

**In this moment of
heightened insecurity and
repression, how can
assessments be part of
building school and
classroom climates that
honor students' whole
selves?**



Youth Participatory Action Research Across LAUSD

Shifting Assessment Practices to **Community
Knowledge & Action**

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Action Research is Part of Our Youth Culture & LA History



“We would stand on **Whittier Boulevard** ...and when the **cruisers stopped** because the traffic wouldn't let them, we would step out and **go from car to car** giving them [newspapers] . That's how we **raised awareness** .” -Paula Crisostomo, Lincoln Class of '69 (the **Church of the Epiphany**)...we went there every day for a whole summer...**talking with youth, motivating youth, and being trained...house -to-house food drives** for the farm workers...very **socially conscious** not only of our **local community** , but the **farm workers' struggles**. ” -Vickie Castro, Roosevelt Class of '63

“I think that the **Walkouts...** had **triggered things** ... by the time I got to college at Loyola...**tudents had heard** about the Walkouts...that was the **motivator** ... we were **instrumental in getting a Chicano Studies department**. ” -Celeste Baca, Lincoln Class of '69

CRITICAL PRACTICE

“**Everybody** who was directly at **Camp Hess Kramer** taught us some **leadership strategies** and ways that we could **communicate** .” Rachael Ochoa, Roosevelt Class of '67

“And we started a **survey**: Have you ever been asked to **go to college?** Do you know what it means? Do you want to go? Have you ever been **disciplined** ? Were you ever **swatted** ? Were you ever **suspended** ?”
-Vickie Castro, Roosevelt Class of '63

Presentation Overview

Definition & Framework

YPAR – What it is and how is it curriculum and assessment?

Implementation

What Does YPAR Look Like in Practice?

Barriers

Challenges: What makes this hard?

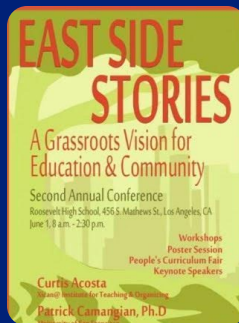
Outcomes

Impact on Students

EASTSIDE STORIES

2012

Youth
Transformation
Across Los Angeles



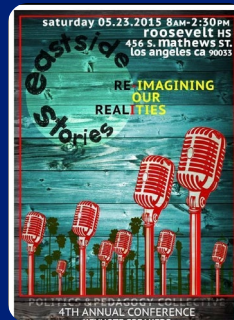
2013

A Grassroots
Vision for
Education &
Community



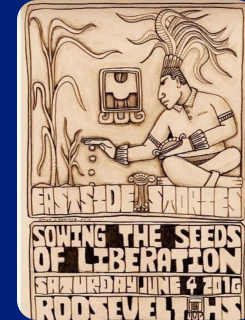
2014

Healing Through
Dialogue



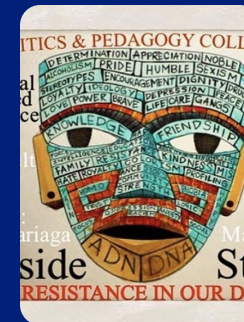
2015

Re-Imagining
Our Realities



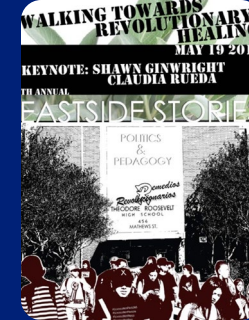
2016

Sowing the Seeds
of Liberation



2017

Resistance in Our
DNA



2018

Walking Towards
Revolutionary
Healing

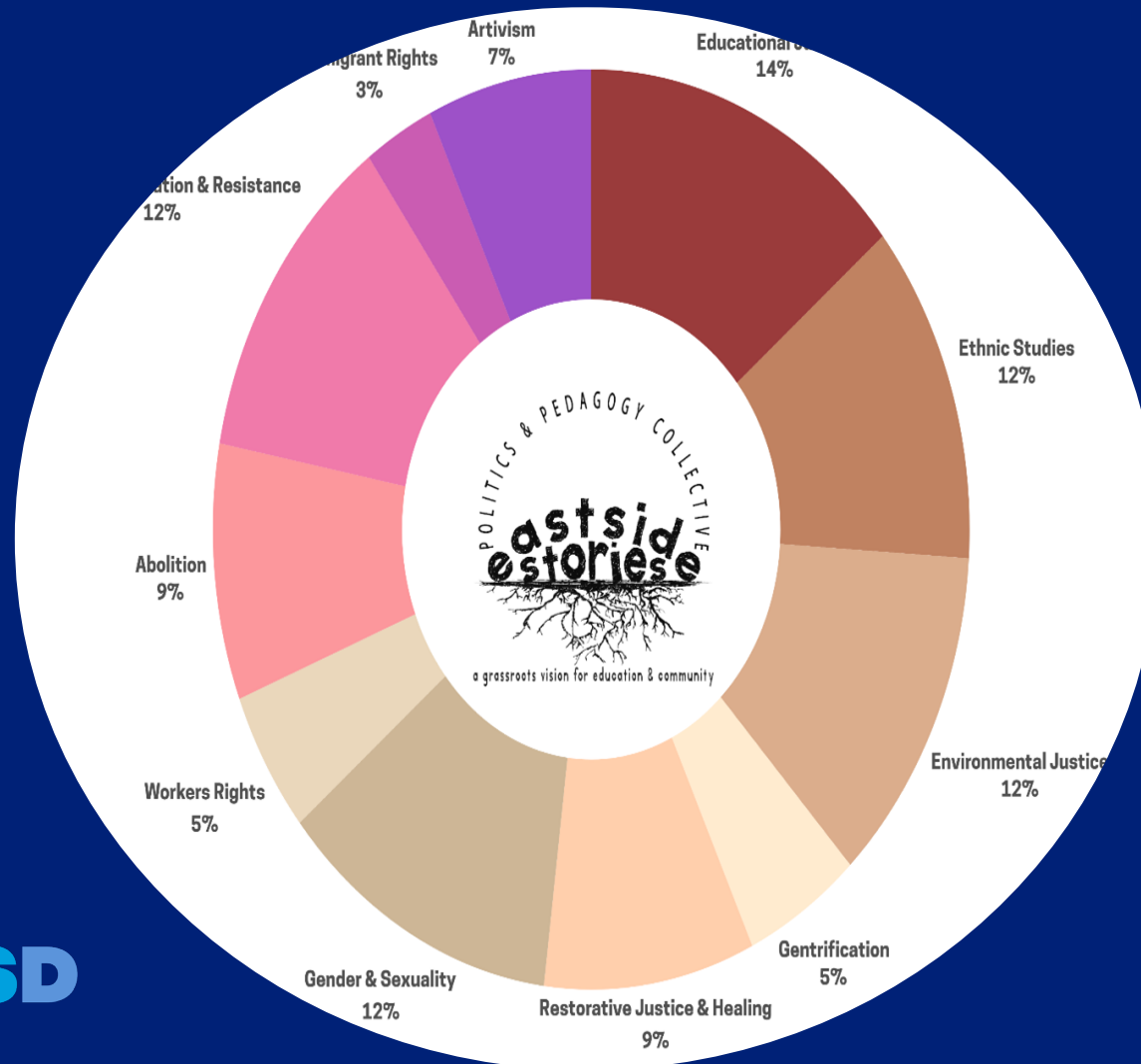


2019

Teachings of
Dignity &
Rebellion

EASTSIDE STORIES

Student Workshop Themes Throughout the Years



14% Educational Justice
12% Ethnic Studies
12% Environmental Justice
12% Gender & Sexuality
12% Youth Criminalization
9% Gentrification
9% Restorative Justice
9% Abolition
5% Workers Rights
3% Immigrant Rights
3% Artivism

5 Central Elements of PAR

01

Researchers work in a collective.

02

Researchers are immersed in the issue being studied.

03 Intersectionality is a guiding force, analyzing how race intersects with gender, class, and sexuality.

04

Produce social change grounded in contemporary or historic conditions.

05

Findings as launching pads for actions and strategies to initiate change.

SCHOOLING FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS



SOCIAL ANALYSIS

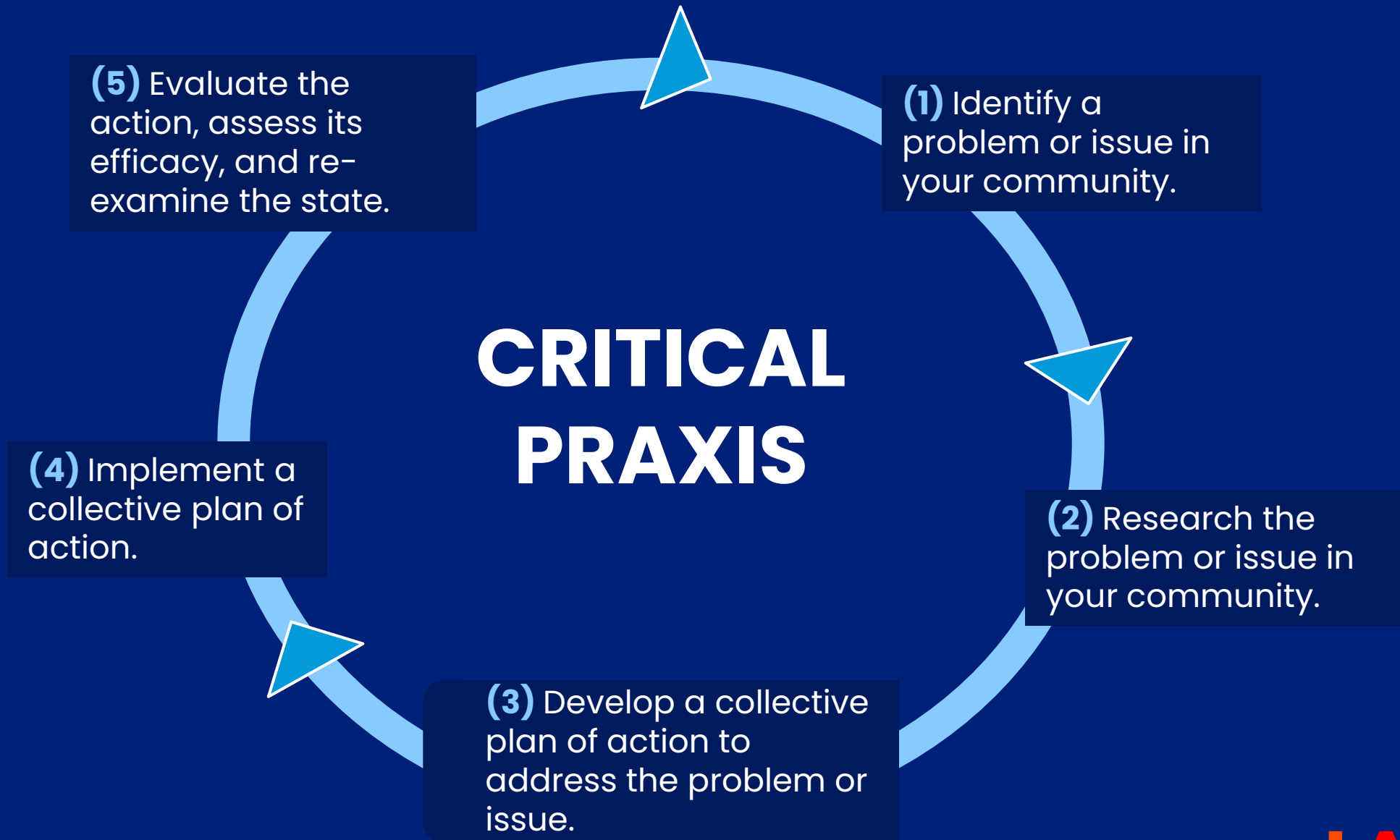
The ability to name and analyze the social, political, and economic forces that contribute to inequity and inequality.

POLITICAL AGENCY

The belief that one has the capacity to effect social or political change.

SOCIAL ACTION

Engaging in events or activities that confront oppressive forces and structures, and the unequal conditions they perpetuate.



CA Assessments

- Standardized tests
- Individual performance
- Multiple choice questions
- One-time snapshot

Focus on scores and accountability

Rigor as accuracy.

**What students
do with
knowledge.**

YPAR

- Student-designed questions
- Interviews, surveys
- Oral histories
- Real-world community focus

Focus on community knowledge and action

Rigor as inquiry and impact.



CA assesses learning. YPAR creates learning through action.

Ethnic Studies Teacher Fellows



Scott Aquiles

Horace Mann UCLA
Community School



Roxana Dueñas

Math, Science & Technology
Magnet Academy



Nivia Alvarado

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez
HS



José Yobani López

Roosevelt High School



Joanne Yi

Horace Mann UCLA
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Tichina Ward-Pratt

Horace Mann UCLA
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Brenda Casanova

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Danielle Torrez

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High
School



Adriane Nguyen

Horace Mann UCLA Community
School



Jo Anna Ley

Math, Science & Technology
Magnet Academy at Roosevelt
HS

YPAR AS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM



Danielle Torrez

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High School

Goal: End of Unit

Assessment in World History

Partner: Boyle Heights Beat

Authentic Inquiry & Rigor

Research, interviews, and community-based problem solving demonstrate deep learning.

Lived Experience

Students investigate Boyle Heights issues, connecting local history to present-day realities.

Civic Action

Acting as journalists, students collect community data and propose real solutions for change.

Authentic Publication

Student reports are published on the Boyle Heights Beat website for the community to access.

YPAR AS ORAL HISTORY



Joanne Yi

Horace Mann UCLA
Community School

Goal: Oral History Repository
Partner: Community Coalition

YPAR redefines rigor

Students use interviews, research, and analysis to study South Central.

Student-driven inquiry

Students choose local landmarks, histories, and people based on interest.

Community oral history archive

Creating a shared repository of preserved stories with Community Coalition.

Authentic work assessment

Final projects shown through interviewing, documenting, and reflecting.



YPAR AS DRAMATIC ARTS



Jo Anna Ley

Roosevelt High School

Goal: Dramatic Performance
Final Semester Project

Partner: About Productions

YPAR redefines rigor

Students research community leaders like Paula Crisostomo and build understanding through interviews, inquiry, and storytelling.

Multiple ways to show learning

Students take on different roles and demonstrate learning through scripts, performances, interviews, and reflections.

Centering community voice

In partnership with About Productions, students turn real community stories into theater-based learning.

Assessment through performance

Learning is shown through research quality, collaboration, interpretation, and public performance.

Identifying Problems of Practice & Supports Needed

Problems of Practice

1. Limited Professional Learning & Teacher Isolation

Teachers often lack consistent, structured professional learning on ethnic studies research practices, leading to isolation and uneven implementation.

2. Limited Community Partnerships

Initiatives are hampered by a lack of youth centered community liaisons.

3. Fragmented Literacy Development

Students lack a coherent districtwide progression of civic engagement and research skills.

4. Service Learning Gaps

Requirements focus on activities rather than deep inquiry.

Supports Needed

A. Ethnic Studies Micro-Credentialing

Offer structured pathways to build teacher capacity and reduce isolation through collaborative communities.

B. Community Representatives

Establish paid school-based roles to support community connections for YPAR projects.

C. K-12 Vertical Literacy Pathways

Design consistent research development and civic engagement plans for all K-12 students.

D. Policy Alignment

Update policies to prioritize student-led civic action.

IMPACT

