



# Intro to Ethnic Studies in Boston Course Overview

Boston Teachers Union (BTU)  
Ethnic Studies Now Committee

[Intro to ES Website](#)

[BTU ESN Website](#)



Screenshot from Ethnic Studies Curriculum Launch Sept. 4, 2020

## Vision

The vision for Ethnic Studies in Boston Public Schools centers the history and experiences of people of color to empower us to collaboratively read the world, while honoring and affirming our intersectional identities. Through Ethnic Studies we develop our capacity to interrogate and critique systems of power while building solidarity with others in order to realize a world without racism and other forms of oppression. Ethnic Studies builds on the collective power of communities of color and their social movements to inspire us to act locally and globally toward justice and transformation.

## Framework

Ethnic Studies will **RECONSTRUCT** educational spaces to:



**RESPOND** to the historical and current marginalization that people of color face in the United States by holistically representing their histories, experiences, and knowledge.



**RESIST** systems of power and oppression (i.e. white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, heteropatriarchy).



**RESTORE** humanity by providing healing spaces and tools for students to examine and embrace their intersectional identities.



**REVITALIZE** communities by valuing their cultural wealth and (re)connecting students to their families.



**REALIZE** societal transformation and social justice by providing opportunities for student agency through solidarity and collective action.

# Concepts

## UNIT 1: Narrative, Identity, and Why Ethnic Studies?

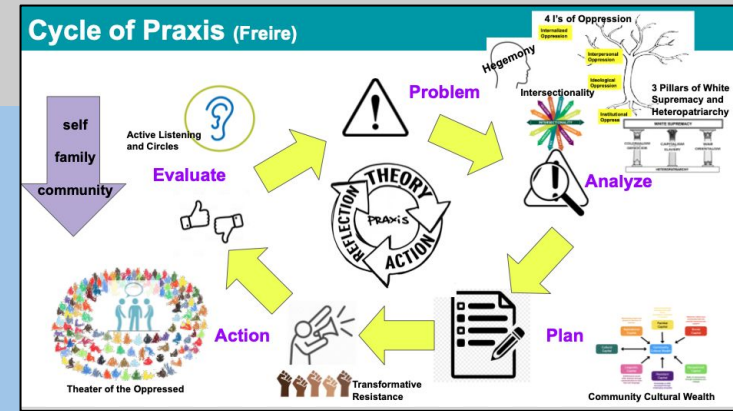
- Intersectionality (Kimberlé Crenshaw)
- Cultural Wealth (Tara Yosso)

## UNIT 2: Systems of Power and Oppression

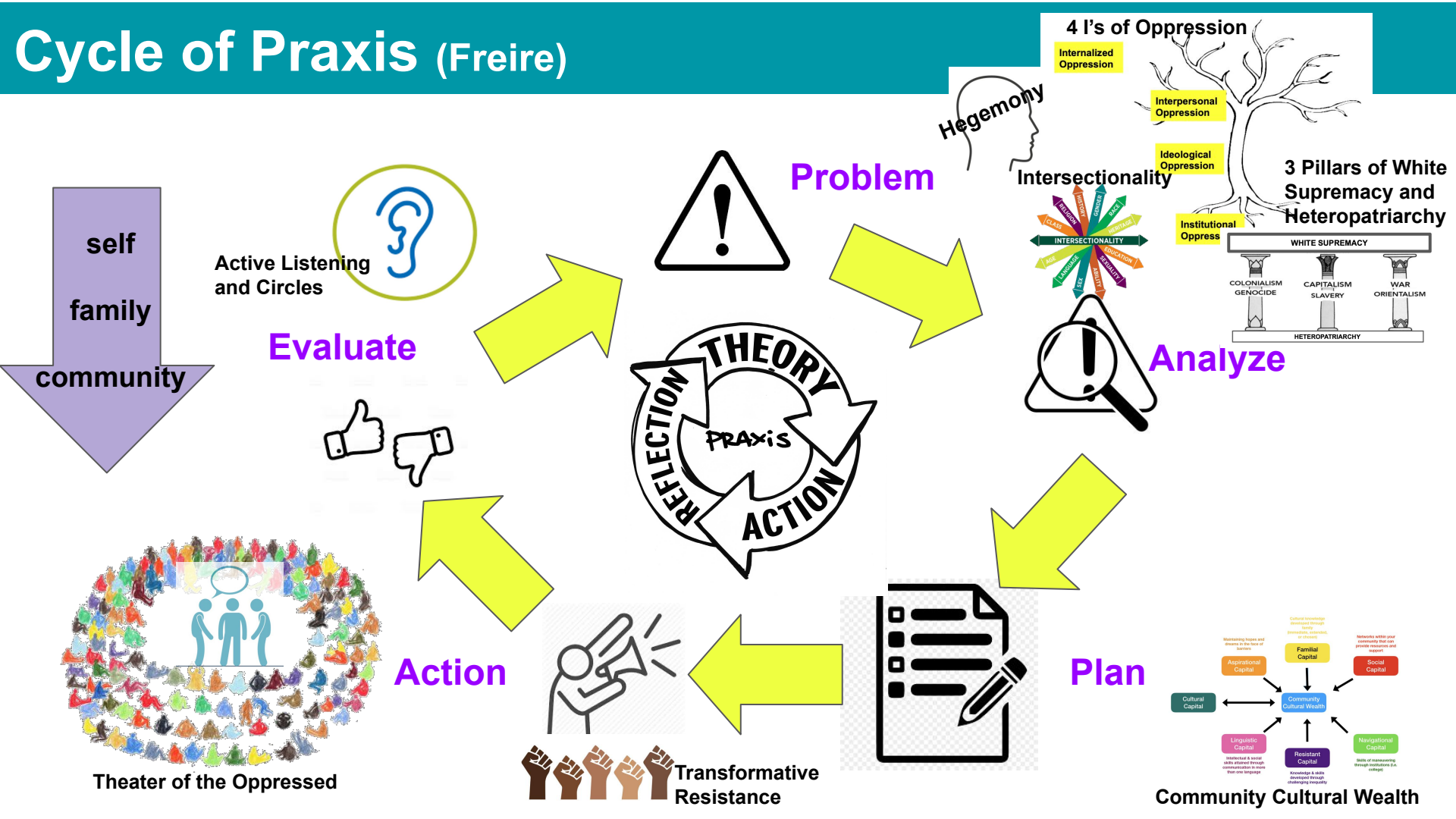
- Hegemony and Counterhegemony (Gramsci)
- 4 I's of Oppression (John Bell)
- 3 Pillars of White Supremacy and Heteropatriarchy (Andrea Smith)
  - Racial Capitalism (Cedric Robinson, Robin D.G. Kelley)
  - Orientalism (Edward Said)
  - Colonization and Genocide (Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, Frantz Fanon)
- Theater of the Oppressed (Augusto Boal)

## UNIT 3: Resistance, Transformation, Action, and Change

- Transformative Resistance (Daniel Solórzano and Dolores Bernal)
- Praxis (Paulo Freire)
- Restorative Justice (Fania Davis)



# Cycle of Praxis (Freire)



# Implementation Proposal for Ethnic Studies in BPS SY 2020-21

1. **Stakeholders part of the decision making process** for design and implementation of ES in BPS.
2. **BPS Teachers Pilot an Ethnic Studies Course** in 3-6 schools in BPS in SY2020-21.
3. **Funding for:**
  - a. **Ethnic Studies Instructional Coach** Full time BTU position
  - b. **Ethnic Studies Coordinator** Full time BTU position
  - c. **Professional development**
  - d. **Curricular Development**
  - e. **Community Partnerships**



# Intro to ES Reoccurring Themes and Concepts

1. **Intersectionality:** How do people's intersectional identities (especially race, ethnicity, culture and nationality and how they intersect with class and gender) affect the way they move through their worlds? (Crenshaw, Cuahtin)
2. **Race and White Supremacy:** How are groups of people are racialized (put into a socially constructed hierarchy to justify the dehumanization of those peoples) in order to maintain white supremacy? How is the normalization of slavery/racial capitalism, orientalism, war, colonialism, genocide, and heteropatriarchy used to uphold white supremacy, capitalism and empire? (Robinson, Kelley, Said, Tuck and Yang, Fanon)
3. **Levels of Oppression:** How does oppression (especially racial oppression) work at different levels (institutional, ideological, interpersonal, internalized)? (Bell)
4. **Community Cultural Wealth:** How do people use their community cultural wealth to resist oppression at all levels (institutional, ideological, interpersonal, internalized)? (Yosso, Cuahutin)
5. **Transformative Resistance, Solidarity and Collective Action:** How do groups of people worked together to address structural and institutional power in order to humanize people, build critical consciousness and collectively control their lives? How do groups of people unite (as well as face challenges to unite) in order to fight for a common goal? (Solórzano and Bernal, Davis, Boal)
6. **Praxis:** How do people identify a problem, analyze it, make a plan, take action and evaluate the results to influence the next cycle of praxis? (Freire)
7. **Hegemony vs. Counter Hegemony:** How do hegemony and the normalized dominant view used to maintain and uphold the group in power? How do people resist with counter-hegemony? (Gramsci)

# **Unit 1: Narrative, Identity and Why Ethnic Studies?**

**Essential Question: How can I realize my own power by exploring the stories of my family, community and self?**

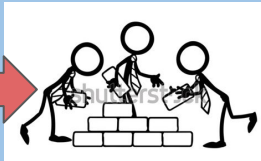
# Unit 1: How can I realize my own power by exploring the stories of my family, community and self?



**Subunit Question 1:** Who Am I? What are the identities that make up who I am? (Intersectionality, Race/Culture/Ethnicity/Nationality, *Harm Circle/Norms Setting/Consensus Process, Circles, Peer/Pair Active Listening Sessions, Storytelling (teachers and students)*)



**Subunit Question 2:** How can stories of my family help me understand my identity, my family and my community today? (Oral history interviews, *Question Formulation Technique (QFT), Translanguaging, Google My Maps*)



**Subunit Question 3:** What parts of my culture and identity make me feel powerful or powerless in my life? (Community Cultural Wealth, Political Autobiographies, *Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), Theater of the Oppressed Image Theater*)

**Final Assessment:** Spoken Word Poem--Who Am I? Where Am I From? What's it's like to be \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_?

The background of the slide is a deep blue night sky filled with numerous stars. A faint, glowing band of light, likely the Milky Way, stretches across the upper portion of the sky. At the bottom of the image, the dark silhouettes of several trees are visible against a horizon where a soft, orange and yellow glow from the setting or rising sun is visible.

# **Unit 2: Systems of Power and Oppression**

**Essential Question: How has power and oppression impacted me, my community and my world?**

# Unit 2: How has power and oppression impacted me, my community and my world?

Internalized  
Oppression

Interpersonal  
Oppression

Ideological  
Oppression

Institutional  
Oppression



**Subunit Question 1:** How do the 4 I's of Oppression impact me, my community and my world? (4 I's of Oppression: Internalized, Interpersonal, Ideological and Institutional)

**Subunit Question 2:** How has ideological and institutional oppression impacted me, my community and my world? *Slavery/Racial Capitalism, Orientalism, War, Colonization, Historical Case Studies, Close Reading Analysis*

**Subunit Question 3:** What does the dominant narrative say about me, my family and my community? *(Hegemony, Controlling Images, Restorative Justice Circles)*

**Subunit Question 4:** How are my interpersonal relationships affected by oppression? *(Cycle of Praxis, Interpersonal Oppression, Theater of the Oppressed Forum Theater)*

**Subunit Question 5:** How has the dominant culture shaped how I feel about myself, my actions and my worldview? *(Internalized Oppression, Restorative Justice Circles)*

**Final Assessment:**

# **Unit 3: Resistance, Transformation, Action and Change**

**Essential Question: How can we build upon legacies of resistance and healing to collectively realize social transformation and revitalize our communities?**

# Unit 3: How can we build upon legacies of resistance and healing to collectively realize social transformation and revitalize our communities?



**Subunit Question 1:** How can I effectively resist oppression? (*Transformative Resistance, Counter-Hegemony, Cycle of Praxis, Spoken Word, Organizing Strategies*)

**Subunit Question 2:** How have communities of color resisted and fought for liberation and change? (*Cycle of Praxis, Google Mapping Sites of Resistance*)

**Subunit Question 3:** How can I use reflection and healing practices with myself and others in order to humanize each other? (*Memorials and Healing Traditions, Google Mapping Sites of Healing*)

**Subunit Question 4:** How can we collaborate and use our community cultural wealth to make an action plan to revitalize our community? (*Praxis: Plan of Action, Action, Cultural Wealth, YPAR*)

**Final Assessment:** Political Community Tour with stops and info outlined on My Google Maps

# Ongoing Ethnic Studies Learning Spaces for Teachers

## Curriculum Writing Groups and Professional Learning Communities

- **Intro to Ethnic Studies CWG, PLC**
- **Black Studies CWG** (*PLC in development*)
- *Asian American Studies* (*CWG and PLC in development*)
- *Indigenous Studies* (*CWG and PLC in development*)
- *Latinx Studies* (*CWG and PLC in development*)

## Ethnic Studies Teacher Cohort Space (*biweekly, Wed, Sun.*)

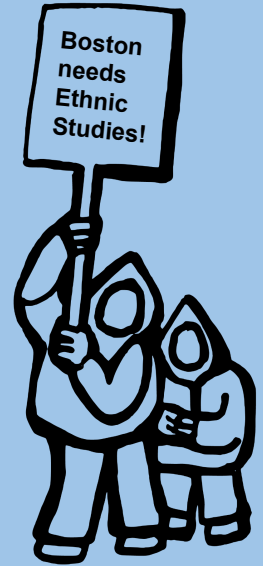
- Space for ES teachers to check in and support each other to teach ES

## Deep Local Historical Context Learning

- **Boston Through a Wider Lens**

## Learning Sites

- *At specific BPS schools (in development)*



[Boston ES Listserv](#)  
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