

**From:** Judith Gussmann  
**Sent:** Friday, November 13, 2020 5:02 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

I am a retired teacher, and no matter which grade level I was teaching, nor what subject matter, I had two primary goals: that my students learn to develop their own opinions through analytical thinking processes, and that they become adept at interacting with the rich diversity of people they'll encounter throughout their lives with a sense of curiosity, inclusion and respect.

As I see our country fracturing into divisive fronts, I feel it's imperative that our textbooks -- most especially in history and social studies -- foster acquisition of these skills if we are to survive as a nation.

For long decades, text materials were couched within a conservative framework which denied the realities of many in our country. And now, the framers of the Ethnic Studies curriculum proposal are calling to couch them in a far-left framework, which denies a different portion of our citizenry. Their model advocates a particular point-of-view rather than presenting a range of facts with which students must learn to grapple. In either case -- whether from the right or the left -- such texts are a hindrance to a society needing to bind together, and a poison that kills analytical thinking.

I have read that there is a curriculum approach through the History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016, which follows the process I speak of. I assume that within it, there would be space, for example, to explore both the many, diverse Jewish understandings of Israel along with an equal space for various Palestinian understandings of their situation.

Whether it or another model is used, please select a text series which trains our students' minds to be analytical and open to exploring a range of views without pressure to take on any particular view espoused by a teacher, the State of California, or the President of the United States. Otherwise, we leave ourselves to fall even deeper into our tragic and potentially dangerous divide.

Many thanks to you for reviewing this letter,

Judith Gussmann