



THE BENEFITS OF ETHNIC STUDIES (ES)

Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity that centers on the histories, narratives, and issues of communities of color. It improves students' academic performance, especially that of students at risk, and teaches needed cross-cultural skills.

1. Promotes 21st Century Skills: Critical thinking, Communications, and Cultural Competencies

- Well-designed and well-taught ES that teach directly about racism produce higher levels of critical thinking.^[1]
- ES students are able analyze racism in their lives and identities by addressing specific historical, cultural and class-based realities.^[2]
- Those with substantial interaction with diverse high school peers are more likely to see the world from different perspectives and to engage in social action.^[3]

2. Increases academic performance-- attendance, GPA, and credits earned^[4]

- ES increases 9th grader attendance by 21%, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23%.^[5]
- ES significantly increases the probability of high school graduation by 17.5%, increases attendance by 7% and probability of college and university enrollment by 13%.^[6]
- ES is more cost-effective than other preventative measures for reducing dropouts.^[7]

3. Improves race relations by addressing racial differences and similarities

- ES promotes improved race relations through structured intergroup dialogues and perceptions of group similarities and differences.^[8]
- ES enables students to navigate racial conflicts by increasing perception of both commonalities and differences between and within groups. ^[9]
- ES, through storytelling pedagogy, helps students identify the personal impacts of racism.^[10]

4. Reduces stereotypic attitudes

- After receiving history lessons about racism, European American children show less biased attitudes toward African Americans.^[11]
- ES decreases prejudice, discrimination, and racial minority antagonism in comparison to traditional instruction.^[12]



5. Builds civic engagement for an inclusive democracy

- ES increases the citizenship engagement of students.^[13]
- ES significantly increased valuing racial fairness by 37% and civil rights by 13%.^[14]

^[1] Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), 330–367. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051>

^[2] Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2014). Toward an ethnic studies pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research. *The Urban Review*, 47(1), 104–125. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-014-0280-y>

^[3] Sylvia Hurtado, Mark E. Engberg, Luis Ponjuan, & Lisa Landreman. (2002). Students' Precollege Preparation for Participation in a Diverse Democracy. *Research in Higher Education*, 43(2), 163–186. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014467607253>

^[4] Bonilla, S., Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2021). Ethnic studies increases longer-run academic engagement and attainment. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(37).

^[5] Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2016). The causal effects of cultural relevance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 127–166. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216677002>

^[6] Bonilla, S., Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2021). Ethnic studies increases longer-run academic engagement and attainment. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(37).

^[7] Ibid

^[8] Makaiau, A., Sugimoto-Matsuda, J., Glassco, K., Honda, F., Rehuher, D., Hishinuma, E., Kida, L., & Mark, G., Ethnic Studies Now: Three Reasons Why Ethnic Studies Should Be a Requirement for High School Graduation in the United States. In *Oregon Journal of the Social Studies*. 7(1) Spring 2019, 20-51.

^[9] Gurin, P., & Nagda, B. (Ratnesh) A. (2006). *Getting to the What, How, and Why of Diversity on Campus*. *Educational Researcher*, 35(1), 20–24. doi:10.3102/0013189x035001020

^[10] Aveling, N. (2001). 'Where do you come from?': Critical storytelling as a teaching strategy within the context of teacher education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 22(1), 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300120039740>

^[11] Hughes, J. M., Bigler, R. S., & Levy, S. R. (2007). *Consequences of Learning About Historical Racism Among European American and African American Children*. *Child Development*, 78(6), 1689–1705. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01096.x

^[12] Okoye-Johnson, O. (2011). Does multicultural education improve students' racial attitudes? implications for closing the Achievement Gap. *Journal of Black Studies*, 42(8), 1252–1274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934711408901>

^[13] Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Saugher Nojan (2020) Why ethnic studies? Building critical consciousness among middle school students, *Middle School Journal*, 51:2, 25-35, DOI: [10.1080/00940771.2019.1709259](https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2019.1709259)

^[14] Hughes, Bigler, Levy, (2007)

