

From: Harriett Feltman
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 1:33 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model (ESM) Curriculum

Dear Curriculum Evaluators,

There is a Curriculum principle that I believe needs serious consideration:
Only informational "Presentations on Beliefs and Practices" is that principle.
There should be no emotional content to that, only presentation of information.
I propose this based on my personal experiences with several religious practices.
On that basis I believe every religion has substantial belief and practice variations.

I was personally raised as a limited practice Jew within the Conservative Jewish tradition.
My extended family runs the gamut from Reform through very traditional Chabad Orthodox.
And I spent two fine summers at a live-away Episcopalian summer camp as a child under ten.

My son (who is also Jewish) is the current music director at a United Church of Christ church.
My wife and I both support his ecumenicism and on occasion have added our voices to their choir.
Mondays and Thursdays I used to play Bridge and lunch with other players at a local Senior Center.
Comparisons of our religious practices was one ongoing lunch subject until our Covid-19 shutdown.

As you can see I regularly had chances to talk with people with different beliefs and practices
These talks were all based on listening to presentations by individuals on belief and practice.
With that protocol our discussions have always been both respectful and informative for all.
My personal experiences have made it easy to accept a variety of religious views by others.

I therefore believe "Presentations on Beliefs and Practices" should be the ESM Curriculum basis.
It should be structured into "Pods" to illustrate the wide variety of religious beliefs and practices.
For example there would be about a dozen varieties of Christian belief and practice in that Pod.
And I have personally been at services in six beliefs and practices that can be in a Jewish Pod.
I know of Sunni and Shiite Islam but my knowledge is limited so more varieties are possible.
All the above observations support the "Beliefs and Practices Pods" concept I now propose.

Ultimately the important take-away is that all students should expect and accept religious variety.
A curriculum based on unemotional exposition of beliefs and practices will accomplish that.

Respectfully Yours,

Charles J. Feltman