



Ethnic Studies Lesson 3G: Latino American Education

TOPIC:

LATINO AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

2. History and Movement
4. Social Movements and Equity

Values and Principles:

2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
6. Connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice and an equitable and democratic society, and conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic-racism society that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)

Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text. (RI.11-12.3)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):

History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)

Lesson Purpose

Students will investigate school segregation, the *Mendez v. Westminster* case, and positive examples in Latino/Hispanic American education.

Essential Questions

How did school segregation impact Latino/Hispanic Americans, and what is one positive example of methods used to improve Latino/Hispanic education?

How has life changed for Latino/Hispanic Americans over the last 250 years?

Materials

[C-SPAN: Interview with Sylvia Mendez by the US Commission on Civil Rights](#)

[United States Courts: Background—Mendez v. Westminster Re-Enactment](#)

[California Legislative Information: Assembly Bill 1805](#)

[PBS: Mendez vs Westminster 75th Anniversary](#)

[National Park Service: Setting the Precedent: Mendez, et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County, et al.](#)

[KWL Chart for Unit 3](#)

Vocabulary

segregation

desegregation

Jaime Escalante

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a whole class, ask students what they have learned so far about the realities of education for Latino/Hispanic immigrants. What do students know about the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case? Have they heard of the case *Mendez v. Westminster*? As of January 2024, the California legislature had introduced Assembly Bill 1805 in order to have the case taught in social studies and history courses in California.
- Divide students into four groups and let them know that they'll be finding evidence for the California legislators on why this case is important to Latino/Hispanic Americans but also to the civil rights movement as a whole. Give groups the following resources:
 - [C-SPAN: Interview with Sylvia Mendez by the US Commission on Civil Rights](#) (video 8 minutes, 41 seconds)
 - [United States Courts: Background—Mendez v. Westminster Re-Enactment](#)
 - [California Legislative Information: Assembly Bill 1805](#)
 - [PBS: Mendez vs Westminster 75th Anniversary](#) (video, watch minutes 2:00-11:25)
- When groups have completed their research, have them present their evidence to the whole group. As a group, create a timeline event card for *Mendez v. Westminster* using the who, what, where, when, and why of the group. Let students know that there were two important civil rights characters that participated in *Mendez v. Westminster*. Read to the class the third and fourth paragraphs under the Appeal section from the [National Park Service: Setting the Precedent: Mendez, et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County, et al.](#) Make sure to point out who Earl Warren and Thurgood Marshall are in terms of the Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the continuing civil rights movement.

Step 2:

- Ask students if they believe that all students—regardless of their background—can be successful with the right start. Have they heard of Jaime Escalante or the movie *Stand and Deliver*? Use a group reading strategy such as round robin or popcorn to read [Teaching Lab: Why Jaime Escalante Was So Important to Education](#). As students listen, they should take notes on how Escalante’s teaching methods are different. Can any teacher employ his methods?
- Before students share their notes, have them watch [ABC: East LA native, who was Jaime Escalante’s student, playing integral part in Mars mission](#) (2 minutes, 17 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on how Escalante’s teaching methods impacted students.
- When students have completed the video, they should pair up with another student to compare their notes. Have student pairs share their notes with the class.

Step 3:

- Ask students to reflect on “How did school segregation impact Latino/Hispanic Americans, and what is one positive example of methods used to improve Latino/Hispanic education?” and “How has life changed for Latino/Hispanic Americans over the last 250 years?” Add what has been learned to this unit’s KWL chart.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time permits and for homework, have students write a short paragraph about an educator who made a difference for them and the techniques that educator used. If the students do not have an educator who has impacted their life yet, have them write about what they would hope for in an educator who could bring out the best in them.

Additional Readings and Resources

Bean, Jonathan J. “R. C. Hoiles, Civil Rights Pioneer.” *Orange County Register*, November 25, 2007. <https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=2086>

[Biography: Jaime Escalante](#)

Matthews, Jay. “Finding the Aorta of San Diego.” (Excerpt from *An Optimist’s Guide to American Public Education*. Santa Anita Publishing, 2021.)

Editorial, “Sylvia Mendez’s Moment.” *Orange County Register*, February 18, 2011. <https://www.ocregister.com/2011/02/18/editorial-sylvia-mendezs-moment/>

[Orange County Register. “Sacramento Snapshot: Legislators want Mendez desegregation case taught in California schools.” January 16, 2024](#) (digital access requires a subscription for more than one access).

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 244-270.

Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Fight for Desegregation*. Harry N. Abrams, 2014.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 3A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

What do we think we already know about this topic?

What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.

After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.

<i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i>	<i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i>	<i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i>