

Dr. Emma E. Holmes Faculty Fellow 2021
Carolina Valdez, PhD

This project allowed me to expand my support in developing Ethnic Studies teachers. I developed and presented professional development on the creation of ethnic studies curriculum, as well as the interrogation of created curriculum to include ethnic studies approaches.

Impact on my practice

I was able to partner with Sandra Cisneros Learning Academy (SCLA) and ABC Unified for this project—both experiences were insightful in different ways. ABC allowed me to learn of the various factors pushing for and against ethnic studies. In my meetings with the assistant superintendent of academic services and director of curriculum they shared the various tensions, how they navigated them, and what they needed from me. In ABC, I worked with a group of 15 teachers to provide PD and leadership in their development of ethnic studies curriculum. The teachers shared their concern of push back from parents and we were able to develop an “Ethnic Studies Tool Kit” of responses to common misconceptions, so teachers feel prepared to host a townhall at the start of the year. I will include this tool kit in the foundations course I teach in the ethnic studies cohort. At SCLA, I met with the entire faculty to support teachers in critically examining the new language arts curriculum they adopted to embed ethnic studies approaches within the units. This experience was different in that this school has already implemented ethnic studies pedagogy for years and the teachers are very knowledgeable on the practice, but still needed support interrogating new curriculum. This allowed me to familiarize myself with new curriculum entering the field, which I will incorporate in the learning activities I use in my foundations course.

Impact on the College of Education

My work with ABC allowed me to build a relationship with administrators in the district, such as director of student teaching placements. In my meeting with her, she welcomed the idea of hosting teacher candidates from the ethnic studies cohort and was especially excited to host men of color in the group, as they are looking to diversify their elementary teachers and would hope to hire them after they complete the program. SCLA currently hosts teacher candidates from EDEL, but this partnership allowed me to work closely with teachers and identify additional teachers to serve as mentor teachers in the ethnic studies cohort.

Renewed engagement in the field

The experience with ABC gave me a great deal of insight on the behind the scenes work in schools, which I hope to use to continue to build with other districts in the county. I am excited to continue to build relationships and strengthen partnerships with Santa Ana and Anaheim districts. My work with SCLA also motivated me to connect to classrooms

directly to stay abreast of latest curriculum, and I am excited to continue to offer my services to local districts to critically interrogate their curriculums.

Met stated goals

My goals were to learn about current school climate, curriculum, and needs to align our coursework within the ethnic studies cohort.

- 1) School Climate & needs: I gained insightful knowledge of the political climate and inner workings of local districts, which I can share with teacher candidates. This led to the creation of the “Tool Kit,” which I will embed in my coursework.
- 2) Curriculum: I worked intimately with new language arts curriculum, keeping myself abreast of new curriculum in the field. I will embed this curriculum in learning activities in my coursework.