

Racially charged events spark classroom intervention

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As we approach Juneteenth, a day marked each year to commemorate the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, new research in the INFORMS journal *Management Science* finds that racially-charged

events and protests over the past decade have a direct and positive effect on what children are learning in U.S. public school classrooms.

The researchers looked at the timing of high-profile police brutality and other racially-charged events to identify their effect on antiracism resources in the classroom.

"We find a significant increase in antiracism requests following the killing of George Floyd in 2020. We also find an increase in requests for [books](#) featuring Latinx, Asian, Muslim and Jewish cultures, suggesting that a focus on equality for one group can spill over and yield culturally aware dialogues for other groups as well," says Saharsh Agarwal of Carnegie Mellon University.

The study, "Antiracist Curriculum and Digital Platforms: Evidence from Black Lives Matter," was conducted by Agarwal alongside Ananya Sen, also of Carnegie Mellon University.

The study focused on the digital platform DonorsChoose, the largest crowdfunding platform for [public school teachers](#).

"In the four months following George Floyd's death, more than 91% of antiracism projects posted in response to his death were successfully funded, enabling teachers to acquire books worth \$3.4 million, reaching more than half a million students," continued Agarwal of the Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy at CMU.

Further analysis suggests that these books are now regularly used in the classroom to stimulate conversations related to [racial equality](#) and empathy.

"The results were driven primarily by teachers whose students are younger than 10 years old and in schools at the lower end of the income

spectrum," says Agarwal. "The results also show the same significant effects in Republican areas, although they are lower than in Democratic areas. This suggests that DonorsChoose allows teachers to overcome geographical frictions and not be limited by local opinions on what is important to teach in the classroom."

More information: Saharsh Agarwal et al, Antiracist Curriculum and Digital Platforms: Evidence from Black Lives Matter, *Management Science* (2022). [DOI: 10.1287/mnsc.2021.4281](https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2021.4281)

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