

DETAILED PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS IN THE ESMC

Submitted by the Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies

This details the Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies' recommendations regarding specific problems with California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, and includes the chapter, page and line numbers from the August 31, 2020 draft.

Align all lessons only to the impartial Outcomes (see specific line numbers listed below)

Lesson plans should *only* align with "Eight Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies" from Chapter 1, not with the "Guiding Values and Principles." The norm for teachers is to align lessons with the desired outcomes for students, and this is especially important for the ESMC, when the Outcomes and Values conflict. The Outcomes encourage critical analysis of multiple perspectives, but the Values promote a one sided political agenda. Additionally, the Outcomes require evaluating the strengths and limitations of different approaches to affecting change, but the Values only permit limited types of approaches and don't evaluate the downsides to them. This conflict could confuse K-12 educators, and put them in an untenable position.

It is pedagogically correct to align lessons with desired outcomes. It is inappropriate to align lessons with "Guiding Values and Principles" that promote specific political ideology, in opposition to California's History-Social Sciences framework, which says that curriculum, resources and materials should "represent multiple, and sometimes opposing, points of view or perspectives."

Recommended steps to fix this problem:

- Remove all elements requiring, "each unit and lesson plan should be founded on the key values and principles of ethnic studies as described in Chapter 1." (Ch.3, p. 28, l. 730-31); "These are the guiding values and principles each Ethnic Studies lesson should include" (Ch 1.,p. 8-9, 181-82); "The following sample lessons are aligned to the ethnic studies values, principles" (App. B, l. 45). Remove words "values and principles" from each.
- Additionally, the "Guiding Values and Principles" should be removed from Appendix B p.3, l. 48 – 64.
- Also remove the specific Ethnic Studies Values and Principles Alignment listed in individual lessons in Appendix B. Specifically in lines 136, 242, 382, 622, 736, 968, 1123, 1326, 1529, 1715, 1889, 2262, 2468, 2759, as they align the promotion of specific political ideology to the sample lessons. The political messaging should be removed from these lessons as well.
- It's essential that the word "outcomes" remain in all the references above.

Terms that have multiple, conflicting meanings should be removed from the Guiding Values and Principles, and Outcomes, so there is no misinterpretation of their meaning.

For example, the terms "truer democracy" and "true democracy" are mentioned as goals in Value 6 and Outcome 6. (Ch 1., p.9, l.196; Ch 1., p.12, l.282 ; Ch. 3, p. 29, l.744; App. B, p. 3, l.61)

“True(r) democracy” is often used in Marxist circles to mean the elimination of private property, and can be a term that stands for communism.¹ Taken in context, Value 6 and Outcome 6 call for connecting students to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle to ensure communism. If “true(r) democracy” is not meant to be a stand in for communism, then it should easily be replaced with words like “a more perfect union” or “a more just society” which can’t be misinterpreted as Marxist buzzwords.

Another example is the term “resistance,” which occurs in three of the seven Guiding Values and Principles, (Ch 1., p.9, l. 188, 195, 198; Ch 1., p.12, l.281 ; Ch. 3, p. 29, l.736, 743, 746 ; App. B, p. 3, l. 53, 60, 63) and appears 104 times in the ESMC. The word “resistance” is subjective. It can imply the nonviolent resistance advocated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and demonstrated by Rosa Parks, as well as the self-proclaimed resistance of a terrorist group like Al Qaeda. It is important for a K-12 curriculum to specify what type of resistance is encouraged, and that violence is discouraged. The ESMC does not do that, but it should.

While the first draft included many more specifics about terrorists and advocates of violence, the current draft of the ESMC still includes more than enough examples of those who advocate violent resistance to demonstrate the intent of the term “resistance” in this curriculum. Some specifics in the current draft include:

- Mumia Abu Jamal, a Marxist advocate who murdered a police officer (Appendix A, p.64, l. 2043)
- Rabab Abdulhadi is cited as a source (Appendix A, p. 72, l. 1993). She is a professor at SFSU’s College of Ethnic Studies who said, “We really idolize somebody like Leila Khalid (convicted hijacker and member of a terrorist group on the US and EU terror lists)...somebody who actually goes to a plane and hijacks it.” Abdulhadi hosted a recent event called “Gender, Justice, & Resistance: A conversation with Leila Khaled.” The presentation repeatedly called for violent resistance, and Rabab Abdulhadi’s meaning of resistance is not ambiguous. The reference should be removed.
- Franz Fanon, the Marxist philosopher who argued that violence is a necessary tool of people’s political engagement (mentioned six times in Appendix A: p.64, l. 1718-19; p. 73, l. 2028-29; p.129, l.3544; p/185, l.5133; p. 224, l. 6239; p. 270, l. 7492)
- Students are to read “Malcolm, Garvey, Huey” by Dead Prez (Appendix A, p. 74, l. 2045):

“I study Malcolm Garvey Huey, Malcolm Garvey Huey
Monster Kody² with a UZI, listening to Fela Kuti
I’m a goon with the machete, especially if it’s deadly
Got the Santos for the Xe to protect me, so respect me
This is heavy legendary, revolutionary...

Bang bang, pig shooting, we should blame Rudy Julie...

¹ *The Young Marx on Constituent Power and True Democracy*” by Mikkel Flohr <https://forskning.ruc.dk/en/publications/the-young-marx-on-constituent-power-and-true-democracy/>.

² Monster Kody - brutally violent L.A. gang member

Police cannot stand me packing y'all like a manny
Call me Little Bobby Hutton³, cause I'm first to push the button
Rappers don't be saying nothing to the system, we say fuck 'em"

These calls to violent resistance should be removed, as should the wording in the Guiding Values and Principles that lead to them.

Remove the political agenda and extreme ideology from the Values and Guiding Principles as well as the resulting lessons.

(Chapter 1, Page 9, Lines 173-199; Chapter 3, Pages 28-29, Lines 730-747; Appendix B, lines 47-64, 136, 242, 382, 622, 736, 968, 1123, 1326, 1529, 1715, 1889, 2262, 2468, 2759)

Teaching the Third World Liberation Front's history was authorized in AB 2016, however evangelizing their extreme political ideology was not. Their political agenda, like that of the Black Panthers, includes: anti-capitalism, pro-militancy, support for communist governments in China, Cuba, Laos and North Korea, opposing self-determination for Jewish people in Israel, and berating non-violent US civil rights leaders as "docile." That is the same political ideology promoted in the Values and Guiding Principles, and delivered in this Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum lessons. This political ideology does not reflect the actual identity or beliefs of most Californians. Instead of indoctrinating students to this agenda, ESMC should provide insight to ethnic identities, racism, struggles, and successes.

Remove the inflammatory "Guiding Values and Principles" which promote radical ideological aims and can be used to justify bringing hate and political dogma into the classroom.

(Chapter 1, Page 9, Lines 173-199; Chapter 3, Pages 28-29, Lines 730-747; Appendix B, lines 47-64, 136, 242, 382, 622, 736, 968, 1123, 1326, 1529, 1715, 1889, 2262, 2468, 2759)

The ESMC Guiding Values call students to "challenge imperialist/colonial beliefs;" "critique empire building;" "critique capitalism;" and aspire to "post-imperial... transformative resistance." These principles promote a narrow political agenda, and one-sided ideological aims. Regardless of one's personal political beliefs, promoting one specific ideology in K-12 is inconsistent with The Common Core State Standards, which state that "Students will actively seek to understand, analyze and articulate multiple points of view, perspectives and cultures." It is also inconsistent with California's History and Social Sciences (HSS) Framework 2016⁴.

The Guiding Values directly reference, and are based on, specific pages from a book called Education at War. The relevant section of the book encourages teachers to "develop solidarity and create linkages" with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. The Guiding Values can easily be twisted to justify promoting anti-Israel and antisemitic hate in the classroom, in violation of AB331, and should be removed.

³ Bobby Hutton - Treasurer Black Panther Party, ambushed Oakland police, wounding two officers

⁴ Students will "Grapple with multiple and often competing pieces of information, form interpretations based on evidence, and learn how to place information in its appropriate context, and connect it to issues of broader significance." "Curriculum, resources and materials should "represent multiple, and sometimes opposing, points of view or perspectives." (from History and Social Studies Framework 2016)

Values 4, 5, and 7 inculcate a one-sided political ideology and should be removed. (Ch. 1, p.9, l. 192-9; Ch 3, p. 29, l. 740-747; App. B, p. 3, l. 57-64) Value 4 states: *“critique empire-building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism [as well as patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism] and other forms of power and oppression.”* This is a politically-motivated value, not an ethnically relevant one, and should be deleted from the ESMC. “Empire building” is something done by numerous ethnic (and political) groups, including those of color – not just whites or racists or capitalists. Chinese, Japanese, Arab, Mongol, Incan and many other groups throughout history conquered and oppressed others to expand their territories, yet that fact is excluded due to the blame filter of white and capitalist. Value 5 “challenge imperialist/colonialist beliefs” and Value 7 “Post-imperial life” have the same problem and should also be removed.

Remove the Guiding Values and Principles, or if they must be kept for some reason, revise them to remove the political agenda, Marxist innuendo, and references to Education at War. Here are several examples of how Values might be revised: (Ch 1., p. 9, l. 192-199; Ch 3, p. 29, l. 740-747; App. B, p. 3, l. 57-64)

Value #	Current Wording	Suggested Wording
5	<u>Challenge imperialist/colonial [and hegemonic]</u> beliefs and practices on multiple levels	<u>Examine how race and ethnicity have been constructed</u> in the United States, have changed over time, and continue to shape the country today
6	“Connect ourselves to past and contemporary <u>resistance movements</u> that <u>struggle</u> for social justice on the global and local levels to ensure a <u>truer democracy</u> ”	“Teach students about <u>social justice</u> and <u>social responsibility</u> , and to understand that they can become <u>agents of change</u> at local, state, national, and global levels.” Or “Learn about past and contemporary <u>social justice efforts</u> to create a <u>more perfect union</u> ”

7	Conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for <u>post-imperial</u> life that promotes collective narratives of <u>transformative resistance</u> , <u>critical hope</u> , and <u>radical</u> healing	Focus on the <u>experiences, histories, cultures, struggles and accomplishments</u> of specific ethnic/racial groups within American history and society, with an emphasis on <u>truth and healing through empathy</u> and education.
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Remove the inflammatory "Guiding Values" (Chapter 1, Page 9, Lines 173-199; Chapter 3, Pages 28-29, Lines 730-747; Appendix B, lines 47-64) **and identify the Outcomes as "Guiding Principles and Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies."** (Ch. 1, p.9, l. 200)

The Outcomes should be elevated in importance and emphasized throughout the ESMC, and conflicting information (such as the Guiding Values) should be removed. The Outcomes were a positive addition to the current draft. They call for the ESMC to “promote honesty and nuance, drawing on multiple perspectives;” “build bridges of intergroup understanding;” “challenge group stereotyping and polarization;” “build community and solidarity;” “develop civic participation skills” and “encourage the assessment of various strategies for bringing about change” while examining “individual and collective efforts to challenge and overcome inequality and discriminatory treatment.”

Ch. 1 p. 14, 330-336 demonstrates well the importance of the Eight Outcomes (called eight principles in this description): “By operating on the basis of these eight principles, statewide ethnic studies can become a venue for developing a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges that come with ethnic diversity. It should advance the cause of equity and inclusivity, challenge systemic racism, foster self-understanding, build intergroup and intragroup bridges, enhance civic engagement, and further a sense of human commonality. In this way, ethnic studies can help build stronger communities, a more equitably inclusive state, and a more just nation.” If ESMC adhered to these Eight Outcomes, it would make a difference building ethnic group understanding, human commonality and creating a more just state. Yet the current Guiding Values are completely in conflict with these outcomes, so the Values and Principles must be removed and the Eight Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies must be renamed “Guiding Principles and Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies Teaching.”

Even if the Values are *not* removed, the current Eight Outcomes should be renamed, moving the words “Guiding Principles” from the “Values” section to the “Outcomes” section. The newly named sections would be, “Ethnic Studies Values” and “Guiding Principles and Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies Teaching.” That way the principles and outcomes would be consistent, and lessons would align with them.

Add to General Principles (Preface, p. 4-5, l.76-98) **and Guiding Principles** (Ch. 1, p. 8-14, l.173 – 336) **the *Elements of a Balanced Curriculum***⁵ **for guidelines against politicizing Ethnic Studies classes**

⁵ Los Angeles Unified School District’s Elements of a Balanced Curriculum for Ethnic Studies <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/226/Balance%202017.pdf> or see attached

Key elements to add include:

- In K-12 education it is imperative that students are exposed to multiple perspectives, taught to think critically, and form their own opinions.
- Curriculum, resources, and materials should include a balance of topics, authors, and concepts, including primary and secondary sources that represent multiple, and sometimes opposing, points of view or perspectives⁶
- Students will actively seek to understand, analyze and articulate multiple points of view, perspectives and cultures.
- The instruction, material, or discussion must be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students, and be a fair and balanced academic presentation of various points of view consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias or partisanship⁷

Protect against indoctrination (Chapter 3, Page 14, Lines 315-328)

Add additional guidelines for teachers to “effectively engage students in productive conversations and learning activities around difficult and important issues:” *“Pay careful attention to their own political viewpoints and potential biases, to ensure students are empowered to form their own opinions rather than simply adopting the views of the teacher or particular educational materials.”*

Revise interpersonal racism definition (Appendix B page 43)

Personal acts of discrimination are offensive regardless of the source. Change the interpersonal racism definition to say: “examples of interpersonal racism include the following—what some members of an ethnic group do to members of a different ethnic group up close,” rather than “examples of interpersonal racism include the following—what some white people do to people of color up close.” Racist jokes, stereotypes, beatings and harassment happen frequently to people who look different. People of color treat people of other ethnic backgrounds with this behavior, and are equally guilty as those who are white. We should admit it – all types of people engage in the personal acts of discrimination that are described. It's not OK from anyone, whether white or of color.

Exclude the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement and one-sided political conversations about Middle Eastern conflicts (Appendix B)

When an Arab American lesson is added to Appendix B, it's important to exclude the BDS Movement, whose goal is to destroy the state of Israel, the world's only Jewish state. That's according to its founder Omar Barghouti, who's been quoted on that many times, and that sentiment has been echoed by its activists even here in California, like CSU Stanislaus Professor As'ad AbuKhalil. BDS is not part of teaching California students to be empowered or empathetic. In fact it's the opposite, as BDS teaching correlates very strongly with a large rise in antisemitic incidents on the college campuses where it's being promoted. BDS and other one-sided conversations about Middle Eastern conflicts do not belong in California Ethnic Studies and create unsafe classrooms.

⁶ History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016

⁷ Adapted from the United Teachers – Los Angeles/Los Angeles Unified School District Contract 2014-2017, Article XXV Academic Freedom and responsibility, 1.0 Lesson Content

Include approaches to social change from a wide range of political orientations, including methods that work within the US system to improve it. (Appendix B)

Due to the narrow political ideology baked into the current Guiding Values and Principles, seminal leaders like John Lewis, Martin Luther King, and Thurgood Marshall are currently outside the bounds of this curriculum. While they were impressive agents of change, their methods don't fit the ESMC's political litmus test for ideology or methods of change.

The Guiding Values and Principles embrace revolutionary leaders like Oscar López Rivera (led Marxist-Leninist organization responsive for 100 bombings in US cities), numerous Black Panther leaders, Yuri Kochiyama (Maoist admirer of Bin Laden), and Lolita Lebrón (led armed assault on the US House of Representatives, wounding 5 congressmen). The first draft of the ESMC listed all these and many more like them. While the second draft of the ESMC no longer specifies all these figures, the Values and Principles resulting in their praise have not been changed, and the topics that lead to them are also still included, suggesting they are welcome examples in K-12 classroom. This should be fixed.

Emphasize balanced evaluation and analysis rather than forcing one-sided perspective.

For example:

- Remove the parenthetical examples which only show an extreme perspective of Black political thought: "Evolution of Black Political and Intellectual Thought (e.g., racial accommodationism, Black nationalism, and revolutionary intercommunalism)." (App. B, p. 32, l.714-15).
- Revise the focus on "eras" and instead compare and contrast the "approaches and accomplishments of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements" (App. B, p.33 l. 723)
- Recognize positively some non-violent change strategies. Don't denigrate those who work within the system to improve it. The recommended material Teaching Tolerance's "Bringing Black Lives Matter into the Classroom Part II" paints non-violent change agents such as John Lewis and Martin Luther King as weak "passive" and "docile." (App. B p. 32, l. 704-06). It is fine to study both types of approaches, but the "more militant tactics" should not be portrayed to students as the better or the only good solution
- Add a balanced sample of refugees from a wider variety of political orientations. Refugee issues mentioned throughout Appendix B fit the Guiding Values' political litmus test, but ignore the many ethnic groups fleeing from Marxist or Maoist persecution – large portion of Chinese-Americans and Cambodians, among others. It also ignores the large number of economic refugees, who emigrated to the US for job opportunities, given the strong US economy and economic problems in Latin American and various parts of Asia. More balanced examples should be added.
- Include the Los Angeles Unified School District Ethnic Studies course in Appendix A as a recommended A-G approved course. See attached survey course description.