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Curricular Approaches to Developing Positive Interethnic Relations

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This article examines whether and in what ways curricular approaches can be helpful in building positive interethnic relations in a large, ethnically diverse high school. Through this case study of curricular reform, the author documents four curricular approaches teacher leaders used to explicitly address issues of race and ethnicity and explores the impact of these approaches on student learning. By tracing the process of curricular change, the case illuminates how teacher leaders and administrators created the conditions for these curricular reforms to be sustainable.

> I think people forget that kids, even at this level—even though we don't consider ourselves kids, but really we are—just like kids tease each other in elementary school, why's he wearing that or he looks funny, it's the same thing in high school. It really is. I think because people don't know, they don't understand, they just act out in that way without knowing the consequences, the reasons, the justifications, or anything. So considering the fact that we don't learn very much [about race relations], race relations are pretty good, considering. But things would be a lot better if we had more education. (An African American high school student)

The young woman who made this comment points to the need, even in schools that have purportedly good relations among different ethnic groups, for more focused attention to race and ethnicity in the regular educational program. This school, normally considered peaceful, had recently experienced an incident in which an immigrant student from India was beaten after getting off the school bus by several African American and Pacific Islander American students. The beating occurred in full view of the bus driver, who did not stop or intervene. The student quoted above was surprised by the incident and deemed it tragic because "that's the only type of experience [the beaten student is] going to take with him." As a result of this negative impression, she claimed, "that's what he's going to think all African Americans are like. He's not going to see the good aspects, the people who do know, or the [Black] people who do understand." Like many of her peers, she wished more time could be devoted in the high school curriculum to addressing such issues.

In this article, I examine whether and in what ways curricular approaches can be helpful in building positive interethnic relations in a large, ethnically diverse high school. I begin by looking at what other researchers and theorists have said about the curricular reforms associated with multicultural education and about improving interethnic relations.

I then provide some contextual information about Ohlone High School,[1] the research site that informs this article, and describe four curricular approaches to interethnic relations used in this school. My goals in this article are (a) to examine what these approaches offer students in terms of providing an enriched learning experience that prepares them for participation in a more democratic, respectful society; and (b) to better understand how teacher leaders and administrators can create the conditions that allow such curricular reforms to be sustainable.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THEORY AND RESEARCH

A substantial body of research and theory has examined how schools can better meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds. In practice, however, the notion of meeting the needs of increasingly diverse student populations is often oversimplified, as if everyone agreed on their nature and extent. Depending on how educators define these needs, different claims can be made about the strategies or approaches required to meet them.

Most educators agree, at least in theory, that one need is for all students to have access to academic success. The literature on how schools can meet this need, especially for students who traditionally have been underserved, is replete with recommendations. Among the most prominent currently is the critique of tracking—the sorting of students by presumed ability—and the concurrent movement to "de-track" by doing away with ability grouping (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1998; Lipman, 1998; Mehan, 1996; Noguera, 1995; Oakes, 1985). Although de-tracking holds much promise as a way to address entrenched problems of unequal access to high-level curricula, it is limited in that it addresses only the need for equal access to academic success. It does not question whether the basic purpose of formal education might go further than simply preparing students of all backgrounds for success in mainstream society. Ladson–Billings (1995) suggests considering whether schools might serve additional purposes. Should schools, for example, play a role in nurturing students' sense of cultural or ethnic identity? Should they assist in developing positive human relations? Should they teach students to be critical, to question and challenge inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate? These are value questions and cannot be easily settled by research. However, they are important because they underlie many of the debates that take place daily in school board meetings, district offices, and meetings between site administrators or teachers and parents.

Depending on one's concept of the purpose of schooling, different answers emerge. In the 1990s and early 2000, national and state policies in the United States increasingly have pushed for districts and schools to develop higher academic standards and greater accountability at the local level. California's new Academic Performance Index (API), for example, rates schools based on students' performance on the Stanford 9 test. The school rating is then used to compare schools. As Garcia (2000) has pointed out, however, the use of the Stanford 9 data for this purpose is flawed for a number of reasons, making the resulting comparison of schools academically suspect and inequitable. Policies such as these, which emphasize a very narrowly defined concept of academic success to the exclusion of other priorities, can extract a heavy cost. As Ladson–Billings (1995) contends,

> Among the scholarship that has examined academically successful African American students, a disturbing finding has emerged—the students' academic success came at the expense of their cultural and psychosocial well being. . . . Culturally relevant pedagogy must provide a way for students to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically. (pp. 475–476)

[1]To protect the confidentiality of sensitive information shared, a pseudonym has been used for the case study high school, and individual identities have been concealed.

This lack of attention to cultural and psychosocial well being has powerful ramifications for the United States and other diverse nations because it involves a process of assimilation in which groups that differ from the dominant culture group must give up their cultural characteristics and sense of group identity in order to "fit " into the mainstream. According to Banks (1997): "This approach to shaping a unified nation state has created anomie and alienation and has deprived individuals and groups of some of the most important ways in which people satisfy their needs for symbolic meaning and community" (p. 8). Banks goes on to argue that "the political and cultural oppression of some groups has caused them to focus on their own particular needs and goals" rather than those of the larger community (p. 8). To achieve a healthy national identity, however, individuals and groups need to feel they have a real stake and place in the life of a nation.

If schools are to play a serious educational role in developing positive human relations in a diverse world, then a grounded theory of race/ethnic relations is needed to inform practice at the local level. Until recently, race relations in the United States have been framed primarily as a "Black–White" issue, in which the particular experiences of Asian/Pacific Islander Americans (APIAs, for short), Hispanic Americans, and other groups were subsumed. More recent theorizing about race relations is beginning to consider that different ethnic minority groups in this nation do not all experience identical phenomena. APIAs, for example, are subject to a different kind of racism than are African Americans because of the prevailing perception that APIAs do "too well" in U.S. society. As Espiritu and Omi (2000) contend, however, among APIAs, the impact of racism is experienced not so much as direct discrimination but as invisibility, marginality, and neglect. Groups such as American Indians, Hispanic Americans, and APIA's raise issues outside the prevailing Black–White paradigm such as those related to sovereignty rights, immigration and nativism, language maintenance and revitalization, and ethnic rather than racial concerns. This complexity demands acknowledgment that race is a social rather than a biological construct (American Anthropological Association, 1998), and that ethnicity plays an equally important role in one's perceptions and treatment of different groups and individuals. Within the APIA category, for example, people of Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Native Hawaiian ancestry have very different histories, cultures, and experiences in the United States. Furthermore, Rosaldo (1989) points out that earlier theorizing about culture, ethnicity, and race tended to "fix" these categories in time and space. He argues that since the late 20th century, cultural, ethnic, and racial categories have been in rapid and continuing motion, "marked by borrowing and lending across porous national and cultural boundaries that are saturated with inequality, power, and domination" (p. 217).

These forms of complexity must be acknowledged and taken into account in developing educational reforms designed to create more culturally responsive, equitable, and socially just schools. As part of this larger reform agenda, many educators have called for schools to develop multicultural curricula. A great deal of variation has been found in models that specify what these curricula should include and how they should be structured. Some multicultural theorists have focused on describing this variation. Banks (1997), for example, posits four different "levels of integration of ethnic content" (p. 26). These are:

(1) the contributions approach, which "focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements";

(2) the additive approach, in which "content, concepts and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure";

(3) the transformation approach, in which the "structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups"; and

(4) the social action approach, in which "students make decisions on important social
    issues and take actions to help solve them" (p. 26).
Grant and Sleeter (1989) describe a slightly different framework of approaches to multicul-
tural education that includes:
(1) the mainstreaming approach, which focuses on exceptional or culturally different
    students with the goal of helping them acquire cognitive skills and knowledge of the
    traditional curriculum;
(2) the human relations approach, which focuses on attitudes and feelings students have
    about themselves and each other;
(3) the single-group studies approach, which provides an in-depth study of specific groups
    and a critical examination of their oppression;
(4) the multicultural education approach, which advocates reforms consistent with the
    goals of social justice; and
(5) the multicultural and social reconstructionist approach, which extends the multicul-
    tural education approach "by educating students to be analytical and critical thinkers"
    who can take action toward greater equity in race, class, gender, and handicap" (p. 54).
The levels or stages described by Banks and by Grant and Sleeter, though they may
appear discrete, are in practice often mixed, thus increasing the likelihood that a variety
of approaches may be used at different times in the same school and even in the same
classroom. Furthermore, though both frameworks are helpful in assessing the depth of
change in curricula and schools, they do not explain the processes through which such
changes occur.

Schools are notoriously slow to change, and curriculum reform is often short-lived.
As Kliebard (1988) asserts, "Innovations that win the battle of words prove indigestible
within the supremely stable structure of schooling and are ultimately regurgitated. Only
when the significance of institutional culture is recognized as a vital factor in curriculum
reform can change be sustained" (p. 32). Thus, it is critical to examine how curricular
innovations in interethnic relations are embedded within the institutional culture of the
school.

Acknowledging that it is often difficult for teachers to merge multicultural content
into the curriculum when they themselves have little knowledge of the communities in
which their students are immersed, González et al. (1995) view connecting with students'
families and communities as fundamental to creating culturally responsive curricula.
They posit a funds-of-knowledge approach, in which students' households are viewed
as repositories of knowledge and practices that can inform and enrich school curricula
in many ways. To access these funds of knowledge, they encourage teachers to use
ethnographic techniques to interview family members and observe family activities in
students' homes and communities. Such techniques, they contend, can reveal how practices
such as candy making, carpentry, and small business operation, among others, provide
opportunities for teachers to invite parents to share their knowledge in the classroom.
They also help teachers draw lessons about measurement, mathematics, economics, and
other subjects from these practices.

Another difficulty that arises in addressing issues of ethnicity and race within the
curriculum, particularly when the more "high-level" approaches are used (i.e., Banks's
levels three and four and Grant and Sleeter's levels three through five), is that teachers
often encounter a variety of forms of student resistance as well as resistance from other
faculty members. Tatum (1992) has identified several sources of this resistance, including
the idea of "race as a taboo topic" (p. 5), "the myth of meritocracy" (p. 6), and the "denial
of any personal connection to racism" (p. 8). She presents racial identity development
theory, as articulated by Cross (1978) for African Americans and Helms (1990) for European

Americans, as a framework for understanding and explaining these forms of resistance and for building strategies that counter them. She further identifies the following strategies for learning about ethnicity or race as most useful in the classroom:

(1) the creation of a safe classroom atmosphere by establishing clear guidelines for discussion;
(2) the creation of opportunities for self-generated knowledge;
(3) the provision of an appropriate developmental model that students can use as a framework for understanding their own process;
(4) the exploration of strategies to empower students as change agents.

Tatum's work discusses the resistance teachers will undoubtedly encounter when they begin to talk about issues of race and ethnicity with their students and suggests some strategies for addressing it. As Kliebard (1988) notes, however, any curriculum reform offered as more than a transitory solution must address this resistance as it manifests beyond the classroom itself. Thus, the following case study of curricular reform shows how the teachers at one school sought to address issues of race and ethnicity within and outside their school explicitly in a number of ways. It further examines how the larger structures of the school and society both supported and hindered that process.

METHODS

This article draws on data from the Leading for Diversity Research Project, which used a qualitative case study design to document proactive leadership approaches to addressing interethnic conflict and building positive interethnic relations in 21 schools (Henze, 2001). This article is based on an analysis of approximately half the data from one high school.

Setting

The student population at Ohlone High School, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, presented a demographic mix that reflects what many believe all of California will look like in a few years (see Table I). It was a very large school, with approximately 4,100

TABLE I
Key Demographic Information, Ohlone High School

STUDENTS[a]	
● Ethnic Breakdown:	24.52% Hispanic American; 22.74% Asian American; 20.59% European American; 17.42% Filipino American; 13.53% African American; 0.98% Asian/Pacific Islander American; 0.22% American Indian/Alaskan Native
● Socioeconomic Status (SES):	40% Low-SES
● Limited-English-Proficient (LEP):	30% LEP (64 home languages represented)
STAFF[a]	
● Ethnic Breakdown[b]:	65.8% European American; 13.5% Hispanic American; 8.6% Asian/Pacific Islander American; 6.3% African American; 5.4% Filipino American; 0.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native
● Certified Staff:	210 (including 8 administrators, 6 counselors, and 1 activities director)
● Classified Staff[c]:	145

[a]Compiled from January 1997 school data and from the October 1997 California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS).
[b]Ethnicity data are for certified staff only.
[c]Paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, etc.

students, located in an area that was experiencing recent and rapid population growth due to its proximity to the so-called Silicon Valley, the heartland of the nation's computer industry. In addition to its large size and ethnic diversity, Ohlone was unusual in that it was the only high school in the district. This was to some degree a conscious strategy on the part of the superintendent to maintain a diverse student population:

> One of the reasons [for Ohlone's diversity], and one of the things that I'm probably more responsible for is the fact that we have one high school. And a lot of that had to do, in my mind, with maintaining the diversity. If we were to build a second high school, this would have become predominantly Hispanic and the other side would be predominantly Asian.

The increasingly urban suburb surrounding Ohlone sits on land that was once agricultural, and a large proportion of the Hispanic American students attending Ohlone were the children or grandchildren of farmworkers. Although Ohlone's drawing area does not present any extreme income disparities, it does include a range that encompasses working-class to upper-middle-class families.

Participants

The data for this article were obtained from interviews with 41 students, 14 teachers, and 5 administrators at Ohlone. The students identified as African American, Latino, Filipino, Punjabi, Bosnian, Pakistani, Vietnamese, European American, and mixed ethnicity. They were drawn from the school's courses on leadership, its ethnic-focus classes and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) II class, student clubs, and special education classes. The teachers were selected primarily because they taught or were involved in the development of classes that addressed interethnic relations topics. Supplemental data were obtained from my observations of 15 classes and 21 meetings and other events at the school, in which students and staff spoke up about their views on race and ethnic relations.

Data Collection

I collected data over a period of three semesters with the assistance of a co-researcher, Ernest Walker. One or both of us visited Ohlone approximately once a week. We used semistructured interview protocols designed specifically for different role groups (e.g., students, teachers, administrators) and observed classes as well as other activity settings such as student club meetings, teacher collaboration meetings, leadership team meetings, and special events. Interviews were taped and transcribed, and narrative notes were written about each observation.

Data Analysis

The data were coded using the coding scheme employed in the larger Leading for Diversity Research Project study. We used QSR Nud.ist, a software program for qualitative analysis, to electronically code and retrieve information related to particular topics (e.g., curricular approaches) or from certain sources (e.g., students). The data were further analyzed to identify salient patterns and themes using methods described by Erickson (1986), Goetz and LeCompte (1984), and Miles and Huberman (1994).

FINDINGS: A POWERFUL CASE OF CURRICULAR REFORM

Though the larger Leading for Diversity Project study, of which this case is a part, documented many approaches to addressing interethnic relations, the most comprehensive curricular efforts found were those at Ohlone High School (Henze et al., 1999). The principal confirmed this focus when he noted, "If there's anything we do [in regards to

ethnic relations], we try to do it *inside* the classrooms." Another feature that many of those interviewed mentioned as unusual was that, given the diversity of the school's student population, Ohlone had experienced far less racial or ethnic tension than had other nearby high schools. However, veteran teachers pointed out that this was not always the case, recalling times in the 1970s when their school was considered a violent campus.

Two unique structural features at Ohlone provided the foundation for the school's curricular efforts in interethnic relations. One of these was the coring of Ohlone's language arts and social studies classes. All of its 10th-grade classes and about half the 11th-grade classes were cored.[2] The other key structural feature was the school's faculty collaboration groups. Several years earlier, the district had established a policy that all schools would provide faculty with two hours a week of collaboration time on Wednesday mornings. Classes on that day were shortened and additional time added on the other four days so that students did not lose overall instructional time. Many teacher collaboration groups were formed as a result and yielded a variety of teacher-initiated projects. One of these, called the Multicultural Collaboration Group, focused primarily on the development of multicultural and ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogy. Participation in this group ranged from 15 to 20 teachers, all but 1 of whom were teachers of color. Many of the curricular innovations discussed below grew out of the work of this group.

Four distinct curricular approaches to addressing interethnic relations were evident at Ohlone. An overview of these four approaches is provided in Table II.

Ohlone's Ethnic-focus Classes[3]

Ethnic-focus classes had the longest history among the four curricular approaches employed at Ohlone High. The first such class, African American History, started in 1974. Initially a year-long course, it was later split into a first-semester history course and a second-semester course called "The African American Experience." "Mexican American Heritage and Contemporary Hispanic America" came next. Until 1995, when the Asian American Studies elective was added, these were the school's only ethnic-focus courses. The most recent course to join this group was "Filipino American Heritage," new in 1997.

A purpose shared by all these courses was that of addressing gaps in the regular social science curriculum, which largely viewed the history of Europeans and European Americans as the only history to be studied. The ethnic-focus courses were also intended to create a personal connection between the school and diverse groups of students—that is, to provide an intellectual space in which, as one Ohlone teacher put it, students, teachers, and others could talk about "community issues and things that don't get touched on in any other course." The principal also saw virtue in having a class in which students of similar ethnic backgrounds could experience "a commonness and bonding and comfort to them where they can talk about the issues of race." Despite the singular ethnic focus of each class, Project researchers also observed considerable attention being paid in all of them to interethnic relations. For example, the teacher of the "Filipino American Heritage" class was observed having a discussion with his students about why students of various ethnic groups on the campus self-segregated.

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[2] At Ohlone, coring meant that for each section of English II offered (required for all 10th graders) there was a companion World History class. The teachers of both classes shared the same 60 or so students and planned the courses together to achieve more continuity and depth.

[3] I use the term "ethnic-focus class" here rather than the more common "ethnic studies" in order to make a distinction between courses where the focus is on a particular ethnic or racial group, and courses such as the introductory one in which ethnicity, race, and gender are the foci and many different ethnic groups may be included as topics.

TABLE II
Overview of the Four Curricular Approaches Employed at Ohlone High School

COURSE ATTRIBUTES	APPROACHES TAKEN			
	Ethnic-Focus	Infusion	Introductory	Individual Teachers'
PRIMARY EMPHASIS	History and culture of one racial/ethnic group; some intergroup issues also	English and history (World and U.S.) through multiple perspectives	Overview of concepts and issues related to ethnicity and gender	Depended on course
STATUS	Elective; could be used to meet minimum eligibility requirements for the University of California system	Required	Pilot; elective or substitute for Lifeskills requirement	Depended on course
GRADE LEVEL(S) AFFECTED	Mostly 11th and 12th, though open to all	10th and 11th	9th	9th through 12th
DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS	Primarily one racial/ethnic group	Multiple races/ ethnicities	Multiple races/ ethnicities	Depended on course; usually multiple groups
EXTENT OF RESULTING STRUCTURAL CHANGE	As elective, little structural change; as part of multicultural graduation requirement (from 1999 on), major structural change	Affected all 10th-grade language arts and social studies teachers, and some 11th grade teachers	As elective, little structural change; as part of multicultural graduation requirement (from 1999 on), major structural change	None

All of the school's ethnic-focus courses were offered as electives during the time this study was being conducted, and most tended to be taken by 11th and 12th graders. Each course could be used to meet minimum eligibility requirements for the University of California system. Approximately 20% of Ohlone's 4,100 students took one or more of the courses at some point during their time at the school. Students taking the courses generally identified as members of the ethnic group that was the subject of study. From time to time, students of other ethnicities enrolled in these courses as well. The courses were taught by teachers whose ethnic backgrounds were consistent with the ethnic focus of the course and whose life experience, interests, and academic training provided them with sufficient background knowledge to develop substantive and challenging curriculum content. Most were affiliated with the Multicultural Collaboration Group.

Although elective ethnic-focus courses such as those offered at Ohlone create a space in the curriculum where students can take an entire course focusing on their ethnic history, the curriculum outside the courses can remain unchanged unless further interventions

are introduced. Schools are always in flux, however, and the status of Ohlone's ethnic-focus classes changed shortly after the study was completed. A 1999 follow-up interview with two Ohlone teachers, revealed an interesting new development: A proposal to make five units of multicultural studies a graduation requirement had made its way rather quickly through the school's Social Studies Department, its Leadership Council, the faculty at large, and the district school board. The proposal became district policy in 1999. As a result, all students graduating from the class of 2007 onward will have to fulfill a one-semester, multicultural studies requirement by choosing from a menu of several approved courses. This requirement represents a major structural change because all students will be exposed to ethnic studies curricula.

The Infusion of Interethnic Relations Topics into Required Courses

As noted earlier, all of the 10th-grade language arts and social studies teachers were cored, along with about half the 11th-grade teachers. Along with this coring of teachers across disciplines, the Language Arts Department attempted to modify the literature selections for grades 9 through 12 so that they reflected perspectives of a diverse range of U.S. authors and experiences. Thus, for example, in 11th grade, the school's English III and U.S. History courses were cored. The study of the Viet Nam War was greatly enriched because the English teacher coordinated with the history class teacher. Students were reading literature about Viet Nam while they were studying the war in their history class. According to a teacher,

> One of the things I thought was effective was looking at the Viet Nam War from both American and Vietnamese perspectives. The kids read eight different titles from a variety of perspectives on the war. . . . We're looking at power, we're looking at the definition of the 'other' and how the other plays with laws and how people deal with one another. For instance, kids have been looking at justice—social, economic, and racial justice issues in the American literature course.

The infusion approach differed from the ethnic-focus approach in several respects. First, the core courses were required, so they reached more students. Second, the students themselves tended to be from diverse groups and the teachers, because they were drawn from the general faculty at the school, tended to be European American. Third, the infusion of multicultural perspectives represented a major change in the "business as usual" of schooling. One of the shortcomings of the infusion approach at Ohlone was the inadequate amount of time allotted to cover the additional content; as a result, the dominant Eurocentric view of history presented in the standard texts prevailed.

The "Introduction to Ethnic and Women's Studies" Pilot Course

The "Introduction to Ethnic and Women's Studies" pilot course was, at the time of the study, the newest curricular approach being tried at Ohlone. The course was modeled after a similar course offered in another Bay Area high school. Its purpose, as stated in the original proposal, was "to promote respect, tolerance, empathy, and understanding of gender, cultures, ethnicities, and races." The course's first two sections were launched as a pilot effort in spring and fall 1998. They were taught by two teachers from the Multicultural Collaboration Group, who had worked with others from that group throughout the previous year and summer to propose the course and develop its curriculum. The students who took the course, like those in the required infusion courses, represented the full range of diversity at Ohlone, with the exception of the school's ESL learners, whose needs could not be met unless a special section of the course was taught bilingually or through a sheltered approach.

The methodology of the Introduction to Ethnic and Women's Studies course differed from the infusion approach in that its entire curriculum was devoted to ethnicity and

gender issues, whereas in the infusion courses, traditional English and history content from a Eurocentric perspective had to be covered. Due to its initial status as an elective and pilot course, the course's structural effect on the school was limited to providing another course offering similar to the ethnic-focus classes. In fall 1998, however, this introductory course was approved as a regular elective, and in 1999 it became part of the menu of courses that students could take to satisfy the new multicultural education requirement.

Individual Teachers' Approaches

In addition to the three curricular approaches described above—each of which was structural in that each involved support that extended beyond one individual teacher—it is important to note that individual teachers also integrated topics related to interethnic relations into their course curricula without benefit of having structural supports in place. A notable example was the school's forensics teacher, who frequently assigned or encouraged students to develop their oral interpretation and debate skills with regard to current topics such as affirmative action, immigration policy, and so forth. This African American teacher also served as an important male role model for many African American and other students at Ohlone. In his words,

> When I look at forensics and I look at what it is and who it was cut out for—forensics was cut out for predominantly White kids. Black kids and kids of color are not supposed to do the kinds of things that they do. And I just think that for us to be able to have the kinds of success [that I and Ohlone's students of color] do—when we go into tournaments, we just thoroughly *obliterate* the competition! It shows that when you work with a kid, despite the color, and you do it well, that these kids will go to any limit to be successful. And that's what has happened.

Students who participated in this teacher's forensics classes were powerfully affected by both the teacher and the subject matter. In addition to exposing his students to debates and arguments about controversial topics relating to race or ethnicity, he and the school's forensics team also traveled extensively together, often staying overnight in places that were much less diverse than the Ohlone community. According to an African American female student:

> Our coach makes a point to pair you up with not always your best friends, maybe somebody you don't know. And so that's part of the way I came to know different people, mainly through being roommates. Like I have a friend who's Chinese, and she taught me a few Mandarin words here and there.

Additionally, two of the teachers who taught the school's Lifeskills course took it upon themselves to integrate interethnic relations topics within existing courses. Lifeskills was a relatively recent, semester-long, required course for incoming 9th graders and any other new students. Intended to cover such areas as sex education, drug issues, and decision making, the course, as outlined, did not include any specific attention to ethnicity or race issues. Among the five teachers who were teaching the course, two felt strongly that ethnicity and race issues needed to be included and covered in a more substantial way. They both created whole units on the topic lasting from four to six class periods, yet to do this one teacher explained that she had to "cut down some week-long units to two or three days to make room for this."

In addition to these examples, a number of other teachers told Project researchers that they too address interethnic relations issues "when they come up in class." Most indicated, however, that they do not teach whole units on the topic, nor did they plan for it in their course designs.

Themes Among Different Curricular Approaches

In reflecting on these different curricular approaches, a continuum of intentionality and structural change becomes apparent, with Ohlone's infusion courses and its multicultural education requirement representing the most significant transformations of school structures. Concurrently, the school's elective courses in ethnic studies can be seen as representing a middle ground of some institutional change, and its individual teachers' strategies of addressing relational issues seen as representing an important but ad hoc approach, dependent entirely on the teacher's willingness and interest in engaging students in discussion of ethnicity and race relations. At one point during this study (in fall 1998), the Multicultural Collaboration Group was actively seeking to form a new department of Ethnic Studies, but this proposal was put on hold due to numerous institutional barriers. Had the group succeeded, this measure would have represented an even more deeply structural change than those noted above.

In addition to the continuum of structural change, our analysis of interview and observational data revealed three recurring themes that further characterized the ethnic-focus, infusion, and introduction to ethnic and women's studies approaches. These themes were critical thinking, collaboration, and conflict.

Critical Thinking. Observations of Ohlone's ethnic-focus, infusion, and introductory ethnic and women's studies classes provided many examples of teachers and students practicing and honing their critical thinking skills. This is unusual, given that other researchers have documented high incidences of drill and rote-learning methods in classes and schools serving predominantly low-income and minority students, where students are given very low-level cognitive tasks and are not expected to do more (Lipman, 1998; Noguera, 1995). In many instances, educators in such school settings tend to think of human and interethnic relations topics as too "touchy-feely" or nonacademic. However, the classes we observed did not fit this representation at all. Instead, they required students to grapple with complex ideas in the study of race, culture, ethnicity, and intergroup relations. As a Native American member of the Multicultural Collaboration Group pointed out, "We don't want to just touch diversity; we want to approach it academically. . . . We find things in common epistemologically; we feel we have a definite discipline." His comments were borne out by Project researchers' observations of his class, as the following vignette illustrates:

> It is close to the beginning of the semester. In the introductory pilot class on ethnic and women's studies, about 30 diverse 9th-grade students are having a discussion about what they learned from an earlier group assignment in which they shared with each other "what they would like the class to know about their group, ethnicity, race, or culture that contradicts how 'America sees you all.'" An African American girl says, "I did Caucasians, and I learned that they feel they shouldn't be blamed for what their ancestors did. It's not their fault." Another student says he learned that White people don't like being called "White." "It's like an insult."
> [The teacher responded:] "What would you call them?"
> [Student:] "By name, or Caucasian."
> [Teacher:] "Any other possibilities?"
> [Student:] "People"
> [Another student:] "European"
> [Teacher:] "Or like, African Americans, we can call them European Americans, or Euro-Americans."
>   [The teacher] draws a quick graphic on the board to illustrate the two parts of these combination terms. "The first part—'Euro'—shows the roots, and the second part, 'American,' shows the nationality." [He later pointed out that the term "Native American" is an exception to this pattern.] An African American girl then asks, referring to a girl who is Irish, Native American, Italian, and German, "How could your Grandma be racist if you're mixed with all that stuff? Did she have a bad experience or something?" The other girl isn't sure; the African American girl persists: "If she dislikes all those races, that means she's disliking herself and her family."

At this point, the teacher says something about there being a difference between being uncomfortable and developing hatred. "We're afraid of a lot of things: We're afraid of the dark, afraid of the boogey man, but we don't have to keep those fears." As he speaks, he places on the overhead projector a list of terms: "racism," "institutional racism," "hate crime," "stereotype," "ethnicity," "race," "nationality," "culture," "intolerance," and others. He circles "ethnicity," "nationality," and "race." He turns to the students and says they are going to do an activity with index cards to better understand the three terms he has circled. On the index cards, he asks them to write the three words vertically on the left side. Then he asks them to write in next to each word how they identify themselves.

As the students start to work on identifying their nationalities, there is a lot of buzzing and questions. Many students don't know what to write. A boy who says he was born in Taiwan says his grandfather always told him he is not Taiwanese; he's Chinese. He doesn't understand why. A girl from India talks about the caste system there and how she had a conflict with her mom about marriage to someone of a different caste. The teacher points out that he's trying to "build on who we have in the room." He discusses the difference between country and ethnicity, giving the example of a "student in class last year who was of Mexican nationality, but had red hair, blue eyes, light skin. In this country, people didn't perceive him as Mexican." He also asks, rhetorically, "How many Black Americans know what their ethnicity is? Not many. . . . People's identity and their ethnicity get broken down in these situations where we can't trace our history because of slavery or other forms of oppression." He also provides students with a list of the racial categories on the census form, [noting that they] are to try and fit themselves in, even though he acknowledges that many people will feel their race is not represented here.

[Part of the point of these class activities and discussion is to have students see the arbitrariness and poor fit of racial and some ethnic categories.] The students continue with many questions: Can a person have two nationalities? What "race" are Egyptians and Pacific Islanders? What about Afghans and Indians? As the class ends, the teacher suggests students talk with their parents about their questions of nationality and ethnicity, and [states that] they will continue the discussion the next day. He also says, "Maybe last but not least, we should keep in mind that we're all human beings."

Collaboration. A second theme inherent in these course's approaches was that their content and instruction were marked by a high degree of collaboration among teachers. This was a direct result of the district's provision of paid collaboration time for teachers and of the intentional coring of the language arts and social studies courses. Both of these efforts marked structural changes that provided a climate conducive to collaboration.

During observations of collaboration time among these teachers, Project researchers frequently saw them sharing curricular and instructional ideas and resources with each other, pooling resources to meet shared goals, and generally supporting each other in the implementation of their courses and in addressing institutional and administrative barriers. Conversely, the time teachers spent to plan the cored classes was not usually covered by collaboration time; for this, they either used their allotted preparation times or did their planning outside the regular school day. Notwithstanding, the cored teachers noted the following benefits that resulted from their collaboration with statements such as the following:

"The learning is not as fragmented."

"There's more thinking going on than I've ever seen since I've been teaching."

"I think the kids see us as a team, they don't look at us as separate teachers per se, and I think that influences the belief that history is not separate from English and vice versa. We're looking at a whole series of things from a lot of different perspectives."

Conflict. The development and maintenance of curricula that focused on ethnicity and interethnic relations engendered much debate and conflict among the faculty at Ohlone, mirroring the controversy that has marked national discussions about Eurocentric versus multicultural curriculum. The resulting conflict took place in many forms, including controversy over what literature students should read in the language arts curriculum; who among the staff was qualified to teach content about non-White groups; whether the teachers in the Multicultural Collaboration Group were "separatist" or not; whether the school should profess a "colorblind" approach to viewing students' racial/ethnic backgrounds; and whether the administration was adequately supportive of the above-

detailed curricular reforms. The highly charged national context of racial/ethnic relations before, during, and since the time of the study meant that the school's ethnic-focus classes were not viewed as "neutral" or objective" in the way that mainstream educators view courses on U.S. history or world history. Of course, the very fallacy that a U.S. history or any other core course is neutral was the pinch point that fueled much of the critique on both sides. Claims by strongly Eurocentric teachers that ethnic studies curricula were biased or subversive quickly led the mislabeling of the teachers who taught those curricula as the same. Interviews with a wide range of faculty members indicated that strong, negative feelings existed on both sides. Although the majority of faculty claimed to be supportive of ethnic studies courses, some were openly hostile. A teacher in the collaboration group expressed her frustration with this conflict as follows:

> The issue, however you choose to refer to it, has not been academic enough to be respected. We're totally invisible and the efforts so far have been window dressing, pacification, or used when something has to be done. Teachers and students of color are frustrated—we're talking, but people aren't hearing us. We have the ability to teach what it means to be an ethnic American. Being in this collaborative group takes away my invisibility. I become somebody. Other people could teach it, but we bring an insider perspective. People are taking it as if we're taking something away from them, but we want to *offer* something.

Student Perspectives on Curricular Approaches to Developing Positive Interethnic Relations

The curricular approaches addressing interethnic relations at Ohlone were designed to have a positive impact on students learning about themselves, their ethnic background and history, and their relations with others. Among the 41 students interviewed, about half had experienced one or more of the attempted curricular approaches. The following sections first discuss the perspectives of students who did not experience any of these curricular approaches, followed by a more in-depth examination of the perspectives of students who did.

Students Who Had Not Experienced the Curricular Approach. Interviews with students who had not experienced a curricular approach to interethnic relations revealed that these students did not consider the curriculum as a vehicle for addressing racial/ethnic issues or building positive intergroup relations. Many of these students were aware that something about these issues was missing from their education, but when asked what they thought might improve interethnic relations, they tended to recommend more assemblies and other special events outside the regular curriculum. Some blamed themselves and other students for not being more tolerant, as evidenced by the following Filipino American student's comments:

> When it comes to the whole thing about [interethnic] unity and applying it, . . . I really don't see that. . . . I think they've [referring to teachers and administrators] pretty much done all they can. It's really up to the students, 'cause it's not the faculty who's going to be there when we're having a conflict . . . it's us, the students . . . We need to be more aware, more open minded."

A possible interpretation of this statement is that from the perspective of this category of students, curriculum is more or less immutable—that is, a given that cannot change. Kluckhohn's (1949) analogy, commenting on the implicit nature of culture, that a fish would be the last creature to discover water may be appropriate in this regard. These students may simply see the curriculum as part of the environment that surrounds students from kindergarten onward; thus, the idea that teachers can change it to serve a variety of purposes may not be apparent until these students experience such changes personally.

Students Who Had Experienced the Curricular Approach. If curricular interventions that address interethnic relations are to command long-term support, a crucial point to consider is whether or not these interventions have any impact on students. Does learning about

the history and background of one's own ethnic group have any impact on one's relationships with people of other ethnicities? Does attention to interethnic relations in coursework help students become more respectful of others? Do students who have such experiences better understand the value of seeing issues from a variety of ethnic perspectives? Unlike the students who had no experience with a curricular approach to interethnic relations, those who had been exposed to such curricula had an awareness that the traditional curriculum was the product of human decisions about what to teach and that important pieces of the human story were missing. Their exposure to curricular approaches with an interethnic relations focus, however brief, had made them realize that the school curriculum is not immutable, and that it is a potential, if little tapped, channel for learning about societal issues that concern them. Students in the school's ethnic-focus classes consistently noted that they had learned things about their own ethnic group that they would not otherwise have known. Although initially this learning may seem to have little to do with interethnic relations, Banks (1997) presents good evidence that a strong grounding in the history of one's own people can give students a point of departure that enables them to be more open to learning about others.

> [The ethnic-focus curricula] taught me more about my culture. . . . The only thing I knew about our culture was the food and the dance and stuff. I never knew about my roots and the history of my culture. (A Mexican American student)

Almost all the students who had experienced curricular approaches to interethnic relations indicated that this exposure had increased their understanding of different cultures, ethnicities, or races, and helped them to break down their own stereotypes about other groups and develop greater respect for others. One White male student recommended that students should be encouraged "to join those classes [ethnic-focus] and they'll learn more about this person and that person, and have respect for them." An Hispanic American student added, "I think we wouldn't have a lot of racism if we had more open discussion about this." According to an African American female student who had experienced the curricular approach to improving interethnic relations:

> [Schools] need to teach kids about different races, because I feel if they knew about different races, they would understand why things go as they go. . . . You need to educate people because people don't like what they don't understand. So if they make more classes like this African American History class. . . There's only Black kids in here—there's one Chinese girl, but she has some African American in her—but there should be kids of other cultures, so they can understand why all this is.

Several students reported that their exposure to this approach had helped them see commonalities among the experiences of ethnic groups that they had previously viewed as completely separate and unrelated. For example, a Filipino American female student stated,

> In Asian American studies, we learn about other cultures besides Filipinos, and we see the similarities between the Asian community as one, instead of just Filipinos are here, Chinese are here . . . and how each one faced some of the same things. 'Cause most people think . . . we go through this and we go through that, and then no one knows we're all facing the same thing.

An African American female student shared a similar viewpoint:

> People have this mentality where, if we don't talk about it [racial/ethnic issues], maybe it will just go away. If we talk about color, then people are going to see color, and they're gonna lash out. That's not true because when you understand culture, or when you can understand people's race, you can appreciate it. . . . Like, oh, you know, the same thing happened with African Americans. Or when you understand Latino culture, you can say you have something in common. But if you don't know, all you think is, "They're Mexican, and I'm African American." That's all you think.

Other students reported that their exposure led them to value the opportunity to view events and issues from different perspectives—an opportunity not normally encountered in their other classes:

The history book is just written from one perspective, but in the reader [in the infusion curriculum] we get different perspectives. (A Chinese American female student)

I had two great teachers for English and for history who were both very multicultural, so we read lots of different types of literature, and we learned what you're technically not supposed to learn—you know, the minority perspective on race.... So that was nice to hear, instead of just the standard text where everything is beautiful and worked out just the way they wanted. We heard things that they didn't want us to know or wouldn't print. (A European American female student)

In some cases, the students indicated that their ethnic-focus or interethnic relations classes and curricula provided them with forums for discussions of ethnicity that helped them not only to understand themselves and their own backgrounds better but also to see the diversity within their own ethnic groups. A glimpse of this understanding is revealed in the following excerpt from a discussion between the interviewer and a Filipino American male student:

Interviewer: What about, you're in this class, Filipino American Heritage, ... do you think it helps you understand not only yourself as Filipina American but also other people?
Student: Yeah, 'cause the Philippines wasn't just Filipinos 'cause there was also Spanish, Japanese, Americans. They imperialized. That's why if you go back there, there's a whole bunch of other cultures. There's Muslim, Catholic, etc. It's pretty diverse in culture and religion, not so much in color.

Further evidence of this growth in understanding is revealed in the comments of a European American Ohlone teacher who integrated interethnic relations topics into her regular curriculum:

We had a debate about interracial dating, and it was so amazing to me the different opinions. It wasn't at all what I expected it to be, like, who in the class I expected to be more open-minded, and who I expected would say "No, you should just stay with your own culture." They [the students] split, all different racial groups split down the middle. Like, African American students were debating with other African American students; they had completely different opinions. The Asian students split too. The White students split.... And [all the students] had really well thought-out, valuable opinions. None of them said the superficial, like, "Oh, we should just preserve our own race." I mean, that's not superficial, but none of them said just the stereotypical lines that you hear. They were all real deep. Like, they were talking situational [like], what happens in my family when I bring this person home with me?

Why Curricular Interventions Provide Powerful Learning Experiences

Given that the students and faculty we interviewed made many comments indicating that other approaches at the school (ethnic assemblies, student clubs, etc.) were less than effective at building positive interethnic relations, it is worth exploring what made the curricular approaches at Ohlone more powerful in terms of student learning.[4] There appear to be several reasons. The most obvious is related to time. Most "serious" learning expected of students in schools does not occur in a day or an hour; it occurs over extended periods of time: an hour a day, five days a week, a whole semester. This suggests that any other topic areas considered serious and important should be given equivalent amounts of time. The extended learning time provided in the curricular approaches at Ohlone ensured that students did not simply have a "one-shot" exposure to the complex issues of race and ethnicity.

Another reason, likewise related to the time factor, is that curricular approaches often involve relationship building, especially when cooperative grouping strategies are used

[4]Although these approaches were viewed as less than effective in promoting positive interethnic relations, few of our informants indicated that they would do away with them entirely. Ethnic-focus assemblies seemed to serve a celebratory and recognition function that was important in the development of the school culture, even though they were also linked to competition among ethnic groups and shallow interpretations of culture. Ethnic-focus clubs also served an important function in planning these events and providing a social base for students.

to mix students of different backgrounds. Curricular approaches to developing positive interethnic relations have the potential to build in to students' everyday routine encounters with "the other." For example, a Punjabi American student commented:

> You talk to [persons of other groups] and get to know them, eventually you see that there are positive sides of people and other groups that aren't of your kind. So you hear past the stereotypes and all the negative stuff you hear about them.

Another student also praised the approach, noting, "In the classroom, we have a lot of interaction time where we get to do group activities and we get to know one another, and I think that helps a lot [with interethnic relations]." Notably, the opportunity to build relationships in classes through cooperative grouping assignments is not limited to classes that focus on interethnic relations topics. It can occur in any mixed class that uses grouping strategies effectively, such as was the case at Ohlone.

A third reason why Ohlone's curricular approaches for developing positive interethnic relations were powerful is tied to the teaching process itself and to the knowledge that teachers can and must bring to classrooms serving diverse groups of students. Not just any teacher can teach on these topics. In the earlier vignette drawn from the Introduction to Ethnic and Women's Studies class discussion of race, ethnicity, and nationality, it was clear that the teacher had specialized knowledge and skill in this area. Many teachers and other adults are unfamiliar with the distinctions among these concepts and use all four concepts synonymously. One reason why the classes observed by Project researchers were successful in terms of student learning is that the teachers knew their subject matter well and were good teachers. They knew how to organize instruction, how to draw out students' own experiences and relate those experiences to the new information, and how to facilitate a productive class discussion, among other skills. Like any good teaching, this made students feel they were learning something of substance. The teacher's engagement processes drew them in and made them want to learn and know more.

Finally, the clear intentionality in these curricular approaches was evident. Diversity was not just something to address if or when it "came up"; rather, the ethnic/interethnic studies courses were structured so that the topic had to come up daily. In the larger national culture of schooling in the United States, many students have gotten the message that they should be "colorblind" to race and ethnicity and that frank analysis and discussion of these subjects to be avoided at all costs. Curricular approaches, such as those employed at Ohlone High, that directly address interethnic relations counter this tendency, sending a message to students that these topics are worthy of serious curricular attention.

DISCUSSION: CREATING SYSTEMIC CURRICULAR REFORM—THE ROLES OF TEACHER LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

If curricular approaches to developing positive interethnic relations are to become institutionalized and sustainable, a better and more widespread understanding of the larger systemic context that encourages or hinders such efforts is necessary. Key to this systemic understanding is examining the roles of teacher leaders and administrators in specific change efforts. At Ohlone, the teachers were largely responsible for initiating new elective courses or integrating multicultural content into existing courses, acting through their departments or through the Multicultural Collaboration Group as a point of departure. To get new courses approved, they engaged in a fairly routine bureaucratic process. They submitted written proposals, attended one or more meetings with school and district administrators, and worked with school departments to ensure that the new classes fit with existing offerings (or, if a new course was to be nondepartmental, teachers obtained approval from the Ohlone Leadership Council). Teachers wrote the proposals, developed

curricula for the courses, revised those curricula, taught the courses, and carried proposals for further developments to the necessary levels of administration for approval. None of this could have been accomplished, however, without the support of the school administration and the approval of district administrators. The existence of standard procedures for all new courses made this process relatively smooth, provided one agreed with the bureaucratic procedures and followed the prescribed steps.

In choosing literature for a more multicultural perspective in required English classes, however, the existence of standard procedures or guidelines did little to ensure a smooth change process. The choice of appropriate literature representing non-European American perspectives was fraught with difficulties. Teachers of color who wanted to participate in the decision making felt they had much to offer in terms of recommended literature and materials on particular ethnic groups, but some of them left the departmental meetings with the sense that their opinions and choices were devalued or dismissed by other teachers. Several European American teachers, on the other hand, felt they had "tried their best" to encourage teachers of color to participate in the process, but that those teachers had not provided materials in a timely enough manner to be useful within their particular set of deadlines. As a result, some European American English teachers had gone ahead and developed units without the input of their colleagues of color. The hurt and mistrust resulting from this controversy on both sides was not resolved by the time this study was conducted, even though a couple of years had already passed. One attempt at a mediated dialogue with a union representative had been tried, and it essentially failed. Ohlone's administrators were aware of the situation and of the negative effect it had on collegiality, but they did nothing to intervene, even though many faculty believed that the administrators should have done something.

In fall 1997, some of the school's faculty of color decided to take on the issue of staff collegiality by planning an in-service workshop on the topic. They felt frustrated that the administration was not taking on a strong role in planning and implementing the staff development and schoolwide events related to multiculturalism that were unfolding. Two very different sets of expectations were held regarding what administrators should do to show their support for this effort. The teachers expected at least one administrator to attend the planning meetings and be visibly and actively involved. The principal, a European American male who had himself attended school in this district, had a different perspective:

> I never did think it was my role to *do* the work. My role was to help them organize the work, give them time and opportunity to plan the work, give them resources and compensation for doing the work. I really believe that's my role. And maybe I need to advocate publicly better for them. And I would see that as my role as well . . . but there was always such a tension in my communication with them that I don't know if I was able to communicate that. . . . I really see my role as kind of a fulcrum between the opposing views and trying to get a sense of how to reach some level of equilibrium so that change can move forward. And the hardest thing is . . . just to try to juggle . . . everybody's thing is the most important thing you should be doing.

Confusion and frustration over appropriate roles was also evident in an earlier effort to establish a department of ethnic studies at Ohlone. Although this idea was later put on hold, the process itself was instructive. For example, when teachers in the Multicultural Collaboration Group initiated discussions with school administrators about the possibility of creating such a department, administrators quickly pointed out that there was no precedent for doing so. No new departments had been created at the school in decades, they claimed, and that effort would present an enormous structural change, particularly if it involved required courses. As a result, the administrators were extremely cautious in their advice to the planning group, raising many issues and barriers that they felt needed to be considered and addressed. They stated first of all that the teachers' proposal

did not take into account the number of FTE (full-time equivalent) teachers and class sections needed to merit a new department. The smallest department at Ohlone, they noted, had five FTEs and at least 25 class sections; single electives like Asian American Studies could not possibly generate enough student enrollment to justify offering 25 sections. The only way to increase the number of section offerings for such courses would be to classify them as required courses, which would automatically establish about 20 sections of each. The administrators warned, however, that new required courses would be competing against existing electives such as keyboarding and career technologies. Moreover, the teachers of those elective courses would be threatened by loss of their jobs if fewer students enrolled in their classes.

Another point administrators raised was that the rationale for an ethnic studies department included both pedagogical reasons, with which they did not argue, and political reasons, with which they did. Supporters of the proposed new department argued that it would empower teachers of color who were currently marginalized in their existing departments. Such teachers would have a greater voice and greater control over decisions about curriculum and instruction, they claimed, and would also have stronger representation in the larger structures of the school, given that every department is represented in most school-based decision making. The administrators countered that this was an unusual reason for creating a department, although they agreed that the current situation was not empowering for teachers of color. Nonetheless, they contended that it would be difficult to sell the department idea to other faculty members based on a partly political rationale.

These and other barriers raised by administrators were viewed by some as an unwillingness to push for an ethnic studies department at Ohlone. Although none of the administrators openly voiced any substantive disagreement with the idea, an underlying current of distrust developed among some of the teachers who favored creating this department. In 1998, the teachers in the collaboration group and other supporters of the department proposal changed their strategy. Having seen that the proposal was not likely to be successful, the teachers turned their focus toward the creation of a graduation requirement in multicultural studies. This idea, they envisioned, would not only increase student enrollment in ethnic-focus and interethnic relations courses (possibly contributing to an ethnic studies department argument later on) but also address gaps in the standard curriculum in a more comprehensive way. It also would address the concerns of students, parents, and teachers about the need for greater respect across lines of difference. The proposal had to be approved by the school's social studies department, the leadership council, and the district board. It passed each of these steps and became district policy in 1999.[5] Subsequently, all Ohlone students in the graduating class of 2007 onward must complete a one-semester, five-unit multicultural studies course selected from a menu of approved options. In an era of increasing pressure on schools to raise standardized achievement scores, this requirement represents a major victory for those who believe schools must attend to identity and social issues as well as academic success. It also demonstrates the power of teacher collaboration and leadership to effect systemic change.

The graduation requirement victory must also be viewed as the result of a long history of efforts to imbue an awareness of race, ethnicity, and interethnic relations into the curriculum, beginning as early as 1974 with the creation of the school's first Black History course. What transformed those early efforts into a more comprehensive program of schoolwide change was the formation of teacher collaboration groups that were supported by the school's administration. Lipka and his colleagues (1998), note a similar "slow,

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[5]This event took place after the data collection for the study was completed; therefore, detailed information about any resistance or problems teachers encountered during the approval process cannot be provided.

deliberate process of teachers becoming more empowered" in their study of teacher collaboration in a Yup'ik Eskimo context (p. 199). As they conclude, "by forming their own groups and by considering questions of teaching, learning, methodology, and school community relationship," teachers create "an excellent forum for beginning a process of school change and reform" (p. 199).

It is equally important to point out, however, that as teacher leaders move up the ladder of structural change and away from established policies and practices into new territory, their interlocking roles with school administrators become more strained. Proposing and creating a new elective course at Ohlone did not create deep structural change—students and parents still had a choice, no other teachers' jobs were threatened, and, apart from the course itself, business proceeded as usual in the rest of the school. Developing better collegial relations among staff was higher on the ladder of structural change because it involved the whole staff. In this case, it also involved a very controversial and difficult topic: interethnic relations among faculty. Proposing a new required course and proposing a new department represented the most deeply structural changes because they involved every student (and every parent), they had a potential negative impact on other teachers' jobs, and, unlike a staff development event, they were permanent changes that would affect the school from the point of change onward.

Barriers to the Quest for Systemic Reform

As noted in the foregoing discussion, teacher leaders at Ohlone encountered a number of barriers in their efforts to institutionalize curricular reforms addressing interethnic relations. First, time-related issues were often brought up by both teachers and students. When electives were the only way for students to experience interethnic relations curricula, only a small percentage of the student population took advantage of the opportunity because most did not have the time to take more electives. On the other hand, when teachers tried to infuse ethnic and multicultural content into the regular core classes, the time available to "squeeze in" this additional content became a major issue. Second, the lack of a college entrance requirement also functioned as a barrier. Given that U.S. colleges typically do not require students to have any high school coursework in interethnic relations or ethnic studies, little incentive existed for Ohlone's college-bound students to take the elective ethnic studies courses, apart from their own interest. Third, many teachers at Ohlone and elsewhere feared that talking about race/ethnicity in the classroom would lead to an uncomfortable discussion and possibly conflict, so they preferred to avoid such discussions altogether.

Job security issues functioned as a fourth barrier. Any move to create new requirements at Ohlone threatened existing electives because students would have fewer time slots on their schedule to fit in electives. Fifth, a lack of faculty cohesion, especially polarization along racial/ethnic lines, made it very difficult for the school's teachers to move forward as a faculty in making any curricular changes related to interethnic relations. Contributing to this lack of cohesion was a perception among some teachers of color that they lacked a significant voice in school decision making. Finally, teacher leaders and administrators alike lacked a "road map" for structural changes. Proposals that did not readily fit into existing policies and procedures presented an opportunity for conflicts over roles, relationships, and responsibilities at Ohlone. Statements such as "It's never been done before" thus became another barrier for those seeking structural change in the curriculum.

CONCLUSION: CREATING AND SUSTAINING CONDITIONS FOR CURRICULUM REFORMS GEARED TOWARD DEVELOPING POSITIVE INTERETHNIC RELATIONS

The curricular approaches discussed in this article offer much promise in terms of student learning about interethnic relations. If, as Ladson–Billings (1995) argues, schools

are to become places where students not only achieve academically but also become cognizant about their own ethnic and cultural identity, learn how to respect and appreciate those who are different, and learn to question and challenge the inequities that surround them, then curricular approaches such as these are an important step in transforming schools toward that end. However, in taking on this challenge, administrators and teacher leaders need to be aware of the barriers they may face and be prepared to address them. Above all, they need to heed Kliebard's (1988) advice that in order to sustain curricular reforms, educators must recognize institutional culture as a vital factor. Curricular reforms that attempt more structural kinds of change such as establishing a required course, infusing different perspectives into existing required courses, or forming new departments will quickly fall short of their goals if careful attention is not paid to bringing the institutional culture along.

The case of Ohlone High School provides a number of lessons on how to support and sustain curricular reform efforts that address interethnic relations. First, the school or the district needs to provide support for teachers to meet regularly in collaborative groups for the purpose of curricular reform. This structure was the cornerstone of the development of far-reaching curricular changes at Ohlone, and it also led to the emergence of strong teacher leadership to carry the initial changes forward. Additionally, the school's Multicultural Collaboration Group provided a support and mentoring space for teachers, a support function that was critical in order for teachers to gain strength from each other as they faced the many challenges along the path toward change.

Building staff cohesion around new curricular reforms is vital. This requires professional development and informal discussion opportunities so that the entire staff can be informed of the changes and the reasons for them. All faculty members need to have opportunities to share in the discussion and give input before changes are made. Similarly, parents and students must be provided with opportunities to discuss curricular changes so that they can better understand the reasons behind those changes. Curricular reforms aimed at developing positive interethnic relations often begin by addressing a small core of students, but successful efforts eventually grow to the point where they reach all students. In planning such efforts, curricular leaders need to keep the goal of reaching all students clearly in focus.

In making decisions about who will teach courses focusing on racial/ethnic issues or interethnic relations, it is important to select teachers who are knowledgeable about these topics. The Ohlone example confirms that teacher knowledge is absolutely critical, as teachers adept in ethnic-focus and interethnic relations subject matter showed their students that the study of such issues is a serious academic subject. A less knowledgeable teacher could easily make the topic appear superficial or lacking in substance. Teachers of such courses also need to have strong pedagogical skills and be able to engage and challenge students to think critically while at the same time creating a safe environment for discussion.

Communication problems frequently arise when teachers attempt to bring about structural change. Thus, time spent on developing clear and effective communication across role groups, especially teacher leaders and administrators, is time well spent. This can involve clarifying expectations about what the different role groups will do to bring about the desired changes, and creating a structure for conflict resolution among adults should the need arise.

To be sustainable in the long term, curricular reforms must be supported by district leaders and diverse community leaders. Leaders of the curricular reform movement must therefore focus outside the school as well as inside. They must cultivate district support by attending board meetings and communicating with district administrators, and nurture community support by attending local meetings that reflect the various sectors of their

school communities. In these venues, the benefit of the reforms for all stakeholders should be stressed. Such benefits might include improved relations among different racial/ethnic groups, greater understanding and respect across groups, reductions in violence, and as Banks (1997) suggests, an ability to focus more on the needs of the larger community as a result of having a healthy sense of one's own ethnic identity.

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