



Access and Equity Pedagogy Principles for Ethnic Studies

2017

1. Attend to the varied student populations in the classroom by embracing diversity as an asset for engaging in rich and rigorous instruction.
2. Explicitly teach the academic skills, habits of mind, and rhetorical strategies that are employed when engaging in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking in the area of ethnic studies.
3. Ensure the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are accessible to all students and provide a variety of options for students to demonstrate their learning.
4. Focus on disciplinary literacy by explicitly teaching the language and literacy skills students need to analyze various primary and secondary sources, literature, and other texts explored in ethnic studies.
5. Infuse instruction with culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) practices and approaches designed to make lessons comprehensible and accessible to diverse student populations.
6. Develop and implement a coordinated multi-tiered system of increasing instructional supports to ensure all students are successful with the course content and assessments (MTSS).

Description of Each Guiding Principle:

- 1. Attend to the varied student populations in the classroom by embracing diversity as an asset for engaging in rich and rigorous instruction.** Ethnic studies is inclusive of students and families from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, sexual orientation, race, class, gender, socioeconomic, linguistic, and ability backgrounds. Culturally competent teachers respect and integrate these differences into their instruction. Students who are still developing their academic, linguistic, cognitive, and social-emotional competencies are viewed as able, important contributors to the classroom discourse.
- 2. Explicitly teach the academic skills, habits of mind, and rhetorical strategies that are employed when engaging in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking in the area of ethnic studies.** Ethnic studies teachers should expose students to a variety of instructional practices and techniques designed to assist students in identifying the strategies and appeals employed in text or visual media. Effective instruction embeds the critical aspects of thinking in the history/social science and literature disciplines, including explicit modeling and practice with sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating evidence (Wineburg 1991, Seixas 2009, De La Paz 2013). Ethnic studies teachers provide ample opportunities for guided collaborative practice and independent practice, both orally and in writing as well as through the use of visual aids and/or media. Teachers utilize a gradual release of responsibility approach that fades, scaffolds and supports, and promotes self-regulation of learning so students build independence with their academic skills (Wineburg 1991, De La Paz 2005, De La Paz & Felton 2010). Teachers must also provide explicit instruction on the essential elements of expository and argumentative writing by allowing students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from multiple historical and/or literary sources, as well as learn from models and rubrics when developing proficient historical analysis and fluent writing (Young & Leinhardt 1998, De La Paz 2013).
- 3. Ensure the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are accessible to all students and provide a variety of options for students to demonstrate their learning.** Teachers should employ the principles and guidelines of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide options for the ways in which students will access the content, tasks, and assessments in the course (HSS Framework, Ch. 20, pp. 726-729). With a focus on providing multiple means for students to become engaged in historical thinking and analysis, teachers can design opportunities for varied learning experiences to address the variability of learning strengths and needs among the students in each class. When initial instruction is planned in such a way that it flexibly addresses learner variability, more students are likely to succeed.

- 4. Focus on disciplinary literacy by explicitly teaching the language and literacy skills students need to analyze various primary and secondary sources, literature, and other texts explored in ethnic studies.** Teachers will provide expert modeling of evidence-based practices for disciplinary reading, writing, and speaking. Ethnic studies teachers assist students in developing the capacities of literate individuals, including demonstrating independence; building strong content knowledge; responding to varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline; comprehending as well as critiquing; valuing evidence; using technology and media strategically and capably; and coming to understand other perspectives and cultures. Students will engage in authentic reading and re-reading of discipline-specific texts to deepen their understanding of language, genre, style, and vocabulary, and teachers will provide students with scaffolded practices to assist them in comprehending complex text and the syntactical and semantic choices employed by authors. When appropriate, teachers check for students' comprehension of what they are reading and respectfully point out differences between standard English and students' home dialects of English or pronunciation influenced by the student's primary language or regional accent (ELA/ELD Framework, Ch. 7, p. 713).
- 5. Infuse instruction with culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) practices and approaches designed to make lessons comprehensible and accessible to diverse student populations.** Culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them (LAUSD English Learner Master Plan, Ch. 4; California ELA/ELD Framework, Ch. 9). Instruction in ethnic studies poses cognitive and content area challenges because it is a literate discipline with a historical context; its thinking is constructed in language and culture. Students are better prepared to grapple with ethnic studies topics and texts when they learn how to decipher the linguistic, methodological, and cultural choices made by their authors (Schleppegrell & Achugar 2000, Gay 2002).
- Ethnic studies teachers should continuously strive for social justice, access, and equity in their classrooms. The course will require them to adopt a stance of inquiry toward their practice and to engage in ongoing, collaborative discussions with their colleagues about challenging issues including race, culture, language, and equity. Teachers must draw on and value students' cultural backgrounds by learning about their students' lives and making connections between school learning and their students' experiences, backgrounds, and interests (McIntyre & Turner, 2013, from ELA/ELD Framework, Ch. 9).

- In order to understand the depth and complexity of ethnic studies texts, some students will benefit from a dual approach: instruction that integrates content and language learning in addition to designated language and literacy instruction that assists students in comprehending historical texts (HSS Framework, Ch. 20). Ethnic studies teachers can maximize the potential of all students by partnering with those who specialize in language, literacy, and cognition to design instruction that increases students' ability to use their newly-acquired content and language. In so doing, teachers will ensure that instruction is accessible to all learners, particularly English learners, students with disabilities, and Standard English learners.

6. Develop and implement a coordinated multi-tiered system of increasing instructional supports to ensure all students are successful with the course content and assessments (MTSS). Effective prevention and intervention efforts are designed to increase the number of students successful in their courses and reduce the need for intervention and/or credit recovery. MTSS occurs in the context of well-designed curricula, effective instruction, and a comprehensive assessment system, as well as effective leadership, professional learning, and an empowering culture for all educators, students, and families. Ethnic studies courses should incorporate a preview-preteach-reteach mastery learning approach, particularly for students struggling academically (HSS Framework, Ch. 20). Instruction, intervention, and assessment should be well aligned and articulated so students and parents can understand the course expectations clearly and consistently.

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