

P2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum May 2019

Include the chapter of the model curriculum, the page number, and line number(s) to ensure that the California Department of Education and Instructional Quality Commission can reference the content of the document when reviewing your comments. Please email this document as a Word document to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. You may contact Kenneth McDonald, Education Programs Consultant, at kmcdonal@cde.ca.gov with any questions regarding this template or the public input process.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Chapter 3 Coarse Goals	Michael Brandon, Historian	<p>Ethnic Studies is extremely important for students to gain a better understanding of their fellow classmates different cultures and histories. The proposed course has muddled and diluted ethnic studies into a catch all ethics & morality class.</p> <p>“explore a diverse set of narratives and primary sources across race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and culture”</p> <p>Class, gender, and sexuality are important issues that should be studied in a different class/format. Including these topics within the course changes the entire purpose and learning dynamic for students. Rather than promoting understanding, the true purpose of this course, it’s creating resentment and public backlash at the perceived “liberal propaganda.” With a history degree focused on Meso-America, I understand the importance of ethnic studies. The study of history has opened my eyes to the world around me. The vast, interesting, and UNIQUE diversity of our country. Even I see the course outline as somewhat political and ideologically driven.</p> <p>The focus of a high school ethnic studies class should focus on various ethnic groups, history, culture, struggles/oppression, and contributions to America. This should include all the unique cultural groups throughout history that have have</p>

struggled for equality throughout history. Native-Americans, African-American, latinos, Asians, Irish, Italian, German (Amish), Middle-Eastern, etc.

GENERAL

**America vs
California**

Michael
Brandon,
Historian

The course outline states the focus ethnic groups that have struggled in California but I believe that it should focus on the entire nation. Limiting the study to California limits the opportunity to compare and contrast how America evolved from a WASP nation to the country we have today; E Pluribus Unum, OUT OF MANY ONE. Including American history also provides a greater opportunity to compare and contrast ethnic groups across the history of our country. It will provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the oppression and struggles of ethnic groups in the 19th century vs 20th and 21st century. How some groups became more widely accepted, others were not, and the role skin color played.

GENERAL

**Increase Public
Support with
Name Change**

Michael
Brandon,
Historian

While unwarranted, the term Ethnic Studies seems to stir up a lot of animosity among certain demographics. The backlash is rooted bias and misunderstanding of the content of ethnic studies. Without changing the course content, a tweak of the course name to better describe the class like “**American Ethnic Studies, American Cultural Studies, World Cultural Studies, Cultures of the World**” or some other variation would temper much of the animosity towards the class. The fact that the course name creates animosity proves the importance and necessity of an Ethnic Studies course. Improving resistant parents opinions of the class will in turn make their children more willing to learn.

GENERAL

**Virtual Cultural
Exchange**

Michael
Brandon,
Historian

The purpose of Ethnic studies is to promote student’s understanding of different cultures. Books and the classroom provide superficial facts and figures. True understanding comes from personal interaction with people from other cultures.

VIRTUAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Using existing organizations such as the Virtual Cultural Exchange or creating a new program that coordinate with High schools in other countries students would be paired up with a peer from another nation and culture. The Virtual Exchange Project would include set goals:

- Weekly written communication
- Monthly Skype communication

- Assignments designed to promote interaction and learning between students and foreign peer: Peer biography, national/cultural report, day in the life video project, and various other assignments.
- Final joint project with foreign peer presented at the end of the year. Student would introduce peer to class with oral and video/slide show presentation. Peer would present project about California student to their class.

The addition of one on one student interaction with students abroad will take lessons off the pages of textbooks and into the everyday lives of students. A 2002 study of students who had participated in foreign exchange programs found “On average, 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that study abroad influenced them to seek out a greater diversity of friends.”*

While a virtual cultural exchange can't provide the same experience as study abroad, weekly interaction with a foreign student will create an enriched learning environment and personal investment in the cultures they are exploring. It also has the potential to create lifelong friendships and help students see world events through the prism of those friendships. **Rather than viewing world events as unimportant background noise in a far off place, students will begin to see the human impact of world events because of their personal relationship with a friend living in that far off place.**

*More Is Better:

The Impact of Study Abroad

Mary M. Dwyer Institute for the International Education of Students, 2002

Page 158