

The Power of Background Stories Infographics to Support Engagement with Research

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In collaboration with Background Stories, the Research Translation Platform team of the Evidence-to-Impact Collaborative distributed a resource about the research on teaching about race and racism in schools.

Together, we conducted an experiment to understand how people engage differently with a [written fact sheet](#) compared to a [Background Stories infographic](#).

We distributed to 5,159 policymakers—half of whom received an email about and directing them to an infographic, the other half of whom received an email about and directing them to a two-page text brief. After recipients had two weeks to interact with the email and linked materials, we analyzed how engagement looked different for each email.

Compared to the people who received the email about the text brief, those who received the email about the Background Stories infographic:

- Were **16%** more likely to **open the email** (34.8% vs 38.4%)
- Were **40%** more likely to **click the email link** to the research information (4.8% vs 6.7%)
- Were **2.2x** as likely to **engage** with the page (31% vs 50%)
- Were **half as likely to bounce** from the page (exit the site from the landing page) (69% vs 50%)
- Spent an average of **60% more time on the page** (25sec vs 39sec; not a statistically meaningful difference)

So, what?

These results illustrate the power of Background Stories' products **to effectively communicate information with audiences** who are constantly battling **information overload**.

People who received the Background Stories infographic **engaged more** with the content **across a number of meaningful metrics**, suggesting they **processed the information deeply** and felt encouraged **to learn more**.

The Nitty Gritty

- Recipients were chosen based on relevant committee membership.
- The recipients (N = 5159) were randomized, stratifying by whether they were an official (n = 2099) or a staffer (n = 3060).
- The infographic page included a link to the brief page, and the brief page included a link to the infographic, so each recipient was able to see both formats.
- Open and click rates were tracked using industry standard metrics.
- The methodology is similar to that of this article (<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306404>) and this presentation (<https://www.quorum.us/info/research-backed-tips-for-emailing-legislators/>)
- The email was sent in early October 2022; approximately one month before Election Day.

Emails (bold added for clarity; not bolded in distribution)

Subject: Research brief on teaching about race
Good morning, [person's name]!
I am excited to pass along a detailed resource about the research on the impacts of teaching students about race and racism. My collaborators and I created a couple pages of content that summarizes the literature (see here). As you prepare for the 2023 session, please feel free to reach out with any questions.
Hope things are going well!
Warmly, [name]
[signature block]
<small>Information about this email may be tracked for quality and research purposes using industry-standard methods. Questions can be directed to the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775 and ORProtections@psu.edu, or Elizabeth Long at ecl5218@psu.edu. Please contact Morgan Thomas at Morgan.Thomas@research2policy.org to change preferences.</small>

Subject: Research infographic on teaching about race
Good morning, [person's name]!
I am excited to pass along a short resource about the research on the impacts of teaching students about race and racism. My collaborators and I created a one-page, clear infographic that summarizes the literature (see here). As you prepare for the 2023 session, please feel free to reach out with any questions.
Hope things are going well!
Warmly, [name]
[signature block]
<small>Information about this email may be tracked for quality and research purposes using industry-standard methods. Questions can be directed to the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775 and ORProtections@psu.edu, or Elizabeth Long at ecl5218@psu.edu. Please contact Morgan Thomas at Morgan.Thomas@research2policy.org to change preferences.</small>

Please direct questions to: Jessica_Pugel@research2policy.org

