

Meet Our Teachers



A teacher joins the Project!

Evelyn Cervantes teaches 6th Grade Social Studies and 8th Grade Leadership in the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD). Evelyn started working with UCBHSSP by attending an institute in the summer of 2014. When UCBHSSP began working with history teachers across SJUSD as part of a three-year partnership focused on fostering literacy and technology in the history classroom, she joined a cohort of table leaders. Currently, Evelyn is a member of UCBHSSP's Teacher Research Group and plans to serve as a facilitator at UCBHSSP's [Technology in the Common Core Classroom](#) institute this summer.

Following my second year of teaching, I registered for the Dynamic Technology Institute, which was offered by the UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project. I was seeking opportunities to improve my knowledge and teaching practices, and my district, as part of a just launched [partnership with UCBHSSP](#), offered to pay for the registration to this week-long institute. During the week of learning, I was introduced to a new way of thinking about my curriculum and discrete strategies to foster student learning. Despite these concrete learnings, my biggest take-away from the institute was how constantly reflective participant teachers were about their practice. I was hooked.

That fall, UCBHSSP launched its work with my district -- San Jose Unified. The work focused on incorporating [literacy and technology into history classrooms](#). Based on my summer experience, I asked to join a team of table leaders who would facilitate small group conversations during the district-wide professional development days. Before each district-wide session, the leadership team came together to discuss, plan, and practice for the bigger meeting. Through this model, I was able to collaborate with and learn from other teachers in my district -- replicating the culture of reflection I had experienced at the Dynamic Technology institute. Together, we discussed how we could better support students from all over San Jose to learn history through the use of historical thinking concepts, oral discourse, primary sources, writing, and technology.

At the start of this school year, I applied to become a member of [UCBHSSP's Teacher Research Group](#). One evening a month I travel from San Jose to Berkeley to engage in deep reflection with colleagues from around the Bay Area. We have spent the year in deep study of historical thinking -- using Peter Seixas' [6 concepts for historical thinking](#) to amplify our instruction. In collaboration with the TRG's middle school team, I have integrated these concepts into my planning and instruction. And, through the lessons that I have piloted, I have seen my students demonstrate a greater degree of understanding by asking higher level thinking questions and actively engaging in evidence-based academic discussions.

It is in my classroom that a lot of my 6th graders are exposed to world events and history as a subject of academic study for the first time. This year, I have seen my students' communication, both oral and written, develop alongside their critical study of the world's history. My students' abilities have evolved from analyzing maps and explaining the Agricultural Revolution in human history at the beginning of the year, to presenting historical evidence and analysis in structured oral discourse on questions such as: "*Was the Ancient Ashoka a ruthless conqueror or an enlightened ruler?*" and "*Did the benefits of the Great Wall outweigh its costs?*"

It has now been two years since I ventured into my first UCBHSSP program, moving from institute participant to, this summer, [institute facilitator](#). I look forward to continually learning from my peers, who I meet through UCBHSSP programming and participation in the [Teacher Research Group](#).