

From: brucethebald  
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 3:41 PM  
To: Ethnic Studies  
Subject: Comments on Ethnic Studies proposal

Some comments about your Ethnic Studies proposal  
Bruce Reeves, 1025 Hacienda Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Bravo for trying! California has a lot of ground to cover to make up for past omissions in our curricula. I know, from having been a classroom teacher since 1958 at both high school and college, that there's a long way to go before we have a fair world. I also know from experience that writing readable, effective curriculum is damn hard work. I've read a lot of the criticisms of your proposal; I hope my comments suggest ways your next draft will be less high fallutin' and more effective. [References are to line numbers].

1. You knew when you started that whatever you said would produce Sturm und Drang and raised hackles. That being the case, why did you not thoroughly edit your work? You have three members of the Advisory Committee listed as English teachers who should have been given a crack at the drafts.

2. Your use of "alternative to traditional wording"[footnote to line 7] is guaranteed to get fence-sitters against you. Hxrstorically is distracting, and comes across as an affectation: the reader asks, "Well, if the his in history is somehow sexist, what do we do with histrionic or histamine? And since fair is fair, do we then write hxb or hxrd or hxrald? A proposal for a relatively new and politically sensitive curriculum is not the place to simultaneously introduce an untested neologism.

3. Who/what is your target audience? I've reviewed over 60 pounds of English curricula over the years [NCTE Curriculum Review Committee – before computers], and have yet to meet anyone – anyone—who speaks highly of the educationese that most of them contain. Do you anticipate that the State Board will purr, and think more highly of your work when you write [67] "social positionalities," [77]"critical solidarities," or [205]"foregrounds accompliceship"?

4. There are many run-on sentences, vague references, and awkward phrases, but life is too short to lay that on you. Again, the document needs thorough editing.

5. It would have been helpful to faculty, administration, etc. if you had cited some of the schools where "[i]t is not uncommon to see Ethnic Studies..." [222-227]. Are you referring to five school districts? Fifty? And high school? Intermediate? College? As is, it seems to beg the question.

6. Surely you don't mean that faculty should be the cheerleaders for [285] "challenging systems of inequality and support for student activism and social change"? Should faculty also be a cheerleader for Democratic or Republican candidates? We need change, but as I understand it our job is to present situations and teach critical thinking skills, not indoctrinate.

Good luck as you work on the next draft. Like a thunderstorm, this too shall pass.

Sincerely,  
(Sig) Bruce Reeves