

Identity Intersections in the Classroom: The Impact of Teacher Identity on Student Experience

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The 2014/2015 school year marks a turning point in the demography of American education. For the first time ever, nonwhite students constitute the majority of elementary and secondary public school enrollment. Despite this, America's teaching profession remains overwhelmingly white. What are the consequences of this demographic divide for students' classroom experiences? I address this question using new student survey data from the Measures of Effective Teaching study, the most comprehensive study of teaching practice ever conducted in the United States. I find that both black and Hispanic students report that being taught by same-group teachers improves their classroom experience in significant ways. However, these reported benefits are concentrated in English Language Arts and not math. Moreover, the specific benefits that black students see with black teachers are meaningfully different than those that Hispanic students see with Hispanic teachers. All told, results both reinforce and complicate existing work, with implications for sociological theory and social policy.

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