

(In)equity By Design
 Vanessa Medellin, Shelby Sember & Matt Chapman
 Sixth Grade
 High Tech Middle North County

In this project, students investigated the U.S. education system to answer the question: “Is the education system broken?” Initially students explored what it means to be genetically human, how similar we are and what makes up our differences. Students took their own phenotype data and compared it between the class, school and community data sets.

Students then explored different “flashpoints” throughout the history of US Education to provide a social and political context of that data, while they also analyzed and graphed current educational outcome data (SAT scores, rates of disciplinary actions, teacher-student diversity gaps, graduation rates) to recognize patterns across racial groups and social class. Students interviewed people in our community about their experiences in the US education system, which culminated in recording a set of podcasts. These podcasts were curated in a life-size shoebox museum built by students called “Walk in our Shoes” where guests would wear the actual shoes of the storyteller while walking and listening to their stories. The goal for this project was for students to understand the way in which social structures and institutions can impact the lives of individuals. Specifically, how racism and other discrimination has played a role in the formation of our education system which has been designed to create different outcomes for different people.

Teacher Reflection

While doing this project, we had to become comfortable with having difficult racial and social construct conversations with students. Listening to the audiobook, *Stamped* by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi helped us form a common knowledge and grounded our conversations. The outcome we are most proud of is that students were able to discuss racism and other forms of discrimination in a productive and reflective way, both in our classroom, as well as with our community partners.

—Shelby Sember & Matt Chapman

Student Reflection

In this project I appreciated that we were able to connect to things that are happening now in education. I also think it was really important that we got to hear first-hand experiences by interviewing people in our community. In our interviews we were able to make an emotional connection to how the education system impacts people and sometimes causes harm. One thing that will always stay with me is the data we analyzed in math because I realized how important it is to have teachers who look like you and have similar experiences as you.

—Alexandra



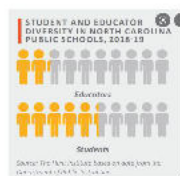
Teacher-Student Diversity Gap

Grace Libby, Alexandria Echevarria

Teacher-Student diversity gap means when school have a large amount of teachers that do not look like there students. The reality is, the majority of the teachers are white but majority of the students are mostly non-white. With that being said there are about 80% of white teachers in schools and steadily increasing, while more than half of the students are non white and they predict that there will be more coming in the future. In Wake County only 3% out of 11,000 teachers were black men. When jobs open up the thought of becoming a teacher is less of a idea to people of color, so that is the reason that majority of the teachers are white. This problem isn't in the past it is still a problem today.

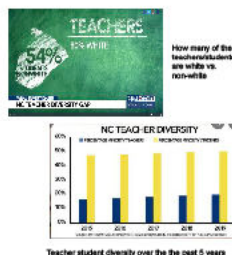
Study shows that when non-white students had a teacher that looked like them by third grade they are 13% more likely to apply for college. If they had two they would be 32% more likely to apply for college. The reason why they are more likely to apply, is because they will have a role model that looks like them so they will believe that they can do great things!

Some people will call this a minority gap this is an outdated term minority means "A racial/ ethnic minority is a person whose race or ethnicity is a non-dominant race within the group. In the United States, racial/ethnic minorities are generally considered to include Hispanic/Latinos, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and those of two or more races." It is outdated because it is supporting the fact that if you are



Change is the amount of how many people of color there are.

Grace Libby's Reflection
 We can practice anti-racism in this area by trying not to stereotype non-white students. So don't assume that they're less smart than you or bad people because they don't look like you.



Alexandria Echevarria Reflection
 We can practice anti-racism in this area by showing the younger generation that the world has a mix of different races and ethnicities. It also shows kids that other people who look like them can do the things that they want to do.

To learn more, visit hthunboxed.org & hthgse.edu

