

May 2022

Critically Teaching Social Studies using an Ethnic Studies Framework: Native American Representation in the Elementary School Curriculum

Erich Schottstaedt
Dominican University of California

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2022.EDU.08>

IRB Number: 10999

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Schottstaedt, Erich, "Critically Teaching Social Studies using an Ethnic Studies Framework: Native American Representation in the Elementary School Curriculum" (2022). *Master of Science in Education | Master's Theses*. 54.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2022.EDU.08>

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Liberal Arts and Education | Graduate Student Scholarship at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Science in Education | Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.



This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the program chair, has been presented to and accepted by the Department of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education.

Erich Schottstaedt
Candidate

Jennifer Lucko, PhD
Program Chair

Katherine Lewis, PhD
First Reader

Kathleen Ferrando, Med
Second Reader

**Critically Teaching Social Studies using an Ethnic Studies Framework:
Native American Representation in the Elementary School Curriculum**

By

Erich Schottstaedt

A culminating thesis submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

May 2022

Abstract

The research problem this qualitative study addresses is how Native American history, and European settler colonialism, can be critically taught in a developmentally appropriate manner, avoiding eurocentrism and whitewashing. Most research on Ethnic Studies and teacher preparation is focused on the high school level. Traditional elementary education tends to both romanticize and decontextualize Native American history, focusing on Native Americans as people who only lived in the distant past. Colonialism is often sanitized in Social Studies curriculum, with the perspectives of European settlers as the dominant frame of reference, where Native Americans are seen as secondary actors (Styres, 2019; Valdez, 2019). The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how elementary teachers prepare to teach topics of settler colonialism and Native American history in a developmentally appropriate manner. Five elementary and middle school teachers from one Northern California school district completed a survey and then participated in follow-up semi-structured interviews. Through the interview and survey process, issues such as how Native Americans are currently represented in the curriculum (including standards, teaching materials, etc.), teacher philosophy, and teacher attitudes and perceptions about their preparedness for teaching these topics, were explored. The findings show that most teachers were unsatisfied with the teaching materials they relied on for teaching U.S. colonial history and Native American topics. Teacher participants generally believed that teaching resources should be easily obtainable and of higher quality to adequately teach these subjects. All teacher participants felt that more support is necessary, especially when addressing these topics in the younger grades.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Katie Lewis and my second reader Kathleen Ferrando for all their support, feedback, encouragement, and flexibility with deadlines. I would also like to thank my family and friends for all their support while I have been writing, researching, and collecting data for this project. Without all their help this project would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>viii</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of Purpose.....	2
Overview of the Research Design.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review	7
The Fight for Ethnic Studies at the K-12 Level	7
The Radical Origins of Ethnic Studies.....	10
What is Ethnic Studies?	11
Critical Race Theory	13
Humanity and Criticality.....	15
Multicultural Education Vs. Ethnic Studies-What’s the Difference?.....	15
Teaching Ethnic Studies.....	17
Benefits of Ethnic Studies.....	17
Ethnic Studies Pedagogy	20
The Traditional Curriculum	23
Native American History as Portrayed in Textbooks	25
Examination of the Standards	27

Possibilities of K-12 Education	28
Conclusion	30
<i>Chapter 3: Methodology</i>	33
Description and Rationale for Research Approach	34
Research Design	36
Methods for Data Collection.....	37
Data Analysis	39
Validity	41
<i>Chapter 4: Findings</i>	44
Teacher Philosophy, Identity, and Attitudes	45
Teaching as Calling and the Importance of the Student-Teacher Relationship	45
Critical Pedagogy and the Political Nature of Teaching	47
Teacher Identity	51
The Curriculum: Grade Level Exploration	55
Eighth Grade: Giving Students the Language to Confront Colonialism.....	56
Fourth Grade: “Explorers” and the California Mission Project	59
Third Grade: Local History and Community Collaboration	62
Second Grade.....	63
Kindergarten	63
The Power of Language & Budding Critical Consciousness?	64
Teacher Preparedness	66
Less Experienced Teachers and Feelings of Isolation	66
Experienced Teachers and Networks of Collaboration.....	68
What Do Teachers Want?	70

Conclusion	72
<i>Chapter 5: Discussion</i>	76
Implications for the Literature	77
Implications for Policy and Practice	78
Limitations of the Study	80
Directions for Future Research	81
Conclusion	82
<i>References</i>	84
<i>Appendix A: Survey Questions</i>	92
<i>Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions</i>	96
<i>Appendix C: List of Figures</i>	98
<i>Appendix D: Informed Consent</i>	105

List of Figures

Figure 1 In Teaching, a neutral point of view is not possible.....	99
Figure 2 Teaching is a political act.....	99
Figure 3 Educators should aim to teach with social justice in mind.....	99
Figure 4 My identity influences how I teach	100
Figure 5 Educators should use multiple learning and teaching approaches	101
Figure 6 The curriculum I use honestly engages with the history of Indigenous people in America.....	101
Figure 7 Native American perspectives are integrated in the curriculum	102
Figure 8 I feel well prepared to teach students about Native American culture and history	102
Figure 9 There has been a positive shift in how Native Americans are currently portrayed in the curriculum versus in the past	103
Figure 10 There has been improvements in textbook treatment of Native American culture and history within the past 10 years	103
Figure 11 My current teaching materials and content accurately represent Native Americans in the history of the United States.....	104

Chapter 1: Introduction

Traditional Elementary education tends to both romanticize and decontextualize Native American history, focusing on Native Americans as people who lived in the distant past. Colonialism is often sanitized in Social Studies, with the perspectives of European settlers (often referred to as "explorers") as the dominant frame of reference, where Native Americans are seen as secondary actors (Styres, 2019; Valdez, 2019). This can be seen when examining California's History-Social Science (HSS) content standards, which were first adopted in 1998 and have not been updated since. In 2016 a new framework for teaching HSS was developed as guidance for teachers. The framework calls for an expansion of study of pre-Columbian California history and expanded study on California Native American tribes (Schneider et al., 2019). When examining the HSS Framework, it is clear there has been a shift in how California HSS is intended to be taught, with more focus on Native Americans and movements away from the California mission project and the inclusion of more Native American perspectives, but has this shift been implemented, and is it enough?

The researchers' motivations for exploring this topic come from their experiences as a fourth-grade student teacher, and the flawed way that European colonization was both taught and framed. While the units covering Indigenous Americans and their experiences were lacking. One project in this class was a Native American art project. It included a mix of symbols that were deemed important to Native Americans; students mixed and matched different symbols with little understanding of what they meant or why they were important. The project lacked any real exploration of California Native American tribes or tribal diversity. The researcher also covered "The Age of Exploration" and their teaching materials focused almost entirely on European explorers, with packets that asked the students to consider what motivations people have for

exploration. Exploitation, dispossession of Native land, and colonialism were not mentioned or even alluded to. In addition, the traditional California Mission Project was still a part of the curriculum. One barrier that prevented the researcher from speaking up was the prospect of finding new materials and creating new lesson plans on the fly. This is hard time-consuming work, and instead of speaking up, the researcher taught the materials as it was on the page, giving some additional context and criticism of the framing but not fundamentally challenging it. The researcher pursued this topic to better understand how teachers can be more fully supported when teaching challenging topics like colonialism and dealing with racist or uncritical teaching materials.

Statement of Purpose

When examining how to effectively teach about Native American culture and Native American inclusion in HSS, including how to properly historicize colonialism, it is instructive to look at the field of Ethnic Studies. K-12 curriculum has historically been framed using a Eurocentric lens that focuses primarily on the perspectives of white Europeans (Loewen, 2018; McKnight, 2015, Winfield, 2007). Ethnic Studies, as a field, is a remedy to the often-whitewashed nature of K-12 History-Social Science curriculum. Ethnic Studies explores the histories, cultures, and lived experience of racialized communities and critically examines structures and institutions that uphold racial oppression on the personal social and economic level. Ethnic Studies is more than just curriculum and content, it is also about pedagogy. In fact, the Ethnic Studies field has its roots in the works of Paulo Freire (2000) and critical pedagogy. Ethnic Studies pedagogy is at its core about democratizing the classroom; it is responsive to individual student needs, connected to one's broader community, and interested in creating critical members of society (Cuauhtin, 2019a, 2019b; De Los Ríos, 2019; Paris, 2012; Pollard,

2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015, 2019). An Ethnic Studies framework is necessary, because of the flawed way Native American culture and history has traditionally been taught. Historically, depictions of Native Americans in HSS have tended to be inaccurate and told from a Eurocentric perspective that flattens the cultural differences of Native Americans and whitewashes the atrocities of colonization and dispossession (Costo & Henry, 1970; Lowen, 2018; Orr, Sharratt, & Iqbal, 2019; Sanchez, 2007). Depictions and inclusion of Native Americans have improved in recent decades; the HSS framework is an example of this, but even with these improvements, Native Americans perspectives are secondary to those of European settlers and the frameworks still tends to exclude Native Americans from contemporary American life (Padgett, 2015; View, Kaul, & Guiden, 2019).

This project is concerned with teacher attitudes toward and perceptions about what they are teaching. This includes teaching materials, curriculum, and who has authority over what they are teaching. It is also concerned with teachers' pedagogical practices and philosophy. Most literature examining Ethnic Studies focuses on either analyzing the curriculum and instructional materials for bias, examining the benefits of Ethnic Studies (or related concepts like critical consciousness) on students, examining what makes good Ethnic Studies teachers, or examining Ethnic Studies pedagogy. The gap that this research is addressing is the limited research exploring using an Ethnic Studies framework in elementary and middle schools and specifically, the ways in which Native American history and culture is taught in these classrooms.

Overview of the Research Design

This qualitative study took place in one Bay Area school district that the researcher is familiar with, having observed in this district while in a teacher preparation program and student taught in a nearby school district. Five participants from three different school sites were the

focus of this study. The school district's student population is primarily Latinx followed by White. The researcher emailed individual principals within this district, asking for permission to conduct this study; once permission was granted, the researcher contacted individual teachers targeting grades K-8. Teachers were sent a letter of introduction, a consent form, and a Google survey (for questions see Appendix A). Research participants were chosen based on interest and response to this initial survey. After completion of the survey, all participants took part in an in-depth semi-structured interview (See Appendix B). The major goals of this thesis were to examine if teachers want to teach critically about Native American topics and if so to explore if teachers feel they are prepared to critically teach about Native American topics. A practical goal of this study was to discover how teachers can be better supported to teach these topics. To answer these questions, this study was guided by four research questions:

1. How is Native American history taught at the elementary school level?
2. How do teachers perceive how they teach Native American history and culture?
3. Are teachers using critical pedagogy in the classroom? Does this influence how they teach Native American topics?
4. How can teachers be better supported in teaching U.S. settler colonialism and Native American history/culture in the elementary classroom in a developmentally appropriate manner?

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to better understand what elementary school teachers need to teach Native American topics in HSS in a more critical manner. Several themes were uncovered in the findings. Teachers' pedagogical styles were examined using an Ethnic Studies framework. This study found that teachers use aspects of Ethnic Studies pedagogy and have strong desires

for teaching with social justice in mind. Most participants did not feel well prepared to teach students about Native American culture and history, however two participants felt more prepared, and they had higher levels of experience and stronger collaborative networks. Participants wanted more critical teaching materials. They believed their teaching materials, for the most part, accurately represented Native Americans in the history of the United States; however, most participants believed that the inclusion of more Native American perspectives and viewpoints was necessary. Curriculum is highly dependent on the individual teacher; while this district has a Curriculum Advisory Committee and assigned textbooks/materials, individual teachers can choose whether to use them. When teachers chose to focus more on Native American experiences, this was primarily a teacher-led process. For example, the fourth-grade mission diorama project is optional for all teachers in this district, and two teachers in this study explained how their school had, in the past ten years, shifted away from the mission diorama into a project focused on Native American cultural life. Participants desired more critical and accessible teaching materials on Native American culture and history. This request was, in part, due to the time-consuming nature of creating and adapting curriculum and teaching materials. While all teachers expressed interest in critically teaching these topics, most participants were not able to give the time and gravity they felt these topics required. A lack of sufficient teaching materials and preparation time was primarily the reason for this.

A working theory of this project is that elementary teachers can adequately and confidently teach about Native American topics and history when they are at supportive school sites with opportunities for teacher collaboration, are allocated resources, materials, and adequate preparation time by their school and district. In addition, ongoing professional development, as well as preservice training in Ethnic Studies pedagogy and content, would be beneficial for all

elementary and middle school teachers. Overall, this study shows that an Ethnic Studies framework can be applied to examining teacher instruction in HSS.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem in education that this research addresses is the uncritical and often racist way Native Americans history and European settler colonialism is taught in Social Studies classes in elementary and middle school (Faragher, 2017; Lowen, 2018; Sanchez, 2007; Schneider et al., 2019; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). This project will also consider the question of how Native American history and European settler colonialism can be critically taught in a developmentally appropriate manner, avoiding Eurocentrism and whitewashing. This will be examined using an Ethnic Studies framework and critical pedagogy.

This review of literature begins with an examination of the current Ethnic Studies movement and its origins. Next, an in-depth look at Ethnic Studies and its various definitions and manifestations as a field is explored. Ethnic Studies pedagogy and teacher preparation is examined before moving into what Ethnic Studies as a movement and field looks to critically upend -the traditional Eurocentric curriculum. This review includes a discussion of Native American depictions in textbooks. Finally, the California History-Social Science Standards and frameworks are discussed, including how these frameworks and standards guide teacher instruction.

The Fight for Ethnic Studies at the K-12 Level

Ethnic Studies as a field has radical roots, with a central focus on combating racism and Eurocentric imperial narratives both in and outside the classroom. For this very reason, the Ethnic Studies movement has faced controversy at the national, state, and local level. In Berkeley and San Francisco, the 1968 Third World Liberation Front student strikes were met with extreme police repression (a mix of campus police, East Bay police and sheriff's departments and the National Guard) and violence (California Department of Education, 2021).

Today, Ethnic Studies remains controversial, but in-roads have been made at the K-12 level within the last 15 years nationwide, especially in California.

In California, Berkeley Unified School District was the first school district nationwide to make Ethnic Studies a 9th grade course and graduation requirement in 1990 (Zavala et al., 2019). In 2014, El Rancho Unified School District made Ethnic Studies a high school graduation requirement. San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has been offering high school students Ethnic Studies courses since 2007 (9th grade pilot course) and it will become a graduation requirement in 2028 for all students (SFUSD, 2021). School districts in Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego, and California are moving in this direction, with the recent passing of an Ethnic Studies model curriculum (AB 2016) and a high school graduation requirement (AB 101) that requires students take one three-unit Ethnic Studies course starting in the 2029-2030 school year (Fensterwald, 2021).

The state of Arizona provides a clear example of the controversy that Ethnic Studies often triggers. Arizona House Bill 2281 specifically targeted the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American/Raza Studies program with language that banned any program that would, "promote the overthrow of the U.S. government; promote resentment toward a race or class of people; are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group; [and/or] advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals" (H.R. 2281, 2010 as quoted in Hoang, 2012, p. 62). This bill also banned schools from using books like Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America* and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as course material (Hoang, 2012). While similar courses resumed under different names after 2012, and in 2017, HB 2281 was ruled unconstitutional after Jude A. Wallace Tashima found it motivated by racial animus; Ethnic Studies in the state of Arizona took a serious hit (Zavala, 2019).

The fight for Ethnic Studies in California is long and persists. Despite growing inclusion of Ethnic Studies at the state level, there is still much debate as to what Ethnic Studies means, as the debate around California's Assembly Bill No. 2016 demonstrates. After the passage of AB 2016, an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (ESMCAC) was created and the original draftees consisted of Ethnic Studies faculty from universities and colleges, as well as K-12 Ethnic Studies teachers around California. The model curriculum's first draft was criticized from both the political right and center because of its perceived radical content and inclusion/lack of inclusion of certain groups (particularly the omission of the Jewish American Experience and inclusion of Palestinian experiences). The first draft was accused of being radical, anti-American, and politically left wing, with critics incised about language and lesson plans with clear critiques of capitalism, support for Palestine, accusations of anti-Semitism, and for its support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, and the inclusion of Critical Race Theory. Critics claimed Ethnic Studies was about making white students feel guilty about their racial identity. Linda Darling-Hammond publicly criticized this first draft and called for a rewrite stating, "A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state..." (Fensterwald, 2019, para. 4). The draft has undergone four rewrites and was recently passed in March 2021, with all original members of the ESMCAC condemning the final draft of the bill, writing an open letter to the State Board of Education and California Department of Education asking for their names to be removed from the "Curriculum Acknowledgments" section of the bill, writing, "Our association with the final document is conflicting because it does not reflect the Ethnic Studies curriculum that we believe California students deserve and need (California Department of Education Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee Members of 2019, We Request section, para. 1)." While many

of the concepts, theories, and values from the first draft remain, some of its more radical aspects have been watered down or de-emphasized. This drafting process is fundamentally a fight about the meaning of Ethnic Studies. Is it possible to create an Ethnic Studies curriculum that does not privilege any points of view, and is “free of bias?”

The Radical Origins of Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies as a field in the United States has its inception in the civil rights and student movements in the 1960s and specifically in the student protests and strikes at San Francisco State College and the University of California, Berkeley in 1968 and 1969. At San Francisco State College, a five-month long student strike led by the Third World Liberation Front lasted from November 6, 1968, to March 20, 1969; it was the longest student strike in history. At Berkeley, strikes began in January of 1969 lasting until March. The result of student activism was the creation of the Ethnic Studies department at Berkeley and the college of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State College (Bañales, 2019). The Third World Liberation Front at both universities were multi-ethnic coalitions of student groups, including the Black Student Union, the Mexican American Students Confederation, the Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor, Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action, the Asian American Pacific Alliance, and white students from Students for a Democratic Society (Lye, 2010). The movement was created in response to several issues facing students and directly inspired by the Civil Rights Movement as well as the work of Fanon and decolonial and anti-imperialist movements around the world. The coalitions called for the universities to explicitly address issues of racism, poverty, and exploitation at the university (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). The coalition called for Ethnic Studies departments to be taught by teachers with the same ethnic background that they were teaching (e.g., Black Studies teachers would be Black; Native American studies teachers would

be Native American) and to have curricular control and autonomy. The lack of university teachers of color, admissions practices that left out students of color and the poor, Eurocentric curriculum, and standardized testing were all targeted, among many other issues (Bañales, 2019; Lye, 2010). Key to the demands was the creation of Ethnic Studies departments that were run by people of color, with full curricular control and curriculum that would be relevant to the lives of traditionally marginalized students. At San Francisco State College, the failure of the university to create a Black Studies department and the suspension of English instructor and Black Panther Minister of Education, George Mason Murray, by the university directly led to the beginning of the student strikes (Lye, 2010). The student strikes after extensive police repression led to the creation of Ethnic Studies as a field and the field proliferated across college campuses nationwide; adequate funding, however, has been a persistent issue.

What is Ethnic Studies?

Throughout much of American history, K-12 education and curriculum have been told through the lens of Eurocentrism and focused almost exclusively on the history and experiences of white people (Winfield, 2007). Ethnic Studies is a response (and often counter narrative) to this history. Ethnic Studies as a field explores the histories, cultures, and lived experience of racialized communities of color and critically teaches students about structures and institutions that uphold racial oppression. Ethnic Studies falls into the larger Social Justice Education (SJE) movement that encompasses critical education reform movements that fight for racial and social justice in K-12 public schools (Chapman et al., 2020). SJE is about challenging and disrupting myths and stereotypes that uphold systems of structural inequality and discrimination (based on race, class, sexuality, citizenship, etc.). While at the same time, it fosters a learning environment

that supports critical thinking and views students in language of strengths rather than that of deficits.

Ethnic Studies is an umbrella term and interdisciplinary field that can take many different forms; Ethnic Studies include standalone courses or integrated into existing classes (e.g., History-Social Sciences, Language Arts, Visual and Performing Arts, Science, Mathematics, etc.). One goal of Ethnic Studies is to directly connect curriculum to the lives of People of Color. This is done by examining the experiences and perspectives of People of Color throughout history. Connecting students' lives to the curriculum is often done through using counter-narratives that are explicitly in opposition to Eurocentric telling of history that center white Europeans and Americans. Ethnic Studies as a field consists of four core fields of study (while the following list represents original areas of study, this is not intended to be limiting; there are, for example, Arab Studies, Jewish Studies, etc.): African American Studies, Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, Latinx Studies, and Native American Studies (Cuauhtin, 2019).

From its inception, three central pillars of Ethnic Studies as a field are clear: access, relevance, and community (or ARC) (Chapman et al., 2020). Access concerns opening institutions to more People of Color, expanding Ethnic Studies courses, integrating Ethnic Studies concepts into the general curriculum, and providing students with equal opportunities in the classroom. The concept of relevance in Ethnic Studies refers to how the curriculum must be relevant to the lives and experiences of students, which necessarily involves knowing and relating curriculum to the backgrounds of students and connecting this experience with the curriculum. Community is another pillar of Ethnic Studies. Ethnic Studies curriculum should incorporate the experiences and histories of local communities with the goal of giving students

the tools to better understand their own communities. The concepts of ARC date back to Third World Liberation Front's demands and are essential to all Ethnic Studies programs.

Critical Race Theory

Ethnic Studies incorporates many different theories and viewpoints. Critical Race Theory is an essential element. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is both a theory and a broader movement of activist-scholars. CRT today is an interdisciplinary movement with reach in fields like Legal Studies, Education, Sociology, among others. At the broadest level, CRT examines the relationship between race, racism, and power in society. From CRT, other similar and related movements have sprung forth, focusing more specifically on the experiences of specific ethnic groups and identities, like Queer-critical and Latinx-critical theories. Of note for this project is Tribal Critical Race Theory, which shares many of CRT's understandings around race, but explicitly centers settler colonialism and assimilation. The central tenet of Tribal Critical Race Theory is that colonization is endemic to society (Padgett, 2015). CRT began in the field of Legal Studies, building off the scholarship of Critical Legal Studies, Radical Feminism, the American Civil Rights tradition (including the Black Power movement, Chicano movement, American Indian Movement, the work of scholars like DuBois and many others), and the work of some European philosophers (Gramsci is noted as a particular influence). Derrick Bell is one of the founding figures of the movement, along with scholars Richard Delgado, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Williams, Eric Yamato, and many others. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), CRT is skeptical of the "triumphalist" view of history and borrows from Critical Legal Studies the idea of legal indeterminacy – "the idea that not every legal case has one correct outcome" (p. 5).

Delgado and Stefancic (2017) identify four basic tenets of CRT, while acknowledging that these tenets are not something that every scholar who in the CRT movement would necessarily agree with. The first tenet is that racism is ordinary and ingrained in society, but at the same time it is not generally acknowledged as such. The authors describe this as the colorblind conception of equality. The second tenet is identified as “interest convergence” or “material determinism,” essentially that racism continues in society because many people (namely white people) benefit materially and psychically from this racism. The third tenet is that race is socially constructed; as the authors write, “race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 9). Part of this social construction is that different ethnic groups are racialized differently depending on time and context and those stereotypes shift and change often in contradictory ways. This shifting context can be due to any number of factors and contexts, like shifts in the labor market or single events like 9/11. The authors label their final tenet the “voice-of-color thesis” which, “holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 11). While People of Color have unique experiences and voices, it is important to not essentialize their experiences as well. CRT has an activist component and is necessarily critical of the status quo (and therefore dominant ideologies of capitalism, neoliberalism, and the like). Intersectionality is another important concept in the field of Ethnic Studies. Intersectionality is a tool to analyze how the different aspects of identity (including but not limited to race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship, etc.)

intersect and interact with one another, and how individuals can experience multiple forms of oppression based on different aspects of their identity (Crenshaw, 1989).

Humanity and Criticality

Cuauhtin (2019) conceptualizes a double helix of holistic humanity and critical consciousness as the heart of Ethnic Studies. In the words of Paolo Freire (2000), critical consciousness is “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35). Critical consciousness encompasses three key aspects: critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action. Various scholars have also expanded upon this concept and applied it to gauge teacher and student attitudes (Diemer et al., 2015; Heberle, Rapa, & Farago, 2020; Jemel, 2017; Nojan, 2020; Pollard, 2020;). Ethnic Studies pedagogy and curriculum must engage with students in a holistic manner. Ultimately one of Ethnic Studies major goals is to raise the critical consciousness of students so they can better understand and act against oppression. For further elaboration on holistic humanity and critical consciousness see R. Tolteka Cuauhtin’s (2019) Ethnic Studies Framework; this framework is also a tool that can be used to evaluate Ethnic Studies courses and curriculum.

Multicultural Education Vs. Ethnic Studies-What’s the Difference?

One way to gain a greater conceptual clarity of what Ethnic Studies as a field is, is to compare it to other similar educational disciplines. One charge the original members of ESMCAC levied against the state adopted Ethnic Studies model curriculum is that it is not in fact an Ethnic Studies curriculum but, rather, watered down multicultural education. Multicultural education has its roots in the Civil Rights Movement and is primarily concerned with creating a more equal and inclusive curriculum that includes historically marginalized identities (Sleeter,

2018). Multicultural education views marginalized students' diversity and culture as strengths to be utilized and celebrated in the classroom, and in these regards, it is like Ethnic Studies. Initially as a movement, multicultural education was concerned with both the inclusion of historically marginalized identities and combating institutional racism and oppression. Sleeter (2018) argues that reciprocity and dialogue are essential honest attempts at building multicultural education, requiring white educators to take a backseat and honestly listen to communities and educators of color as they build curriculum together. However, building on the work of Kymlicka (2013), Sleeter (2018) makes the case that multicultural education has been co-opted into a diversity checklist and watered down and stripped of its substance. In this version of multiculturalism, only inclusion of marginalized identities remains, the critiques of structural racism and oppression are minimized, and multicultural education becomes "...steps to follow; [where] consideration of culture and curriculum is reduced to cultural celebration as an extracurricular activity" (Sleeter, 2018, p.11).

While critical multicultural education exists, multiculturalism has been largely de-fanged by its more mainstream adaptations, its focus in this manifestation turned from challenging structural inequality to managing diversity (Kymlicka, 2013). Multicultural education in this manner became absorbed by traditional power structures, focusing only on diversifying reading lists and curriculum, not fundamentally challenging racism, and oppression. Examples of this can be seen in how historically radical figures are adopted into mainstream retellings told in more palpable terms (for example, celebrations of Martin Luther King Jr. rarely mention his opposition to the Vietnam war and U.S. imperialism; more generally, Helen Keller's socialism is rarely mentioned, and so on). This mainstream multiculturalism tends to flatten and universalize all historically marginalized peoples and this "...assumes that oppression has universal

characteristics that are independent of history, context and agency” (Linda Tuhiwai Smith quoted in Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 81). In this way, the particularities of racism and oppression can be folded into larger grand narrative of continual American progress, where the historical legacies and particularities of settler colonialism, slavery, and other unique historical contexts can take a back seat. Multicultural education has, in the words of Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) shifted into a “depoliticized version of diversity,” (p. 82) which often manifests, as Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) write as, “trivial examples and artifacts of cultures such as eating ethnic or cultural foods, singing songs or dancing, reading folktales, and other less than scholarly pursuits of the fundamentally different conceptions of knowledge or question for social justice. (p. 61)

In this way, the contemporary strand of Ethnic Studies can be seen as a response to the co-opting of multicultural education. Ethnic Studies as a movement explicitly highlights its roots from the multi-ethnic anti-colonial and anti-racist Third World Liberation Front and race and racism are explicitly centered. Ethnic Studies moves beyond inclusion and requires collaboration and dialogue with local communities and is fundamentally about giving students the tools to name and act against systems of oppression. In the words of Angela Davis (2005), “the challenge of the twenty-first century is not to demand equal opportunity to participate in the machinery of oppression. Rather, it is to identify and dismantle those structures in which racism continues to be embedded” (p. 29). Ethnic Studies takes up this challenge.

Teaching Ethnic Studies

Benefits of Ethnic Studies

Research has found that Ethnic Studies classes and frameworks are beneficial to all students (Sleeter, 2011). Most of the research, however, has focused on Ethnic Studies’ positive

impact for Students of Color, with proponents arguing it can help close the opportunity gap. The *opportunity gap* was a term created in response to the *achievement gap* (this refers to disparities between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds measured by standardized tests, grade point average, dropout rates, college enrollment, etc.) and its centering of Students of Color as culturally deficient; the term *opportunity gap*, instead centers structural inequalities and barriers that students may face. The *achievement gap* is a construct created by what critics have called deficit theory or assimilationist theories. These theories view the home cultures of students who are not the norm (i.e., white, and middle class) as deficient and in need of education to make up for a perceived lack of skills (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Deficit thinking views students' home languages as struggles to overcome and is often combined with racist and classist stereotypes about the home lives of Students of Color, and the poor. Assimilation theories argue that "...the more groups become assimilated into society, the more success they experience in areas such as education and income" (Cabrera, 2019, p. 48). In these theories, cultural assimilation flows in one direction and students' funds of knowledge are largely ignored and their cultural backgrounds are seen as deficits to be overcome. Cultural specificity and diversity are seen as something to be removed instead of celebrated. In opposition to this are pedagogical practices like culturally sustaining pedagogy, which build off and utilize students' strengths that are not traditionally recognized in the classroom (which will be discussed more in depth in the next section).

Christine Sleeter's *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies* (2011) highlights how Ethnic Studies can improve students' academic achievement, academic confidence, self-efficacy, critical thinking, agency, and create more positive student-teacher relationships. When

reviewing the research, the benefits of Ethnic Studies were especially notable for Students of Color. This is in part because:

Ethnic Studies recovers and reconstructs the counternarratives, perspectives, epistemologies, and cultures of those who have been historically neglected and denied citizenship or full participation within traditional discourse and institutions, particularly highlighting the contributions people of color have made in shaping U.S. culture and society. (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2019, p. 4)

Ethnic Studies engages Students of Color by deeply exploring history that centers the experiences and narratives of their own communities in an academically rigorous and caring manner. In many instances, Ethnic Studies courses are the first-time students learn about their own culture. Nojan (2020), using a case study design, examined an after school Ethnic Studies program for 7th and 8th graders in California schools. Responses from the student survey start with students expressing feelings and thoughts about the Ethnic Studies program, such as " Yes, it made me feel really happy because I don't get to learn my culture in school" (Nojan, 2020, p. 30), highlighting how often Students of Color cultural backgrounds are minimized or ignored in the mainstream curriculum. Furthering this point, Nojan surveyed 34 students participating in the Ethnic Studies program and found that 6 of 34 students responded that they learn about their culture during the regular school year. It is clear from this study that Ethnic Studies is a necessary inclusion in middle schools. Ethnic Studies allows Students of Color to see their own lives and backgrounds reflected in the curriculum, as well as to study and explore issues of racism and structural inequality. Students are given tools to see how these structures affect their own lives.

Ethnic Studies Pedagogy

Ethnic Studies requires more than just curriculum; it also necessitates a certain pedagogy. Pedagogical approaches related to Ethnic Studies look to democratize the classroom and view all students as bringing their own unique funds of knowledge to the classroom (Cabrera, 2019). While there are many different pedagogical approaches that Ethnic Studies educators use and borrow from, all these styles and approaches are derived in part from the critical pedagogy inspired by Paulo Freire and his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire believed that education can be a liberating force for oppressed people, changing people from “being for others” to “being for themselves (Freire, 2000).” Education can give people the tools to better their own lives as well to critically examine their own roles in society. Freire saw teaching as dialogue, emphasizing critical thinking, rather than rote memorization or other methods which he called the “banking” method of teaching. The “banking” method of teaching conceptualizes students as depositories for teachers to fill with information; it is passive and unidirectional. A key component of critical pedagogy is dialogue. In contrast to the “banking” style of teaching, is the problem solving/posing method. This method encourages dialogue and critical thinking with mutual respect- “through dialogue and problem-posing, teachers and students are engaged in a practice of listening to different perspectives, and naming and transforming the world” (Shih, 2018, p. 67). Freire believed that curriculum is a mutual process between students and teacher; “From Freire’s perspective, curriculum planning is a fully people-oriented process in which the starting point is people and their expectations and wants” (Shih, 2018, p. 68). A critical pedagogical approach seeks to understand how students learn best and is responsive to these needs. Dialogic education views students as co-creator of knowledge; as Shor (1993) explains,

“students are doing education and making it, not having education done to them or made for them” (quoted in Pollard, 2020, p. 79).

Culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching has its roots in the work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2005) and has been expanded and built upon by Paris (2012) with culturally sustaining pedagogy. Three essential aspects of culturally responsive teaching are, “building upon students’ experiences and perspectives, developing students’ critical consciousness, and creating caring academic environments” (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015, p. 10). Paris builds on and refines what is meant by relevant or responsive pedagogy arguing that what is necessary must move past these terms, offering culturally sustaining as an alternative:

The term culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people - it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster - to sustain - linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling. (Paris, 2012, p. 95)

Culturally sustaining pedagogy requires a deep commitment to one's students and all that they have to offer, which requires high expectations and belief in the academic ability of students. De Los Rios (2019) succinctly describes the philosophy behind Ethnic Studies pedagogy, writing, “At the core of Ethnic Studies pedagogy is the aim to equip students with tools to better

understand social inequities and the structural forces that shape their lives while also providing tangible strategies to socially transform their communities” (p. 64).

Teacher Preparation

To teach Ethnic Studies at the high school level, no Ethnic Studies background or content knowledge is required (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015). To teach an Ethnic Studies course, a teacher is required to have either an English or Social Studies credential, and neither credential necessarily involves any Ethnic Studies preparation or critical discussion regarding institutionalized racism (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015). This lack of Ethnic Studies content knowledge is a serious problem for the development of Ethnic Studies courses and for the integration of Ethnic Studies frameworks into existing classes. Tintiango-Cubales et al. (2015) analyzed existing research on Ethnic Studies pedagogy and teacher preparation and found four major themes when examining successful Ethnic Studies teachers. The first finding was that in successful Ethnic Studies programs, teachers believed that the purpose of Ethnic Studies was to help students critique and understand racism and its effects on society. These teachers had also, for the most part, attended professional development relating to Ethnic Studies. The second finding was that successful teachers had a culturally responsive pedagogical approach (or a similar approach), knew their students well, believed in them academically, and were able to relate the course to their students' lives. The third finding was the use of community responsive pedagogy. These teachers built relationships with parents and community members and included them in curriculum creation. The fourth finding was that for successful programs, teachers had to be critically reflective about their own cultural identity and the influence of Eurocentrism on traditional curriculum. In addition, these researchers found that being a teacher of color was an asset in the field of Ethnic Studies. Successful Ethnic Studies programs/teachers have a strong

sense of purpose and take an activist stance towards anti-racism and decolonizing education/curricula. What is needed is Ethnic Studies professional development and increased focus on Ethnic Studies content in pre-service training. Many teacher preparation programs do not include or focus Ethnic Studies or critical race pedagogy, and many teachers do not examine their own privileges, cultural biases, and assumptions. Hopefully, with the passage of AB 2016 and AB 101, this critical examination of race and racism will become more of a priority in teacher training in California.

The Traditional Curriculum

For most of the history of the United States, Social Studies and History has been told from the perspective of white Europeans and Americans and filtered through the lens of continual progress (Loewen, 2018). In this telling of history, critical examinations of how racial structures like colonialism and slavery persist into the present are inconvenient. Education is seen as a civic mission to instill pride in America's foundational values and institutions. Moral contradictions at the heart of these values (liberty for all juxtaposed with slavery and dispossession of land) are often glossed over, as mistakes that were eventually corrected. This has been especially true for elementary school students. Faragher (2017) frames U.S. history as teaching first “the sacred” and then “the profane” (the sacred and profane is taken from a text by Tony Waters (2007), which he advocates as developmentally necessary). By this, Faragher argues that first in elementary school, students are taught a sanitized, idealized version of American history that is intended to primarily instill moral values into students. Education is structured in this way partially because elementary school students are not seen as developmentally ready for a more complicated version of history. The realities of colonization and slavery are seen as too complicating a narrative to intertwine with the country’s founding

myths; “The profane” then is taught in the later grades; more complexity and conflict is presented. However, even this “profane” telling of history is generally Eurocentric, avoiding narratives that fundamentally reexamine the founding myths of the United States of America. For clear examples of the Eurocentric nature of U.S. curriculum, see the work of Loewen (2018), McKnight (2015), and Winfield (2007).

In Social Studies, colonialism and the dispossession of Native land is treated as an event or period of United States history where unfortunate things happened to Native Americans. Tuck and Yang (2012) explicated that while colonization might have been an event in history, settler colonialism is a structure that remains:

This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. (p. 5)

Settler colonialism, in this way, has structured how Native Americans have been racialized in the United States; the primary motive behind this racialization is the dispossession of land. Wolfe (2006) describes the racialization of Native Americans as the logic of elimination. This understanding contrasts with the racial construction of African Americans:

The inclusive construction of Black ethnicity allowed for the exploitation of their labour, while the exclusive and narrow construction of American Indian ethnicity

facilitated greater access for settlers to land and resources by denying that American Indians might still exist. Thus, American Indians were not only removed geographically through reservations and biologically through genocide but were classified by settlers in a way to further erase and eliminate their existence. (Orr, Sharratt, & Iqbal, 2019, p. 2079)

When examining the depictions of Native Americans in textbooks and instructional material, it is important to keep the logic of elimination in mind (for more on racialization of Native Americans see Wolfe, 2006 & 2016).

Native American History as Portrayed in Textbooks

While analysis of textbooks and their depiction of Native people stretches back to the beginning of colonization, this brief review will focus on textbooks from the 1970s to today. Costo and Henry (1970) in *Textbooks and the American Indian*, examined 300 textbooks and their depiction of Native Americans, and found that, “Not one [book] could be approved as a dependable source of knowledge about the history and culture of the Indian people of America” (quoted in Sanchez 2007, p. 312). In 1995 (with updated editions in 2007 and 2018), Loewen found that little had changed in textbook depictions of Native Americans. In 2007, Sanchez examined textbooks for their historical accuracy and cultural knowledge of Native people. He found these textbooks to be more accurate in their depiction of Native Americans (as well as more expansive inclusion) than those by Costo and Henry. However, these textbooks still were full of inaccuracies and omissions. Of the major themes that Sanchez identifies, the most prevalent one is that Native Americans, and Native American cultures, have died off or disappeared. Contemporary depictions of Native Americans were lacking across the texts and most texts that do cover modern Native American life end around the 1970s with the American

Indian Movement. The impression overall is that there is no rich modern Native American cultures or life, this is especially prevalent in lower rated textbooks with Sanchez (2007) stating:

...that Native cultures simply vanished via conquest and disease is yet another factor that negates connections to the present. The poorly-rated textbooks clearly imply that Native cultures were non-existent over huge gaps of time, appearing sporadically at best in a paragraph or two, and lamenting that only names, art, and artifacts remain as vestiges. (p. 315)

Like the narrative of vanishing Native Americans, is the narrow way contemporary Native American culture rests in the popular imagination (Orr, Sharratt, & Iqbal, 2019). Authentic Native American culture is viewed narrowly as stagnate and unchanging from the past (Orr, Sharratt, & Iqbal, 2019). For example, Orr, Sharratt, and Iqbal created a survey with three different depictions of a fictional Native American tribe to test a series of hypotheses related to authenticity and other variables, they found that...

...when confronted with descriptions of American Indian communities living in cities, participants were less willing to support tribes across multiple measures. Authenticity was also swayed by geographic context. When the tribe was described as having never moved, this fit within static conceptions of American Indians and was one of the rare instances that increased assessments of authenticity against the control. However, tribes that were described as living in urban locations violated this narrow image and were assessed as inauthentic. This confirms the subjection of American Indians to a geographic expectation of their identity and authenticity. (2019, p. 2091)

In addition, Native Americans are stereotyped in an anachronistic manner where using modern technology goes against popular understandings of authentic Native Americans culture (Orr, Sharratt, & Iqbal, 2019). At the same time, Native Americans are overemphasized as warriors and nomads. Cultural differences between tribes are often mentioned, but rarely explored in any depth, leading to stereotyped depictions of Native American dress, language, customs, and lifestyles (as being monolithic). More recent analysis of textbooks throughout various states finds that while there may be more inclusion of representation of Native Americans, it is still severely lacking when it comes to historical and cultural accuracy (Padgett, 2015; View, Kaul & Guiden, 2019).

Examination of the Standards

This section, while a general discussion on History-Social Science Content Standards, focuses on fourth and fifth grade, where the most attention is paid to Native American history and culture. Fourth and fifth grade are notable for their focus on California missions, the “Age of Exploration,” the gold rush, and pre-Columbian California (California State Board of Education (CSBOE, 2000)). While the current History-Social Studies standards have been in place since 1998, there have been multiple revisions of the History-Social Science Framework. In 2016, a new History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (HSS Framework) was adopted. There is a wide gap between the standards and the framework with many of the key areas of studies related to Native Americans being improved upon. For example, in the 2016 HSS, the mission project was revised, advising teachers to not create model missions and to include Native American perspectives on what mission life was like. This is a general feature, with the framework presenting a more critical telling of the California Gold Rush and its negative impact on Native American life.

While the changes in the 2016 HSS are vast improvements, they do little to fundamentally challenge or critically teach colonialism. It is also important to remember that the framework does not replace the standards. Adding Native voices and perspectives to units like California missions, the Gold Rush, and the age of exploration do little to fundamentally challenge the story being told. Native dispossession and oppression become just another perspective for students to read before it is on to another unit or lesson that invariably will exclude Native American perspectives. Sleeter (2004) makes a similar point writing, “...periodically, students are asked to ‘consider the viewpoint of the American Indians who occupied these same lands,’ particularly by studying the Trail of Tears, but then the same narrative of triumphal westward movement continues (Obscuring Colonial History section, Para. 3).” Students are left to make their own conclusions about atrocities committed against Native Americans unless their teachers are intervening. Native Americans still vanish with this framework as it does not systematically look to include Native Americans throughout the curriculum. The framework also calls for an expansion of study for pre-Columbian California history and expanded study on California Native American tribes and their great cultural diversity (Schneider et al., 2019). This leaves open the possibility for teachers to use resources that tell California history from a Native American perspective; the California Indian History Curriculum Coalition (CIHCC) is one example of such organizations with free materials available online (Schneider et al., 2019).

Possibilities of K-12 Education

In *Challenging Colonialism: Ethnic Studies in Elementary Social Studies*, Valdez (2019) drew on her own experiences as a classroom teacher in designing and supplementing units that challenged colonialism. This text is an example of how teachers can push back against the

Eurocentrism and Colonialism that is embedded in most traditional Social Studies textbooks. Valdez supplements her district-adopted Social Studies book with her own lessons, handouts, and books (*A Young People's History of the United States* by Zinn & Steffoff, (2009). Valdez models how she used counter-narratives that pushed back against embedded colonial assumptions. Valdez uses the teaching of vocabulary to explicitly name and define what the “Age of Exploration” unit was missing — explicitly studying words like “exploitation” and “colonialism” — so that students would have the language to examine colonialism more thoroughly. Valdez had students journal and then asked them to think and write about questions relating to power and race. For example, on a unit about the American Revolution and British taxation, Valdez asked questions like, “Who benefited from the English colonial economy?”, and “What groups were left out?” While the traditional activity focused on American settlers, Valdez probed her students to dig deeper and think about who was and was not included in this narrative — Native Americans and Black slaves. As Valdez (2019) writes about her students:

They were stuck in the mind-set that European settlers were the only ones involved in the colonial economy—as the text had presented it—but with further probing questions, one student’s light bulb lit. ‘They left the slaves out of the activity. They have the plantation owner but not the slaves that worked for them.’

(p. 156)

This point was further elaborated by discussion on the dispossession of Native American land. As Valdez puts it “...the basis for the whole economy is Native American land and resources and the slave labor used to work it...the United States today, is built on top of slave labor and Native land” (p. 156). Valdez (2019) wanted to link this lesson to the present and show how, “history is not just in the past but is the foundation for the conditions today” (p. 156). By examining how

both Native Americans and African Americans were left out of the traditional narrative in the past, it makes it easier to connect this to the present. Lessons like this are important to properly historicize Native American history in the United States. It is also necessary to combat over-romanticizing of Native American culture and people and for students to recognize that throughout history, Native Americans have had their own agency and histories. Styres (2019) writes of the potential for literature to reinforce stereotypes of Native people:

Literatures that simply appropriate and misrepresent Indigenous knowledges within a mainstream retelling reinforce stereotypes and promote cultural theft. It is important for students to look beyond the ‘quaint’ or ‘romanticized’ notion of Indigenous stories in order to see them as providing complex information about our world and the ways to appropriately be in relation with that world...we need to move beyond texts that romanticize Indigenous people and portray them as people who lived in a distant past—a people of folktales rather than vital contributing human beings within a contemporary Canadian context. (p. 35)

Teachers must make sure that they do not reinforce the notions of Indigenous people as “people who lived in a distant past.” The author argues that the use of Indigenous stories and counter-stories can be an essential tool in decolonizing dominant education discourse/curricula and make clear relations of power.

Conclusion

To review Ethnic Studies succinctly, Sleeter (2011) identifies five main themes that differentiate Ethnic Studies from Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy:

1. explicit identification of the point of view from which knowledge emanates, and the relationship between social location and perspective;

2. examination of U.S. colonialism historically, as well as how relations of colonialism continue to play out;
3. examination of the historical construction of race and institutional racism, how people navigate racism, and struggles for liberation;
4. probing meanings of collective or communal identities that people hold; and
5. studying one's community's creative and intellectual products, both historic and contemporary. (p. 3)

There is a large breadth of literature that demonstrates how Ethnic Studies is beneficial for Students of Color (Sleeter, 2011). The literature has also outlined what is required for teachers to effectively teach Ethnic Studies (Tintiangco-Cubales, et al., 2015). Researchers have shown that teachers with strong curriculum, teacher preparation/familiarity with the content, critical pedagogy, and critical self- reflection are most effective at teaching Ethnic Studies (Tintiangco-Cubales, et al., 2015).

The weakness in the literature is that few studies examine how Ethnic Studies frameworks and pedagogies can be implemented at the elementary school level. Few studies look at elementary school teachers and their use of critical pedagogy. The purpose of this research is to explore and examine how Native Americans are represented and taught in the elementary classroom and to demonstrate how Ethnic Studies frameworks and pedagogies can be used to help elementary school teachers better support and teach their students Native American history. This research project uses an Ethnic Studies/critical pedagogy frame to look at Native American representation in elementary Social Studies classrooms. Teacher attitudes and feelings about preparedness, the state adopted content standards (CCSS), and primary curriculum used in these classrooms are examined. The project considers ways to address how elementary school teachers

can prepare to teach topics of settler colonialism and Native American history in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study seeks to understand how elementary school teachers represent Native Americans in the elementary school curriculum. Traditional elementary education tends to both romanticize and decontextualize Native American history, focusing on Native Americans as people who lived in the distant past. Colonialism is often sanitized in Social Studies, with the perspectives of European settlers as the dominant frame of reference, where Native Americans are seen as secondary actors (Styres, 2019; Valdez, 2019). The problem my research will address is the uncritical and often racist way Native American history and European settler colonialism is taught in Social Studies classes in elementary school. This project will also consider how Native American history, and European settler colonialism can be critically taught in a developmentally appropriate manner, avoiding eurocentrism and whitewashing.

Most research on Ethnic Studies, critical pedagogy, and teacher preparation (in an Ethnic Studies context) is focused on the high school and above level. While there is growing literature looking at how Ethnic Studies concepts (for example critical consciousness) are beneficial to students, most of this literature examines explicit after-school programs or case studies where teachers are explicitly using an Ethnic Studies framework (or something theoretically similar). This study will examine to what degree ethnic studies principles are already integrated into the elementary school grades. This is especially relevant with the recent passage of California Assembly Bill 2016, the adoption of Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), and the 2016 History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (HSS Framework). This project looks to examine to what degree the model curriculum and HSS Framework reflect the attitudes and practices of teachers today. *To what degree has the HSS Framework been adopted by teachers and districts?* While these documents are too new to

expect them to be fully integrated, this study examines to what degree the principles guiding these documents already exist among teachers in one Bay Area County school district. This leads to four guiding research questions for this project:

1. How is Native American history taught at the elementary school level?
2. How do teachers perceive how they teach Native American history and culture?
3. Are teachers using critical pedagogy in the classroom? Does this influence how they teach Native American topics?
4. How can teachers be better supported in teaching U.S. settler colonialism and Native American history/culture in the elementary classroom in a developmentally appropriate manner?

Description and Rationale for Research Approach

This researcher's approach is informed by two worldviews: transformative and constructivist. The overarching lens is transformative because the researcher believes that the primary purpose of research should not be passive inquiry, but rather, look to actively understand the world to change it for the better. The researcher believes that objectivity in research is impossible and criticism of "being too close to the work," is about, "retaining the veneer of objectivity in scholarship" (Diaz-Strong et al., 2019, p. 5). Politics cannot simply be disentwined from research; this applies both to the researcher and research participants. Creswell (2018) summarizes the transformative philosophical worldview as containing two major strands; it sees itself as consciously political work and contains an action agenda:

A transformative worldview holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever levels it occurs (Mertens, 2010). Thus, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may

change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. (p. 47)

The researcher takes a humanized approach to research and views the relationship between researcher and research participant as that of dialogue in concert with a community or group of individuals instead of research done on subjects. A humanized approach to research centers the subject and views the researcher's relationship with their subjects as a creative and collaborative one. A humanized approach is more than working with a social justice framework but seeing students and communities as active partners in the research instead of as passive subjects. This approach leads to "dialogic consciousness raising for both researchers and participants" (Paris & Winn, 2019, p. xvi) and it is more than well intentioned, but is critical and asks questions such as *who is this research for and what end does it serve?* How people understand and view their own lives is extremely important.

At the same the researcher's approach also takes a constructivist perspective into account. A large part of this research involves survey responses and open-ended interviews. To gain greater understanding of people and their situations, it is necessary to do more than just examine peoples' material realities, but to ask how they see themselves and their place in the world or in specific contexts and situations. Constructivist research tends to focus on open ended questions so that, "the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons" (Creswell, 2014, p. 46), while also situating the research participants in their specific contexts. Teachers' perspectives and understandings are essential to my research project and in-depth interviews are an ideal way to gain further insight and understanding into teacher mindsets. As Seidman (2019) writes, interviews are about "understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that

experience” (p. 9). Seidman (2019) defines lived experience as "our observations, our seeing, feeling, hearing. They are events of our day that we often take for granted and normally do not call to mind” (p. 22). Lived experience is given meaning and becomes something that can be studied by reconstructing it, putting it in proper context, and reflecting on it.

This research project takes a mixed methods approach. It utilizes survey data which includes both quantitative (multiple choice, Likert scale, demographic questions) and qualitative data (short and long answer responses). In addition, this project includes in depth open-ended interviews.

Research Design

Participants were chosen from one Bay Area elementary school district. The researcher is familiar with several Bay Area schools having been a student teacher at one Bay Area school. The researcher has also observed teachers during their pre-service teacher training education at a variety of schools and districts throughout this area. The researcher is familiar with the curriculum and some educators who are currently teaching or have taught at these schools in the past. Teachers in this school district are majority white and female (all district data taken from eddata.org). The student population is majority Hispanic/Latinx, with the next most populous group being white students.

In phase one, a cross sectional survey was created using Google Forms and was emailed to all elementary school teachers at three different school sites in one Bay Area elementary school district. The survey was targeting K-6 teachers who have, or have in the past, taught social studies/history. All participants who responded to the survey were included in phase one and phase two. Survey participants were asked to leave their contact information if they wished to participate in a follow-up interview, expanding upon their teacher practices, attitudes, and

survey answers. Teachers were purposefully selected based on survey answers and willingness to participate. The researcher chose teachers whose survey answers expressed a desire to teach social studies and history in a critical manner or within a social justice framework, and who were supportive of teaching practices consistent with critical pedagogy. Negative cases were also selected to gain a greater understanding of the range of teaching styles and practices that students experience. Negative cases offer a helpful way to check against researcher bias and help against drawing easy conclusions based on what the researcher is looking for (Seidman, 2019).

The researcher first gained permission to interview teachers by contacting school principals. All participants were provided with a letter of introduction (which detailed the nature of the research project, data collection and protection practices, and methodology and risk information) and an informed consent form. Survey participants read the letter of introduction and were informed that submitting the survey is consenting to phase one participation. All survey participants' answers were recorded anonymously, unless they agreed to do a follow-up interview. For participants involved in phase two interviews, the researcher reviewed the informed consent form with them, answered any questions, and did not begin interviews until the participants signed the informed consent forms. Interviewees were told that they could decline any questions and revoke participation in the research project at any time.

Methods for Data Collection

For phase one of data collection, a cross-sectional survey was created using Google Forms. Survey was chosen because the researcher wanted to gain general insight into teacher attitudes on topics such as critical pedagogy and critically teaching social studies. Survey methods allow for larger sample responses in a shorter time period. Prior to sending out the survey, the researcher secured permission from three school principals in one Bay Area County

elementary school district. By submitting the survey, participants provided consent for participation in phase one of the research. Survey participants were shown a letter of introduction that provided a description of the study and its purpose. The survey included brief demographic questions, asking for information about which grade the teacher was currently teaching, their years of experience, and if they are currently teaching about topics that include Native Americans. The survey contained Likert scale questions related to teacher attitudes towards the representation of Native American culture and history in the curriculum that they use in the classroom. In addition, it contained items relating to teaching philosophy/pedagogy asking participants to respond with whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement. For example, one prompt asks teachers to respond to the statement, “In teaching, a neutral point of view is not possible” (See Appendix C for survey questions). The survey also includes several open-ended long answer questions, asking for more information about the curriculum. The survey was used to gain insight into how teachers feel about Native American representation in the curriculum they use. The researcher was interested to know if teachers felt their curriculum and teaching materials were accurate and culturally appropriate. The researcher was also interested in knowing if participants felt prepared to teach these subjects. An additional goal was to gather information about participants' pedagogical styles. The researcher was investigating if there was a correlation between pedagogical beliefs and increased critical teaching of Native American topics and social studies. The final survey question asked if participants would be willing to engage in a follow up interview.

Interview participants were purposefully selected using data analyzed from the survey. The researcher was limited in selection based on survey response. The researcher wanted to interview participants that (based on their survey data) were sympathetic to critical pedagogy and

critically teaching social studies. Negative cases were also interviewed (individuals who were not coded as sympathetic to critical pedagogy or critically teaching social studies) but responses of this type were limited due to a lack of survey response. The in-depth interviews allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the general trends discovered in the survey. Interview participants provided verbal consent and written consent via the Informed Consent Form. They also reviewed a brief description of the study and purpose before the interview. For the second phase of data collection, each participant took part in a 45–60-minute interview, which was audio recorded for transcription purposes. Participants were thanked for their time and received reminders that they may request a report of completed research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of two phases. Phase one of data consisted of analyzing the results from the district wide survey of elementary school teachers. Phase two of data collection consisted of in-depth open-ended interviews. Throughout both phases of data collections three of Maxwell's (2013) analysis strategies were utilized: analytic memos, categorizing strategies, and connecting strategies.

The cross-sectional survey was created using Google Forms and sent to all elementary school teachers from three elementary schools in one Bay Area school district. The survey consisted of demographic, multiple choice, Likert scale, short-answer, and long answer questions. Survey methods were used because the researcher wished to gain general insight into how elementary school teachers viewed their curriculum's representation of Native American culture and history. In addition, the researcher was interested in how this population of educators viewed their general teaching practices and philosophy, and how they could be better supported in the teaching of these topics. The researcher analyzed the data looking for participants whose

survey answers were coded as being sympathetic to critical pedagogic teaching strategies and who were critical of the way in which Native Americans are represented in the traditional curriculum.

While trends were discovered and a greater understanding of teacher attitudes and opinion was gathered through survey, in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to gain more insight and depth of understanding, moving beyond yes/no and agree/disagree answers. Interviews allowed for more in-depth explorations of the content that teachers were teaching, as well as more information on their teaching philosophies and strategies. Interviews were recorded over the phone and then transcribed by the researcher.

Analytic memos were used at all points of the research project, while drafting research questions, before the survey questions were created, throughout data collection and analysis, and during narrative analysis and other connecting strategies. They were used before and after interviews to help guide the researcher's general thinking and used to gain a general grasp of what the interview was about before the coding process. These memos helped guide and shape research questions, interview questions, as well as general analysis and thinking on this project. Analytic memos are an essential part of the data analysis process (Maxwell, 2013).

Categorizing strategies refer to coding and thematic analysis. As Maxwell writes, the point of coding (in qualitative analysis) is, "...to 'fracture' the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (Maxwell, 2013., 108). Before data analysis began, expected codes, themes, and keywords were created based on what the researcher expected to find in the surveys and interviews. Expected codes included: Colonialism, White-Washing, Critical Pedagogy, Racist Depictions of Native Americans, Mission Project, Age of Exploration,

among others. The data was analyzed one document at a time. Next, the survey data and interview transcripts were examined and coded by labeling and segmenting interview transcripts and survey data. This involved highlighting key words and text segments and linking them to codes. The researcher paid particular attention to unexpected codes and themes that arose from the data. After this initial coding step, codes were edited to reduce overlap and redundancy and then codes were collapsed into themes (Bazeley, 2013). Figure 9.4 in Creswell's *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (2005, p. 238) further demonstrates this process of data analysis. In addition, a data analysis matrix was used to help organize codes thematically (Maxwell, 2013).

From this point, narrative analysis was used, connecting themes and codes found in the survey responses to obtain a better understanding of the data. Narrative analysis and similar connecting strategies are about making sense of and putting the coding data in context, instead of fragmenting and segmenting the data into specific codes and themes (Maxwell.). This involves looking over the codes, themes and drawing further connections between the codes, themes, and research questions.

Validity

Researcher bias must be acknowledged. The survey and interview participants are all teachers, same as is the researcher. While the researcher does not have much experience in this regard, (one semester as a student teacher in a fourth-grade classroom and as an education specialist) they still count themselves among the general community of teachers. They understand the hard work and hours that are necessary for teaching and creating curriculum. While the researcher has a very critical view of how American History has been taught in the elementary classroom, and the inclusion (or more accurately the lack of inclusion) of historically

marginalized groups, they are also very sympathetic to teachers who are often already overworked and do not necessarily have the content knowledge (or authority) to challenge the teaching materials available to them. The researcher has experience teaching social studies classes and units on Native American culture and history, as well as their own experience as a California public school elementary student. These experiences (and along with research) inform what they expected to see as a researcher. For the research project, they are looking for fellow teachers who share the same pedagogical values, and commitment to decolonizing elementary education. This potentially influences the lens under which the researcher analyzed what people say and expressed (in both positive and negative ways). Reflexivity is another potential issue. Many individuals are uncomfortable speaking on issues of race and may self-censor or potentially tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear. However, the researcher's status as a teacher who has taught (and struggled to teach) about the same interview topics, helped the researcher gain rapport and trust with the interview participants. One practical goal for this project is trying to answer the question, *how can teachers better be supported in the process of teaching about U.S. settler colonialism and Native American History?*

The researcher also searched for discrepant evidence and negative cases. Peer feedback was used to limit this possibility. The researcher is aware that without carefully examining the researcher's own bias, it can be tempting to ignore inconvenient data, choosing data that fits their desired conclusions (Maxwell, 2012). Rich data was used for this study and ensured by recording audio of all in-depth interviews with full verbatim transcripts, and descriptive observation notes that included details about participants' tone, voice, and body language. Respondent validation in the form of a member checking process (sending quotes to participants to clarify understanding) was also used to help ensure validity. Both qualitative and quantitative

data were considered using survey and in-depth interviews. Triangulation of data was achieved by using multiple types of data collection methods, using both qualitative and quantitative data through survey and interview.

Chapter 4: Findings

A working theory of this research project is that elementary school teachers can adequately and confidently teach about Native American topics and history when they are at supportive school sites with opportunities for teacher collaboration. In addition, teachers need critical resources and materials, and sufficient preparation time by their school site and district. This qualitative study is based on the interview and survey data of four elementary teachers and one middle school teacher. The teacher participants' experiences ranged from one to thirty-seven years of teaching. Three participants could be classified as new teachers, with four or fewer years of experience, while two of the participants were veteran teachers with twenty-five and thirty-seven years of experience. All teachers interviewed were currently or had previous experience teaching Native American topics. Ludmilla teaches seventh and eighth grade social studies, Gabriella teaches fourth grade, Ezra works with Kindergarten, Sandy teaches third grade (with previous experience teaching fourth and fifth), and Jessie is a second-grade teacher (with previous experience teaching fourth and fifth grade). The findings of this research fall into three broad categories: examination of teacher philosophies, exploration of teacher curriculum, and analysis of teacher's feelings of preparedness for teaching about Native American topics.

The findings of this research indicate that teachers are concerned with integrating and highlighting the perspectives of Native American people into their curriculum and teaching, but struggle with putting this integration into practice. This project found that these teachers may not be using critical pedagogy in the classroom, but their teaching styles and philosophies have elements of critical pedagogy. Teachers involved in this project who had a more integrated curriculum had a higher level of experience, but most importantly, they had stronger collaborative networks and felt more supported by their school and district. Teachers wanted

more support from their schools and districts, more time for lesson planning, and better and more rigorous materials that gave primacy to the perspective of Native Americans, instead of viewing Native Americans as secondary actors to early American settlers.

Teacher Philosophy, Identity, and Attitudes

Critically teaching about the history of U.S. colonialism and Native American culture, requires combating stereotypes and myths about the history of the United States of America. The traditional vision of U.S. history has often excluded the voices of Native people (Schneider et al., 2019). When teaching about historically marginalized groups of people, what goals do teachers possess? Are they concerned with avoiding stereotypes and Eurocentrism, or do these concerns not cross their minds? To better understand why teachers teach what they do, it is necessary to look at how teachers conceptualize their teaching philosophy, identity, and core values. In addition, it is important to examine why teachers got into the profession and what motivates them to continue teaching. What teachers view as their role in the life of students they work with is a way to gain insight and understanding about what they view as their role as a teacher. In the literature review, aspects that serve a foundation for successful Ethnic Studies teachers were identified.

Teaching as Calling and the Importance of the Student-Teacher Relationship

All teachers who were interviewed spoke of their desire to teach as a sort of calling, something that they did despite the inadequate pay, time commitment, and other negative aspects of the job. This calling was inspired by a deep commitment to improving the lives of students and a belief that a good education can provide students with tools to succeed in life. Teachers spoke about the student-teacher relationship in a holistic manner. Teachers stressed that academics are important but teaching students life skills and developing socially and

emotionally, took just as much priority. Ezra viewed his main role as a kindergarten teacher as giving students the “tools to succeed,” with the goal of creating students who will be their own self-advocates. As Ezra explained:

We have to teach academics, but we also have to teach life skills. Not every teacher is going to be me. And not every teacher is going to be flexible. And what do you do with that? What do you do with your own agency, with your own ability to advocate for yourself? How can you? How can I teach that to make sure that you have a successful academic experience?

Ezra viewed his primary role as developing students' critical thinking skills, teaching students not just content but how to learn. A part of this process is learning about students' needs and how they learn best. Gabriella also stressed the importance of caring about students, saying, “I care more about the student's well-being — their social emotional health — than meeting my instructional minutes.” What was fundamentally clear was the depth that Gabriella cared for her students, this statement was not meant to discount the importance of academics, but rather stress that students have lives outside of the classroom that they do not leave before entering the classroom each morning. Gabriella described her passion for teaching as inspiration, elaborating that, when she can see the process of students learning it “feeds into my soul.” The focus on the whole student as an individual was a pattern among all participants. Sandy described teaching as a “shared and collaborative experience,” and “truly a joy;” by this, Sandy was describing not just her relationship with fellow teachers, but primarily the student-teacher relationship. Sandy was clear that children need to be shown respect and taken seriously- “I think kids need to learn to say how they would like to be addressed. And people need to be respectful of that.” The importance of building and sustaining relationships with students was a constant theme

throughout the interviews; Ludmilla emphasized that building relationships were essential to reaching students:

The focus first and foremost is on getting to know them, building relationships with them, and learning who they are and tailoring my teaching to what best meets their personal needs. Obviously, that's easier said than done. But I want to get to know them as people and then challenge them to be even better than the people they are at the moment, expand their perspectives and learn more about the world.

Ludmilla described how her decision to work at her school site was a deliberate choice. Ludmilla wanted to work at a school that was not primarily full of “privileged” students. This decision was clearly influenced by the importance that Ludmilla placed on education:

I'm very passionate about education, and the opportunity it can provide for people that don't have as much opportunity as other people. So that's really what motivates me to do my job. Not that I really think that I, by myself, I'm gonna, like change the world or anything, but I want to do a small part to help provide people with more opportunity.

This drive for teaching was driven by the desire to create a better, more equitable world.

Critical Pedagogy and the Political Nature of Teaching

A major hypothesis was that teachers most prepared to teach topics of Native American culture and history would be practitioners of critical pedagogy or exhibit tendencies that are consistent with critical pedagogy. In the interviews, when asking teachers about their teaching philosophies, not one individual ever mentioned critical pedagogy or the works of Paulo Freire.

The findings from this study show that teachers held contradictory positions on the political nature of teaching; this was evident in both interview and survey responses. The survey posed three questions related to the political nature of teaching:

1. In teaching, a neutral point of view is not possible.
2. Teaching is a political act.
3. Educators should aim to teach with social justice in mind.

As figures 1, 2, and 3 show, most teachers thought that a neutral point of view is possible while teaching (only Gabriella disagreed), that teaching is not a political act (only Ezra disagreed), and that educators should aim to teach with social justice in mind. Teachers' answers to the first two questions are at odds with their responses to the third question. This was also evident during in-depth interviews where teachers were quite explicit about discussing power dynamics and espoused positions that were anything but neutral. This was especially true for Ludmilla, whose entire class consistently explored issues of race and power. For example, Sandy and Jessie helped to revamp their schools fourth grade mission project, shifting the perspective from those of white settlers to the perspective of Native Americans. Ludmilla's history class begins with a speech by John Lewis calling for the younger generation to continue the struggle for racial justice and a more just world. At the same time, all teachers espoused the importance of having students come to their own conclusions, and not forcing their own opinions on students.

Another key component of critical pedagogy is dialogue. This is both a teaching style and philosophy of an ideal educational environment. Philosophically, all teacher participants believed in the importance of dialogue with students. However, teachers admitted that the return to in-person teaching has been difficult, academically, and socially, for students and teachers. In part,

because of the pressure to make up for COVID related learning loss and from increased behavior issues in the classroom. Ludmilla admitted that classroom practices during the 2021-2022 school year have been more teacher and lecture driven than in the past, and most teachers brought up COVID as something that has forced teachers to adapt their teaching practices. For example, Ezra wrote on the survey, “in my experience teaching kindergarten, most focus has been on other content, as the ‘immediate need’ in the class due to COVID is based around oral language acquisition, numeric and alphabetic principles.” While the language and exact teaching strategies used to express student-led teaching practices varied, (e.g., Project Based Learning, interactive, experience based, student choice, among others) it was clear that these teachers did not believe that students should be treated like "empty buckets to be filled," as Sandy put it, but believed that teaching is about maximizing student strengths and building the tools for them to succeed.

Sandy’s approach to teaching was an example of this:

I think a lot of my teaching is interactive and experience based, and the kinds of things that we can provide students where they can make their own determinations, even as eight-year-olds, about what they resonate with, and what they find important, is really valuable.

Respect for students and “treating them like adults” was a pattern among the teachers’ responses to questions about their educational philosophies, Gabriella, for example, shared the following:

I try to respect them as if they were adults, they're children, but I want them to learn what honest respect is and not just listen to your elders. I tell them why for everything. I don't have my students do anything without explaining why. Even if it's lining up, even if it's hand sanitizer, or sharpening your pencils, like everything has a why — they know the reason behind everything.

Engaging in authentic dialogue with students looks different in the elementary context than when working with older students and adults, but all teachers participating in interviews expressed elements of dialogic teaching.

Teaching for Social Justice. Social Justice was an important topic for every teacher; how they conceptualized this, and how this influenced their teaching, differed. As a term, social justice is difficult to thoroughly define and can come with a lot of baggage, both negative and positive. How to approach challenging topics like colonialism and racial oppression in a developmentally appropriate manner was a consistent topic. I told participants, when asking for clarification, to conceptualize social justice however they saw fit; this would also help me gauge how they viewed the term. Sandy was the most ambivalent about the topic. Sandy viewed equity and social justice as important, but she did not think that teachers should “push their viewpoints onto children.” Teaching about race and integrating the perspectives of people historically left out of the curriculum was clearly important to Sandy. Presenting students with multiple perspectives is what Sandy was advocating for, in her own words,

I believe that social justice should be within all teaching, but not necessarily the major goal, because I find a lot of social justice is putting forth one's own opinion.

And that I think kids need to discover a lot of that on their own. And I don't think it's a cookie cutter stamp kind of thing.

For Gabriella, social justice was an important part of her teaching practice and philosophy and to her it could be boiled down to teaching students how to be good people- “I'm not just teaching them how to get to fifth grade, I'm teaching them how to be good people, how to be in the world and have an impact, big or small...so, that social justice piece is very important.” For Ezra, social justice was an important issue to him but how to teach this in a developmentally appropriate way

was a key concern. Ezra sees his role as primarily about confronting and challenging stereotypes and biases, in Ezra's words:

As a kindergarten teacher, our job is to start breaking down barriers and focus more on normalizing inclusion, celebrating differences. acknowledging differences in a neutral state, rather than diving too deep into the difficult conversations of race, inequity, gender inequity.

When discussing social justice, Ludmilla was the most explicit in examining power and structural causes of racism and oppression. Ludmilla looked to link historical inequities to inequities in our contemporary society. Ludmilla explained her approach as follows:

But our world is unfair. Humans, we decide, we create hierarchies, and we find ourselves embedded in them. And sometimes we don't even recognize them, sometimes we do. And sometimes we don't have a way to get around them. So, in my teaching, I like to point out lots of social dynamics in history, and then help students kind of apply it to their own lives. I mean, like, even just middle school, like the playground, there's very similar power dynamics, as there would be in say, a presidential election in 1803.

Critical Consciousness, an essential element of critical pedagogy (Diemer, et al., 2015; Freire, 2000), was not something that teachers described as part of their teaching practice. Some elements of critical consciousness seemed to be part of the teacher participants' practices, especially for Gabriella and Ludmilla.

Teacher Identity

As the literature reveals (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015), the most effective Ethnic Studies teachers are constantly thinking and reflecting on race, culture, and identity and about

how these relationships affect one's classroom and teaching. All but one teacher (who responded indicating they were unsure) believed their identity played an important role (see Figure 4) in their relationship with their students. Teacher identity was often brought up before the question was directly asked, which was then used to transition into a conversation more directly about identity. Ludmilla said that, when teaching, she is often the only white person in the room. Ludmilla identified her whiteness as something she was constantly reflecting on, examining herself for potential unexamined biases. Racism is something that is brought up daily in Ludmilla's history class, and she stressed that presenting multiple perspectives, especially those of historically marginalized people, was essential for teaching U.S. history.

All teachers participating in interviews identified themselves as cisgender; four teachers identified as women, and one as a man. Gabriella is Latina and the other teachers are all white. Sandy and Jessie both work at a majority white school, but both teachers described working at other school sites that served mostly non-white students. In our interview, Jessie sketched out how she views her identity, and specifically how she navigates being a white female teacher, and how her understanding of her own identity has grown and shifted over the years. She described how her teaching experiences, working in school districts where students had experienced trauma, had shifted her understanding of the importance of identity and race. These experiences were very different from her own experiences in Catholic school:

I've spent time learning about my own practice and my own potential bias in the classroom and how my lens needs to change to incorporate a lot of different types of families and systems that didn't grow up like [me, when] I went to Catholic school.

Jessie said her experiences as a teacher led her to study cultural sensitivity and further reflect on her own identity and race, which could influence how her students and parents perceive her.

On the survey, Sandy marked the question related to identity (see Appendix B and Figure 4) as “unsure,” and throughout the interview, her answers on subjects of identity showed that she viewed identity as important, but not something that teachers should focus on. Sandy was more ambivalent when talking about her own identity. It was clear she believed identity to be important, especially for students; she said, “kids need to learn to appreciate their similarities and their differences and know that each has its value.” Her ambivalence was related to how she viewed identity impacting relationships with students, saying, “I think every person can impact others. But I don't think that [teacher identity] should be the focus of teaching necessarily.” Teacher identity was not something that Sandy focused on in the classroom.

Gabriella, Ezra, and Ludmilla work in schools with a majority of Latinx students; they each described how their identities play a role in their classrooms. Gabriella talked about how her Latina identity, socioeconomic background, and Spanish language proficiency helped her to connect to many of her students who came from similar backgrounds:

On another level, I am Latina. So, I know that my Latino students enjoy when they can speak Spanish to me, when I can interpret what I'm teaching. I have a student who majority speaks Spanish, even though my class is not a bilingual class, but we have classes here like that. I technically have to do my teaching in English, but I do interpret a lot. In that same aspect of being Latina, aside from language is also culture. I understand what these kids are going through, you know, I've been there, when like, oh, my parents didn't have money for hot lunch, right? Even though, now, school lunch is provided, you can see the disparities in

just like the home lunches that kids bring, or who gets to bring a home lunch, who doesn't. So, I provide snacks for my students for snack time. They know that if they really don't want the school lunch, for whatever reason, I always have a ramen, they can grab and use my microwave. So, there's also that aspect. I grew up and still feel low income because teachers don't get paid anything. A majority of my students are low income. I'm always buying materials. Out of my own paycheck, I buy the snacks that they're eating. You know, I'm buying this stuff for the projects, right?

Gabriella is Latina and the only non-white participant; she works in a majority Latinx school. This quote demonstrates how Gabriella's language, class and ethnic background help her to connect with her students in multiple ways. Teacher identity plays an important role in the relationships between students and teachers. It impacts how comfortable students feel in the classroom and the different ways in which students and teachers interact. Gabriella's ability to speak Spanish is an obvious example of this, as is her insistence on keeping her classroom stocked with food. When prompted Gabriella had the most to say about identity and its impact in her classroom. Sandy And Jessie both work in majority white schools and in general had less to say about teacher identity and the role it plays within their current classrooms. Jessie's described her awareness of her own teacher identity as something that evolved throughout her teaching career, especially when she began working in majority non-white schools. Sandy when asked about teacher identity instead spoke only of respecting the identities of her students. When prompted about identity teachers outside of Gabriella primarily spoke about their teaching philosophies and guiding principles.

The Curriculum: Grade Level Exploration

Conversations with teachers explored the issue of curriculum related to Native American culture and the history of Native people in the United States. The interview questions were framed through an Ethnic Studies lens, which centers the experiences and narratives of historically underrepresented communities. Figures 5-10 (see Appendix C) cover topics related to curriculum, the data comes from the survey. Figure 5 shows that teachers generally believe that their curriculum honestly engages with the history of Native American people. A key survey question about teachers' curriculum was, *does your curriculum feature the voices and perspectives of Native Americans?* Figure 6 shows that integration of Native perspectives within the curriculum varied among teacher participants. When examining interview and survey data, Native American curriculum integration, for most teachers, consisted of primary source materials, and videos and multimedia sources by or featuring Native Americans. Sandy and Jessie used literature written by Native Americans and Sandy's third grade class was an exception in that it featured collaboration with Native American community members who taught at a local college.

California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) of grades kindergarten, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 8th were discussed during interviews with teachers. Before diving in-depth with grade level examinations of the curriculum, a brief overview of what topics were discussed by grade level will be provided. Ludmilla teaches an eighth-grade history class and both colonialism and Native American history feature heavily in this class. At the time of the interview, Gabriella was teaching fourth grade, and both Sandy and Jessie previously taught fourth grade within the last five years. The California mission project and the "Age of Exploration" unit were featured extensively during these interviews. Sandy also discussed teaching third grade, which covers

local community history; this was the primary lens through which Native American topics were taught at this grade level. Conversations with Jessie about second grade were mostly notable for the absence of Native Americans in any meaningful manner. Kindergarten CCSS do not extensively cover Native American topics outside of holidays and historically important individuals like Pocahontas, but Ezra explained that in the past, he covered Native American topics. However, this year, because of the COVID related academic gaps, he has not had the time to focus on these topics in a manner that he felt appropriate. In general, there was a lack of Native American faces and representation in literature except when covered as a part of United States or California history (third, fourth, and eighth grade).

Eighth Grade: Giving Students the Language to Confront Colonialism

Ludmilla teaches an eighth-grade history class; Colonialism and Native American history and culture are a significant part of the curriculum. At her school site, Ludmilla has the autonomy to select topics to focus on. Ludmilla uses the standards as a general framework to guide the time period she covers, but criticizes them for being, in her words “old and outdated,” despite using the new History-Social Science Framework. Ludmilla links the outdated standards as a reason why most textbooks remain outdated and, therefore, why she does not use these textbooks in her classroom. Ludmilla uses a variety of primary sources in her classroom, using the Stanford History Education Group as one example, in addition to finding primary sources from the internet. Ludmilla told me that she makes it a point in her class to center colonialism, “I cover that [colonization of the U.S.] to try and make it super crystal clear, there was no discovery of America by Europeans, it was somebody else's land that they decided would work better for them.” Ludmilla laid out her curriculum and approach to this class very clearly and succinctly,

with a focus on power relations. In Ludmilla's own words on the trajectory of her U.S. history class:

So, I'm still developing my curriculum. We start the year with a letter that John Lewis wrote, right before he died, that is him passing the baton to the younger generation and like, I've done all of this work, but I know you are going to address these issue, it's your generation that's going to make a big change in this world. So, we start with, like a mandate, more or less by looking at John Lewis. And then we go back, and we actually study the history of race. From its like conception as a concept, and have them look at some primary sources, and then we read some from Stamped [a book on racism and anti-racism by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds for kids]. And just kind of help them understand that racism was created. It's not biological, it's something that was created by Europeans as a way to create social hierarchy and order of importance for people based on the color of their skin. And so, through that lens, then we start to look at Columbus, and what he did to Native Americans, what their lives were like before, how their lives changed after Columbus. And then we move on to colonization, and then 1619 when slavery started in the United States, and then from there, we continue to look at how choices that people in power made in the United States impacted people from different groups, primarily, the black community and the Native American community. And, any other underrepresented, underrepresented people, for example, early on, poor white people were not represented either. So, it's a constant theme that comes back, and a constant motivation and underlying factor. So, as we study, it keeps coming up

as a reason why power is being given to some and taken from others, or others are being ignored at pivotal points in history.

It is clear from speaking with Ludmilla about how she conceptualizes U.S. history that race, and power are key subjects of analysis for her class.

A large portion of the interview session was spent discussing, in depth, Andrew Jackson, the Indian Removal Act, the Trail of Tears, and stereotypes about Native Americans. Ludmilla's class requires major projects in which students debate issues related to race and power. For example, one project is about whether students believe that Andrew Jackson deserves to be on the 20-dollar bill. Ludmilla described how, in her class, Native American stereotypes throughout history were discussed, beginning with contemporary stereotypes like the Cleveland Indians logo/mascot, stereotypes related to the "Vanishing Indian stereotype" (like "all Native Americans live in teepees"), and highlighting stereotypes in popular culture, like the Peter Pan song "What Makes the Red Man Red." These stereotypes are used to spur discussions in class about stereotypes and discrimination more broadly. Ludmilla, in a manner like Gabriella, highlighted the importance of teaching students the language to describe and understand complicated issues related to race and power:

I give them language to use, I give them like, here's acceptable terms...to help them feel like okay, I can talk about [Native] people and I know the right words, now we can enter into some learning about Native American history. Feeling a little more comfortable with how to talk about this appropriately.

Ludmilla stressed throughout the interview that it was essential to make one's students feel comfortable when talking about difficult subjects, like racism and colonization and, to do this,

students needed to be taught language and terms to help them work through and conceptualize these issues and concepts.

Fourth Grade: “Explorers” and the California Mission Project

Fourth grade curriculum specifically engages with the history of Native Americans in California, along with the early colonial history of the United States. I talked with Gabriella, Sandy, and Jessie about their experiences teaching fourth grade. Gabriella is currently in her first year as a full-time teacher (with previous experience as a long-term substitute teacher), while Sandy and Jessie are both veteran teachers with years of experience teaching fourth grade curriculum. These teachers used the curriculum *Teacher Created Materials*, and *California Studies Weekly*; they also used Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) teaching strategies and included curricular materials they created or discovered from other sources. Both Jessie and Gabriella drew attention to the primary sources and non-fiction books that were part of the *Teachers Created Curriculum*. Both teachers noted that the curriculum on its own was not enough to cover all content, and that while Native perspectives were present, they were dwarfed in comparison to European perspectives. Gabriella specifically mentioned how she wished there were more Native American perspectives contained within this specific curriculum- “I wish it had more resources from the Native Indians. I feel like we don't have their perspective shown too much.” Within this curriculum, all teachers had a large degree of freedom in what and how they taught; Jessie explained, “We can be really creative within the confines of the curriculum that our school district has picked out.” However, as Sandy and Jessie both noted in their interviews, this freedom is entirely teacher led and requires time, work, and collaboration.

Mission Projects and “Explorers.” All teachers chose not to engage with the traditional fourth grade California mission project, where students build their own California Mission diorama. Gabriella explained that, in her district, it is up to individual teachers if they want to do the mission project and Gabriella chose not to, explaining, “I didn't do it. I didn't want to glorify the missions — to be honest.” Jessie estimated that at her and Sandy’s school site, they stopped doing the mission project about 10 years prior. Sandy and Jessie both described how they observed the mission project shift over the years. Jessie recalled the shift, from a focus on the Spanish missionary perspective to one concerned more with Native life:

[It became] more deep dives into the Natives and shifting the focus [away from Spanish settlers], The mission project [It used to be] kind of like pros and cons [of the mission system] and then it shifted, to include a lot more about native life, and what foods they were eating, you know, how their daily lives were vs [focusing on the Spanish Settler perspective] the mission, and we stopped building missions.

In addition, Sandy and Jessie described a corresponding shift in the type of literature used in their classrooms, moving from using books about Native Americans by white authors to books by Native authors, focusing primarily on Native experiences. Sandy spoke about how the shift also focused more on why the missions were created and the colonization of what is now Mexico and California by the Spaniards.

Gabriella made colonialism explicitly a part of how she taught about both the missions and the fourth-grade unit on the “Age of Exploration.” Gabriella shared,

It was about like Columbus and the paper is calling them explorers. I literally did a whole ass lesson on that. I showed a video of Dora the Explorer. And we talked

about why she is an explorer? Oh, because she's looking, but she's leaving alone, right? She's peaceful, she's calm, you know, she's learning. She goes home, and she thinks about what she's learned. Then I showed pictures of Columbus, and I gave background information. I was like, what do you think? Like, is this an explorer like, Dora? Or is this not an explorer? And, you know, they were able to deduce that it's not exploring because they didn't just literally explore. Right. So, I gave them a word, that they were colonizers, right. And colonizers, they were not good people. One kid did bring up like, but they discovered America, And I'm like, no, they didn't. They did not—there were people here before them.

How to present language to children in a developmentally appropriate manner was a pattern within conversations with Gabriella about teaching colonialism to students. Gabriella questioned the framing of the “Age of Exploration” unit by comparing figures like Columbus with that of Dora the Explorer, having students question and interrogate what words like *explorer* really mean. Gabriella gave students a new language to describe the difference between colonizer and explorer. Gabriella makes it clear that she presents “both sides” when exploring Native American history, but she makes it clear that “both sides” are not on the same moral footing:

I made it a point for them to understand the negative side, just because we're constantly told the pretty side like they helped these Indians become “civilized” and that was like, you know, well, did they help them become "civilized?" Or were they forced to become "civilized." So, it's like, changing the language for them. Not with any emotion behind it, just like just the factual information. Just understanding language and why it's important to understand it.

Again, the importance of language is explored, with Gabriella encouraging her students to question the word *civilized* to fully understand what forced assimilation actually entailed in the missions.

Third Grade: Local History and Community Collaboration

Throughout Sandy's interview she described how for her third-grade class, community engagement was a focus. Third grade focuses on local history and in Sandy's survey she wrote:

In our third-grade Native American unit we have a draw and label activity that exposes students to the natural resources available in our local region and discusses how the Miwok used those resources in a wide variety of ways within each village.

Sandy emphasized that her third-grade class collaborated during an eight-week period with a professor teaching students about Native American culture and dance. Sandy was the only teacher who had support from the local community in her classroom. In addition, Sandy also made a point of emphasizing that field trips to important cultural sites and landmarks were an essential part of how she taught about Native American culture. Sandy made it clear that it was important for her to make students aware that Native Americans are not a people who only existed in the distant past but are a part of local communities and contemporary life. She stated - "I think just the fact that kids recognize that they have Native Americans, in their classrooms, in their communities and in local businesses is huge."

Third grade field trips involved going to locations like Ring Mountain, Kula Loko, and China Camp, where the history of Native American culture in these regions were highlighted. Teaching was primarily done in a hands-on and project-based manner.

Second Grade

Jessie had a lot to say about fourth grade, but little to mention when it came to the second-grade curriculum. The curriculum and standards in second grade do not explicitly cover Native American culture, and it is not a subject of serious study in Jessie's second grade classroom. When talking about the curriculum, Jessie shared about the lack of Native American representation in the curriculum, materials, and literature, writing, "second grade doesn't include the same topics (as CA history is fourth grade), but there should be more 'Native American faces' shown in the books kids are reading, etc."

Kindergarten

The conversation with Ezra about kindergarten focused on the lack of Native American representation in the curriculum and the inadequate nature of the existing curriculum that Ezra had to work with:

We do have a curriculum box, but it is super outdated. Reading through it was like, oh, man, I don't want to pull this out and start teaching this because it's super whitewashed, paintings of Pocahontas, just very outdated. [The curriculum is] understudied, underrepresented, whitewashed history, and I don't want to pull that out.

Outside of Thanksgiving and brief mentions of Coast Miwok territory, Native American topics are not a part of Ezra's kindergarten curriculum. When asked about how his classroom addresses Thanksgiving, Ezra told me "I haven't taken a step back, until doing this now to think about it, but we're spinning it along the lines of appreciating the things that we have around us." Ezra explained that, for holidays, he has followed what other grade level teachers have been teaching for Thanksgiving. Ezra stressed that the perspective that is privileged is almost entirely that of

the early American Settlers, with Native American experiences and perspectives as an afterthought. Ezra was unhappy with the literature around the topic as well- “I think almost any book that you would typically pull off of a shelf in a classroom library about Thanksgiving paints a very peaceful picture of it all.” Ezra did mention using and thinking about articles from *Learning for Justice* to give him more perspective on Thanksgiving.

The Power of Language & Budding Critical Consciousness?

Gabriella and Ludmilla were adamant about giving students the language to better understand the reality of colonialism and the exploitation and dispossession of Native Americans. Gabriella made it an issue to examine what the word explorer really meant contrasting Christopher Columbus with Dora the Explorer asking students if the word explorer could really be used to describe the actions of both. In addition, she gave her students vocabulary like colonizers and spoke about colonialism in clear terms. When asked about how to teach topics like colonialism and Native American land dispossession in a developmentally appropriate way, Gabriella was clear that she believed students could handle the material. Gabriella spoke about how students at her school have already faced racism and oppression:

like, the kids can take it like they're facing frickin deportation. They're facing all the shit Trump said about their cultures and race, so they can handle to know the truth of like, what happened to the Native Indians who like, did nothing except exist and like, were frickin massacred and traumatized.

Gabriella detailed a student at her school who had recently been in a border detention camp, and the discourse on immigration more broadly, arguing if they can handle this, they can handle the truth about what happened to Native people in this country.

Ludmilla, similarly, focused on giving students the language to talk about power relations and stereotypes and how they manifest in students' lives. In addition, Ludmilla described multiple moments where her students were showing budding levels of critical consciousness during classroom debates, with students fully invested in the material. For example, she detailed an interaction with a student following a lesson on the Indian Removal Act, where a student the following day came to class after having done more independent research:

A student came to me today, who had looked up the Indian Removal Act, after learning about it, and said 50,000 Native Americans were removed during the Indian Removal Act. And I was like, really? Where did you find that? What was your source? And then she went back and pulled it up on her Chromebook and was like, look what it says. And she was horrified because she was like, that's the size of our city. Like, that's so many people. I can't believe it was that many people who were kicked out of their homes. It was a cool moment because she obviously was impacted by her learning.

She also recounted how her students pushed back against the legitimacy of state boundaries and the "discovery of America."

oh, yeah, definitely. And when I don't, my students will, like it if it comes up, like in some other way, we'll talking about state boundaries or something [and her students will respond with] "but at first, it wasn't even their land, I don't even know why they're putting boundaries there." You know, and I'm like, "okay, you're right. But we're trying to figure out this border now. So, what are we going to do with it?" You know, that sort of thing, where it's like, it is related, but not necessarily the focus of the lesson and they'll still be like, it's not their land.

Ludmilla and Gabriella provide examples of educators who are committed to critically teaching their students about United States history and connecting this history to the lives of their students.

Teacher Preparedness

A major theme that arose from the findings is that most teachers interviewed did not feel well prepared to teach Native American culture or history. Those that felt prepared were veteran teachers who described a network of trusted teachers and colleagues who they had collaboratively developed curriculum that they felt proud of throughout the past decade. However, all teacher participants felt that Native American representation outside of specific units and topics dealing directly with Native American history or culture was lacking. For the survey responses, teachers were asked to use a Likert scale to rank how prepared they felt to teach students about Native American history and culture. Figure 7 shows that most teachers felt unprepared to teach these subjects. Ludmilla, Ezra, and Gabriella rated themselves with a two on this scale about preparedness; Jessie rated herself a three, and Sandy gave herself a four.

Less Experienced Teachers and Feelings of Isolation

Gabriella and Ezra conveyed an increasing amount of frustration related to the lack of teaching materials and curriculum they believed accurately portrayed colonialism, Native Cultures, and integrated Native perspectives. Both teachers were adamant that what was necessary was not just materials and curriculum that adequately addressed these perspectives, but materials that were also easy to access and accessible for teachers. Ezra and Gabriella stressed how thin they were already stretched as teachers. They felt that expecting teachers to sort through research and look for developmentally appropriate materials in their already limited free time was asking too much. Gabriella's primary concern, more so than professional development

or pre-service training, was primary sources and teaching material: “as teachers, whatever you give us, like, we know how to transform it into lessons, you know, but it's just having something, right?” Gabriella said these materials might include workbooks, literature, primary sources, lesson ideas, packets etc., if these were clearly connected to standards. Ezra echoed similar thoughts,

I've struggled with some feelings about how certain curriculum is introduced no matter how rooted in goodness it is, based on the amount of development that I need to do as a teacher, when I'm expected to do 15 other things. I've worked with a curriculum where it was, here's a strategy — now I want you to use this and three other strategies to develop an entire unit by yourself on your own time.

For elementary teachers who are expected to teach a variety of different subject areas, the lack of preparation time was the primary concern that teachers felt was standing in the way of how they would ideally teach these subjects. Ezra talked about wanting to develop more lessons about Native American culture and History that integrated Native American perspectives with his fellow grade level teachers, but expressed that especially because of COVID, making this a priority was difficult and has not happened. Ezra also mentioned the need for cultural training for all staff when it came to Native American culture, highlighting a music lesson his students received:

The other exposure/context my class has is through music class. The music teacher did a unit on Native instruments and chants.... let's just say it hurt my heart and the students only walked away with yelling really offensive onomatopoeia

While Ezra was quick to say that this teacher was not intentionally being offensive, it was clear that greater cultural sensitivity and knowledge is required for many educators on topics of Native American culture.

Ludmilla's reported experience is unique among the teachers' interview responses; unlike the other teachers, Ludmilla is focused on one content area. Ludmilla teaches at a K-8 school and teaches seventh and eighth grade. The treatment and history of Native Americans throughout U.S. history is a central part of this class. Ludmilla, throughout her interview, stressed that she did not feel like she was doing enough to cover and represent Native Americans in her classroom, saying, "I still feel like I'm rushing through it. I'm doing extra than I'm required to do by state standards. Not that I'm bound by those, but it's not enough if I'm not satisfied with what I do." Ludmilla felt that she was not doing enough to cover individual Native American tribes and the cultural differences between Native people. Ludmilla noted how Native American culture is often treated as a monolith despite the vast cultural diversity and experiences of Native people, and how little is actually covered in the classroom- "There's just so much Native American history that isn't covered, well or thoroughly. There's not enough justice given to the Native community after so many years of injustice."

When asked how to improve teaching on Native American topics, Ludmila described her desire for more personal study and research. When asked what help she wanted from the district, she was unsure. When asked about professional development, Ludmilla did not believe it was realistic at her school site because she was the only history teacher at the school.

Experienced Teachers and Networks of Collaboration

The primary difference in Jessie's and Sandy's experience was the level of school and grade level collaboration. Sandy and Jessie both described a shift that occurred in their school

within the past 8-10 years, which reimagined fourth grade social studies and specifically the mission project. Jessie described the curriculum shift in one of her survey answers writing:

I taught fourth grade for many years. During that time, students study mission history. We really shifted our focus in teaching to include the real negative impact the mission system had on Native People. We also shifted our literature to include a book written by a Native person (Land of our Ancestors) - ditching Island of the Blue Dolphins as the novel. I also sought out articles on Newsela or other publishing companies to include those voices.

During Jessie's interview she expanded on this shift in teaching missions and other Native American topics, and it was clear that change at her school site was entirely teacher led and driven. Jessie described how change began when the teachers at her site read about other school sites and districts that stopped doing mission projects; after learning about this shift, she started conducting further research. From this starting point, Jessie described collaborating with grade level teachers, noting specifically, the emergence of a new younger social justice-oriented educator who helped spur further changes in the literature, and content of their curriculum.

Sandy described a similar experience, working with the third-grade team at the same school, in Sandy's survey she wrote, "We have a Curriculum Advisory Committee, but grade level collaboration throughout the district is the most supportive." Third grade focuses on local history; Sandy said that, in recent years, there was a shift to include more of the history and culture of Native Americans. Sandy and Jessie described how collaborative efforts with grade level teams, along with work and study during their own personal time, led to the creation of third and fourth grade curriculum that included more Native American perspectives. Sandy and Jessie were also clear that these changes took time to implement and were the result of years of

reflection. In the past, Sandy and Jessie did not feel prepared to teach about Native American history or culture. Through personal study and collaboration over the years, these teachers have developed curriculum they are proud of and now feel better prepared to teach students on these topics.

What Do Teachers Want?

Teachers expressed that what they wanted from their districts and schools were better and more expansive teaching materials. In addition, the need for more preparation time was a major concern. Every teacher described their lack of time, or the large amount of time that they were spending creating and finding teaching materials or creating curriculum that included Native American content. Ezra and Gabriella spent a large amount of time speaking on their desire for more easily digestible materials and resources, while Ludmilla described spending a lot of time looking for primary sources and creating lesson plans. Ezra and Gabriella also expressed that they wanted lesson plans that were developmentally appropriate for their grade level. For example, Ezra wrote on the survey:

Speaking for lower grades specifically, we need a palatable, 6-year-old comprehensible, "even the white 30-year veteran teacher can do it" curriculum. Most importantly, teachers need mandatory professional development on cultural sensitivity (no, not an online module), AND accredited historians should be part of the curriculum selection.

Both teachers expressed the desire for developmentally appropriate material that could help to guide kindergarten discussions on topics like Thanksgiving and Pocahontas or guide discussions with fourth graders on colonialism and Columbus. Teachers also expressed the desire for more

explicit support from their schools and the district when it came to teaching about content critical of the United States.

Sandy and Jessie described a rather different experience from the other teachers, but still emphasized that they believed better and more diverse teaching materials were necessary. While at their school site, third and fourth grade curriculum have improved in their representation and inclusion of Native Americans, the same is not true for other grades. This is in part because the standards do not directly address Native American history or cultures. Jessie expressed this point:

I would say, in second grade, so far, I've not seen a lot of Native faces. I don't think there's a lot of books, you know, like just literature [about Native Americans]. Could you imagine this? This is how kids learn about themselves, and how to solve problems in the world and how to get on with people, and how their own families exist. I cannot think of one book, besides the ones I use in fourth grade, about a Native American.

Literature that includes Native Americans or is about Native Americans is something that Jessie in particular, believed needed to be a larger focus for school libraries and librarians, not something that is brought up only in the specific context of California history or American history. Jessie was clear that Native American representation in general needed to improve, “I think what's most missing is the inclusion of their faces and perspectives. Asian, Black, and Latino faces and perspectives are included frequently (which is important), but not those of Native People.”

Professional development was not a topic that came up in most interviews. When teachers were asked about how they believed the district could better support them in teaching on

Native American topics. Gabriella and Ezra did not think it was the most effective way to help them, believing that a professional development day or training would not address their real needs, which were better materials and time. However, teachers did bring up the need for sensitivity trainings and more cultural sensitivity on the part of colleagues.

Conclusion

The central question guiding this research was *how is Native American history taught at the elementary school level?* While this research is limited in scope, the findings do offer insight into how Native American history is taught by a small group of teachers working in one school district in the Bay Area. The answer is that it is highly individualized and dependent on the teachers at each school site. While all teachers are from the same school district, follow the same baseline curriculum, and follow the same standards, teachers are given a lot of room to teach these topics in their own manner. For example, the traditional mission project, where students build a model California mission, is something that is a teacher-by-teacher decision. The baseline curriculum offers some Native American perspectives, primary sources, as well as some content on the oppression of Native Americans, but it still centers the narrative of early American settlers over those of Native Americans. Going beyond this baseline curriculum, is entirely up to each individual teacher. If students are learning explicitly about colonialism this is a choice made by an individual teacher, not something that can be expected in every classroom. Teachers interviewed, even when they felt they were not doing enough, were going beyond what the standard deemed necessary to teach, and beyond what their teaching materials provide. Teachers are finding primary sources themselves and building from the provided curriculum. From the interviews, it is clear that teaching about Colonialism and Native Americans has improved, with a larger focus on the perspectives of Native Americans occurring at the elementary level, but

teaching that focuses on power relations and seek to understand race and racism in a more holistic manner (like that of Ludmilla) are still rare.

The second research question was *how do teachers perceive what they teach?* The answer to this question varied teacher by teacher, but two general trends emerged. Less experienced teachers, in general, felt less prepared to teach about Native American culture and history, while more experienced teachers felt more prepared. The more veteran teachers had stronger collaborative relationships with their colleagues and especially their schools fellow grade level teachers. These teachers described collaboratively developing curriculum and what they wished to emphasize and focus on. All teachers generally perceived their curriculum to honestly engage with the history of Indigenous People in America or at least did not consider it to be actively dishonest. However, teachers in general did not feel that they were doing enough, or at least felt that they could be doing more. The need for more representation of Native Americans outside of the core curriculum, was a common theme, as was the desire for more primary sources from the perspectives of Native Americans and materials that did not treat Native Americans as an afterthought or checklist to mark off.

The third research question was, *are teachers using critical pedagogy in the classroom? Does this influence how they teach Native American topics?* The answer to this question is mixed. Teachers are not teaching using critical pedagogy, but elements of critical pedagogy are evident in teachers teaching style and philosophies. Teachers believed that building strong relationships of mutual respect between teacher and student was of utmost importance. Teachers spoke of the importance of student driven instruction and rejected the banking style of teaching, as Sandy said, “students are not empty buckets to fill.” Teaching students critical thinking skills (giving students the tools) was a point of emphasis among interviewed teachers. Teachers viewed

their relationship with students as a collaborative one. The aspects described are clearly in line with thinking of teaching as a dialogue between student and teacher. However, most teachers interviewed did not see teaching as a political act, and while they believed that social justice should be an important element of teaching, for most it was not an emphasis, but rather one of many perspectives that students needed to be introduced to. Teaching philosophy clearly influenced how students were being taught about Native American issues. Teachers with stronger views on social justice and its importance were more explicit in naming and calling out colonialism. All teachers were committed to more accurately representing Native American culture and diversity.

The fourth research question was *How can teachers be better supported in teaching U.S. settler colonialism and Native American history/culture in the elementary classroom in a developmentally appropriate manner?* While teachers had many different concerns and ideas, two themes emerged from all the interviews- teaching resources and time. Less experienced teachers felt particularly overwhelmed and “stretched thin” with the number of roles they felt they had to fulfill. Less experienced teachers felt that to adequately teach about Native American history or culture, they would need to build their own units and lessons from scratch, which required the use of time they did not have. Less experienced teachers directly spoke about the need for understandable and accessible teaching materials that were developmentally appropriate and linked to state standards. Experienced teachers were more satisfied with their curriculum and teaching materials and described strong teacher networks and collaboration at their school sites. More experienced teachers' concerns had more to do with the need for additional literature about Native people or directly addressing Native culture and histories. To help teachers better teach these topics, higher quality and more accessible teaching materials are required in addition to

paid time for teachers to develop curriculum, and structures at school sites that encourage building strong teacher relationships and networks where teachers can collaboratively develop curriculum.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study looks at elementary and middle school teachers using the framework of Ethnic Studies pedagogy to examine their feelings of preparedness on teaching about Native American topics. It investigates what teachers think they need to better teach these subjects. While none of the teachers interviewed were Ethnic Studies teachers, looking at aspects common in successful Ethnic Studies teachers is a useful lens for discussing how the research participants approached teaching Native American content. In the literature review, aspects that serve a foundation for successful Ethnic Studies teachers were identified. The literature identified professional development, content knowledge, critical examination of identity, Ethnic Studies pedagogy (critical pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy), and community engagement as traits that made for successful Ethnic Studies teachers (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015, 2019).

The participants' pedagogic styles incorporated elements of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. Teachers, overall, believed in the importance of building and fostering student relationships, student-led teaching, examining their own identities as teachers, and the importance of teaching with social justice in mind. Community was identified as an important aspect of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. Only one participant's class featured Native American community members. However, all participants expressed a desire for more community engagement and cultural activities (such as field trips). However, teachers did not explicitly see their role in teaching as developing students' critical consciousness and largely believed teaching to not be inherently political. In this regard, most philosophies were more closely aligned with the multicultural model described in the literature review than with a model of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. This is not to discount the good work that the research participants are doing in their classrooms.

One goal of this project was to examine teacher practice and see if it aligned more closely with the 2016 History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (2016 HSS Framework). In this regard, teachers’ practice is in general more aligned with the guidelines than I was anticipating. All teachers interviewed rejected the traditional mission diorama project and replaced this with projects more aligned with the guidelines, replacing the mission project with deeper examinations on California Native American tribes and cultures. The HSS Framework, however, is not a reimagining of the content standards, but an improvement that looks to center Native Americans more explicitly without fundamentally challenging and replacing narratives of the “Age of Exploration” with settler colonialism.

Implications for the Literature

The literature review explored the importance of Ethnic Studies as a field, effective Ethnic Studies pedagogy, and briefly explored how Native Americans have been depicted in elementary curriculum. While there is a growing body of research on the importance of Ethnic Studies for all students, there is more limited research applying this research to elementary and middle school History-Social Science classes. This research posits that the qualities that make for effective Ethnic Studies teachers, translate to quality elementary and middle school teachers as well. This research examined how elementary and middle school teachers are teaching and including Native Americans in their curriculum, asking if they feel prepared to teach these topics.

The findings show that teachers encountered many barriers that prevented them from feeling prepared to teach about Native American topics and settler colonialism. The largest barrier that teachers felt prevented them from teaching on these issues adequately was the lack of

easy to find and critical teaching materials. This was especially true for less experienced elementary teachers. Hand in hand with the need for accessible resources was the time-consuming nature of developing, creating, and/or finding new curriculum and materials. Teachers, in part, were adamant about the need for higher quality teaching materials because of the lack of necessary preparation time for developing new material and units.

Teachers who felt prepared were established veteran teachers who described strong collaborative networks with fellow grade level teachers and colleagues at their school sites. Preparation time, and better resources were still issues that more experienced teachers mentioned but were not as prominent as these teachers throughout the past couple years had developed curriculum that they were satisfied with, while acknowledging that there was still room for improvement.

What is clear is that at the elementary level, curriculum is highly dependent on individual teachers taking the initiative. While this was the case at all school sites, some participants felt more supported by their school sites and administration than others. Some teachers, like Ludmilla, whose understanding of History focuses on power relations and the social construction of race, are clearly in line with Ethnic Studies pedagogy and practice. Gabriella is another example of this approach. Outside of curriculum, teachers all used elements of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. The importance of student relationships and students' choices and voices were all essential elements of the participants' teaching styles. More explicit training and guidance of critical pedagogy and other Ethnic Studies pedagogies would be beneficial to teachers in general.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The literature review identified the need for professional development and improved pre-service training (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015). While more professional development and

pre-service training are necessary and would be beneficial to all teachers, this was not the most pressing concern for the research participants. Participants identified the need for easily understandable and accessible teaching materials and resources that more fully incorporate the viewpoints and perspectives of Native Americans. While there are plenty of resources available that critically teach on Native American topics (Schneider et al., 2019), many teachers do not know where to look, or how to incorporate these teaching materials into their curriculum or lesson plans. What this demonstrates is that those creating resources intended for teachers need to be more cognizant of how to practically put their materials into use.

In addition to the need for more resources, a common theme among participants was the amount of preparation time that is required for planning and creating curriculum. Teachers spoke about how much of their own free time they needed to spend preparing units and curriculum. Teachers spoke about feeling like they were already stretched too thin and had to pick and choose what topics and subjects to invest their limited time in. Preparation time included teachers discussing professional development, more personal study, and research in their free time, as well as needing more scheduled preparation time for curriculum and lesson planning. The lack of preparation time was one of the largest barriers teachers described that prevented them from feeling that they were adequately teaching on Native American topics and subjects. This was true especially among elementary school teachers, who also had to lesson plan in subject areas outside of History-Social Science. The need for more preparation time manifested itself in the planning, creation, and redesigning of curriculum as well as in the day-to-day operations of teaching. Teachers need more paid preparation time from their school districts and sites for lesson planning and collaboratively creating curriculum.

There is a clear need for more children's literature featuring and about Native American topics and histories in school libraries. Jessie made it clear in her interviews that Native American faces and voices were mostly absent in the classroom unless a unit or topic specifically featured Native Americans. Students do not often see Native Americans represented as active community members or living lives outside of specific units on California history and holidays like Thanksgiving.

Overall, this study points to both areas of growth and the possibilities of K-12 education. All participants rejected the traditional mission project and Ludmilla and Gabriella explicitly rejected the framework of European colonization as exploration, instead naming and giving students the language to discuss exploitation and colonialism in clear terms. Sandy's third grade classroom is an example of the potential for engagement with local community and cultural members. All participants believed in the necessity of providing more accurate depictions of Native American cultural life and spoke about how the classroom can be a way to directly challenge stereotypes and racism. From participants' description of their curriculum and teaching, clear improvement of the cultural depictions of Native Americans is seen. However, elementary education remains Eurocentric, giving primacy to European narratives and perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

There are many limitations to this study. Five teachers participated in this study from three different school sites in one Bay Area school district. More participants and grade level diversity would give a fuller picture of the conclusions drawn from this study. The two veteran teachers were from the same school site, which makes drawing conclusions from their experiences murkier. Were their stronger collaborative networks a result of their experience

level, their school site, more supportive administration, or something else. Without more research it is hard to draw firm conclusions. The findings are also limited to the responses of participants in one Bay Area school district. Participant self-selection bias is possible, as all teachers who chose to participate in this study were interested in this topic, implications drawn from this group might not be applicable to the whole body of teachers from this school district. Researcher positionality could also affect the findings. The researcher has experience as a fourth-grade student teacher and teaching on these topics, which could influence how the researcher interprets participants motivations and teaching.

Directions for Future Research

Many resources exist online that are made by Native American scholars or groups, however ensuring elementary school teachers are aware of these resources is still necessary. Easily fitting and adapting these resources and matching them to standards can also be challenging or at least time consuming. More research that focuses on existing resources and materials and how to make these more accessible for teachers is necessary.

One area of interest discovered in the findings is the importance of relationships and collaboration between teachers in developing and implementing new curriculum. Examining relationships and levels of collaboration of teachers by grade level teams could be an area of interest for future research. More research examining the role of collaboration in the creation of critical curriculum would be useful. Sacramento's (2019) research points to possible directions. In this study, Sacramento analyzed the Ethnic Studies Collaborative, a professional development group created for developing Ethnic Studies curriculum at one school district. In this group, teachers would meet weekly to study and discuss various Ethnic Studies texts and frameworks, as well as discuss their own identities and feelings while teaching/developing Ethnic Studies for

the ninth grade. The findings indicate that collaboration with fellow teachers played a role in positive curriculum changes in the integration and depiction of Native Americans. Future research could include grade level focus groups or the examination of existing collaborative teacher groups at the elementary and middle school level.

Conclusion

When covering Native American history and culture, positive changes were primarily led by teachers learning and growing and working with each other, often with limited support and often during non-work hours. It required more than a desire to critically engage with how the traditional curriculum teaches and frames Native American culture and history, but to put in effort and time to create and modify existing curriculum. All interviewed teachers cared about equity and social justice. They wanted to teach about Native Americans, avoiding stereotypes and providing Native American perspectives and primary sources. When teachers fell short of these goals, it was primarily because they believed they lacked the resources and time to do so. With greater support, teachers would be able to critically and effectively teach Native American culture and include Native American perspectives and voices in History-Social Sciences. This research demonstrates that there are teachers who generally want to teach about Native American culture and history in an honest and critical way without whitewashing atrocities and crimes committed against native people; many of these teachers just do not feel prepared or know how to effectively teach these subjects to their students. As Gabriella puts it:

So, it's like, you know, I want to believe in the good faith of all teachers, not just myself, like, we want to teach this, but it's like, we need the help. It's also just like, we're not stupid. I don't know how to phrase it like... [we need] stuff that

matches the standards and give us the resources, even if it's like different books,
like find us the books, find us the primary resources.

The reimagining of mission projects, and the expansion of Ethnic Studies in high school, are areas of growth and change that point to a better future in how History-Social Studies is taught in elementary and middle schools.

References

- Bañales, X. (2019). Celebrating Ethnic Studies at 50. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 51(3), 232–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2019.1650484>
- Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. SAGE.
- Cabrera, N. L. (2019). Critical Race Theory v. deficit models. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 52(1), 47–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2019.1630342>
- California Department of Education. (2021). Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>
- California Department of Education Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee Members of 2019. (2021). Remove Names from Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. <https://savearabamericanstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Letter-to-CDE-2.3.2021.pdf>
- California State Board of Education. (2000). History-social science content standards for California public schools: Kindergarten through grade twelve. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistnd.pdf>
- California State Board of Education. (2018). Executive Summary of the History-Social Science Framework. https://www.scoe.net/castandards/Documents/summary_history_framework.pdf
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black Feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1). 139-167
<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>.

- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed). Merrill.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Cuauhtin, R.T., (2019a). Ethnic Studies pedagogy as CxRxPx. In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st ed., pp. 26-32). Rethinking Schools.
- Cuauhtin, R.T., (2019b). The Ethnic Studies framework: A holistic overview. In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st ed., pp. 65-75). Rethinking Schools.
- Chapman, T. K., Jones, M., Stephens, R., Lopez, D., Rogers, K. D., & Crawford, J. (2020). A necessary pairing: Using academic outcomes and critical consciousness to dismantle curriculum as the property of whiteness in K-12 Ethnic Studies. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 53(4), 569–582. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2020.1791767>
- Davis, A. Y. (2005). *Abolition Democracy: Beyond empire, prisons, and torture* (Seven Stories Press 1st ed.). Seven Stories Press.
- De Los Ríos, C.V., (2019). Revisiting notions of social action in Ethnic Studies pedagogy. In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st ed., pp. 59-64). Rethinking Schools.
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (3rd Ed.). NYU Press.
- Diaz-Strong, D., Luna-Duart, M., Gómez, C., & Meiners, E. R. (2013). Too close to the work/ there is nothing right now. In Paris, D., & Winn, M. T. (Eds.), *Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities* (pp. 3-19). SAGE Publications.

- Diemer, M. A., McWhirter, E. H., Ozer, E. J., & Rapa, L. J. (2015). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of Critical Consciousness. *The Urban Review*, 47(5), 809–823. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-015-0336-7>
- Faragher, J. M. (2017). “And the lonely voice of youth cries ‘what is truth?’”: western history and the national narrative. *Western Historical Quarterly*, 48(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1093/whq/whw196>
- Fensterwald, J. (2019). Criticism of draft curriculum for ethnic studies in California intensifies. *EdSource*. <https://edsources.org/2019/criticism-of-draft-curriculum-for-ethnic-studies-in-california-intensifies/616355>
- Fensterwald, J. (2021). California becomes first state to require ethnic studies in high school. *EdSource*. <https://edsources.org/2021/california-becomes-first-state-to-require-ethnic-studies-in-high-school/662219>
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). Continuum.
- Heberle, A. E., Rapa, L. J., & Farago, F. (2020). Critical consciousness in children and adolescents: A systematic review, critical assessment, and recommendations for future research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(6), 525–551. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000230>
- Hoang, Q. (2012). Ethnic Studies: The cyclical fight, conquer, and struggle. *Vermont Connection*, 33, 59–66.
- Jemal A. (2017). Critical consciousness: A critique and critical analysis of the literature. *The Urban Review*, 49(4), 602–626. <https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0411-3>

- Kymlicka, W. (2013). Neoliberal multiculturalism? In P. A. Hall & M. Lamont (Eds.), *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era* (pp. 99-124). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 465-491.
- Lye, C. (2010). US ethnic studies and Third Worldism, 40 years later. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 11(2), 188–193. <https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/14649371003616128>
- Loewen, J. W. (2018). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. The New Press.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- McKnight, D. (2015). *Schooling, the Puritan imperative, and the molding of an American national identity: Education's "errand into the wilderness"*. Routledge.
- Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (6th ed). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Nojan, S. (2020). Why ethnic studies? Building critical consciousness among middle school students. *Middle School Journal*, 51(2), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2019.1709259>
- Orr, R., Sharratt, K., & Iqbal, M. (2019). American Indian erasure and the logic of elimination: An experimental study of depiction and support for resources and rights for tribes. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 45(11), 2078–2099. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1421061>

- Padgett, G. (2015). A critical case study of selected U.S. history textbooks from a tribal critical race theory perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(3), 153–171.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2106>
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41477769>
- Pollard, B. (2020). Exploring the impact of critical pedagogy: Do preservice teachers develop critical consciousness when taught by critical pedagogues? *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 20(3), 74–100. <https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v20i3.466>
- Sacramento, J. (2019). Critical collective consciousness: Ethnic Studies teachers and professional development. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 52(2/3), 167–184.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2019.1647806>
- Sanchez, T. R. (2007). “The depiction of Native Americans in recent (1991–2004) secondary American history textbooks: How far have we come?” *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 40,311–320. <https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10665680701493565>
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Schneider, K., Allender, D., Berta-Avila, M., Borunda, R., Castro, G., Murray, A., & Porter, J. (2019). More Than Missions: Native Californians and Allies Changing the Story of California History. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 58(3), 58-77.
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A659376872/AONE?u=anon~8e6ce528&sid=googleScholar&xid=4a2e5cfa>

- Shih, Y.-H. (2018). Some critical thinking on Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and its educational implications. *International Education Studies*, 11(9), p. 64-70.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v11n9p64>
- Sleeter, C. (2004). Standardizing imperialism. *Rethinking Schools*.
 19(1), <https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/standardizing-imperialism/>
- Sleeter, C. E. (2011). The academic and social value of Ethnic Studies: A research review. In National Education Association Research Department. National Education Association Research Department. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED521869>
- Sleeter, C. (2018). Multicultural education past, present, and future: Struggles for dialogue and power-sharing. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 20(1), 5–20.
- Stanton, C. R. (2014). The Curricular Indian Agent: Discursive Colonization and Indigenous (Dys)Agency in U.S. History Textbooks. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(5), 649–676.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12064>
- Steffoff, R., & Zinn, H. (2009). *A young people's history of the United States* (Seven Stories Press 1st ed). Seven Stories Press.
- Styres S. (2019.) Literacies of land: Decolonizing narratives, storying, and literature. In Smith, L. T., Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (Eds.). *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view* (pp. 24-37). Routledge.
- Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2015). Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research. *The Urban Review*, 47(1), 104–125. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-014-0280-y>

- Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R. Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2019) What is Ethnic Studies Pedagogy? In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st ed. pp. 20-25). Rethinking Schools.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.
- <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>
- Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernández, R. A. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 29(1), 18.
- Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2019.) Series editors' introduction. In Smith, L. T., Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (Eds.). *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view* (pp. x-xxi). Routledge.
- Valdez, C. (2019.) Challenging colonialism: Ethnic Studies in elementary social studies. In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st ed. Pp. 153-156). Rethinking Schools.
- View, J. L., Kaul, A., & Guiden, A. (2019). We are not even Post-Colonial yet!: Archetypes in the master narrative of U.S. history textbooks. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, 16(1), 1–13.
- Waters, Tony. (2007). The sacred and the profane in American history curriculum. *The Social Studies*, 98, 246-250.
- Winfield, A. G. (2007). *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. Peter Lang.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4),387-409.

Wolfe, P. (2016). *Traces of history: Elementary structures of race*. Verso.

Zavala, M., Cuauhtin, R. T., Au, W., & Sleeter, C. (2019.) The movement for Ethnic Studies. In

R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (1st edition, pp. 9-11). Rethinking Schools.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Teacher Information

1. What grade do you currently teach?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. Are you currently covering Native American history and topics?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - Not currently, but in the past

The Curriculum

1. I feel well prepared to teach students about Native American culture and history
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
2. The curriculum I use honestly engages with the history of Indigenous people in America.
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
3. Native American perspectives are integrated in the curriculum.
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
4. There has been a positive shift in how Native Americans are currently portrayed in the curriculum versus in the past.
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
5. There have been improvements in textbook treatment of Native American culture and history within the past 10 years.
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
6. My current teaching materials and content accurately represent Native Americans in the history of the United States.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

7. Who selects social studies and history teaching materials at your school & how are they selected?
8. Please provide an example of a unit or lesson you have taught in the past that is related to Native American history or culture.
9. If you would like you could also upload an example unit or lesson. (The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Your email is not part of your response.)
10. Considering how the curriculum addresses Native American history, what is missing or could be improved about this curriculum?

Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements

1. In teaching, a neutral point of view is not possible.
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
2. Teaching is a political act.
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
3. Educators should aim to teach with social justice in mind.
 Yes
 No
 Unsure

4. Educators should use multiple learning and teaching approaches.

Yes

No

Unsure

5. My identity influences how I teach

Yes

No

Unsure

Contact information

1. Would you be willing to participate in a 45-60 minute follow up interview? If so, please leave your name and email address in the box provided.

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What are some of your core values?
2. What beliefs drive your teaching? How would you describe your teaching practices?
3. Do you have any experience or interest in teaching for social justice methods?
4. Please share your understanding of critical pedagogy. Do you consider yourself a critical pedagogue?
5. Please reflect on how/if your identity (e.g., race, gender, social class among other factors) impacts your relationships with your current or past students. Share what you feel comfortable sharing (after a brief reflection time)
6. There will be discussions about the content and standards depending on the grade level taught. For example, a question to a fourth-grade teacher would be an open-ended question and discussion of the California mission project. Questions will involve asking if the teacher has or has in the past had students build their own mission projects. Another example would be discussing how teachers navigate a unit on California “

Appendix C: List of Figures

Figure 1 *In Teaching, a neutral point of view is not possible*

5 responses

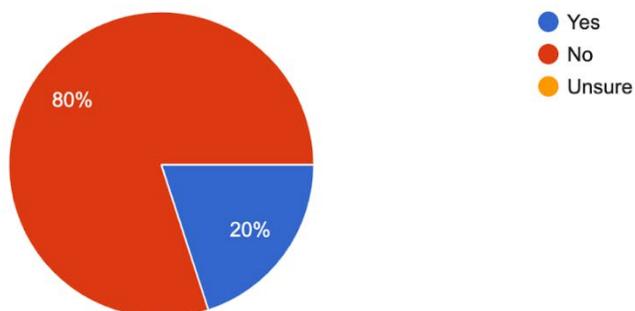


Figure 2 *Teaching is a political act*

5 responses

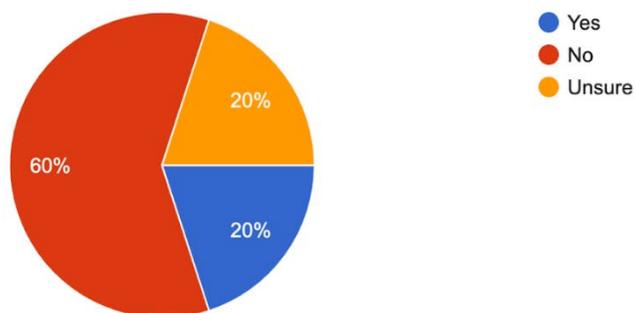


Figure 3 *Educators should aim to teach with social justice in mind*

5 responses

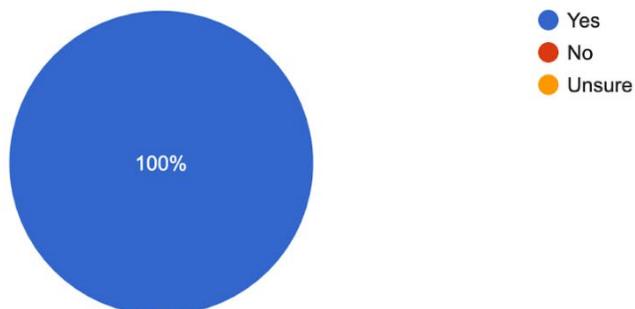


Figure 4 *My identity influences how I teach*

5 responses

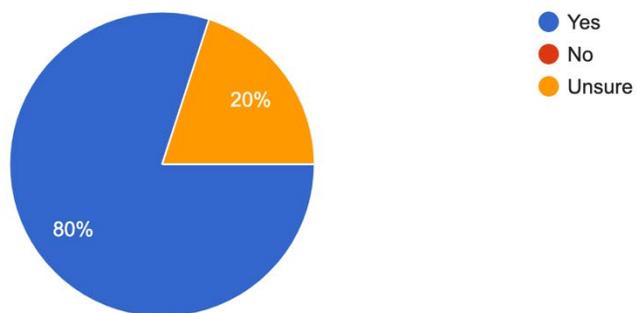


Figure 5 *Educators should use multiple learning and teaching approaches*

5 responses

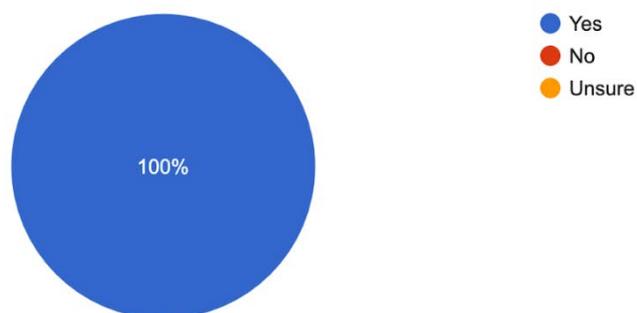


Figure 6 *The curriculum I use honestly engages with the history of Indigenous people in America*

5 responses

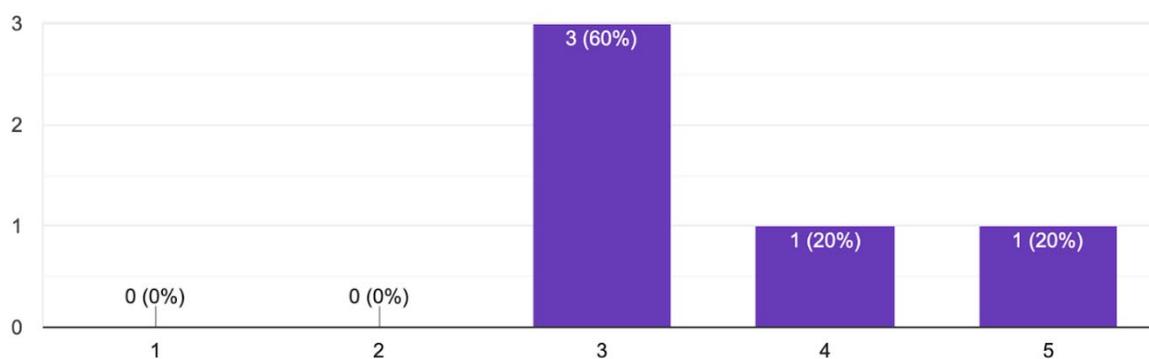


Figure 7 *Native American perspectives are integrated in the curriculum*

5 responses

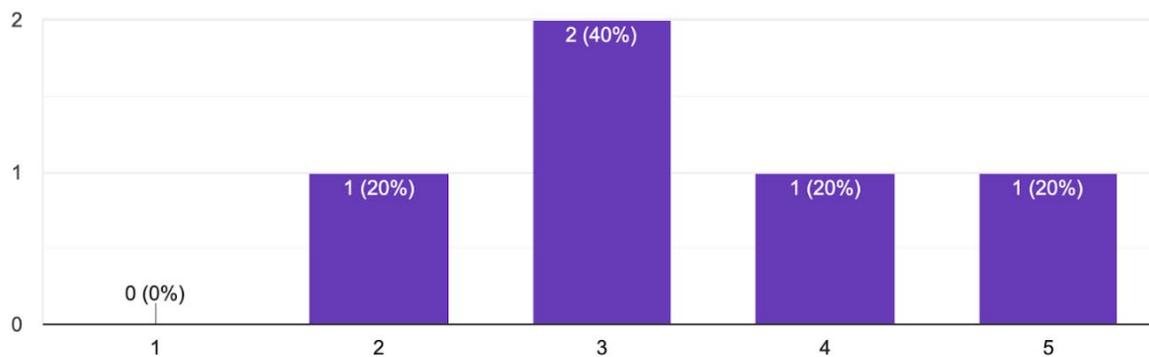


Figure 8 *I feel well prepared to teach students about Native American culture and history*

5 responses

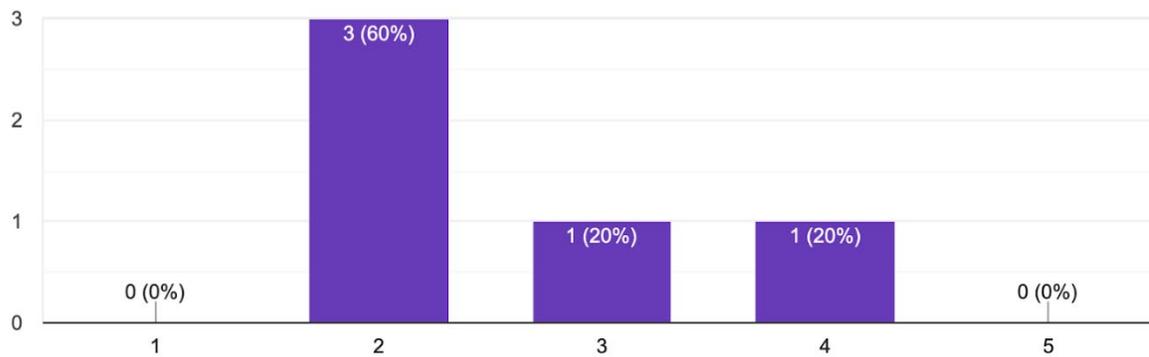


Figure 9 *There has been a positive shift in how Native Americans are currently portrayed in the curriculum versus in the past*

5 responses

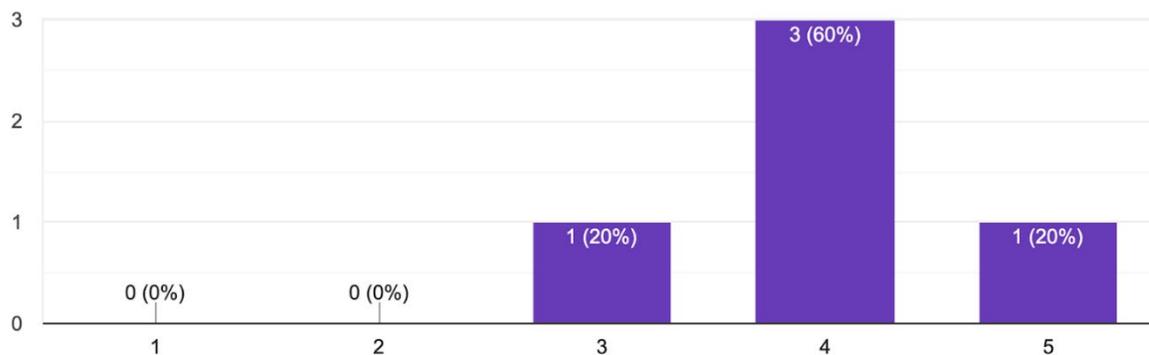


Figure 10 *There has been improvements in textbook treatment of Native American culture and history within the past 10 years*

5 responses

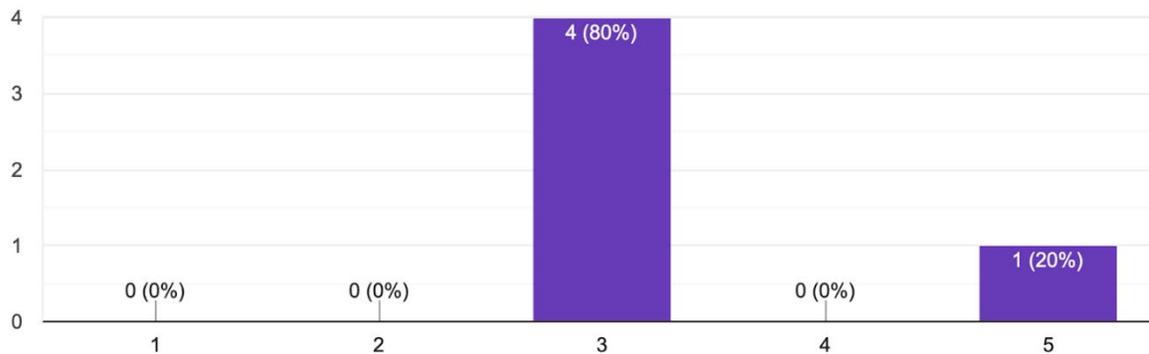
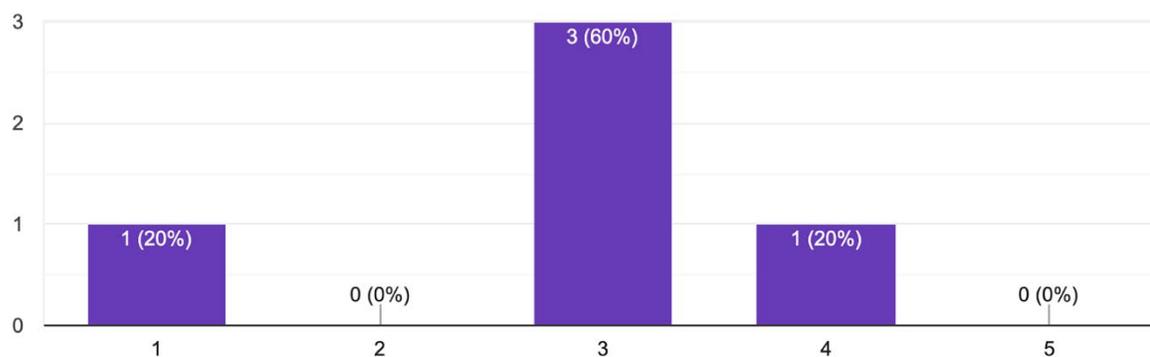


Figure 11 My current teaching materials and content accurately represent Native Americans in the history of the United States

5 responses



Appendix D: Informed Consent

1. I understand that I am being asked to participate as a participant in a research study designed to examine how elementary teachers can be better prepared to teach topics of settler colonialism and Native American history in a developmentally appropriate manner. This research is part of Erich Schottstaedt Master's Thesis research project at Dominican University of California, California. This research project is being supervised by Dr. Katie Lewis, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Dominican University of California.
2. I understand that my participation in this research will involve participating in a Google Form survey. In addition, participants might be asked to participate in a 45–60-minute follow-up interview. The survey and interview will include questions about teachers' pedagogical philosophy, Native American representation in the content/curriculum & standards, feelings of preparation, teacher identity, teaching practices, and demographic questions.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.
4. I have been made aware that the interviews will be audio recorded. All personal references and identifying information will be eliminated when these recordings are transcribed, and all participants will be identified by pseudonym; the master list for these pseudonyms will be kept by Erich Schottstaedt in a password-protected file, separate from the transcripts. Coded transcripts will be seen only by the researcher and his faculty advisors. One year after the completion of the research, all written and recorded materials will be destroyed.
5. I am aware that all study participants will be furnished with a written summary of the relevant findings and conclusions of this project. Such results will not be available until May 1, 2022.

6. I understand that I will be discussing topics of a personal nature and that I may refuse to answer any question that causes me distress or seems an invasion of my privacy. I may elect to stop the interview at any time.
7. I understand that my participation involves no physical risk, but may involve some psychological discomfort, given the nature of the topic being addressed in the interview. If I experience any problems or serious distress due to my participation, Erich Schottstaedt will provide contact information for mental health services.
8. I understand that if I have any further questions about the study, I may contact Mr. Schottstaedt at _____ or his research supervisor, Dr. Lewis, at _____. If I have further questions or comments about participation in this study, I may contact the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRBPHP), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHP Office by calling and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at _____, or by writing to the IRBPHP, Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.
9. All procedures related to this research project have been satisfactorily explained to me prior to my voluntary election to participate.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE ABOVE EXPLANATION REGARDING THIS STUDY. I VOLUNTARILY GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE. A COPY OF THIS FORM HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME FOR MY FUTURE REFERENCE.

Signature

Date