



Californians for Equal Rights Foundation
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Memo on PUSD's EL/ES Curriculums

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To: PUSD Local Parents & Community Groups

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Ethnic Studies Curriculum Analysis

-Overall, the general objectives of the curriculum ("encourage students to be politically conscious," "identify contemporary issues of oppression," "illustrate the intersectionality") are firmly rooted in the ideological framework of critical race theory. It conflates the stated goal of ethnic studies (to prepare students to be global citizens with appreciation for and understanding of multiple cultures and ethnicities in the US---- per AB2016) with a more narrow and politicized goal of social justice and action civics. Are we teaching students true multiculturalism or indoctrinating them to become political activists?

-Unit 1.1 contains a benign aspect to teach students to "relate to all people as individuals rather than representatives of groups." But the message is incongruent with the general tone of the document or the 3 sample resources. All three resources ('My Parents Decided To Outwit Everyone By Giving Their Daughter A White Man's Name', The urgency of intersectionality, and Master Narrative Close-Reading) are typical sample readings of critical race theory.

-Unit 1.2 perpetuates the dichotomy between dominant/master narrative vs. counter narrative. Again, typical CRT lingo.

-Unit 2 continues on the path of quoting CRT key words, to include: "lived experiences," "aspects of master and counter narratives," "power, oppression, and resistance"... The resource "Get comfortable with being uncomfortable" is a Ted Talk given by social justice warrior Luvvie Ajayi Jones on "speaking truth to power." The talk has little to do with the topic of immigration and cultures.

-Unit 3 shows the District's dedication to reinforcing the theme of power v. oppression with 6 weeks of coursework on the topic. The two resources--- "Four T's of Oppression" and "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack" are again straight out of the CRT camp, preaching race-based, disparate treatment of individuals.

-Unit 4 is the action-oriented part of the whole curriculum, explicitly asking students to "honor past social justice initiatives through their own actions, and celebrate their learning and empowerment through their own social justice efforts." The two advocacy groups highlighted in the resources--- Rainbow Coalition and ADL, are both left-leaning political groups. There is no balancing perspective or alternative cases of non-political, community-based groups (such as the



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Woodson Center) working on meaningful initiatives rather than performative virtue-signaling to improve lives of historically marginalized groups.

Ethnic Literature Analysis

-In summary, the curricular design of Ethnic Literature 1-2 is immersed in critical pedagogy in which that cultural understanding and empathy are examined through the lenses of “how systems of power in the United States have affected these groups.” The methodological emphasis on “intersectionality of gender and sexual orientation,” “Teaching Tolerance’s Anti-Bias Framework,” exploring one’s “own implicit biases” are all standard tools of critical race theory. Notably, the “[Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework](#)” is part of a series of racial justice curriculums designed by [Learning for Justice](#), a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. The project’s explicit goals are “to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements.” Again, the curriculum’s goals to learn about “power and privilege” against “historically marginalized groups” through exploring “first person perspectives”, through examining tools to help these groups “achieve power”, and through “transformative resistance” are in line with the dichotomous, politics-centered nature of critical race theory. The proposed focus on students becoming “agents of change” to “promote equity and justice” gravitates toward literature and language education being tools of political activism.

-Unit 1 examines “key concepts of race, identity, prejudice, and discrimination” and “how race and ethnicity impact and shape society”. The race-based perspective is central to any CRT-based or CRT-infused analytical approach. Kimerbele Crenshaw, a key CRT proponent, is also listed in the unit’s assigned readings. Crenshaw is known for the argument that defines CRT as ““an approach to grappling with **a history of white supremacy** that rejects the belief that what’s in the past is in the past, and that the laws and systems that grow from that past are detached from it.”

-Unit 2 centers historical understanding on “systems of power” rather than a more well-rounded perspective of complex social relations, political institutions, or economic organization rooted in both key agents and key processes. The lens of “identity and power” is an essential concept of social and racial justice. While useful in limited historical and theoretical contexts, the concept is a rather esoteric subject requiring advanced knowledge in political philosopher and political science on the non-linear, fluid and complex relationship between collective identity and power. A narrow or literary examination of the concept will risk promoting identity politics.

-Unit 3 pivots learning of historical and political institutions on “US policies and laws surrounding race and ethnicity,” which again pays insufficient attention to other factors influencing policies and laws.



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-Unit 4 introduces more about Kimberle Crenshaw's work on intersectionality and "The Four I's of Oppression" (ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized). Both intersectionality- and oppression-based analyses are ideologically and politically driven to amplify systemic oppression, a key CRT concept, over other societal/political/economic forces.

-Unit 5 demonstrates the activism orientation of the curriculum with a focus on "tools of liberation used by marginalized groups," a Marxist concept. Controversial and explicitly political movements including "the Third World Liberation Front, AWOOC... Black Lives Movement" are promoted as examples of "transformational resistance," another Marxist and CRT concept.

-Unit 6 deepens the activism-heavy rather than education-rich focus of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to "help address discrimination and serve as an ally" instead of being taught to develop nuanced and logical understanding of our complex society. The assigned readings introduce a race-based, politicized and biased view of race in American society.