance. Within the Ethnic Studies year 2 documents, one group reflected on the need to develop standard for Ethnic Studies practice. Developing curriculum was discussed more within the context of middle school where Ethnic Studies was viewed as a discrete class with unique content. Mr. Macias explained that the process was time consuming yet fulfilling:

> Right now we're really trying to keep our heads above water. Like we're treading water and just barely because its finding the curriculum and like making it. All the stuff we're doing is so brand new and we wanna make sure that it's actually meaningful to the students. I would hate for my students just to go through this class and be like, "Oh, yeah, I learned about this and this, but I don't really care." I wanna make this as meaningful as possible to them and as engaging as I can. But, right now, I know this is not my best stuff. I know that and I gotta be okay with that because it's my first time teaching it. I just have high expectations for myself…but I can't do it all right this second.

Ms. Flowers notes that structuring time for teachers to dig into Ethnic Studies and create the curriculum is a challenge she foresees with district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation. She mentions that she has teachers that would do the curriculum creation work as well as teachers who would have no interest in it. These teachers, she believes, would teach the curriculum, but would not want to create it. Even given a curriculum, Ms. Flowers notes that there would have to be professional development, because "it is not a curriculum that you can just wing." Similarly, Mr. Allen questions whether the current teacher workforce has the

skills to implement an adopted curriculum. He argues that there's a hopeful spirit to Ethnic Studies that is beyond the details that are typically presented in adopted curriculum.

Ethnic Studies Pedagogies Evident in the District

Culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies were discussed earlier in this chapter. From a review of the Ethnic Studies Committee documents, focus groups, and interviews, a few key ideas were repeated and a process began to take shape. The concept of developing "brave spaces" (Arao & Clemens, 2013) in the classroom for students to feel empowered to speak up was noted three times within the Ethnic Studies Committee documents and once in focus group discussions. Essentially all focus group teachers discussed creating a caring, supportive, empathetic classroom community by getting to know students through assignments that brought home and cultural life into the classroom. They attributed the community building as essential to creating that "brave space."

A second component, and next in the process, teachers discussed facilitating dialogue using inquiry-based practices. Teachers described using read aloud texts, visuals (images or videos), guest speakers, and journal prompts to engage students in a particular topic. Teachers described these prompts as a way to understand the narratives that students are bringing to class. For example in her attempt to ascertain how students were processing the 2016 election after one student expressed a fear that her family would be deported, Ms. Gamri explained:

> I wanted to be mindful of the fact that there are gonna be families on both sides when it comes to politics. I wanted to give students the space to write. So I let them write their thoughts in their journal and I walked around to read over their shoulders and glance at some of the things that were said.

Once Ms. Gamri gained a sense of the narratives students were bringing to class and had a clear handle on her own biases regarding the topic, she expanded the scope of the narrative by connecting students with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Mr. Edwards described a similar process in his classroom where he facilitated a conversation on integrity after reading, "I Promise" by Lebron James (2020). Through a class conversation prompted by this book, Mr. Edwards gained an understanding of the kinds of promises his students could make to their families as well as the kinds of promises they wish their families would keep. Mr. Edwards explained that he was careful to draw out the theme of this book that promises more than mere words, they are followed by action. Both of these teachers explained how they reframed the narrative prompted by a current event or a text in terms of a community value.

Participants in the focus groups talked about using these inquiry-based and other strategies such as Socratic seminar and expert groups to problematize and process "age appropriate topics" like gender bias, age bias, current events, social justice issues, and in later grades, systems of oppression throughout history. Four of the five teachers discussed teaching methods of civic action such as letter writing and forms of protest, like marches in order to enact change. However, only one teacher took a less idealistic approach when he and his students discussed Colin Kaepernick's protest against police brutality. Mr. Macias described how he and his students discussed how this protest brought awareness to the issue but that it came at a cost to Kaepernick's NFL career.

In summary, a pedagogical process gleaned from focus groups, interviews and Ethnic Studies Committee documents. First teachers felt it was important to create "brave spaces"

(Arao & Clemens, 2013) by facilitating activities were students could share about their home and cultural lives at the same time as learning about others in their class. Next, teachers facilitated dialogue using inquiry-based practices using read alouds, guest speakers, visual thinking strategies, and journal prompts. These strategies were generally used to unpack and explore age appropriate topics including biases, current events, and issues of social justice. Once teachers understood the kinds of narratives students were bringing to class, they expanded on the scope of those narratives to reframe in terms of community values they wanted to teach. These values, they saw as universal. Finally, teachers described teaching methods of civic action such as letter writing campaigns and protests. In the younger grades, teachers were more concerned with teaching civic actions as yielding positive results, but in the upper grades, a more nuanced discussion was facilitated.

Summary of Key Findings

The exploration of one district's journey with the implementation of Ethnic Studies yielded several important findings. First, this district's journey with Ethnic Studies seemed to stem from a school board resolution to adopt Ethnic Studies at the K-8 level which outlined how Ethnic Studies addressed several district needs and vision elements, taking on almost an indoctrination quality. However, review of Ethnic Studies Committee documents revealed a broader support for and historical foundations for Ethnic Studies implementation in this district with an effort to understand what needs to be done to affect change. That said, Ethnic Studies implementation is not seen as having universal support, as some worried that their colleagues would see it as "the shiny thing" that will pass.

A second key finding from this study is how the participants and district documents capture and define critical consciousness in this district. Criticality was defined in terms of adult work and student outcomes in this district. That said, the primary focus for critical consciousness development was within the adult arena. Documents and discussions highlighted a perception that the adults in the system need to develop a greater sense of self-awareness of their own biases and preconceptions. With this understanding, it was assumed that teachers could develop a greater awareness of how the curriculum represents or excludes students or whether it presents a singular view of history. It was also assumed that with greater self-awareness, teachers and administrators could create culturally sustaining environments and adopt systems to support the work. Within the student arena, the discussion was focused on students becoming more aware of intersectionality, individual and group preconceptions, issues of inequality, and later social structures that promote social injustice.

Third, the educators within the district were still developing a common definition for and vision of Ethnic Studies. It was beginning to outline how to address barriers to implementation. The educators within this district discussed Ethnic Studies in two distinct ways: a) as a classroom or school cultural element; and b) as a discrete subject. In defining Ethnic Studies as a school or cultural element, they began to make the case for adopting culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. In the discrete subject discussion, educators discussed the need for curriculum or time to curate resources and create curriculum that was representative, intersectional, and centered counter-narrative perspectives. Which

perspectives to include and how to ensure inclusion of those perspectives were representative of "the students in the seats in front of us," was an on-going dilemma.

A fourth finding illustrated how individuals feared and dealt with backlash with Ethnic Studies implementation. Discussions regarding administrative support and ownership, or top-down leadership supports were seen as important for encouraging implementation on the classroom level. Documents and participants articulated how the outward support of anti-racist views and policy created an environment where teachers felt safer to address and discuss these issues in their classrooms. They felt that administrative buy-in and district support provided a layer of protection against the broader social contention they had either experienced in their practice or seen in the media.

At the same time as articulating the importance of top-down support for Ethnic Studies implementation, educators in this district articulated a vision for grassroots leadership. In this district grassroots leadership meant learning from and being accountable to the community, building upon the expertise of the current workforce, and fostering student voices and relationships to adjust curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom environments to be more sustaining and representative. This district placed high value on cultivating the expertise of the early adopters of Ethnic Studies in this district. Those that considered themselves as early adopters offered to open their classrooms to colleague observation and debrief sessions. Educators within this study articulated a desire for in-school and cross-school collaboration as a means for garnering new ideas and resources and developing a sense of collective efficacy. That said, within all of these conversations, a strategic plan or outline for how these might be facilitated has yet to be articulated.

Final major finding was the educators' perceptions of professional development needs with regard to Ethnic Studies implementation. Educators articulated that they desired on-going professional development that was pedagogically aligned to the content of the professional development. Major themes for professional development included development around Ethnic Studies mindsets and foundations. For example, educators thought more development was needed regarding becoming aware of personal biases and preconceptions, developing an anti-racist point of view, and developing a sense of criticality. A second set of major themes included facilitation skills including the facilitation of courageous conversations and restorative practices. Courageous conversations were also discussed as a professional interaction model. While it was alluded to in conversations and in the statement of purpose, culturally sustaining pedagogies was missing from the conversations regarding necessary professional development. Also alluded to within the pedagogy conversation, but not explicitly named or articulated as a professional development need were the presence of YPAR, service learning, place-based learning, and other community responsive pedagogies.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter summarizes this study and its findings. Within the summary of findings, conclusions are drawn about school culture, critical consciousness, and/or the development of collective efficacy. I present four recommendations for practice and two for future research. This chapter concludes with implications for future practice and a review of the various systemic elements that may support with Ethnic Studies implementation in some K-8 settings.

Summary of the Study

This was a descriptive study of a district engaged with implementing Ethnic Studies at the K-8 level. Given that the purpose of Ethnic Studies is to critique systemic racism and its impact on personal and social life (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014) and is, by nature, a field of study that challenges normative structures, I sought to understand what changes and supports might be needed for implementation. I used school culture, critical consciousness, and collective efficacy as the frameworks for which to situate my analysis. I employed document analysis, teacher focus groups, and administrator interviews to describe existing cultural elements and perceived individual and collective understanding of Ethnic Studies.

Key findings included: (1) the district's cultural elements and readiness for Ethnic Studies implementation; (2) a definition for adult and student critical consciousness development and purposes; (3) a varying, multi-level definition of Ethnic Studies and what Ethnic Studies looks like in a K-8 environment; (4) the fear and understanding of the social-political contentions and possible backlash associated with Ethnic Studies implementation;

(5) a vision of grassroots leadership; and (6) the professional development needs within the district. In the next section, I will articulate conclusions and implications associated with these findings as they arose within each research question.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1

What was the collective understanding and culture of the selected district with regard to Ethnic Studies and its implementation? As a means for inferring the collective understanding and cultural elements, this question was addressed through three sub questions: a) What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed relating to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in a selected urban K-8 district? What words and phrases were used that point to these cultural elements? In other words, how did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation; b) how did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from; and c) what other actions were taken to initiate attention on Ethnic Studies in the School District?

Research Question 1a

What culture, climate, and/or environmental conditions existed when it comes to supporting Ethnic Studies implementation in one urban K-8 district? What words and phrases are used that point to these cultural elements? (How did one urban K-8 school district make the case for district-wide Ethnic Studies implementation?)

Language Moves Used in the Board Resolution

This K-8 school district's journey with Ethnic Studies began with a school board resolution connecting the benefits of Ethnic Studies to the district demographics, mission, commitments, goals and identified needs. This move aligns the new initiative – Ethnic Studies implementation – to the core values and vision of the school district (Kose, 2011; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Riessman, 2008). It clarifies how the vision and goals could be realized with an Ethnic Studies program. It establishes the need for the change (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kose, 2011; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019) as well as grounds the change in the previously expressed values and beliefs articulated in the school district. It is an invitation (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998) to engage with Ethnic Studies. The pattern of problem-solution, value-solution, data-solution was repeated throughout the document connecting each piece of Ethnic Studies research to a different local element of the school district. The repeated use of the district's vision statement, "to ensure every child's potential is achieved," and diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in the board resolution calls attention to the cultural values and traditions that set the standards of behavior in the district (Schein, 2016). Culture was defined at the start of this dissertation as the beliefs and traditions that set the standards of behavior (Muhammed, 2009; Schein, 2016). While the resolution cites several of those standards that pre-exist in the district, the repeated use of those particular phrases makes the case for Ethnic Studies as an essential component within the district culture. Similarly, the use of words like "vital" and "great" when it comes to the value of diversity and "stubborn" and "disturbing" when it comes to inequity are the public affirmation of these cultural beliefs. In this way the resolution almost preempted local

176

contention or possible resistance for Ethnic Studies within the district. It addressed the district needs as indicated by its data, it addressed how Ethnic Studies was a means for achieving the district vision, and it addressed how Ethnic Studies was aligned to core values and pre-existing commitments established by the district.

One of the school board members presenting the resolution also worked on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum at the state level. The resolution most certainly represents their political agenda and moral compass, however, conversations with those in this study and the sheer size of the volunteers on the Ethnic Studies Committee certainly point to a broader support for implementation of Ethnic Studies. According to Public School Review (2023), this school district ranked among the top 1% in California in terms of most diverse and largest student body. According to this website, the "minority enrollment" of this district was 85% with a majority of that student body being Hispanic compared to the California average of 78%. Based on the demographics of the district, Ethnic Studies implementation would most likely be supported by the majority in the district, even without a deep understanding of what Ethnic Studies is. Additionally, interviews, focus groups, and the Ethnic Studies committee notes indicated that this district has a long history of conducting equity work and training within the district. Participants cited racial equity conversations with Glen Singleton, culturally responsive teaching and learning with Sharroky Hollie and Edwin Javis, and the district's implementation of SEAL as some of what framed their equity experiences in the district. So for these educators, Ethnic Studies implementation might be seen as the next step in the progression of equity in the district.

The Ethnic Studies Resolution created institutional support for teachers to address racial identity, history, current events, and civic actions when it establishes that Ethnic Studies is beneficial for "all students," and "promote[s] respect and understanding." Teachers and Ethnic Studies Committee documents both indicated employee appreciation for top-down support for Ethnic Studies. For at least some, the resolution made teachers feel that they would have administrative support when facilitating conversations regarding identity, current events, and racism. For these supporters, there existed two main motivations for those working toward Ethnic Studies implementation: the first was to create an inclusive classroom where all students could feel empowered by their histories and validated through the curriculum; and the second were those pushing the agenda of social justice both in the classroom and beyond.

On the other hand, there may also exist some pushback from some teachers, parents, and community members that were not captured from the design of this study. One principal described how she had to move a student out of the Ethnic Studies elective due to the parent's complaint. However, Ethnic Studies implementation was not yet systemic at the time of this study, with only elective offerings at each of the middle schools and some early adopters at the primary level. Additionally, the broader pushback on the initial Ethnic Studies legislation and model curriculum as presented in AB 331 and what is now known as the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, though not explicitly articulated by participants, is also relevant to how educators might feel about teaching Ethnic Studies and how parents might feel about their children participating in Ethnic Studies. While pushback was discussed and alluded to in the documents, focus groups and interviews, this dissertation focused on

178

those that were working toward Ethnic Studies implementation and their experiences, beliefs, and efforts.

In addition to connecting Ethnic Studies to the district's vision, mission, and goals, the resolution also connected the need for change to the broader social and political events and legislation that existed at the time. Citing AB 331 and AB 1460 established the district's partnership and alignment with the boarder educational community and state legislation (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). This language move placed the district initiative within the broader scope of education and political discourse (DeMatthews, 2018; Furman, 2012; J. W. Neal & Z. P. Neal, 2013). Illustrating how providing Ethic Studies for this district's students will put them at an advantage as they move into high school and college also created a rationale for teachers, administrators, and school board members that this district is forward thinking and on the cutting edge. It provides a sense of security for preparing students for their future beyond the district, but still within educational advancement.

The resolution included language that was celebratory of diversity, expressed pride in being a citizen of a diverse state and district, and condemned inequity. These language moves expressed the school board's value for diversity and contempt for the achievement and opportunity gaps that led to inequitable student achievement. Based on the interviews and focus group language and responses it also represents the views of at least some employees in the district as well. The language moves created a value system of honoring diversity, a foundational stance in Ethnic Studies. As the Ethnic Studies committee and teachers discussed Ethnic Studies in the classroom, language took on a more inclusive feel. They

179

discussed getting to know students, representing students through curriculum, and creating an inclusive, empathetic, and responsive classroom community.

At the same time, however, the Ethnic Studies resolution, the accompanying DEIB resolution, and the resolutions denouncing hate crimes created another narrative that positioned the district and its employees as fighting injustice and racism. For example, the Ethnic Studies resolution established the need for Ethnic Studies in this diverse, urban district as a means for addressing the achievement and opportunity gaps in student outcomes. Even the use of the word opportunity gap expresses the school board's acknowledgment that systems like environment, curriculum, and pedagogy are responsible for the disparate outcomes for various student groups in the district (Baker et al., 2020; Becker & Luthar, 2002; Kozol, 2005; Lieberman & Hoody, 1998; Poliakoff, 2006; Rothstein, 2017). This positioned the district and its employees as cultural workers progressing social justice through education (Freire, 2005). As those in the Ethnic Studies committees, focus groups, and interviews discussed the progression of social justice, the vast majority of the conversation focused on the adult work within the system rather than content for students. For example, implicit bias training, curriculum audits, hiring considerations, culturally responsive pedagogies, and parent education were all discussions that were coupled with these notions of fighting injustice in the educational world.

The resolution repeated the district's vision statement and the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging multiple times throughout the document. The repeated use of these phrases throughout the document connects the reader back to the foundational call for Ethnic studies, the district vision, and what Ethnic Studies establishes, diversity, equity, inclusion,

and belonging. Combined with the larger pattern of alternating paragraphs connecting ethnic studies research to district needs and commitments, these moves were important because it established Ethnic Studies as a solution and core practice for achieving the district's vision. The vision statement and the inclusion of "diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging" were like a chorus of a song that repeated throughout the resolution:

- We have a commitment to serving all students as well as staff from all backgrounds, driven by our mission "**to ensure that every child's potential is achieved.**"

- Ethnic Studies is seen as a vital part of the solution in eradicating these large and stubbornly and historically persistent achievement and opportunity gaps…which prevent the district from ensuring that **"every child's potential is achieved.**"

- Incorporating Ethnic Studies…is a means to accomplish equity, justice, and academic rigor and excellence, as well as **promote diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging.**

- Is guided by the core values of student learning, positive interdependence, quality performance, **inclusivity**, integrity, and respect.

- …the need and importance for culturally relevant instruction and curriculum in regards to **diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging**

- …supports AB 331 and AB 1460 that would aid in the goal as well as aid our district in achieving is mission which is "**to ensure that every child's potential is achieved**" and **supports diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging**

- …its vision elements necessary to guide its actions and decisions vital **"to ensure every child's potential is achieved"** [emphasis added].

181

Throughout the document, these phrases acted as connectors to the data that was presented regarding the opportunity gap in the district and the research supporting Ethnic Studies. These moves served as an explicit reminder the reasons for the call to action (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) and how the call to action would serve the purposes of supporting diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and "ensuring every child's potential is achieved."

Finally, the board resolution ended with a call to action, establishing an Ethnic Studies Committee to oversee the implementation of district-wide access to Ethnic Studies and requiring regular presentations to the board about its progress. It also called for the inclusion of funding to support Ethnic Studies adoption in the 2020 – 2023 LCAP plan. Both of which were implemented within the district. Although specific training and support for Ethnic Studies is only about 1% of the district's LCAP budget allocation, more significant allocations are dedicated toward funding for resources, specifically culturally responsive and representative texts and targeted programs for some of the more underserved populations in the district.

It is difficult to generalize across the population since this study presented a narrative study of one district's journey with implementing Ethnic Studies. However, throughout the literature on change implementation and systems change, clarity of vision and need for change is highlighted (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Riessman, 2008; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). As highlighted in the board resolution, the call for change is directly linked to the existing problems as well as the vision of the district. Grounding the call to action in the district's vision statement connects the call for change to the broader goals of the organization. Repeated language used represented phrases and ideas

that were widely known throughout the school or district connecting employees and community members to the culture and values within the district (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). Districts and schools wishing to implement changes like Ethnic Studies would do well to weave Ethnic Studies research, benefits, and values with the pre-existing outcomes, population, culture, policies, and traditions within the district or school in order to develop the cognitive investment for those implementing the change (Muhammad & Cruz, 2019).

This district's implementation of Ethnic Studies is voluntary as opposed to the state mandated implementation in high schools and universities. Generally there were two perspectives evident within the discussions regarding the voluntary implementation of Ethnic Studies in this district. The first perspective was a point of pride for this district. Educators, parents, and community members involved with the implementation were excited with the forward movement and bought in to Ethnic Studies as a solution to the curricular equity needs of the district (Meyers et al., 2012). However, some skepticism about the systemic implementation of Ethnic Studies existed. This skepticism stemmed more from observations of teacher readiness, perceptions of political backlash, and lack of resources (Meyers et al., 2012). They recognized the level of work and time it would take to prepare a system-wide implementation of Ethnic Studies. One district administrator noted that she thought it would take more than a board resolution to obtain complete buy-in from all staff, "it's going to take more than a board resolution. I mean, designated ELD is the law, and we still don't have everyone doing that."

Internal Perceptions of School Cultures

and Readiness

While each of the following elements are discussed in depth throughout the rest of this chapter, it is important to note how those inside the organization perceived the system's capacity and readiness for the implementation of Ethnic Studies. Teacher perceptions and interpretations can help decipher cultural norms, values, and beliefs, group dynamics, and where to focus with implementation (Kotter & Cohen 2002; Muhammad, 2009; Riessman, 2008). Because this study focused on the ideas, attitudes, and perceptions of educators involved in the early stages of Ethnic Studies adoption and implementation, their views most likely represent those who have "chosen to be disturbed" by this movement (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998) in the district group dynamic. The teachers, specifically, were highly involved in learning more about Ethnic Studies, contributing to the collective understanding, vision and common language of the group. They represent the beginning stages of the development of communities of practice (Wheatley & Frieze, 2007). Analysis of the group conversation illuminated several themes with regard to educator's perceptions of readiness with regard to Ethnic Studies implementation. While the focus groups questions primarily focused teachers on their own interpretations and practice, they, along with interview responses and the reflections of the Ethnic Studies committee questioned the level of collective efficacy with regard to Ethnic Studies implementation in the district.

Research Question 1b

How did the district (teachers, administrators, and community members) define Ethnic Studies and where did these definitions come from?

The Work of the Guiding Team

The Ethnic Studies board resolution called for the establishment of a grassroots team to explore Ethnic Studies implementation within the district. In doing so, it established a second element for organizational change, by building a guiding team for the new initiative (Kotter & Cohen 2002). This team, comprised of teachers, administrators, community members, and parents helped to define an Ethnic Studies vision with in the district. The team explored concepts of Ethnic Studies through their two-year exploration of the original but vetoed California Ethnic Studies Model which is now presented through the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, the current, adopted California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, and by attending webinars hosted by Universities featuring school districts already doing the work. They then evaluated the current state of the district by reflecting on their experiences with the district's expression of culture. That included the team's interpretations of community mindset and the analysis of existing curriculum and pedagogical practices. They highlighted areas of strength, potential, and need.

The notes captured from the Ethnic Studies Committees revealed different ways of talking about Ethnic Studies from year one to year two. In the first year of the committee's convening, the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum as articulated in AB 101 did not yet exist. Much of what was cited in that committee's documents can now be found in the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium's (n.d.) website (Fensterwald, 2021). Those that penned the first draft felt that the adopted draft "Whitewashed" their work because of political pressure and asked to be removed as authors (Fensterwald, 2021), while Newsom called this draft "insufficiently balanced and inclusive," (Fensterwald, 2021). In the

second year, the committee primarily focused on reading and understanding the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum as published by the California State Board of Education (2021). It was during this second year that the Ethnic Studies Committee articulated it's statement of purpose, largely drawing form the state adopted Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum documents. This could account for one reason the tone of the Ethnic Studies Committee documents in Year 2 and the subsequent statement of purpose did not contain the more radical language seen in the Year 1 documents.

Through the recorded notes, interviews, and focus groups, I identified four recurring ideas and elements as the team grappled with understanding how to implement this systemic change. These recurring themes included: a) naming diversity as an asset, b) employing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, c) adopting or creating culturally relevant curriculum, and d) teaching criticality to both students and staff. Each of these themes made their way into the districts' Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose. These themes represented both pre-established beliefs as well as cultural aspirations (Muhammad & Cruz, 2012). For example, it was evident that many in the district had experience with culturally relevant teaching and courageous conversations, but that it was happening in pockets, not throughout the district. The documents, interviews and focus groups also outwardly expressed that they saw the diversity of their classrooms as something that made their experiences beautiful and valuable. However, they also recognized that they had colleagues who did not see things that way.

Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose

Other than the purpose statement, the Ethnic Studies Committee, comprised of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, did not explicitly define Ethnic Studies. It explored concepts and ideas together and highlighted, through documented conversation, which of those resonated with the group. The statement of purpose served as an explicit reminder of how this district views Ethnic Studies implementation in this district. This district's Ethnic Studies purpose statement explicitly includes several of the Ethnic Studies Hallmarks (Sleeter Zavala, 2020). In California, the State Department of Education describes Ethnic Studies at the K-12 level as an interdisciplinary field comprising of African American, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x, Native American, and Asian Pacific Islander studies focused on themes of identity, history and movement, systems of power, and social movements and equity (CAESMC, 2022). The CAESMC (2022) notes that the Model Curriculum should be consistent with the 2016 History-Social Science Frameworks, align to literacy standards, promote self-empowerment, encourage cultural understanding, promote critical thinking and include information on the Third World Liberation Front as a foundation for Ethnic Studies as a discipline. Because Ethnic Studies, by this definition, is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary field, a local statement of purpose is important because it helps to focus a team's efforts in implementing a large-scale, dynamic change. For example, this district's statement of purpose outlines a vision for the purpose, a vehicle for getting at that purpose, and an outline for the district's focus on Ethnic Studies elements. The importance of each element is broken down next.

Each element of the Ethnic Studies Purpose statement can help focus the implementation efforts of this district. The purpose of implementing Ethnic Studies in this district is to, "**promote respect and understanding among races while cultivating empathy and solidarity**" (emphasis added). This statement communicates part of the districts' rationale for building cognitive investment in Ethnic Studies (Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). This statement points to the type of climate the district seeks to promote with Ethnic Studies. It outlines the attitudes, feelings, and perceptions that the district wishes to promote with Ethnic Studies (Muhammad, 2009). In other words, this statement articulates the emotional resonance of Ethnic Studies in this district. Operationalizing these elements with specific standards of behavior and practice throughout the school and district environment would be a suggested next step (Olsen et al., 2018; Solomon et al., 2020). For example, one subcommittee and administrator within the district suggested establishing district and site level Continuous Equity Improvement Teams comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators. Another example would be the DEIB Team that was established at the district level. Within these committees, at the district level and school community level, teams could practice "promoting respect and understanding among races while cultivating empathy and solidarity," through proactively establishing processes for dialogue and collaborative decision-making processes center the voices of traditionally marginalized groups (Furman, 2012). These groups could be established to focus on the greater school environment establishing common language and common practices, like culturally sustaining pedagogies, learner-centered pedagogies, collaborative problem-solving with students, and school-wide themes, events, celebrations, or traditions. Additionally, being explicit about "promoting

188

respect and understanding among races while cultivating empathy and solidarity," with the common practices and using those cultural elements in the evaluation of new programs, practices, and language could provide a third level of integration across systems.

The second part of the statement of purpose articulated the vehicles for achieving the district's purpose. It named "asset-based, culturally sustaining pedagogy and multiple perspectives, students connect to one another, the rich history and untold stories of people in our community and the world around them," as the primary pedagogical methods and curricular content. Employing asset-based, culturally sustaining pedagogy points to an attempt to shift the culture of schooling (Paris & Alim, 2017) by making space for traditionally marginalized ontologies as well as youth customizations of culture and knowledge. In other words, in a culturally sustaining classroom, students learn to integrate their cultural identity with an academic identity (Howard, 2010). Culturally speaking, classrooms that employ culturally sustaining pedagogies will center student voice and identity within the curriculum and learning objectives. It is a syncretic approach to the everyday practices of the classroom, creating a hybrid space where the dynamics of each culture is renegotiated (Paris & Alim, 2017). One might see teachers and students engaging in Socratic seminars, analyzing and critiquing popular music, and making observations about a text or visual stimulus. In other words, it is a constructivist, learner-centered approach which challenges the normative stance through stimuli which presents counter-narrative perspectives.

The second part of the Ethnic Studies purpose statement articulated the challenge that the interviews and Ethnic Studies Committee notes captured: the curriculum is not representative

189

of the students in the classroom. According to Paris and Alim (2017) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies involve dynamic and "multiple perspectives," which point to a hallmark of Ethnic Studies, the intersectionality and multiplicity of experience (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). In this district's Ethnic Studies purpose statement, students are engaging in this recursive and syncretic process with one another through the content of, "the rich history and untold stories of people in our community and the world around them." This piece of the statement points to the "Curriculum as Counter-Narrative," hallmark outlined by Sleeter and Zavala (2020). Ethnic Studies in particular focuses on the racial and ethnic perspectives that are missing, however this statement of purpose does not explicitly name those perspectives. On one hand, not naming the racial perspectives might point to the desire to include the counter-narrative perspectives across race, gender, gender identity, sexual-orientation, family structure, physical and mental abilities, etc. On the other hand, not naming the racial perspectives might run the risk of adopting a color-blind perspective, running the risk of defaulting to or maintaining the status quo (Griffen et al., 2022; Vaught & Castagno, 2008).

"Identity, empowerment and social consciousness," is the final piece of the purpose statement is the focus for this district's Ethnic Studies model. Reclaiming cultural identities, and criticality, two more hallmarks, are included in this statement. Cultivating a positive socio-cultural identity (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019; Learning for Justice, 2022) was a highlight within the Ethnic Studies Committee documents as well as through interviews and focus groups. Several pre-existing curricular resources were cited within these conversations. Additionally, sense of positive self-identity also exists within the social justice standards (Learning for Justice, 2022) as well as within anti-bias education circles (Derman-Sparks &

190

Edwards, 2019; Derman-Sparks et al., 2015). Anti-bias education is the most common way that Ethnic Studies has shown up in elementary education (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020), so these could be useful frameworks from which to base elementary Ethnic Studies curriculum. Empowerment refers to the idea that the district wants students to feel capable and may possibly be tied to the hallmark of community engagement (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Empowerment and social consciousness together allude to the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 2010). Through these statements it becomes clear that the curriculum should be focused on both critique of social problems and the development of the skills to work toward addressing them. This phrase does not quite harken back to the board resolution discussion of civic-engagement, but could allude to it.

Within the Ethnic Studies committee discussions, interviews, focus groups, and particularly the district's "Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose" three distinct rationale's for implementing Ethnic Studies district-wide became apparent (Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). The first rationale was that of a pro-social, welcoming, celebratory, approach to diversity. Ethnic Studies implementation was described by some educators, parents, and community members as a way to help students develop positive, healthy, concepts of self, particularly of their socio-cultural identities. The second rationale was that Ethnic Studies is a field that promotes equity and fairness. While the educators, parents, and community members primarily spoke of interrogating issues of inequity, unfairness, and bias within adult mindsets, curriculum, and school environments, at times, they did note that students should explore inequity and resistance throughout history (CAESMC, 2022; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). The third rationale for promoting Ethnic Studies within this district included

191

addressing gaps in the curriculum, specifically with representation in the Language Arts curriculum, the counternarrative in the History curriculum, and teaching civics and civic engagement.

Research Question 1c

What other actions were taken to initiate attention to Ethnic Studies in the School District?

Origins of Ethnic Studies Implementation: Talk

Followed by Strategic Actions

Two notable, public actions occurred around the time of the Ethnic Studies Board Resolution. First, on the same night as the Ethnic Studies Resolution was adopted, the board Adopted a resolution establishing a DEIB committee consisting of teachers, parents, administrators and community members. This committee's role was to evaluate and propose changes for district-wide systems to make room for greater diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging within the district and schools. This committee is an important partner with the Ethnic Studies Committee. Some of their goals, roles, and responsibilities overlap. While generally Ethnic Studies is seen as the curricular and instructional component that brings greater levels of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to the classroom and curriculum, the DEIB committee is more concerned with systems of hiring, policy, messaging, school culture, and professional development. Ethnic Studies is focused on bringing racial diversity and critical analysis to curriculum and pedagogy. The DEIB committee is focused on creating systems, policies, and environments that promote a sense of inclusion and

192

belonging, not just for race, but for ability, gender identity, family dynamics, and socioeconomic status.

These two resolutions are important and should continue coordinate their efforts for continued and deep implementation of Ethnic Studies. The DEIB committee has the potential to make or recommend changes that can have an impact on the training, environment, operations, and behavioral culture of the school district which supports the structural and paradigmatic shifts needed for implementing Ethnic Studies. If this committee operates authentically, it has the opportunity to promote social justice agendas on the systemic scale by examining policy and decisions through reflective, inquiry based, collaborative approaches (Furman, 2012; Lambert, 1998; Sacramento, 2019; Vaught & Castagno, 2008) and to name and disrupt and even dismantle oppressive, unfair systems and policy within the district (Furman, 2012; Rodriguez, 2013). This follows the equity and fairness rationale. In this way the adult work of interrogating systems reflects the academic work the students would be doing in their Ethnic Studies courses.

The second action the board did to call greater attention to the need for change was to put out a series of resolutions denouncing racism, Latinx hate, AAPI hate, condemning the January 6th attack on the Capitol, and supporting BLM and LGBTQIA rights. These resolutions serve to call attention to the need for a counternarrative in education. It is a public acknowledgement of the unfairness and injustice experienced by these communities that are represented within the district. Many of the aforementioned resolutions directly name and support the four major communities outlined in the CAESMC (2021) – African American, Chicano/a/x and Latino/a/x, Native American, and Asian American and Pacific Islander

Communities. That said, not all hate crimes and not all ethnic groups were included in these resolutions. This could be because the school board was responding to the socio-political issues raised in the media at the time. Calling attention to the experiences of some these communities in 2020 – 2022, condemning the injustices they face in the community and in schools, and sometimes avowing to make changes within the district served to increase the urgency (Kotter & Cohen, 2002) for the DEIB and Ethnic Studies Work. It also created safety for those communities within the district to talk about their experiences as well as an awareness for those who have not had the experiences discussed in those resolutions.

Research Question 2

How did educators (teachers and administrators) talk about their connection and commitment to Ethnic Studies? What language was used to express these connections and commitments.

An Informal Fit and Capacity Analysis

Teachers and administrators in this study described schools as a White space and schooling as the indoctrination of White, colonial values. Teachers and administrators of color in this study described their experiences within the system, feeling disconnected, othered, and unwelcome. One White administrator described her challenges with learning how her racial experiences influenced her perceptions and biases as an educator. These experiences led all of these participants to either support Ethnic Studies implementation at their site or to join the Ethnic Studies committee. They all wanted to make a difference in how their students, particularly their Students of Color, experienced the educational system.

Several key ideas became evident in this discussion with teachers and administrators with regard to educator disposition. First, as in the case of Mr. Rizal, Educators of Color can do the self-work of reclaiming their cultural identities in order to embrace leadership styles that feel more authentic to them (Baptiste, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2018; Kohli, 2009; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). In doing so, these educators can create affirming experiences and environments for other BIPOC people in the system (Sacramento, 2019; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Second, as in the case of Ms. Flowers, White administrators can reflect on their own racial identity through actively listening, learning, and reflecting on how their experiences shape their biases (Furman, 2012; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). As White educators learn to recognize their Whiteness and the benefits of such, they can develop more critical approach to analyzing systems, environment, curriculum, and pedagogy (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014). Third, teachers discussed honoring student perspectives and histories with an inclusive curriculum and culturally sustaining practices. When teachers engage in understanding who their students are and build an understanding of and value for the cultural epistemologies and funds of knowledge that students bring to the classroom, they can employ pedagogies that honor those epistemologies and choose content that highlights that experience or problematizes silencing or regressive practices, perspectives, and representations (Paris & Alim, 2017). Finally, teachers and administrators discussed actively disrupting problematic ideas, language, and perceptions as they showed up in the classroom, on the playground, and in staff meetings. This requires a critical sociocultural awareness of

195

how racism, ableism, sexism, etc., shows up in conversation, play, and work (Paris & Alim, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

Defining Ethnic Studies and Supporting

Rationales

Interviews, focus groups, and documents uncovered two distinct ways educators in this district conceived of Ethnic Studies. The first group, typically upper grade and middle school focused practitioners, defined Ethnic Studies as a distinct course of study. The second group, elementary grades practitioners, defined Ethnic Studies more as a lens or framework to be woven throughout the curriculum and school environment. That said, both groups brought up themes of disruption in their work. Critical friends and collaborative efforts (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hargraves & Fullan, 2015; Kirtman & Fullan, 2016), consistency between school culture and classroom pedagogy, and clear vision (Kose, 2011; Kotter & Cohen, 2002) were all discussed within documents and by participants in the study.

While one could argue that the statement of purpose could serve as a vision statement as well, only one participant in the interviews and focus groups referred to the implementation plan and nobody referred to the purpose statement. It seemed that the participants in this study were still defining what Ethnic Studies means to them and outlining personal visions for implementation in their respective spaces. From these conversations, several common concepts repeated themselves, but a collective and shared vision did not seem to readily exist, as evidenced by multiple participants indicating, "we have to define what it is and what it isn't." In implementation theory, change theory, and theories of social justice leadership all suggest that co-developing and centering a collective common vision that everyone feels

connected to is essential (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kose, 2011; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Shields, 2010; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). That said, themes of empathy, inclusion, and courage were evident throughout documents and conversations, pointing to dispositions and mindsets educators thought were important in order to progress the work.

Critical friends and collaborative relationships were one way the participants in this study discussed disrupting the "White space." Educators noted how powerful it was to collaborate with others from across the district. Participants indicated that these collaborations made ideation more fruitful and criticality more accepted. That said, criticality was highlighted while the district was engaging in DEIB work and around the time the resolutions denouncing hate crimes were published. Additionally criticality was supported by the leadership within those collaborative planning sessions. With leaders modeling their openness to critique, the statement exposing the dissonance between the content and the pedagogical moves in this example was examined, taken seriously, and honored (Paris & Alim, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al. 2014). Similarly, when educators from across the district came together to plan, group think was disrupted and diversity of ideas was seen as valuable. Mrs. Swift mused that discomfort of learning new content and pedagogy and planning to apply that learning with a more diverse team than what was available at just the school site made individuals push pause on their own ideas and more open to listening to and building upon the ideas of others. Critical friends and collaborative relationships helped educators disrupt the conventional paradigms they were engaging with. These relationships were fostered with leadership that centered the perspectives of teachers of color, modeled openness and responsiveness to critique, and

197

supported changes that moved toward greater alignment between pedagogy and content. The second element that seemed to be evident was that by expanding the perspective of the local team and fostering cross-school collaboration added greater diversity of perspective and experience. The degree to which this actually happened and the conditions which may have promoted it could be explored with future research.

Finally, emerging from within the critical friends and collaboration discussion came the view that consistency between culture and practice was needed. In doing equity work the importance of the adults across the system modeling expectations for what happens in the classroom as the students engage in Ethnic Studies replaces the individual philosophy of teachers educating students with the collective responsibility of developing schoolwide strategies that impact all students (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). Within this district's conversation, challenging the current paradigm, calling out the issues, and being willing to try something out of the norm were articulated as ways to promote equity, specifically in a way that challenges White supremacy (Calderón, 2014; Khalifa et al., 2018; Tintiangco-Cubales et al. 2014). That said, Mr. Allen noted that those actions must be met with an authentic allowance for making mistakes. Coupled with Darla's example above, that allowance for mistakes might come from deliberation that unpacks the mistakes and outlines new learning and applications. For Mr. Allen, mistakes cannot be met with chastising, but must be met with inquiry. Administrators should facilitate the conversation by asking themselves, "What just happened? How am I perceiving the situation and why? What other perspectives exist? Who else needs to be here? What is the learning opportunity here? What

implications might this have in my practice and within our systems?" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998).

Dealing with the Political Landscape

Seemingly aware of the broader social contention around Ethnic Studies and CRT, the resolution author(s) used language that promoted inclusivity and respect with regard to all students. That said, the resolution made no direct reference to this socio-political backlash Ethnic Studies was receiving across the United States at the time of the resolution. However, within the study, teachers and administrators spoke about the existing political tension surrounding the broader educational landscape as well as more localized parent complaints as challenges they have dealt with in their positions. These challenges mirror what has been found within the social justice literature (Furman, 2012; Shields, 2010; Theoharis, 2007, Van Hook, 2002). On the other hand, there existed a real urgency for scaling up the work in the areas of anti-racist school culture and climate, curriculum, professional development, evaluation, and parent education. Documented committee conversations and participants expected reluctance to engage with Ethnic Studies yet the benefits for students, the focus on equity and social justice, kept them focused on their goals (Theoharis, 2007).

Research Question 3

What leadership moves or perspectives do administrators and teachers think will support the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies? How might leadership for Ethnic Studies implementation be characterized?

Grassroots and Top-Down Leadership Practices

Grassroots leadership with top-down support were the central themes of this district's conception of leadership for Ethnic Studies (Welton & Freelon, 2018). Grassroots leadership focused on learning from and becoming accountable to the local communities (Furman, 2012; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Welton & Freelon, 2018), building upon the expertise of the collective work force (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015; Welton & Freelon, 2018), and student leadership. Learning from the local communities, for Mr. Rizal meant learning about the experiences of community members in order to adjust and adapt his school environment in order for the school to become more culturally sustaining. Mrs. López and her colleagues conducted focus groups to determine how welcomed families feel on school campus. Additionally, for Mrs. López, building upon the expertise of the collective work force included garnering input and resources and using her position to distribute those resources and giving credit to the source in order to create shared ownership. However, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Macias, as early adopters, described how sharing localized insights and observing those who are successful could generate positive movement in the desired direction (Chu & Garcia, 2021; Goddard et al., 2000). In this case study, student leadership meant involving students in the co-creation of the classroom environment and getting to know students well enough to be able to adapt the curriculum (Moll et al., 2001; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014; Yosso, 2005). This included projects in which students shared about their identities, homes, cultures, etc. Information garnered from these projects were then used to adjust the classroom environment, curriculum, and pedagogy. Additionally, teachers used strategies like

journaling, Socratic seminars and visual thinking strategies to engage students in articulating their observations or perceptions of a particular phenomenon as a launching point into a discussion or unit.

Top-down supports in this district involved establishing common language, vision, and frameworks (Kose, 2011); aligning hiring practices, evaluation practices, and professional development; and enlisting teachers' union support. The importance of administrative buy-in and instituting evaluation and hiring practices to support the new direction were discussed by teachers in this study. Additionally, teachers discussed the importance of the teacher's union and of site administrator support in shaping the culture to sustain a change like Ethnic Studies implementation through communication and reshaping staff meeting time (Muhammad, 2009; Muhammad, 2012), professional development (Furman, 2012; Kose, 2007; Paris & Alim, 2017) and using PLC time to evaluate progress (DuFour et al., 2005).

Research Question 4

What do professionals (teachers and administrators view as professional development needs within the district for the Effective Implementation of Ethnic Studies?

Identified and Missing Professional

Development Needs

Three main professional development areas were discussed by the participants in this study. The first centered around developing mindset, cultural competency, anti-bias lens, and critical consciousness as a prerequisite for implementing Ethnic Studies. The second included developing the skills to facilitate courageous and difficult conversations both in the classroom and in the staff room. Facilitation of restorative practices were also discussed

within the scope of teacher facilitation skill development. The third discrete topic discussed by participants was ensuring that professional development models the pedagogical shifts one would expect to see in an Ethnic Studies classroom. Perhaps it was assumed by participants, but professional development regarding Ethnic Studies content and pedagogy professional development was not directly mentioned. For example, culturally sustaining pedagogies was mentioned in the statement of purpose and within the committee documents, but not mentioned as a professional development need. Perhaps, for those discussing the needs of the district, they saw the development of cultural competency as an inroad to CSP. Likewise, teachers articulated a need for Ethnic Studies content or curricula, but not for professional development in this area. For this district, the focus was on mindset, facilitating challenging conversations, and ensuring that professional development styles modeled those found within Ethnic Studies classrooms. While each of these are important foundations for Ethnic Studies applications in K-8 settings, next steps might include explicit development regarding culturally sustaining pedagogies, resources for presenting a counter-narrative within the pre-established standards, critical curriculum review and development, and establishing an environment, climate, and culture conducive for Ethnic Studies within the school and classroom.

Administrators in particular noted a challenge with the time it would take to develop an understanding of Ethnic Studies mindsets, pedagogies, and curriculum. The educators in this district listed at least six different areas for professional development, even if they did exclude mentioning training in Ethnic Studies pedagogies and curriculum. The educators in this district discussed the need for release time, or time out of the classroom, in addition to

the three district-wide professional development days provided by the district. Within the Ethnic Studies implementation plan, the first Ethnic Studies cohort, consisting of eight teachers, participated in 10 days of foundational training in the first part of the school year between August and December. Another 10 days was scheduled to begin the unit development training. While Mr. Macias, a participant in the first cohort, found these trainings to be useful, he mentioned that it was a lot of time out of the classroom.

Research Question 5

What were the connections that teachers and administrators made between Ethnic Studies and curriculum and pedagogy?

The Curriculum Conversation

Within the Ethnic Studies Committee year one documents, there existed a link to Ethnic Studies Curriculum design templates (Community Responsive Education, n.d.). However, it was not referred to in committee reflections or by participants in the focus groups or interviews. The primary focus in the first year with regard to curriculum was highlighting inclusive perspectives in the existing ELA and ELD curricula. A second notion within those documents was the proposal of the "watch out for this" document. The purpose of that document was to articulate problematic representations within the curriculum. The example used was pulled from the Social Studies Curriculum. While the second-year documents intended to explore existing curriculum more fully, the focus moved to studying Ethnic Studies foundations, learning from other schools and districts, and the CAESMC. The first-year documents seemed to take a more radical stance on the curriculum, highlighting concepts like critique of empire, teaching about racism, and "teaching true history." The

second-year documents included more phrases like inclusion, representation, and culturally relevant.

Within interviews and focus groups curriculum conversations seemed to focus on the curriculum representing the student's and the local histories. The phrase culturally relevant curriculum was a phrase that was used, primarily in the committee documents and in one focus group. Perhaps for those discussing curriculum, culturally relevant curriculum implied a critical approach. That said, a few examples of criticality, inclusion of the counter-narrative, and community/civic engagement were evident within the conversations. For example Mr. Macias mentioned that his Ethnic Studies class talked about racism. Mrs. Darla recalled the conversation of navigating the tension between the great technological advances and the horrific enslavement of Africans and brutal treatment of the Native Americans during the age of exploration and colonialism. Mr. Edwards used the persuasive writing unit as an opportunity to learn about Cesar Chavez and put on a mock protest. These instances were outliers in the majority of the conversation about content and curriculum. The primary focus, at least in the elementary grades, was regarding representation and inclusion in the curriculum. Middle school discussions were a little more explicit about systems critique and counter-narrative in their curriculum.

One tension that existed was the level of curriculum development expected in Ethnic Studies implementation in this K-8 district. Some, particularly in middle school, like Mr. Macias and Ms. Flowers discussed the fact that existing curriculum is not available for middle school Ethnic Studies courses so it must be created. Curriculum creation was also implied by the repeated use of the phrase, "Ethnic Studies honors the students in the room,"

yet others within the study did not see themselves as curriculum developers. They described supplementing the curriculum and wanting to push curriculum publishers to present more inclusive and socially conscious curriculum. Perhaps the educators at the primary grades and district administrators were reluctant to throw out the ELD curriculum work they spent several years developing so they looked for ways to use that curriculum within an Ethnic Studies pathway. Ms. Flowers explained that tension when she noted that she had teachers that would love to create the curriculum and others who would teach it but would have no interest in development.

The Pedagogical Conversation

The pedagogical conversation highlighted the facilitation of courageous conversations, culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies. Educators within this district primarily referred to culturally responsive practices, but the term culturally sustaining appeared in a few documents and within the statement of purpose. Teachers in the district talked about navigating difficult/courageous conversations with varying degrees of ease. While culturally responsive practices were named and discussed by teachers within the focus groups, culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy almost seemed to be used interchangeably in the documents.

The pedagogical process described by the teachers in this study was a learner-centered, inquiry-based practice that involved an action based-culminating project or event. Teachers noted that creating brave-spaces were essential for the facilitation of courageous conversations. They created these spaces by facilitating activities and projects were students could share about their home and cultural lives and modeling how to make space for that as

they adjusted the classroom environment, content, and instructional practices. Then teachers used inquiry-based practices to gain student insight about a particular "age-appropriate" topic or idea. These ideas ranged from unpacking teacher observed biases, current events, issues of social justice, and content specific topics. Teachers in this study used read-aloud texts, guest speakers, visual thinking strategies, and journal prompts as engagement strategies. When teachers were processing biases, current events, or social justice issues, and they understood how students were thinking, teachers engaged students in problematizing the issue by reframing the conversation in terms of a community value. For example, Ms. Gamri reframed the 2016 election and the division it caused in her community as an exploration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These units usually ended with some sort of civic action such as letter writing, a mini-protest, or a walk-out. In the primary grades, teachers were primarily teaching about various strategies to prompt social change. The upper grades and middle school discussed a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to civic action as they learned about the realities of engaging in civic action. In the primary grades, this praxis-oriented approach was primarily discussed in terms of the social learning students were engaging in at that grade level. In the upper grades, the praxis-oriented approach included both social learning and content-based explorations.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

The findings in this study yielded several important recommendations for practice. It is important to understand that Ethnic Studies, as a field, challenges the status quo and normative stances to education. As such, systems alignment for Ethnic Studies

implementation is needed. Next, I outline four recommendations for practice as it pertains to Ethnic Studies implementation at the K-8 level: 1) Establish DEIB committees to apply systems analysis and change through procedure and policy; 2) Create opportunities for grassroots leadership and top-down support of Ethnic Studies; 3) provide or advocate for professional development in the areas of Ethnic Studies curriculum, pedagogy, and critical consciousness development at both the school district level and university/teacher development level; and 4) develop a common local vision for Ethnic Studies and garner buy-in to that vision.

Establish DEIB Committees to Apply Systems

Analysis and Change

In laying the ground work for a change like Ethnic Studies, districts should establish DEIB committees consisting of community members, certificated and classified employees, and district and site administrators, to evaluate existing policy and practice to determine alignment and systemic support for that change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Meyers et al., 2012). These provide the vehicles for the adults in the system to engage in the work of systems transformation that Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogies highlight at the student level. These committees have the potential to influence hiring practices by outlining goals for finding teachers who represent the demographics of the school, who have critical and inclusive dispositions, and who buy-in to the goals and vision of the district (Meyers et al., 2012). These committees can evaluate and influence directions for curriculum adoption, professional development, and district culture by outlining policy and practice norms (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Meyers et al., 2012).

These committees should also exist at the school level (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad, 2009) for a more localized community-based interpretation of district-wide directions and grassroots needs. At this level, these teams can serve in an advisory capacity as well as a task force aiding in the communication and implementation of DEIB initiatives, policies, and practices. DEIB committee members might work together at the local level might establish affinity groups, provide direction on parent education, serve on PTAs and PTOs in an official DEIB capacity, and outline opportunities for culturally sustaining pedagogies and school-wide cultural events. DEIB committees at the district and local levels can lay the groundwork and provide guidance on making the environment conducive to the work of Ethnic Studies at the more local level.

Balancing Grassroots Leadership with
Top-Down Support

Finding a balance between supporting grassroots leadership and top-down support when implementing district-wide Ethnic Studies is recommended. Top-down support provides the shelter and safety for teachers to dig into and engage in courageous conversations with students. It also provides the structure (Meyers et al., 2012), time (Muhammad & Cruz, 2019), financial support, networked communities of practice (Wheatley & Frieze, 2007), and focus for the articulation of a common vision, language, and direction for the initiative (Muhammad, 2009; Kose, 2011; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). District and site administrators should understand the local social and political feelings regarding Ethnic Studies in their districts (Muhammad, 2009). Districts should be prepared for community deliberation regarding Ethnic Studies (Benet, 2013; Johnson, 2014; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). Within

that deliberation it is necessary to simultaneously center the voices of those who are traditionally marginalized by the system as well as address the fear and concern that may be brought forth. This requires that those facilitating conversations understand how to let go of either/or thinking (Johnson, 2014). Administrators should understand how to hold the space for continuing the work, but listen to and dig to the root of the source of contention (Benet, 2013; Johnson, 2014).

Districts and schools should honor and leverage the local and professional expertise that exist (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Muhammad, 2009; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017; Welton & Freelon, 2018; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998). Both teachers and administrators discussed wanting to share their knowledge and experience within the district. Research on teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy indicates that providing positive and successful examples for educators to experience is one way to develop the belief that the action is possible (Donohoo et al., 2018; Goddard et al., 2000; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). Teachers in this study were willing to open their classrooms to teacher observation and follow that with a conversation about the thinking and design that went into creating the lesson and environment. Observation coupled with opportunities to debrief and plan with others was an approach to professional growth that resonated with educators in this district.

Professional Development: Content, Pedagogy,

and Resources

Implementing Ethnic Studies at the school and classroom level requires that educators develop: a) sociocultural understanding; b) a critical lens for reflecting on their own attitudes

and perceptions; c) a critical analysis of the school or classroom environment and the curriculum, and d) the skills and time to make adjustments. Since developing sociocultural understandings and reflection is an ongoing, life-long process (Freire, 2010; Furman, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017), this process would be ongoing. However, it would be helpful if teachers had a foundational understanding of this as a professional practice along with specific pedagogical, content, and environmental tools that progress their practice. Teacher training programs or professional development preparing teachers for teaching Ethnic Studies ought to teach teachers how to be self-aware and inquisitive of their own perceptions and biases (Gay, 2002; 2010a; 2010b; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). It should teach how to develop cultural competency as a life-long process.

Teachers also indicated a challenge with knowing what to teach and where to find resources. In California, State Universities and Colleges are required to offer Ethnic Studies course work. However, it would be helpful for potential teachers to understand Ethnic Studies pedagogies and content by requiring course/s in Ethnic Studies. Additionally, it would be helpful for teachers to have greater access to or outlines of age-appropriate texts, materials and themes that could be integrated or taught in the Elementary setting. For teachers in this study, Ethnic Studies content ranged from representation in the curriculum to integration of the counter-narrative in the History/Social-Science Framework to a distinct field of study. A collection of resources aligned to standards and curriculum would be helpful for teachers attempting to implement Ethnic Studies at the time of this study. Teachers also mentioned the desire for an adopted curriculum they could teach or draw from.

Employing pedagogical approaches that support Ethnic Studies implementation at the K-8 level are also important for teachers to learn. Teachers in this study described facilitation of courageous conversations, learner-centered, inquiry-based practices, and a culminating action. Some teachers described that they would feel more confident with these strategies with ongoing training, practice, and coaching. At the teacher preparation level, teaching YPAR, Service-learning, and place-based learning pedagogies are all examples of community responsive pedagogies and lend themselves to facilitating student engagement with community needs and problems. At the local level, teachers indicated that on-going practice and collaboration could be facilitated through district training and local Professional Learning Community work.

Develop a Common Local Vision Across K-8 Settings

The CAESMC (2022) outlines a framework for Ethnic Studies instruction in K-12 environments, however the majority of the resources provided are intended to support instruction at the high school level (grades 9 – 12) where Ethnic Studies is a graduation requirement. This study explored how one district was in the process of developing that common vision and implementation plan. In order to do so, the district engaged in learning about Ethnic Studies and conducting a needs, fit, and capacity assessment within the district (Meyers et al., 2012). They developed a local Ethnic Studies Statement of Purpose to articulate the rationale for the voluntary implementation at the K-8 level (Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). This statement of purpose indicated the broad strokes for Ethnic Studies in this district.

For this district, the vision of Ethnic Studies implementation looked vastly different across the grade ranges. For implementation purposes, it would be helpful for a guiding team to articulate how Ethnic Studies would take shape within the different grade ranges. For example, Table 5 shows an outline of a potential progressive vision based on some of the common themes that came up in this district. Outlining a progressive vision at the local level can help local agencies conduct a more targeted needs, fit, and capacity assessment in order to outline a more focused implementation plan relevant for teachers across grade-levels and schools.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this section I outline several potential topics for future research. One topic could include expanding the voices who contribute to or are affected by Ethnic Studies implementation in K-8 school districts. A second area of research might be observing K-8 classrooms and students for Ethnic Studies elements related to environment, pedagogy, and content. A third area recommended for research might be to understand what makes Ethnic Studies implementation and courageous conversation facilitation easier for some educators. A fourth area for recommended research could explore how parent and student relationships are affected by student participation in Ethnic Studies courses. And finally, a fifth area in the realm of policy could explore the role of interest convergence in the Education Industrial Complex (EIC) and how it shapes the implementation of Ethnic Studies in the K-12 sector.

Table 5

A Vision for Ethnic Studies Preparation in a K-8 District

Grade Range	Description of Elements
K-3	• Anti-bias curriculum & pedagogies • Attention to the Social Justice Standards: identity, diversity, justice, action ○ Possible areas to focus: individual, interpersonal, classroom, school, and local community level • Student representation in the curriculum • Social learning and literacy applications
4-6	• Continue with anti-bias curriculum & pedagogies • Attention to the Social Justice Standards: identity, diversity, justice, action ○ Build on the K-3 focus and broaden to community, sate, national, and global levels. • Integrate the counter-narrative into the History/Social Science Framework • Social learning, literacy, and historical applications
7-8	• Ethnic Studies as a distinct field of study/subject ○ Offered as an elective • Ethnic Studies themes integrated into 8th grade U.S. History Curriculum • Critique of Empire themes integrated into 7th grade Medieval and Early Modern Times History

Interview School Board and Community Members

Regarding Ethnic Studies

To further understand local community and school board perceptions and experiences with Ethnic Studies implementation, particularly "voluntary" implementation at the K-8 level, research might be conducted with school board and community members. This could include understanding school board members' motivation and understanding regarding Ethnic Studies. It could also explore the local demands and challenges faced by school board members as it pertains to Ethnic Studies implementation. One might ask: What are the local conditions that influence the adoption of Ethnic Studies at the K-8 level?

Interviewing community members could also yield important information about Ethnic Studies adoptions in a particular area. Schools are situated within a broader social, cultural,

and political context that influence the preconceptions of schooling in general and Ethnic Studies, specifically (Muhammad, 2009). Interviewing local community members could help researchers understand the localized context. It can help with understanding local parent hopes, concerns, and needs. Additionally, studying local communities can help local educational agencies with uncovering "the rich history and untold stories," of the local area, providing localized counter-narrative perspectives.

Observe K-8 Classrooms and Students

Participating in Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies in the K-8 classroom environment is a relatively unstudied field. Research into classroom environment, pedagogy, and content at the K-8 level, coupled with student achievement, identity, and other perceptual understandings could provide valuable insight as to which practices support the goals and purposes of Ethnic Studies implementation, particularly at the very early grades. Understanding the types of biases that come up in the classroom and where there are opportunities to explore the counter narrative in pre-established curriculum at the various age levels would be beneficial for helping teachers to become aware of possible learner-centered entry points in the classroom.

Ease of Ethnic Studies Implementation and

Courageous Conversation Facilitation

Some educators found implementing Ethnic Studies easier than others. Similarly, some educators found facilitating courageous conversations easier than others. Future research supporting Ethnic Studies implementation might explore why that was the case. What factors

play into that ease, could it be experience with or formal training in facilitating conversations? Could ease be associated with school demographics?

Parent and Student Relationships

How Does Ethnic Studies Participation Influence this Connection? Although not presented in this dissertation, a fair amount of conversation within the documents indicated a need for parent education. Additionally research indicates that Ethnic Studies promotes self-determination (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2014). What might happen if views and interests of parents conflict with those of the child? While Ethnic Studies aims to bridge the home-school connection with an assets-oriented approach, how are parents involved as key stake-holders and participants (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998) in this level of change?

Interest Convergence and the Education

Industrial Complex

In California at the time of this dissertation, as Ethnic Studies moved into the realm of K-12 education, careful consideration of interest convergence in how the Education Industrial Complex (EIC), by way of social impact bonds, capitalizes on this movement ought to be studied and critiqued. How are performance metrics for Ethnic Studies being defined? Do they resonate with the foundational goals and principles of Ethnic Studies? How will public and/or private funding be used to guide and frame Ethnic Studies professional preparation, development, and curricula?

Implications

This study described one district's ongoing process and challenges with the implementation of Ethnic Studies at the K-8 level. It revealed several challenges with regard to implementation. First, educators concerned themselves with creating safe, inclusive, empathetic environments from which it becomes safe to challenge biases, assumptions, and systemic injustice. Second, educators grappled with finding curriculum and employing pedagogical skills to foster the development of a critical awareness or critical consciousness. Third, educators discussed potential leadership practices that would support professional growth in these areas leading to a fuller systemic implementation of Ethnic Studies. These findings along with a review of the literature helped to articulate a systemic framework for the effective implementation of Ethnic Studies, articulated in Table 6. While the information presented in the table is not exhaustive, it could provide useful, pre-existing tools and frameworks for outlining common language and common practices that could prepare a school or a district for Ethnic Studies implementation, particularly at a K-8 level. The first column in this table outlines the systemic elements needed for the implementation of Ethnic studies. The systemic elements articulated in Table 6 are key themes that arose as needs within this particular K-8 district. This could be expanded to include parent education and community involvement strategies, for example. This section of the table could be expanded based on the recursive iterations throughout implementation cycles or specific needs within a school or district community.

216

Table 6

An Example for the Systemic Alignment for Ethnic Studies

Systemic Elements	Resources	Processes	Mindset/ Ethnic Studies Foundations
Environment	Accountable spaces, Safe Spaces & Brave Spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013) "Tribes Learning Community" Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education (Learning for Justice, 2022) Positive Discipline in the Classroom (Nelsen et al., 2013)	Trauma informed practices (Henderson, et al., 2019) Class meetings/circles for relationship building & problem solving (Nelsen et al., 2013) Restorative practices De-escalation strategies Mindfulness & Other emotional regulation strategies Evaluation of policy	Mutual respect for and between students Focus on relationship building Schools and Classrooms that are reflective of student social & cultural identities Promotes love, care, hope Allow for and encourage student voice and choice Critical examination of regressive ideas, behaviors, and language with students
Curriculum	California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (2022) Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (n.d.) FAIRStory curriculum (Foundation Against Injustice and Racism, 2021)	**Curriculum Development:** Learning goals for the Mind-Content, Body-Skills, Soul-Relevance, and Leadership – both individual & Community (Community Responsive Education, n.d)	Centers the counter-narrative perspective Intersectional Culturally Relevant Critique's empire, racism, and other forms of oppression Develops positive ethnic, racial, cultural identity and intellectual identity.
Pedagogy	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies (Gay, 2010 b; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2009)	Courageous Conversations Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies Culturally Responsive Pedagogies Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Place-based pedagogies Service – learning pedagogies Visual Learning Strategies Socratic Seminars Jigsaw Strategies (Aronson, 1971)	Promotes critical consciousness development Promotes positive socio-cultural identity – "I am an important and capable member of my community." Develops positive intellectual identity Develops critical literacy
Leadership Moves	Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education (Learning for Justice, 2022)	Evaluate school/district policy Systemic Praxis Cycles: cultural, social, systemic analysis of inequity, facilitation of individual and/or collective action to change systems (Furman, 2012) Equity Audits (Skrla et al., 2004) Facilitation of in-school and cross-school collaboration Use of critical friends protocols with regard to unit development Restructuring staff meeting time and PLC time to support Ethnic Studies unit development and evaluation	Criticality Reflective Self-awareness: willingness and ability to address own biases

The resources section of the table outlines foundational ideas and outlines to support with Ethnic Studies implementation with regard to that particular element. The processes section outlines practices that can be employed to facilitate the development of that particular systemic element. And finally the mindset section outlines the rationale and purposes for each systemic element as it pertains to Ethnic Studies implementation.

Conclusion

This study of one urban K-8 school district's early efforts at implementing Ethnic Studies was intended to shed light on how school change occurs by examining the words and actions of district teachers, administrators, and community members. The study explored how one K-8 district set about implementing Ethnic Studies. The research described Ethnic Studies implementation through the constructs of transforming school culture, the development of collective efficacy, and critical consciousness. Ethnic Studies implementation on a K-8 scale is a new and multi-faceted challenge involving the transformation of school culture; it builds on the development of the individual and collective knowledge, capacity, critical consciousness, and processes to facilitate recursive iterations of Ethnic Studies implementation as discovered through dialogue, reflection and action.

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Appendix A

Pre- Focus Group Survey Questions

Pre-Focus Group Survey Questions:

1) Name (short response)

2) Email (short response)

3) Gender Identity (short response)

4) Racial Identity (short response)

5) Ethnic Identity (short response)

6) Current Grade(s)/Position (short response)

7) Current school site(s) (checkboxes)

8) Number of years teaching (checkboxes)

   a) 0-5 years

   b) 5-10 years

   c) 10 - 15 years

   d) 20 years or more

9) Level of Ethnic Studies experience (mark all that apply): (check boxes)

   a) I am currently teaching Ethnic Studies in my classroom

   b) I was an Ethnic Studies major in college

   c) I have experience with Ethnic Studies in my personal life and up-bringing

   d) I have explored Ethnic Studies a bit on my own

   e) I have heard of Ethnic Studies, and I'm interested in learning more

   f) Other (please describe)

Appendix B

Focus Group Question Matrix (Version 2)

Focus Group Questions	Research Questions		
	RQ 3,4,5	RQ 1(a-c); 2, 3	RQ 4, 5
1. Briefly introduce yourself. Tell us your name, preferred pronouns, current grade or position, and what brought you to this discussion today.	These questions are warm up questions to elicit background information and experiences that frame views in the more specific questions later. It also gets at perceived importance of the topic.		
2. Why did you choose to become a teacher/educator? Is there a specific circumstance that you can describe to illustrate your decision?	This question gets at the educators' conception of self and teacher identity. It also gets out their basic assumptions and foundational values.		
3. What is your current experience with (or understanding of) Ethnic Studies? Can you give an example of your experience or understanding?	Experience that developed leaders' capacity for ES implementation. **Sources leading to CE & TE** -experiences of success -other people's experience -oral persuasion/feedback -affective states	**CRT – framework** Tenet 1 – Racism is ordinary Tenet 2 – Interest convergence Tenet 3 – Social construction of race Tenet 4 – Counter narratives Tenet 5 – Whiteness as property **ES Themes -** Goals: critical consciousness; race; power; agency **Pedagogy**: culturally sustaining & responsive, grounded in celebration, hope, love **Curriculum:** centrality of BIPOC voice, perspectives & history (counter-narrative)	
4. How does teaching Ethnic Studies influence your views on curriculum, assessment, and classroom culture? Can you give an example of how it has influenced your practice? (How does (might) your experience with or understanding of Ethnic Studies influence your views on curriculum, assessment, and classroom culture?		**Same as question 3**	**Critical Reflection & Action** Ethic Studies is an act of social justice. Are they reflective of their practice and how have they adjusted their practice.
5. What are some challenges associated with implementing Ethnic Studies in your classroom? (What are some perceived challenges…?) Can you give an example and how you addressed it or hope it can be addressed?	Challenges with building capacity & perceived efficacy Experience or vicarious Experiences of success Feedback Affective states	Challenges with understanding content and pedagogy. Hope Agency Community CRT Tenets	**Critical Reflection & Action** Do they point to systemic challenges? Are they aware of their power as the classroom teacher with regard to students?

6.	What supports are or would be helpful in supporting your practice with implementing Ethnic Studies? Why would they be helpful?	Capacity Self- & collective efficacy Collaboration Resources	Resources	Critical Action
	If time: Thank you all for this discussion, it is incredibly insightful. I wonder how, if at all, you hope this information could be used by our district and administrators? (confidentiality would be maintained, of course!).	Give voice to teachers to empower change within the district		

Appendix C

Interview Question Matrix (Version 2)

Interview Questions	*Research Questions*		
	RQ 3,4,5	RQ 1(a-c); 2, 3	RQ 4, 5
1. What are your gender, racial, and ethnic identifiers?	These questions are warm up questions to elicit background information and experiences that frame views in the more specific questions later.		
2. What is your position in the school/district?			
3. How long have you been in that position?			
4. Briefly describe your career in education. Where have you worked? What prompted you to go into education and leadership?			
5. Describe a time where you've successfully lead staff or colleagues through the successful implementation of a new policy or practice. What was it and what do you think made it successful?	Capacity **Teacher Efficacy** -collective shared goals -collective action -focus on results **Collective efficacy** - task analysis Strategies Resources Sources leading to CE & TE -experiences of success -other people's experience -oral persuasion/feedback -affective states	Leadership disposition Vision Communication Decision making	**Critical Reflection** Are they aware of their involvement in policy implementation? **Critical Action** How are they talking about humanizing the implementation process?
Break here if participant chooses 2 - 45-minute sessions			
6. What is your current experience with and/or understanding of Ethnic Studies? How did you come by this understanding and/or experience? Can you provide examples and/or sources?	Experience that developed leaders' capacity for ES implementation. **Sources leading to CE & TE** -experiences of success -other people's experience -oral persuasion/feedback -affective states	**CRT – framework** Tenet 1 – Racism is ordinary Tenet 2 – Interest convergence Tenet 3 – Social construction of race Tenet 4 – Counter narratives Tenet 5 – Whiteness as property **ES Themes -** Goals: critical consciousness; race; power; agency **Pedagogy**: culturally sustaining & responsive, grounded in celebration, hope, love **Curriculum:** centrality of BIPOC voice, perspectives & history (counter-narrative)	

		ES Themes	Critical Reflection Critical Action
7. What do you perceive your role to be for supporting the implementation of Ethnic Studies?		**ES Themes**	**Critical Reflection** **Critical Action**
8. In your view, what are the current challenges associated with implementing Ethnic Studies on a school-wide or district wide scale? Can you give an example? In your view, to what extent might these challenges be addressable? How have you worked (how might you plan) to address these challenges in your position?	Challenges with building capacity Experience or vicarious experiences of success.	Challenges with understanding content and pedagogy. Hope Agency CRT Tenets	Critical Reflection Critical Action – this will be more about what they might think rather than articulating a story of how they took critical action.
9. What conditions might need to exist for teachers and leaders within our district to effectively implement Ethnic Studies on a school-wide or district-wide scale? How do these conditions compare or contrast with the existing conditions? How have you personally or how might district or site leaders create these conditions? Can you provide an example?	Vision Organizational learning Model previous successes Prior knowledge Focus on results Feedback	Basic Assumptions Values Artifacts & Practices	Critical Reflection Critical Action