



PRINCIPAL
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UNT DALLAS

DESIGN THINKING SHOWCASE
PIC
LEADERSHIP
COLLABORATION

Showcasing the 2020 Cohort
Design Thinking Campus Action Projects

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Greater Agency & Equity Through Collaboration

CHAD SCHWABEROW, M.ED.

Academic Director
Uplift Infinity High School
Uplift Education



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

My goal was to utilize opportunities for community organizing to empower diverse student and teacher voices across the Uplift Infinity community, leading towards more independent student and teacher agency aligned to identity development and a sense of belonging. As Paolo Frier said in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", "The more completely they (students) accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them."

Empathy interviews in 2020-2021 demonstrated some desire to be involved in the process of campus improvement, but students really only became involved in roles assigned to them (like a class), with one exception- Hispanic Heritage Month (the inaugural community-led prototype and initial benchmark for scholar agency). This led to a brief exploration of immigration law, but fizzled after the presidential election. The third iteration of a community planning prototype was strategic planning, lasting from March to May. 78 stakeholders joined in this process, creating a 5-year vision of a graduating scholar. Again, student agency, voice, and empowerment were key words repeated throughout the conversation. Seven parents had key voices in the process and two students had critical voices in what would become the final vision document.

In 2021-2022, the seeds that were sewn in the first three prototypes truly sprouted, nurtured by teacher training through Lassiter Consulting on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as rising scholar and teacher voice shining a light on ongoing racist, homophobic, and sexist language and actions. Though this will continue to be a targeted area for improvement, Hispanic Heritage Month included over 100 student volunteers and authentic sharing of Hispanic culture. Shortly after, the school's Gay-Straight Alliance became more publicly active, a Black Student Union was founded, and a focus group to tackle equity issues convened. This group would later lead to an EmpowerHER Hour group.

The final prototype was a "Real Talk" Conference, student named and organized as a partnership between the Black Student Union, Academic Director, and the larger Uplift community. In the end, over 50 students from 5 total high schools shared their talents and ideas to focus on equity "rooted in the black experience". Unlike the initial prototype, all current prototypes have now become sustainable centerpieces within the school, with student surveys showing the affinity groups to be the most fulfilling activities available, alongside sports teams.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Students
- Teachers
- General School Community

MEASURES OF SUCCESS & IMPACT

- Three affinity groups were founded this year (Black Student Union, EmpowerHER Hour, and an unnamed group exploring racism/homophobia/sexism, including members of the pre-established GSA).
- One district-wide conference, led by teachers, administration, student leaders, and members of the community and larger organization. Over 50 students from four schools, parents, children of teachers, Uplift Board Members, and teachers from four schools attended.
- Campus Sense of Belonging Data (from student survey)
 - The campus showed an increase of:
 - 20% from Black/African American students (double second highest demographic gain)
 - 9% from Females
 - 10% (above) the Uplift Education network average on the question, "How much respect do other students show you?"
 - Highest Social/Emotional Learning results of Uplift secondary schools