

San Francisco Unified School District has taken a number of deliberate steps when designing, piloting, re-designing, and implementing at a wide scale a high-school level ethnic studies course.

In 2010, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) passed a school board policy that introduced a course on ethnic studies at the high school level. With the support of this policy, the district hired a San Francisco (SF) State University professor as a consultant to help teachers develop a curriculum, and then piloted the initial curriculum across five schools. During the pilot, implementation and access to the course was dictated by school-by-school policies and school leaders identified teachers to teach the course. At all schools piloting the course, it was offered only in 9th grade and was a year long course. At three schools, students with Early Warning Indicators (EWI) suggesting they were at risk of dropping out of high school were assigned to the Ethnic Studies course. In some cases, teachers teaching the Ethnic Studies course had advanced degrees or extensive backgrounds in teaching the topic.

By December 2014, SFUSD administrators had research evidence from a study by Stanford University (Dee and Penner, 2017) on the three schools that used the EWI to place students in the pilot course was having a positive impact on students' attendance and achievement. With this evidence giving administrators confidence in the potential of the course, San Francisco's school board passed another board policy stipulating that the course be offered at all high schools across San Francisco.

Starting in 2015, San Francisco's Humanities Department set out to prepare the previously piloted Ethnic Studies curriculum for wide scale implementation across multiple high schools, and to make the course accessible to all interested students. The Humanities Department set out to co-construct the curriculum with the teachers who originally piloted the course. The leaders of the Humanities Department met with teachers who had been teaching the course in the school district's process for re-designing the Ethnic Studies curriculum. The Humanities team met in after school meetings with these teachers, with the teachers being paid extended hours for their time. During these meetings, the Humanities Department validated the work done to date on the course and outlined the need to make the curriculum and professional development such that it would support teachers in the district who did not have expertise in this area of study. The meeting drew out many of the areas that needed to be looked at as the curriculum would be revised to meet State and district criteria related to curricula.

Then, the SFUSD Humanities Department put out an application to all high school Humanities teachers to apply to be a group of teachers working together to review and revise the curriculum. The teachers that applied may or may not have intended to teach the Ethnic Studies course in the future, and came from multiple disciplines within Humanities (including librarians, arts teachers). The teachers would need to commit to working three days in the spring (with substitute teacher costs covered) and 10 days in the summer (where teachers were paid for their extended hours). The district hired a Teacher on Special Assignment (TSA) who was one of the original pilot teachers of the Ethnic Studies curriculum to lead the curriculum re-design. During the curriculum re-design, San Francisco State partners were invited to be thought partners.

The first challenge with re-designing the Ethnic Studies curriculum was the original design by SF State was more oriented towards a university level syllabus, and did not follow a scope and sequence outlined by most K-12 curriculums. The second challenge was designing a curriculum that could reflect the cross cutting values that the original set of pilot teachers embodied through their extensive expertise, but new teachers may not bring to the course. (See Table 1 below for a description of these values). Finally, another challenge was the concern voiced by various groups – African American communities, LGBTQ communities, Latino communities, and others –that their communities would not be properly represented within the content of the curriculum. The curriculum needed to be designed to give students opportunities for numerous explorations of multiple perspectives, which can be a challenging balancing act. The work done by the group during the summer resulted in the creation of a course overview, designated units of study and agreements related to unit and lesson planning. The group worked on the inclusion of the Standards for History-Social Studies, the CCSS for literacy in subject areas, the ELD standards and attention to the universal design for learning guidelines to ensure that the course was both rigorous and that it was designed to address the needs of all students. The summer work also included attention to the importance of having teachers delve more deeply into the history of Ethnic Studies as a course of study, through extensive readings, invited experts in the field and professional discussions. As part of the pedagogical framework for the course, teachers were involved the examination of the dispositions needed in order to create an inviting, engaging and safe educational environment for students to examine and explore their history and that of others. SF State partners were brought in during this period so that the teachers would benefit from their expertise as they highlighted the history of Ethnic Studies in the US and shared their knowledge about areas of focus within Ethnic Studies courses.

By Fall 2015, high schools had identified teachers to implement the Ethnic Studies curriculum across the San Francisco high schools. The Ethnic Studies Teacher on Special Assignment along with some of the educators who participated in the development of the curricula, provided professional development for all Ethnic Studies teachers at the beginning of the new school year. As mentioned below, the curriculum included a set of values, which acted as the entry point for teachers to engage students with culturally responsive practices different than those employed in other courses. This pedagogical approach requires that teachers begin the course by honoring and validating student identity, voice, experience and funds of knowledge. The curriculum also included six curriculum units and lesson plans, with suggested resources and materials for teachers to access. (See Table 1 for key concepts of each of those units.) The professional development started with a one-day overview of the curriculum. This one-day event introduced the course conceptually and provided some exemplars and work samples to help teachers understand the curriculum.

Throughout the 2015-2016 school year, the Humanities Department's TSA met monthly with this group of teachers, and also worked with teachers one-on-one at their individual sites, with teachers who were new to teaching the course given priority. The Humanities Department surveyed the teachers twice a year to get input on their use of the curriculum and the supports they were receiving from the

district to implement this new course. The Humanities Department also created a protocol for teachers to propose new ideas for the curriculum and a survey of students to understand their experience and inform changes to the course. Generally, the Humanities team found that the scope of the work allowed the district to provide support to teachers with professional development on the curriculum, and to also introduced some teachers to an approach to designing lessons with attention to standards and lesson objectives in mind that were directly focused on student learning outcomes.

The goal was to make the Ethnic Studies course accessible to all students interested in taking the course therefore, the district allowed schools to have some variation in how the course was implemented across sites. The schools received an allocation of a 0.2 FTE, most of the teachers who taught the course were already teaching at the high school, and some schools used their site budgets to offer additional periods of the course. The course was designed to be year-long and taught at 9th grade, but at least one school offered the course as a semester course, and another offered the course at 10th grade.

Table 1: SFUSD Ethnic Studies Course Overview, 2015

| | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | Unit 4 | Unit 5 | Unit 6 |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Cross-Cutting Values | Love & Respect | | Hope | Community | Solidarity | Self-Determination |
| Key Concept | Identity & Narrative | Systems & Power | Hegemony & Counter-Hegemony | Humanization & Dehumanization | Causality & Agency | Transformation & Change |