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Cinco Dedos: A Mexican American Studies Framework

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Abstract

Mexican American Studies (MAS) courses have been criticized for many years. Legislation in Arizona and Texas have attempted to ban the content. This article pushes back on this attempt of oppression and offers MAS teachers a framework to apply when teaching the content. Using a timeline to depict the years of attempts for Mexican American Studies to be approved, we offer practitioners and researchers an Ethnic Studies framework particularly with MAS courses. Using cultural art, poetry, and literature, MAS teachers can benefit from using the *Cinco Dedos* framework especially at the secondary (6-12) grade levels. This framework prepares MAS teachers to utilize various Chicanx histories to tell the stories of Mexican American heroes not talked about in traditional American history courses. This article also provides tools to use in secondary MAS classrooms that highlight Mexican American culture for students provided by a MAS teacher. One of the founders of the framework uses this in his MAS course at a high school located in San Antonio, TX.

Keywords: Ethnic Studies, Mexican American Studies, MAS Pedagogy, Cinco Dedos, MAS Framework

Sleeter et. al. (2019) argue that ethnic studies benefits students in observable ways as they become more academically engaged, perform better on achievement tests, graduate at higher rates, and develop a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment. In 2018, the Texas State Board of Education (TSBOE) approved the Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies elective course for Texas high schools. The approval of Mexican American Studies (MAS) created a new challenge in making sure that students received quality lessons while educators explored a new curriculum with few readily available resources. This article describes a new framework, *Los Cinco Dedos*, created to assist educators in creating a multidisciplinary curriculum to address the needs of the students enrolled in Ethnic Studies classes, specifically Mexican American Studies.

This article begins by discussing the differentiation of terms of Hispanic, Latino, and Chicanx, and explains the geographic and political differences among those groups. Ethnic studies, Mexican American studies, Chicanx studies, and culturally relevant pedagogy are also significant bodies of literature for this study. The study then includes examples of a framework created by the co-author who highlights the *Cinco Dedos* of Mexican American Studies pedagogy in his MAS classroom. Examples of how the *Dedos* are used is also discussed, in order to provide educators and scholars with a better understanding of how this methodology is used to enhance the student experience in an Ethnic Studies classroom. The chapter concludes with a timeline beginning from the start of the 20th century as it relates to educational challenges and resistance from Chicanx students and leaders along with examples of *Los Cinco Dedos* in action.

Chicanx studies courses are relevant in this chapter as it relates to MAS and other ethnic studies courses. The discourse and scrutiny regarding these courses at the state level, and the importance of student movement to approve these courses is explained throughout the chapter. The history of deculturalization regarding Native Americans is included to exemplify colonization of education as a practice that still exists in K-12 schools today. Throughout these sections, notable experiences such as the banning of Mexican American Studies in Tucson, Arizona are mentioned. This is important as it relates to Texas' progress towards MAS, African American Studies, and Native American Studies. As these courses are expanded across the state of Texas, educators are faced with the challenge of creating, and maintaining, a culturally relevant curriculum.

Differentiation in Terms

Ethnic studies counters the traditional Eurocentric curriculum that leads many students of color to disengage from academic learning (Sleeter, et. al., 2019). Countering the traditional curriculum students receive allows communities of color to identify stories about themselves. One important issue regarding ethnic studies lies in the name of the course itself. Mora (2014), argues that terms like *Hispanic/Latino community*, and *Latino vote* are common and it is difficult to find a government report or political statement that does not describe persons of Latin American descent as “Hispanics” or “Latinos.” Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Mexican Americans often faced the same backlash but have also been lumped together using political terms. The term Hispanic, created by the Nixon administration, bunched communities of color who spoke Spanish. Several questions remain unanswered including why the Hispanic census category was ultimately deemed an ethnic and not a racial classification and offers little insight into how census officials tried to convince individuals to identify as Hispanic on government forms (Mora, 2014). Eventually, the Nixon administration moved forward and the term Hispanic is still used today. The term can be confusing since it is used as an ethnic term vs. racial classification.

Though they are often placed together in political terms, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans have many differences with the biggest being geographical differences. The largest of the groups, Mexican Americans clustered in the Southwest, while Puerto Ricans stayed near New York, and Cuban communities stayed in Miami (Mora, 2014). The Chicanx movement in California in the 1960s, sparked change in various political and social contexts, including how the education of Mexican Americans and other People of Color created social disparities in and outside the classroom. The term Chicanx has rich meaning in its name and became a term to empower and motivate Mexican Americans to take political and social action against racial injustice. According to the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE), the term Chicanx is defined as an individual living in the U.S. whose parents or grandparents came from Mexico (www.tache.org). Others argue and give more meaning behind the origin of the term Chicanx. Jackson (2010) argues that the term Chicanx began as a derogatory word describing poor Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. and has often been presented as an identity that represents the Mexican American experience or community. Furthermore, the term can be viewed as a symbol of pride as the Chicanx movement continued throughout the 1960s.

Similar to Chicanx, the term Mexican American may also take on different definitions depending on how one identifies oneself. The difficulty in categorizing all Latinos in a single group has affected the discussion regarding what to label the Mexican American Studies course. As students progress in an Ethnic Studies course, they begin to formulate a better sense of their own identity. *Los Cinco Dedos* framework allows students to explore the ideas of identity through a student-centered approach and decide what the name best represents for themselves. In the late 1990s, Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) changed the name of the Hispanic Studies Department to Mexican American/Raza Studies in 2002. They later changed the name again to Mexican American Studies in 2008 (Cammarota et al., 2014). Throughout the discourse of names and political terms, Chicanx will be used in the following sections as it relates to the timelines of the Chicanx movement demanding justice and equity starting in the 1900s. The term Chicanx is most significant because Chicanx studies courses were formed during the Civil Rights and Chicanx movement eras. The *Plan Espiritual Aztlan* and The *Plan de Santa Barbara* labeled those in the movement as Chicanos and set up the basis for Chicano Studies classes to be created at the college level. Although some events are not explained in detail in the next section, it is important to note the history of Spanish colonization on modern day Mexico land, and how this influenced practices and teachings today. While not explained in detail, they are highlighted throughout the timeline relating to Chicanx studies in America.

Framework For Mexican American Studies Pedagogy: *Los Cinco Dedos*

In relation to the history of MAS courses and the debate in Texas, several controversies co-exist. In 2018, the State of Texas approved a year-long Mexican American Studies (MAS) social studies course after a long battle led by Mexican American, Chicanx and Latinx educators, activists, and students. Now that the class is offered to students throughout the state, the challenge remains of providing quality content that satisfies the academic and cultural needs of our students. The importance of Mexican American Studies cannot be overstated. Mexican American students have long been denied the stories and lessons regarding Jovita Idar, Carmelita Torres, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, Ruben Salazar and countless other Mexican American heroes that committed themselves to the idea that Mexican Americans should be treated with dignity and respect. Traditionally, some Mexican American students have learned about the struggles of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and the United Farm Workers (UFW). Although the impact and influence of the

UFW on the Chicana Movement is immeasurable, this was not the beginning or the end of the Chicana Movement. The purpose of this study is to identify ways in which MAS teachers can provide quality content using a multidisciplinary approach created by Keli Rosa Cabunoc Romero and Anthony Gonzales called *Los Cinco Dedos* while also providing an in-depth history of approving/rejecting MAS courses. This study explains *Los Cinco Dedos* and how they are used to increase social capital (Yosso, 2005) and build upon the strengths Mexican American students enter the classroom with. The framework attempts to create an immersive cultural experience for all students enrolled in a MAS class. *Los Cinco Dedos* highlights the important contributions of People of Color and the cultural aspects of art, music, and literature to supplement the history curriculum.

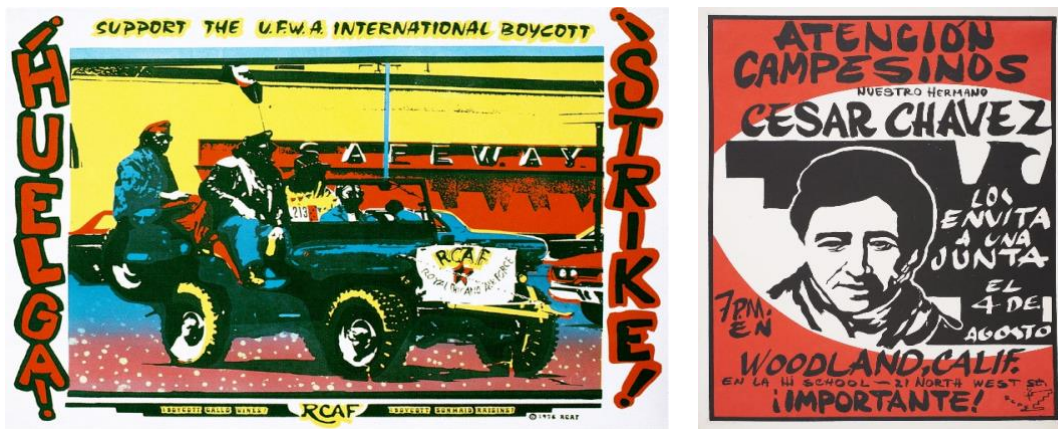
Dedo Uno: By Us, For Us

The first *Dedo* in creating an Ethnic Studies curriculum is to ensure that all material presented uses a *By Us, For Us* approach. Instructional material and the resources provided for Mexican American Studies should be created by members of the Mexican American, Chicana, Latina, and People of Color communities. If these stories are not told and portrayed correctly, others will disregard, exclude, or manipulate the truth of these stories. Teachers must be intentional and use works created by Chicana Latina, Black, and other Communities of Color to create lessons students can identify with in the curriculum. MAS teachers should refrain from simple Google searches that provide artwork and resources that do not credit the creator, but instead use Chicana archives from universities and colleges with strong Chicana communities such as Texas, Arizona, and California. These locations are critical as the Chicana movement's inspiration derived from these areas, however, numerous Chicana programs were created throughout the nation that provide similar archival information. These schools have long been committed to the Chicana Movement and provide educated individuals who have curated primary and secondary resources that can easily be adapted for the classroom. Using these primary sources from those involved in the fight for equality prior to, during, and after the 1960s allows our students to examine the rhetoric and analyze the purpose of those people who fought for equality, equity, and respect. In addition to the archives provided by institutions of higher learning, art collectives such as the Royal Chicana Airforce posted their entire catalog online.

The archives of the Royal Chicano Air Force and work from other Chicano artists can be used to provide visuals for lessons ranging from topics such as the Indigenous people of Mesoamerica, to the Mexican Revolution, and present issues facing the Chicano and Latino communities. It is important that Mexican American Studies incorporates all aspects of Mexican American society, not only history. Figure 1 (Favela, 1976; Montoya, n.d.) are used in the class as ways to deconstruct dialogue regarding the United Farmworkers' strike led by Cesar Chavez.

Figure 1.

Huelga! Strike! Support the UFW (Favela, 1976) and Atencion Campesinos! (Montoya, n.d.)



Dedo Dos: More Than a History Class

The *Cinco Dedos* framework is interdisciplinary and calls for MAS to be more than a history class. The Second *Dedo* calls for Chicano and Mexican American artwork, literature, theatre, music, music videos, movies, poems, and spoken word to be used to provide a total cultural experience for the students in MAS. The intertwining of Mexican art, music, and history make it impossible to teach a MAS course without including those elements. For example, following the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921), the Mexican government financed public art projects to celebrate the accomplishments and history of the Indigenous people in Mexico (Jackson, 2010). When discussing the impact of colonization on Mexico, one must also consider the response to that after the Mexican Revolution. These murals told the history of Mexico and muralism became an integral piece to the telling of Mexican American history in the United States. Other forms of art including theater have been important in telling the history of Mexican Americans. El Teatro Campesino, which was created by Luis Valdez in 1965, continues to produce theater for the

movement that empowers Mexican Americans. The works of El Teatro show the Mexican American and Chicax viewpoint to our students in a way that a reading or textbook cannot. Figure 2 (Aranda, 1984) is another use of Chicax artwork used within the *Cinco Dedos* framework.

Figure 2.

Wall of Heroes and Martyrs (Aranda, 1984)



The Chicax and Latinx communities continue to paint murals across the nation that provide visual imagery that supports the Civil Rights struggles while reclaiming cultural heritage. Figure 3 (Talavera & Melchor, 2020) provide opportunities for students to discuss the controversies centered around Mexican American women and the viewpoints students have. A multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach ensures that students receive a complete representation of Mexican American and Chicax culture. Topics such as the murder of Vanessa Guillen allow students to voice their opinions of the press' handling of her murder. Students often identify with stories when they relate to the communities that are affected. In this case, students of color can identify with Vanessa Guillen as a young woman and a person of color.

Figure 3.

Entre Todas Las Mujeres (Talavera & Melchor, 2020)



Dedo Tres: Cultura

Ensuring that MAS is interdisciplinary will provide a more complete cultural experience. The third *Dedo* in the Mexican American Studies classroom asks that students not only read, view, and analyze work by Mexican Americans, Chicanx, and People of Color, but engage with those artists, musicians, writers, and community members who continue to spread awareness of Mexican American history and culture. Many are more than willing to work with MAS students. Teachers should encourage those who are active in the Mexican American community to speak to our students and this will help them come to the realization that the Chicanx Movement is not over. To our students, the Chicanx Movement seems like a lifetime ago, but it is important that they realize leaders of the Movement are still active today, and they left a legacy of Mexican American and Chicanx empowerment.

Dedo Cuatro: Student Centered Learning

The MAS classroom should be student centered. Our students are capable, articulate, and critical thinkers. MAS is one of the few classes in which many students will enter the room as experts. Some students who take MAS are somewhat familiar with the Mexican American culture based on their lived experiences, and many may consider themselves experts. MAS empowers our students and helps them realize that their stories are valid. MAS should provide a safe space and the opportunity for students to share and celebrate their cultural experiences with one another. For MAS students who do not identify as Mexican American, the opportunity to hear the

experiences within another culture empowers them to speak about their own experiences. The fourth *dedo* focuses on student centered learning. This is a vital part to success in the MAS classroom. A student-centered approach allows students to discuss the content using their own knowledge and experience to formulate their own opinions on critical issues that they explore in an academic setting for the first time.

Figure 4.

Students in MAS class at John Marshall High School celebrating Día de los Muertos



Dedo Cinco: Community Involvement

The fifth and final *dedo* centers on the idea of community involvement. As discussed before, Mexican American and Chicanx artists, writers, and activists have been integral parts of their community and often use their voice to empower that community. The *Cinco Dedos* framework calls for Mexican American Studies students to be given the opportunity to do the same and to use their voice to empower the community. Community involvement not only provides our students with an opportunity to become more active in their community, but also to become a part of and learn from their community. This *dedo* also creates a space where families of our students can enter the classroom and share important aspects of Mexican American culture. As more students realize and understand the validity of their own family's experiences, they understand all our stories and histories are important. In 1969, when Chicanx scholars came together to write el Plan de Santa Barbara to establish Chicano Studies throughout the Southwest, community activism was highlighted as one of the important pillars of Chicano Studies. It is important that MAS students contribute to the legacy of el Plan of Santa Barbara by actively

participating in their community. Figure 5 shows students with the co-author of this article giving back to the community of San Antonio. This gives students the opportunity to demonstrate the teachings they receive within their MAS class.

Figure 5.

MAS students at John Marshall High School volunteering at the 2020 Jaime P. Martinez Thanksgiving in the Barrio hosted in San Antonio, TX



Mexican American Education 1900 to 1960

The State approved Mexican American Studies course is classified as a history elective. Although the goal of *Los Cinco Dedos* is a multidisciplinary curriculum, it is important to understand the history of Mexican American education throughout the Southwest to better understand the needs of Mexican American students. Though the call for better schools and a demand for change sparked headlines during the Civil Rights era, one of the first boycotts against segregated facilities took place in San Angelo, Texas in 1910 (Acuña, 2011). In 1911, *El Primer Congreso Mexicanista* (the first Mexicanist Congress) met in Laredo, Texas to discuss educational issues Mexicans and Mexican Americans faced. Jovita Idar organized the Women's League in an effort to provide education for poor children while advocating for women's rights including the right to vote. Jovita Idar's organization of El Congreso resulted in the founding of *La Gran Liga Mexicanista de Beneficencia y Protección* (The Great League for Relief and Protection.) Their goal was to eliminate the segregation of Mexican and Mexican American children in the public school system (Barragan Goetz, 2020). Idar's leadership and fight for school reform led her to opening *escuelitas* (little

schools) for Mexican American children. Figure 6 (Ortiz, n.d.) is used within the class to show the impact Idar's work had for Mexican American art, culture, and literature. During the same decade, Mexican organizations established other *escuelitas* offering reading and writing lessons for preschool aged children (Acuña, 2011). As our students learn about the efforts of Jovita Idar and *El Primer Congreso Mexicanista*, it is important that they know Idar left a living legacy. The work done by Idar continues to be celebrated in Chicanx artwork and literature. The implementation of *Los Cinco Dedos* and the examination of artwork by contemporary artists will demonstrate the impact of Idar and her contemporaries.

Figure 6.

Jovita Idar setting type in the sun (Ortiz, n.d.)



In the early 1920s, policymakers sought to eliminate the Spanish language from schools, an important aspect of Mexican American identity. The Immigration Act of 1924 attempted to colonize Communities of Color, by creating a quota system for immigrants with Western European nations having the highest number of immigrants allowed in the United States, while Mexican wage workers remained the same to maintain business interests (Grandin, 2019). To offset the nativist policies of the 1920s, the Mexican consulate offered support to *escuelitas* throughout South Texas by providing money, supplies, and attending school events (Goetz Barragan, 2020). Acuña (2011) argues an awareness for education reform increased after World War I with the formation of The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). The organization was formed in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas, and remains the largest Hispanic Civil

Rights organization in the U.S. LULAC, formed the Committee of Playgrounds and School Facilities, which was chaired by Eleuterio Escobar Jr. Escobar concluded that only education could lift Mexican Americans out of poverty. He later developed *La Liga Pro-Defensa Escolar* (School Improvement League) in San Antonio in 1935 (Garcia, 1997). Under his leadership, the inequities of funding schools and the policies regarding the Mexican American community and housing developments were exposed. La Liga also helped organize a student walkout at Sidney Lanier High School, a campus originally created as a vocational school for Mexican American students in San Antonio. Students at Lanier walked out again in the 1960s in demand for a better education.

Other Mexican American movements occurred during the 1930s including strikes in the agriculture business such as the pecan shellers in 1938. Led by Emma Tenayuca, the pecan sheller's strike of 1938 recruited thousands of participants in the demand for better working conditions and better wages. Vargas (1997) argues that with over 10,000 participants, it was the largest labor strike in San Antonio history and largest community-based strike by the Mexican population in the 1930s. Although the Pecan Shellers' Strike in San Antonio may not have yielded the economic benefits that the workers anticipated, it demonstrated the collective power of Mexican Americans in the community. Numerous murals of Emma Tenayuca exist throughout the Westside of San Antonio. *Los Cinco Dedos* can be used to introduce these pieces of art to students, while also increasing student knowledge of their own community.

The participation of Mexican Americans and other People of Color in World War II contributed to an increased level of social awareness and legislation regarding public segregation. Prior to the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, *Mendez vs. Westminster* set a precedent regarding school segregation: Sylvia Mendez, a nine-year old girl, was turned away from a "whites only" school in Orange County, California. Thurgood Marshall represented the Mendez family and argued that segregation of students was detrimental and unconstitutional. In 1947, Judge Paul McCormick agreed with Marshall and stated segregation of schools is similar to the segregation of races and religious groups that occurred in Nazi Germany (Ramos, 2004). *Mendez v. Westminster* was the first case to uphold that school segregation *itself* is unconstitutional and violates the 14th Amendment (Blanco, 2010).

During the decade of the 1950s, several Supreme Court cases affected educational policies still in effect today. In 1954, Pete Hernandez, a Mexican American farm worker, was accused of

killing an Anglo man and faced an all-white jury. In his appeals case, his attorney Gus Garcia argued that Mexican American citizens were discriminated against in Jackson County, Texas. Racial segregation of children in public schools was found unconstitutional in 1954 with the outcome of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*. Judge Earl Warren found segregation of schools unconstitutional in his ruling of the case. *Brown vs. The Board of Education* provided the legal support to begin the process of dismantling segregated schools throughout the United States, however, local state governments intentionally prolonged integration.

Only three years after *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission examined cases involving Communities of Color. The data reflected was meant to highlight the wrongdoings of the Mexican American community, however, the data also provided evidence that Mexican American dropout rates or “push out” rates in school continued to increase. The decisions in *Hernandez vs. Texas* and *Brown vs. The Board of Education* demonstrated that Mexican Americans and People of Color now had the legal backing of the Supreme Court, but in schools and other aspects of American society, the fight for equality was not over.

1960s

The 1960s sparked the biggest moment of Mexican American activism, the Chicano Movement. In 1962, César Chávez and Dolores Huerta co-founded the National Farm Workers Association as they demanded equal wages. The organization evolved into the United Farm Workers (UFW) in Delano, California. It was Chávez’ and Huerta’s leadership that ultimately led to the movement for greater equal schooling opportunities. In 1963, a political takeover began in Crystal City when a coalition called for Mexican Americans to be named to city council. An organization called the Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations (PASO) mounted the successful effort to elect five *Mexicanos* to city council, replacing the previously all white council. José Angel Gutierrez rose to prominence as a political leader in the effort to elect Mexican Americans to public office in Crystal City (Navarro, 2010).

As the actions of the UFW gained national attention, the Los Angeles Times sent a prominent writer Ruben Salazar to cover the stories in Delano. Salazar produced a series of articles highlighting the UFW movement and became an ally to organizers in the U.S speaking out for the equal rights of Mexican Americans. Published by the L.A. Times in 1963, Salazar’s writings linked Indigenous and Mexican American culture. At the time, a conference sponsored by John

Kennedy's Equal Opportunity Committee that demanded a more effective education for Mexican youth took place (Acuña, 2011). Salazar (1963), spoke at the conference about the educational and social problems of urban and rural Mexican-Americans and argued that Mexican American youth displayed low graduation rates because of the acculturation they faced in school. The writings of Ruben Salazar contributed to the motivation behind the student walkouts that became prominent throughout the Southwest in the 1960s.

This leadership continued throughout the 1960s when the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) developed a plan to take over school boards in an effort to demand equity in schools for communities of Color. MAYO was composed of five college students from San Antonio; Willie Velasquez, José Angel Gutierrez, Mario Compean, Ignacio Perez, and Juan Patlan (Acuña, 2011). MAYO's work towards education reform began with seeking culturally relevant courses, like Mexican American Studies. Their methods included boycotting and the organization of the famous student walkouts. MAYO provided innovative ideas while high school youth walked out in Del Rio, Uvalde, Abilene, and Robstown to name a few (Montejano, 1987). Towards the end of the decade, student power continued to grow and on March 5th 1968, the walkouts in East Los Angeles instigated a national student movement. The walkouts brought national attention to the achievement disparities in schools, lackluster education standards for Mexican American youth, and the term "Chicano" was embraced by Mexican American students as a term of ethnic and cultural pride (Sahagun, 2018).

San Antonio's first walkout occurred in 1968 when students protested teachers who did not accept a Mexican American student council nominee. Elida Aguilar was suspended for insubordination when she demanded the right to speak Spanish and advocated for Mexican American history classes (Acuña, 2011). The passion of these students caught the attention of state and city officials such as state senator Joe Bernal. On the Westside of San Antonio in Edgewood ISD, students fought for equitable funding and asked for the extermination of rats and roaches in school facilities. Janie Hilgen, a teacher in Edgewood at the time, supported students and was one of two teachers suspended by the district (Wright, 1968). In 2019, the Edgewood Walkouts were commemorated by Northwest Vista Community College in San Antonio with a mural that depicted the actions of the students. The students who walked out in the 1960 left a legacy of change and active resistance for students of color.

As a response to a lack of attention and care to the Mexican community in education, the first Chicana studies program was founded in 1967 at California State College in Los Angeles (Guidotti-Hernandez, 2017). The struggle to develop the department was countered by a student movement along with Mexican American faculty. Throughout the 1960s, higher education institutions faced resistance from People of Color that led to changes in course offerings. In 1968, *El Movimiento Estudiantil de Aztlan* (MEChA) was formed from *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. The plan asked for recruitment of Chicana students, faculty, administrators and staff and included a curriculum that is relevant to Chicana culture and the historical experiences. Acuña (2011) argues changing the name from English to Spanish made this movement different; claiming “Aztlan” recognizes the indigenous roots of Mexican Americans and the fact that they were here before Euro Americans. This movement struck change and allowed for the development of the first Chicana Studies programs. The use of *Los Cinco Dedos* ensures that students not only receive the historical knowledge discussed in this section, but also the art, music, and literature of the Chicano Movement. The framework ensures that the goals set forth by the writers of *el Plan de Santa Barbara* are met. Mexican American students are given the opportunity to better understand their history, culture, and immerse themselves in their community.

1970s to Present Day

José Angel Gutierrez continued his leadership through the 1970s. Returning to Crystal City and similarly to his effort in 1963, he sought political change by attempting to have Mexican American leadership take over the school board and created the Raza United Party (RUP). The political party challenged the notion of a traditional two political party system. A Chicana political party was a reminder that *Mexicanos* were committed to democracy and community control in their pursuit for self-determination (Navarro, 2000). The RUP held its first national conference in El Paso two years later.

During his tenure as president, Richard Nixon and the transition to Reagan’s presidency coined the term “Hispanic”. This caused a disruption in the Chicana movement since the term attempted to lump communities of color together. In 1980, the government first used Hispanic on census forms with options for Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Chicanas, Puerto Rican, Cuban and “other” (Cruz, 2018). Although other events occurred between the 1980s through the 2000s, another movement occurred in the 2000s that impacted MAS courses significantly.

When Tucson and Arizona policy makers dismantled MAS courses, student voices demanded changes in schools. In response to eliminating MAS courses, students marched to the Capitol and chained themselves to school board members' chairs. Students responded to HB 2281 by using their voice and taking action in a topic passionate to them and their culture. This led to student leadership and movement to keep MAS offered in Tucson schools. These actions displayed resistance capital as students, teachers, and communities of color advocated for MAS courses to remain as options in K-12 schools. As a form of resistance, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001a) argue that students' response acting from a critique of oppression and motivated by social justice, engages in transformative resistance and this is when social change is likely to occur. Students resisting the oppression formed a student leadership group through this process. Cabrera, Meza, Romero, & Cintli Rodríguez (2013) state "Amidst the walkouts, UNIDOS created the day-long School of Ethnic Studies where students could learn from the forbidden curriculum of MAS (pp. 8).

In response to HB 2281, students from U.N.I.D.O.S. (United Non-Discriminatory Individuals Demanding Our Studies) used data to empower student voices and led to a cancelled board meeting by MAS students protesting these decisions. Ultimately, school board officials could not dismantle MAS that day because the board meeting did not take place, however, when later rescheduled, multiple law enforcement officials were called due to the protest. The goal of keeping MAS in schools was achieved that day using student and community voices. Although the board meeting was postponed, policy change later enacted and approved HB 2281 resulting in the loss and banning MAS courses.

Deriving from Chicana studies in California, MAS highlights untold heroes, the histories of migrant workers, and the oppression communities of color faced. Arellano (2018a) argues that Chicana studies forced Mexicans in the U.S. to confront their own pathologies and taught solidarity with Mexicans who immigrated illegally. Shedding light on Mexican histories not only gives students the opportunity to understand their culture but also inserts the untold stories of Mexican Americans. In an additional article, Arellano (2018b) describes the real agenda for Chicana studies is to push students to explore, and question the empirical truth no matter how inconvenient it may be for others.

Summary

This chapter summarized the *Cinco Dedos* framework as it applies to the experiences of the co-author's Mexican American Studies classroom in a South Texas high school. The framework provides opportunities and suggestions to build a curriculum for the Texas approved MAS course. Additionally, this chapter provided a breakdown in the differentiation of terms as well as a timeline of the Chicanx movement. It is important to note the controversies of approving a MAS course in Texas as it relates to the dismantling of MAS in Arizona. In Texas, students will take 28 total classes during their high school career. Because Mexican American Studies is the only course dedicated to their history and their culture, educators must ensure that they provide an interdisciplinary experience that highlights all elements of Mexican American history.

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