

PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY AWARENESS

GEN
X

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Katie Newman
Ava Newton

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Danvers High School
60 Cabot Road
Danvers MA, 01923



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROBLEM

In 2021, the Danvers High hockey team was reported for hazing rituals that perpetuated themes of racism, homophobia, and bigotry. Not even a year later, Holten Richmond Middle School received public attention for antisemitic drawings written on their bathroom walls in permanent marker.

What is NEXGEN?

NEXGEN is a student run club dedicated to providing anti-bias training, curriculum, and interactive games to elicit change in our school culture.



According to 2019 Massachusetts hate crime data, about **1 in every 5 hate crimes occurred in an educational institution.** Making schools the **third most common** location for hate crimes.

PURPOSE

To combat these issues, we want to **create an educated and safe community of students and faculty.** We will recruit freshmen believing that if we begin with the students who are the most unfamiliar with the past events, it will create a better overall environment as they progress into being the leaders of our school. We will implement **a virtual escape room game** across the entire Danvers High School population in order to educate those who are not directly a part of NEXGEN.



Janelle Ridley

Associate Director of the Racial Justice & Tech Policy Project at Brandeis University

The advisor of NEXGEN, and will oversee the program. She has experience with educating students on racism through game design, and she has connections with the NAACP and local committees to establish our program and overall education.



OUR MILESTONES



Lead Faculty Professional Development



Initiating Game Creation



Completion of the Game



First NEXGEN Meeting



Introduction Assembly to Freshman Class



Presentation of the Game to Danvers Community

MEET THE LEADERS



Ava Newton
Chief Executive Officer



Katie Newman
Chief Operating Officer
Head of Marketing



Tristan Hanson
Chief Technology Officer



KEY METRICS

ENGAGEMENT

- Number of members attending each meeting
- Number of teachers attending professional development
- Questions asked (by members and teachers) at each meeting

COMMUNICATIONS

- Number of member responses per message
- Response trends, frequency of member responses
- Response type

IMPACT

- Growth in survey responses as curriculum progresses
- Faculty responses and commentary after game exposure

IMPRESSIONS

- Number of accounts reached per week, and what percent of these engage
- Followers gained per week
- Like count/reach of individual posts

GOALS & TIMELINE

C	CREATE CURRICULUM	2022	MAY	May-June 2022: Initial Research, Idea Creation, & Club Development
	U		UNIFY SCHOOL COMMUNITY	JUN
L	LED BY STUDENTS	2022	AUG	August 2022: Creating Structure of the Club
	T		TEACH EDUCATORS	SEP
U	UTILIZE GAME CREATION FOR UNDERSTANDING	2022	OCT	October 14, 2022: Presentation to Freshmen Class
	R		RECRUIT FRESHMEN	NOV
E	EXPAND PROGRAM	2023	JAN	January 2023: Initiating Through our Eyes: Game Creation
				MAR
			APR	May 2023: Completion of "Through Our Eyes"
			MAY	
			JUN	June 2023: Presentation of Through Our Eyes to the Danvers Community

EXECUTION

Curriculum Development

- In June, NEXGEN members came together to build a curriculum to combat the on-going racial injustices at our school and to educate the future members of NEXGEN.



Professional Development

- In late August, the leaders organized a training for the entire faculty of DHS. We were assigned a topic either about racism, homophobia, sexism, or antisemitism to address with the teachers, in a conversation-based discussion.



Freshmen Recruitment

- In October, we organized a presentation with information and incentives to gather the core members of our club in order to begin meetings.



Implementing the Curriculum

- Every Wednesday at 6 pm we meet to discuss the curriculum and game design. Each meeting begins with a meal, and we talk about how our week has been and anything going on in our lives.

Game Creation

- As of May, we will have a draft of our game, Through Our Eyes, that includes an informal way of educating students on microaggressions, racism, and mental health struggles.



EVALUATION OF KEY METRICS

ENGAGEMENT

100% teacher involvement
Over 100 faculty members attended

COMMUNICATIONS

94% of freshmen responded to messages
100% of responses were positive

IMPRESSIONS

116 followers
Averaged 82 likes per post

IMPACT

100% freshmen member participation during game creation

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Bring NEXGEN to Middle School

NEXGEN should be introduced to younger students, who may be more impressionable. The curriculum can be simplified for young students. We expect that if we begin training earlier, we can prevent future negative interpersonal issues in high school.

Implement Curriculum into Local Districts

Danvers isn't the only district that deals with issues of racism, and we feel that the work being done will inspire other districts to change their school culture. We intend to use NEXGEN as a model that can be replicated throughout Massachusetts and help initiate the creation of NEXGEN clubs of their own.

Refine Curriculum

To achieve better success, we will review our current curriculum and readjust based on our experiences. In the case that we continue using the version of the game we have created, there will be many meeting adjustments to be made and more overall focus on the expansion of NEXGEN.



II. INITIATING

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Approximately **one in three** high school students reported **perceived racism** during their lifetime, including two thirds of Asian and more than half of Black and multiracial students. Student perceptions of racism were associated with poor mental health; difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions; and a lack of connection with persons at school during the COVID-19 pandemic." In 2021, the Danvers High hockey team was reported for hazing rituals that included themes of racism, homophobia, and bigotry. Not even a year later, Holten Richmond Middle School received public attention for antisemitic drawings written on their bathroom walls in permanent marker. Following intense criticism due to the lack of action during the hockey team incident, the former superintendent resigned and new administration was put into action. This resulted in positive action towards "building a sense of community" at our school. The new administration has implemented a number of changes for incoming student athletes including mandatory attendance for a week of training that includes: healthy habits, how to be a good teammate, and anti-bias training provided by the current captains of their sport.

"Do we settle for the world as it is or do we work for the world AS IT SHOULD BE ?" -Michelle Obama, *Becoming*



According to 2019 Massachusetts hate crime data, about **1 in every 5 hate crimes occurred in an educational institution**. Making schools the **third most common** location for hate crimes.

Immediately following the hockey team incident, there was a report on Twitter that read "the district continues to work collaboratively with community partners to strengthen and grow its culture. We recognize the need for transparency, change and trust within the school district, and we are continuing to make improvements. We consider the safety and freedom from discrimination within our schools to be a top priority both in the short and longer term, as we work towards a culture where ALL students feel supported and accepted in our school communities." In this report, it specifically highlights the work by Janelle Ridley presented in a seminar regarding racism and equality that created a movement for leadership and community.

B. PROJECT SCOPE

NEXGEN Mission Statement

NEXGEN is a student run club dedicated to providing anti-bias training, curriculum, and interactive games to elicit change in our school culture.

PURPOSE

Our NEXGEN mission statement reads, "a student run club dedicated to providing anti-bias training, curriculum, and interactive games to elicit change in our school culture." This aligns with our overall purpose, which is to create an educated and safe community of students and faculty at Danvers High School. We will recruit freshmen, because if we begin with the students who are the most unfamiliar with the past events, it will create a better overall environment as they progress into being the leaders of our school. We will implement a virtual escape room game aimed at the entire Danvers High School population in order to educate those who are not directly apart of NEXGEN.

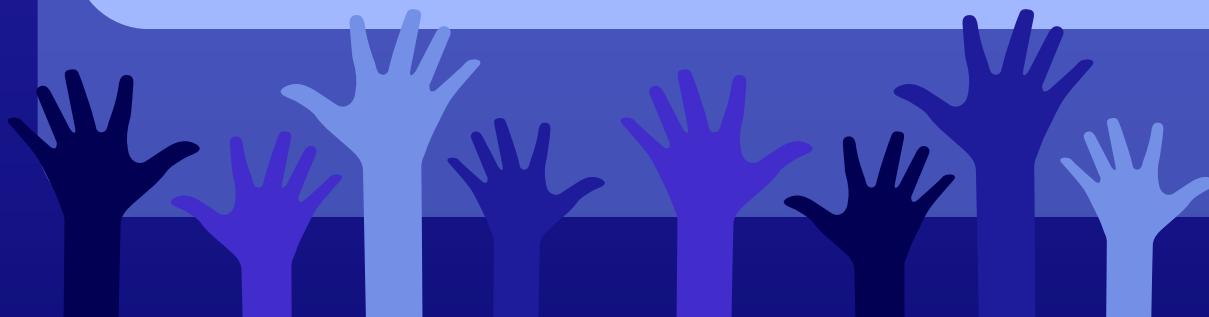
RATIONALE

NEXGEN is a program dedicated to fighting against the ongoing racial injustice at our school.

To protect students of color, we will use our curriculum to educate students in our club to promote a safe school environment while simultaneously educating faculty with training during professional development. NEXGEN utilizes a gaming aspect to simulate real life feelings in order for players to gain perspective on racism, microaggressions, and mental health. We anticipate that learning intense topics through game design will allow for easy comprehension, and an interactive method of communicating unspoken bias'.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

Danvers High School strives to be a community where students feel comfortable advocating against injustice and standing up to administrators when it is necessary and appropriate to do so. We want our club members to gain confidence when speaking in front of their peers so that when they are the future leaders of our school, they will stand up for what is right. As a densely white population of students who will be advocating for minorities, we believe all students should feel supported standing up for others. We will encourage students to change their perspectives on the school as it is, for what it could be with the proper knowledge on racism, microaggressions, and mental health. Through game design, we expect that it will make learning hard topics easier, not only to educate them, but to fully grasp the concept of these situations. We expect that they will apply anti-bias behavior after completing one session of our game.





III. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

A. PROJECT GOALS

C	CREATE CURRICULUM	In May 2022, we created a curriculum focused on educating students about social inequities. This curriculum includes 4 topics: racism, social media usage, LGBTQ+, and microaggressions.
U	UNIFY SCHOOL COMMUNITY	Although an impact on school culture won't be able to be evaluated in the timeline of our project, we hope this will gradually improve even after we graduate. This improvement can be measured by a decrease in discriminatory incidences and an increase in positive actions.
L	LED BY STUDENTS	Our completed game, Through Our Eyes, acts as a reflection of the experiences of all of NEXGEN's members. Each of the students will contribute to either the game's design and format, character experiences, or general research.
T	TEACH EDUCATORS	In August 2022, we hosted a professional development meeting with DHS staff that will measure their knowledge and comfort level regarding our 4 overarching topics focused on in the curriculum and foster open conversation with the faculty.
U	UTILIZE GAME CREATION FOR UNDERSTANDING	By February, we developed the basis for the game: a playable escape room with the help of an outside game designer that accurately demonstrates the microaggressions and hardships experienced by NEXGEN members.
R	RECRUIT FRESHMEN	We recruited at least 10 freshmen into NEXGEN through an introductory assembly held on October 14.
E	EXPAND PROGRAM	By June of 2023, we will add the implementation of NEXGEN into at least two other high schools.

B. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

LEADERS



Ava Newton
Chief Executive Officer

ABILITIES:

- Confidence
- Coordination

STRENGTHS:

- Public Speaking
- Clarity

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Organizes weekly meetings
- Liaison between Ms. Ridley and NEXGEN



Katie Newman
Chief Operating Officer
Head of Marketing

ABILITIES:

- Organized
- Marketing

STRENGTHS:

- Managing and promoting social media
- Communication

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Maintains social media platforms
- Communicates with members



Tristan Hanson
Chief Technology Officer

ABILITIES:

- Organized
- Creative

STRENGTHS:

- Webmaster
- Consistency

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develops creative media for NEXGEN social media and game design



Janelle Ridley
Associate Director of the
Racial Justice x Tech
Policy Project

The advisor of NEXGEN, she provides guidance, support, and oversight to a student organization, ensuring it operates within our school's policies. She also provides finances and fosters an inclusive club culture



Irma Zamarripa
Eli J. & Phyllis N. Segal
Citizen Leadership
Program at Brandeis
University

Works as an Intern for Ms. Ridley, raising awareness about the importance of human rights, equity, and diversity by continuing to explore her passion for education and law.



Ezra Tefera
Racial Justice x Tech
Policy Project Program
Administrator and
Research Associate

Responsible for creating the digital concept, game play mechanics, and overall experience of a virtual escape room. Must balance creative vision with technical constraints to create our game.

C. SCHEDULE

OUR MILESTONES



Lead Faculty Professional Development



Introduction Assembly to Freshman Class



First NEXGEN Meeting



Completion of the Game



Initiating Game Creation



Presentation of the Game to Danvers Community

TIMELINE TO REACH EACH MILESTONE

May-June 2022:

Initial Research, Idea Creation, & Club Development

Research top issues teenagers face in schools so we can address them, and brainstorm ways to combat these issues

August 31, 2022:

Led Faculty Professional Development

Lead an open discussion with Danvers faculty regarding social injustices

May 2023:

Completion of the Game

Complete final touches on virtual escape room

August 2022:

Creating Structure of the Club

Develop meeting schedule, curriculum distribution schedule, and general goals of NEXGEN

October 14, 2022:

Presentation to Freshmen Class

Present NEXGEN to Freshman Class during assembly, recruit new members

2022

MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

2023

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

June-July 2022:

Curriculum Development

Develop a clear curriculum that will guide & inform the members during our meetings

October 19, 2022:

First NEXGEN Meeting

First meeting with freshmen to give them a more in depth overview on the club and responsibilities

June 2023:

Presentation of Game to Danvers Community

We will present our finished game to Danvers staff, students, and surrounding schools.

August 30, 2022:

Planning for Faculty Professional Development

We will meet days prior with the current members. Each member will be given a topic to discuss with the faculty that they will have to research.

November 2022:

Initiating Game Creation

We will begin developing rooms, characters, and a storyline for our game.

D. QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

KEY METRICS

Measurement

Number of members attending each meeting

Number of teachers attending professional development

Questions asked (by members and teachers) at each meeting

ENGAGEMENT

Attendance of both club members and teachers will be logged in order to **recognize trends** and **track overall interest** in NEXGEN. Additionally, the number of **questions** members and teachers ask and overall **participation** will be tracked.



COMMUNICATIONS

Number of member responses per message

Response trends, frequency of member responses

Response type

Emails and **text messages** will be sent out to club members regularly, and both the frequency and number of **responses** we get will be used to **monitor member commitment** and **interest** in NEXGEN.

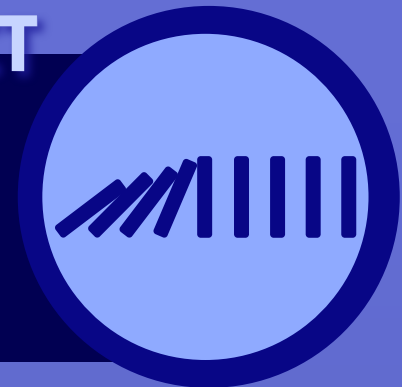


IMPACT

Growth in survey responses as curriculum progresses

Faculty responses and commentary after game exposure

A **survey** will be administered to members at the beginning, middle, and end of the curriculum in order to track NEXGEN's **impact** on their **mindset** and **daily actions**. Trends in growth across these surveys will be documented.



IMPRESSIONS

Number of accounts reached per week and what percent of these accounts engage

Followers gained per week

Like count/impressions of individual posts

By closely monitoring our Instagram platform's Insights, we will be able to **track overall trends**, **accounts reached**, and **engagement**. This information will be used to make changes necessary to **increase follower count and popularity** as a whole.



E. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

RISK PROBABILITY AND IMPACT MATRIX

	Description	Impact	Effect	Mitigation Strategy
Political Pushback	The political climate in our country is unstable and divided. Our topic could be seen as controversial among some citizens.	25%	This could impact the student's urge to join our club and halt our overall objective.	Continue promoting positive feedback on social media
New Negative Occurrences	If students at the middle school or high school intentionally promote inappropriate propaganda.	50%	This would show students' regression on social issues.	Organize a meeting with the faculty from middle school to incorporate NEXGEN's curriculum at their school.
Interest	Students' lack of interest would severely impact the success and production of Through our Eyes.	85%	This would make it nearly impossible for our club to function as intended.	Incorporate the gaming aspect of our curriculum earlier into the meetings

To assess our potential risks, we evaluated plausible risks that would negatively impact our project growth. First, if there was political pushback in our community, it could taint the message to which our club is trying to bring awareness. This risk was assessed at a **25% impact** because it is highly unlikely that this occurs in our town. Another halt in our project would be if students at school continue to act inappropriately. This was assessed to have a **50% impact** because at this point, students are still adjusting to the new administration. We understand it takes time to apply what they're learning about these issues, but it could still negatively impact our message if students aren't growing and adapting to new information. To combat these potential risks, we will begin recruiting at the direct grade level of interest. Finally, the risk that would bring the most concern to our project is the student interest. This risk has an **85% impact** on our project. In order to prevent this, we will continue promoting our club more heavily on the game design to intrigue students.

F. PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

ITEMS	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED VALUE	DONATION
Meeting Space	An area with tables/chairs to collaborate & discuss curriculum	\$250 for 25 weeks	Provided by Danvers High School
Weekly Meetings	A meal is provided at every meeting to accommodate for the late meeting time	\$35/week 25 weeks	Provided by our advisor, Ms. Ridley
Professional Development Supplies	Sharpie markers, poster boards, Post-its notes, and pens	\$25	Provided by Danvers High School
NEXGEN Apparel	1 sweatshirt for each member (20 sweatshirts) ordered via Custom Ink	\$500	Provided by our advisor, Ms. Ridley

TOTAL COST FOR NEXGEN
\$0



IV. EXECUTION

Getting Started

May 2, 2022

To start, our new administration immediately understood that **change was necessary** and opted to bring in a professional, Janelle Ridley, a woman well-versed in combating injustices for students. Ms. Ridley was welcomed to our school to bring the student athletes together to address the ongoing issues at our school. In her seminar, she presented the idea of a club. She explained that the intended goal of this club would be to **create a safe atmosphere for students** to express their concerns at school and to ultimately educate our community with a **game on social injustices**. The club would be short term and the simple goal of creating a board game similar to The Game of Life. The board game would have characters resembling student athletes who are racist, struggle with mental health, and are negatively impacted by social media. The club would be "Leadership through Game Design". Ms. Ridley has previously created games that are informative but fun to teach educators and students about equity and inclusion. We decided to collaborate with her on this idea because adding a game aspect to bring awareness is not very common. The meetings began inside a classroom in the library with only students independently and to later discuss our ideas with Ms. Ridley.

Curriculum Development

June 8, 2022

Ms. Ridley's first vision was quickly aborted when we realized we wanted to make a longer lasting impact on our school culture. Leadership through Game Design was now being rebranded into something more powerful, NEXGEN Equity and Inclusion Leadership. We proposed our idea: **Switching from Game Design to Curriculum Design**. In order to create a curriculum, we needed to find our target audience. We realized that freshmen are the newest and most impressionable students at our school, so we **switched our original target audience** from student athletes to the entire freshmen class. We hope that this will combat prior issues from middle school into new beginnings at the high school. To continue the original gaming aspect of the club, we continued coming together to discuss the complex game design. We are excited to showcase the finished virtual game to our school community. The body of our curriculum is based on data from online resources that give information on each individual issue, and it is separated into sections with guided worksheets to reinforce understanding. This would not be possible without Ms. Ridley. She is the foundation of our club because without her help, we would not have access to the resources to create this game in order to create overall change within the student culture at our school.



NEXGEN meeting, Ms. Ridley discussing the current direction of the curriculum

Professional Development

August 31, 2022

In order to ensure our club would be understood and supported by the Danvers High faculty, **the leaders organized a training** for the entire faculty of DHS. The NEXGEN club members gathered at the high school to present our curriculum to the faculty. We were separated into 4 groups of two together to collaboratively present in front of 20 teachers per group. Each group was assigned a topic either about racism, homophobia, sexism, or antisemitism to address with the teachers in a **conversation based discussion**. Each teacher was given a Post-it note and a pen, and they were told to respond to each question presented to them by the student leaders on their Post-it. This way, they were able to discuss anonymously while seeing everyone's ideas. The ultimate goal of the training was to create a secure relationship between students and teachers. Teachers responded to this training positively and throughout the meeting they were open and honest.



Members of NEXGEN gathered before the professional development

At the end of the training, teachers requested we meet more often regarding these issues. A comment that stood out during the discussion was "To see students coming together, and actually putting their energy into this outside of school about the problems here is really refreshing to be a part of."

Freshmen Recruitment

October 14, 2022



The core leaders after presenting to the freshmen at the assembly

To begin implementing meetings, we had to recruit the core members. We met with our principal to introduce our new target audience, and he suggested **recruiting during an assembly**. We then scheduled a time for all of the freshmen to meet in our auditorium to promote our club. We created a slideshow that included information about meeting times, incentives, and the overall mission of our project. We created a Google Form that had questions about their relationship with social media, their knowledge on inequalities, if they could define "equity", and lastly a recruitment form to track our future leaders. When our form was approved by our principal, we were ready to present it to the freshmen. During the presentation, each member spoke about a slide and the importance of our message. Included at the end of our slideshow was a QR code that connected to the Google Form. This way, we learned a lot of valuable information, and we had officially gathered our freshmen members to begin implementing our curriculum.

Implementing the Curriculum

October 19, 2022

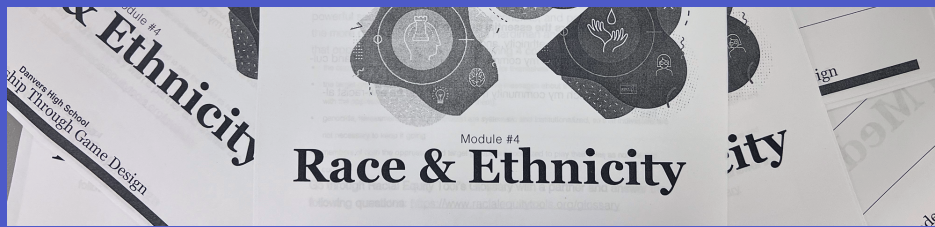
Our first club meeting took place on October 19th, and we had a turnout of 10 freshmen on top of the other existing members. Since then, **NEXGEN has expanded over 30%** to 30 members total. Our meetings take place every Wednesday night at 6:00 pm, and they go for about an hour and a half. We begin every meeting with a meal that Ms. Ridley provides, which we've noticed has brought comfort and connections between the members of our group. While the members unwind and eat, we go around in a circle and talk about how our week as been and anything going on in our lives.

This time in our meetings is crucial in creating bonds with our members as well as allowing them to speak openly about mental health and other issues they are having inside or outside of school. Over the past couple months, we've noted the members' weekly check ins and noticed many **people becoming more open every meeting**. After we finish our opening, we get started into our curriculum and game designing aspect of the club. While working alongside the curriculum, we decided that the most reoccurring issues in our school are **microaggressions aimed towards sexuality, gender, race, and mental health**. To be an active participant in our group, freshmen have been assigned to create characters that resemble every aspect of themselves. We think its important for our game to be relatable to its players, so having our characters represent real students creates a sense of familiarity.

To ensure every meeting is planned out beforehand, the core leaders meet with Ms. Ridley every Tuesday at 5:30 pm. This time is used to communicate about how we could improve and expand on our program, as well as plan any upcoming events. **Ms. Ridley is a vital piece of our club** and without her we wouldn't be able to run efficiently. She guides our meeting process to ensure participation levels are high, we stay on task, and meet all of our goals.



Katie directing the plans of the curriculum for the oncoming weeks after winter break



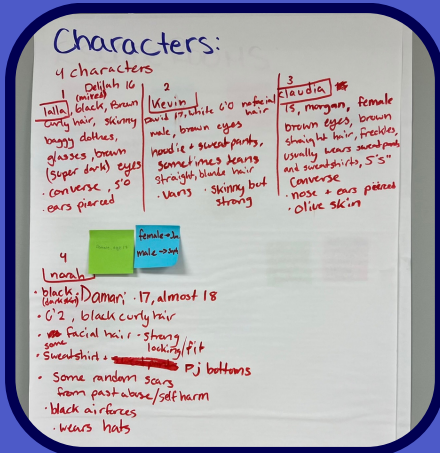
"Race & Ethnicity" portion of curriculum that was recently introduced to NEXGEN members

Through Our Eyes: Game Creation

November 3 - May 2023



The logo for our game shown above, and below is the brainstorm for our characters



We began mapping Through Our Eyes the second week after the meetings started. We decided to create a virtual escape room because we want our game to be interactive. To ensure Through Our Eyes works correctly and is designed properly, Ms. Ridley brought in **a professional game designer** for NEXGEN, Ezra Tefera; who will bring our game to life. Through Our Eyes will be centered around the topics that our freshmen feel are the most recurring issue within our high school. After multiple conversations with the NEXGEN freshmen, they decided that Through Our Eyes should be centered around microaggressions, racism, and mental health.

The project managers have no experience with game creation, so Ezra explained that we would have several stages; including idea generation, concept development, game design, programming, art and asset creation, sound design, testing, and then presentation. Our first step was already mostly completed, we decided it should be a virtual escape room with different settings according to each specific character. Then we realized we would need to divide and specialize to create a detailed storyline, characters, game mechanics, and visual designs.

To ensure success and productivity, we split into four groups. Each group was tasked with a different aspect of the game design process to be completed. The groups are: the Photographers, Character Designers, Research & Data Team, and the Room Creators.

We want Through Our Eyes to be relatable, so the setting of it will be Danvers High School. Our Photographer group was given the task of taking specific pictures of our school. This is so that Ezra is able to get an accurate visual for the details of our classrooms, chairs, desks, hallways, and computers into small digital versions to be played. Our freshmen club members have created characters that have similar qualities to people at our school, while basing them on the topics we chose to focus our meetings on.

Our Character Designers are currently expanding on the previous characters, and they will be made into playable characters with their own personal profiles and stories.

To create the game mechanics, we decided when a player starts Through Our Eyes, they will be prompted to choose from 4 character profiles, each will have their own story line and a requirement that the player goes through in the eyes of the person they have chosen. Each player will have 8-12 issues to work through as they go into the different rooms, and the player will be timed as if going through real life. The issues that pop up will have multiple choice options for the player to choose from and the player is to answer based on how they think their character would respond in real life. If the player answers each issue accurately, a fact about the specific topic will appear, and allow them to continue to the next question/room. As the player progresses through our game, the questions will get more challenging and involve more critical thinking. Each fact being presented will be checked by the Research & Data Team.

The Room Creators are responsible for deciding the setting for each room in Through Our Eyes. The Room Creators decided that Through Our Eyes will be centered around four different rooms; their bedroom, their living room, a classroom, and the school hallway. We are currently in the process of creating our first room which will start inside the character's bedroom, and they will work their way into the school. Each room will have an individual scenario, which could include a family situation or issues in the hallways.

Through Our Eyes is estimated to take about 20 minutes to complete, 5 minutes for each room. Our Room Creators are going to be personally working with Ezra to intricately design each room and ensure they are accurately depicted.

The Room Creators and the Character Designers will collaborate for the art and asset creation stage. They will decide the environments conflicts will take place and the overall sound effects. The sound design is crucial because it will help create an immersive gaming experience.

Throughout this process, we are aiming to create a thought-provoking and immersive experience that highlights the systemic injustices on marginalized communities within our school. Through Our Eyes will enable students to think critically about their own biases and privilege. To achieve this goal, Ezra will use a variety of game mechanics, such as quick decision-making scenarios, dialogue between characters incorporated in their home lives, and puzzles that reflect real-world challenges supported by our Research & Data Team. We will implement meaningful choices and consequences that reflect the complex and nuanced nature of social injustices.

The completed game is projected to be done in early May. It will become a website application intended for mobile phone use. We plan to host a demo play-through to identify any bugs or issues that need to be fixed before we arrange the mandatory presentation of our game to the incoming freshman of our school. Since the game is being finished towards the end of the year, it will be launched in the next school year.



Delilah

16 yrs (she/her)
DHS Freshman

INTERESTS: Social media, hanging with friends, field hockey, and online gaming.

STRUGGLES: Feels detached from field hockey, because she doesn't feel accepted by her varsity teammates during school. On top of that, her parents recently separated. She feels depressed.

LOOKING FOR: Someone to connect with, and something other than nicotine to exert her frustration with her depression.

SOCIAL NETWORK: Students in band

Delilah is a sample character profile made collaboratively by the members of NEXGEN



This is the physical drawing of Delilah made by our freshmen member, Lalla

Networking and Collaborations January 4 - June 2023

The hard work being put into NEXGEN is continually recognized by organizations and schools outside Danvers High School. Over the past two months, NEXGEN has been connecting with the Danvers Public Schools' School Committee, and the Danvers Human Rights & Inclusion Committee. Due to the unavailability of Tristan and Katie, leaders Kevin and Isiah stepped in to lead a presentation to the Danvers Public Schools' school committee alongside Ava. Our presentation showcased NEXGEN's mission as well as requests of additional support from the younger schools and to potentially have NEXGEN be a real course freshmen can take in the future. We wanted the committee's support through NEXGEN's progression as not only a club, but as a program. The Danvers Human Rights & Inclusion Committee has similar goals to **"stand against hatred and support those who experience marginalization due to their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status."** Their beliefs align perfectly with our goals as a program, and we have rightfully earned their respect and support.

Two nearby districts, Winthrop and Framingham, are interested in implementing NEXGEN into their school curriculum. Last month, Lisa Howard, superintendent of Winthrop schools, shadowed one of our meetings to get an idea for how NEXGEN meets. Mrs. Howard heard about NEXGEN through Ms. Ridley, and she was immediately intrigued. After she shadowed our meeting, her decision to bring NEXGEN to Winthrop High, was solidified. Additionally, our previous curriculum director of Danvers High School, Amy Gerade, who is currently the principal at a much larger and more diverse school system, reached out to us about NEXGEN. Mrs. Gerade and Mrs. Howard want us to introduce NEXGEN to their high schools and help them build a similar program. Before we begin presenting NEXGEN at other schools, we must confirm that it will achieve its intended purpose starting with Danvers. We can do this by **evaluating and adjusting the curriculum as needed** based on the feedback and responses from players. Once we confirm there is an accurate version of the curriculum, the seniors of NEXGEN will be interning with Ms. Ridley to bring NEXGEN to these schools.

Ms. Ridley has connections with the program **NAACP**, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and has established NEXGEN as an aspiring organization. All of our club members have received permission slips regarding our involvement with the NAACP through Ms. Ridley. By associating with this well-institutionalized program we will establish a network of contacts that can help grow our credibility and we will gain knowledge and insights from the people we are seeking to represent. We hope that this relationship will help us to share our values and to have a safe environment for our group.



Leaders Isiah, Kevin, and Ava presenting to the Danvers School Committee about NEXGEN



NEXGEN members attending The Earthshot Prize at the JFK Foundation Library



NEXGEN collaborating with the NAACP Youth Council Meeting on March 20th from 7-9 speaking on how to further our mission

This way we are able to network with schools doing similar things, and connecting with students of color to hear their feedback on what we are trying to do for our school culture.

To begin our connection to NAACP Youth Council, NEXGEN will be collaborating with existing members on a Zoom meeting to discuss and go over our individual activism, and how we can grow more than just creating a game to become equal within school districts. The most recent meeting on March 20 from 7-8:30 pm, was a raging success with over 50 members combined of both programs getting to know each other. It was very eye opening for some members. Isha, a junior member of NEXGEN said, "it was interesting to listen to the students from Lowell speaking on all of the issues going on at their school. I've never heard of some of the situations they were mentioning." Overall, we can already observe the change in conversations coming from our connections with the NAACP.

Zoom meeting agenda from March 20

NAACP Youth Council agenda:
March 20th 2023, 7pm-8:30pm

Zoom Login Information:
Janelle Ridley is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: NAACP Youth Council
Time: Mar 20, 2023 7:00 Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89313848421?pwd=YNMyRUUwZWlHMDZlYUUsMmMxVkd2d2Z09
Meeting ID: 893 1384 8421
Passcode: 748100

1. Introductions and Ice Breaker:
Every student/adult-please introduce yourself!
Name and Pronouns
School Attending/Grade
Ice Breaker:
If you could be a superhero, which superhero would you be and why?
2. What is the NAACP and What it is Not
A brief understanding on the mission of the NAACP organization and why we are all here.
3. Norms Moving Forward/Logistical Planning/The Space You Create
I would like for each of you to set forth the norms for this council-how will you hold each other accountable? How often should this council meet? When should the council meet?
How will you show-up for each other? Expectations regarding respect and perspective as well as individual differences?
How do we appreciate one another even if we do not agree, but can agree to disagree? What expectations do you have of the adults on this council? What expectations do you have of the larger NAACP Organization?
4. Alignment and Synergy within the Youth Council
Why are you here and what are you looking for as an outcome? What do you want to be known for-core



V. MONITORING AND CONTROLLING

A. MONITORING

ENGAGEMENT

Member attendance is logged at each meeting and divided into leader and freshman groups. This data is entered into a **Google Sheet** where trends can be identified. Frequently asked questions by both members and teachers at weekly meetings and professional development is logged so we can address them in Through Our Eyes. In the earlier stages of NEXGEN meetings, Ms. Ridley tracked which members opened up about their personal struggles and mental health. Over time, she will assist us in identifying how many members demonstrated more comfort in regards to sharing with others.

COMMUNICATIONS

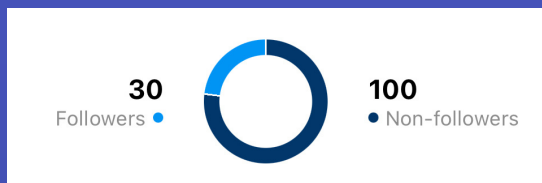
The number of member responses per message is logged in a **Google Sheet** so that an average of this data can be calculated. Additionally, we are identifying which of these responses are positive or negative and calculate the percentage of positive responses.

IMPACT

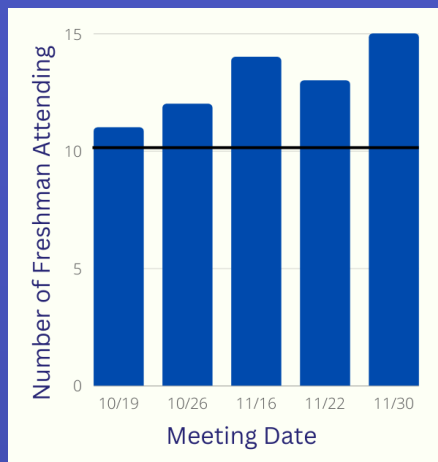
We will **compare freshman survey responses** from before to after curriculum exposure and calculate how many members felt positively impacted by NEXGEN. We will also log faculty responses after exposure to our game and see what percent were positive. Our long term impact will be more difficult to monitor in the time span of our project, but ultimately we can measure this by a **decrease in racist and discriminatory incidences** at DHS over the years as NEXGEN continues.

IMPRESSIONS

To track social media impressions, we'll utilize **Instagram's Insights**. Through this, we will track general trends weekly, including reach and engagement of new accounts, followers, and like count. Our likes on each post will be logged and graphed, where we will determine the correlation between time and like count.



Instagram Accounts Reached (March 29 - Apr 4)



As we expected to gain **10** new freshman this year, we exceeded this number by averaging **13** freshman attending each meeting

Additionally, attendance has **increased** as NEXGEN progresses

WEEKLY FRESHMAN ATTENDANCE

B. CONTROLLING

Issues Log

Description of the Problem	Reported By	Solution	Issue Status
Change in direction for the entire program from the original game design	Leaders	To combat with the old idea, a curriculum was created to properly implement the Game design into a learning atmosphere	Closed
Students who don't participate in athletics are unaware of NEXGEN club	Tristan	To reach students at a broader level, we organized an assembly for all freshmen students to gain exposure to our club	Closed
Meeting cancellations due to Ms. Ridley being unavailable to attend	Katie	To work around these issues, we attempt to reschedule for different days of the week or plan for an in-school meeting	Active
Rapid club expansion, and changes resulting in growth into surrounding areas	Ava	We are re-branding into a program, and we will be working with the NAACP to further our collaborative work	Active



VI. CLOSING THE PROJECT

A. EVALUATION OF KEY METRICS

ENGAGEMENT


of teachers at professional development were **engaged, curious, and participating**

faculty members across Danvers High School attended professional development

100%
over
100

COMMUNICATIONS

94% of freshman members **responded** to each message on average 

100% of responses were **positive** and demonstrated **interest** 

IMPRESSIONS

116

Current follower count

82

Average likes received on each Instagram post

IMPACT

As we are still in the active process of meeting regularly, the final survey has yet to be administered, making these results **to be determined**. Over time, we'll measure this impact by a decrease in discriminatory incidences in Danvers. We're proud to say that **100%** of our members are **actively involved in the Game Creation**.

ENGAGEMENT

We were thrilled to see this level of engagement from our Danvers staff, and realized they simply weren't educated on these more difficult conversations. This shows how Danvers staff are actively trying to make a change in our community.

IMPRESSIONS

With a higher percentage of non-followers interacting with our page compared to followers, this shows the reach we're getting to new accounts, which will ultimately increase our follower count. Additionally, we hope to put more time into our social media in the future to get a higher reach, so leaders can showcase their progress to a larger audience in years to come.

COMMUNICATIONS

With a lower freshmen response rate, we realize we could implement more engaging messages that would yield more responses. These positive responses show the commitment and interest members show in NEXGEN, increasing the likelihood of them participating in NEXGEN for years to come.

IMPACT

As we are still in the active process of meeting regularly, the final survey has yet to be administered, making these results to be determined. Having 100% of members involved in game creation ensures that Through Our Eyes is a true reflection of what NEXGEN has taught, and demonstrates meaningful, diverse, real-life experiences.

B. LESSONS LEARNED

To provide the most high quality experience for players, we have been continually extending our timeline dates. Moving forward with expansion, NEXGEN should commit to the goals that they set by making a calendar with specific dates and events to follow each week. For each organized meeting, there should be an overall objective or agenda to strictly follow. This is to ensure that the timeline dates are being met so that we can avoid extending any important dates.

NEXGEN should assign the role of social media coordinator to a current member, so that they can continue to keep a positive media presence. Additionally, NEXGEN should expand onto adult dominated social media to gain the respect of parents & adults who are active on social media.

For NEXGEN to run efficiently, we need all members to put forth their best effort. We believe we should have set rules/guidelines for members to follow in order to stay in the club. For new members later in the year, there should be an attendance rule as well as a form that confirms privacy (for each member to sign) before joining to ensure the conversations in NEXGEN are protected.

If NEXGEN comes together next year to create an updated version of Through Our Eyes we are creating right now, we expect that students should be meeting with our game designer early on. He should be involved with NEXGEN from the first meeting to keep a steady relationship.

At this point, we are exceeding the expectation of the original club by spreading our message to other communities. NEXGEN should proceed with the connection with NAACP and meeting with the Danvers committees.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

BRING NEXGEN TO LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

To follow up on the issues with antisemitism at our local middle school, we recommend that NEXGEN is introduced and implemented with an impressionable age group of students. The curriculum was made for high school but can be simplified for younger students. Students aged 11-14 are often immature and beginning training earlier may prevent future issues in high school.

In order to begin this process for future projects, the seniors in our club will be interning at the middle school to conference and adapt the current curriculum into an age appropriate version. The internship this year will include a focus on the 8th graders who will be attending high school next year, (to bring interest and awareness to them early on). Students will be playing Through Our Eyes to further their overall understanding and knowledge on microaggressions, racism, mental health, and the long term effects of social media.

EXPAND CURRICULUM INTO OTHER DISTRICTS

As NEXGEN evolves into a program, we intend that it will be implemented into local districts, and eventually school districts around the state. Our goal is to begin expansion after we showcase our game to the Danvers Public Schools. Our work is being recognized by the superintendent of not only our district but districts around the state. Danvers isn't the only district that deals with issues of racism, and we feel that the work being done will inspire other districts to change their school culture. We intend to **use NEXGEN as a model that can be replicated throughout Massachusetts** and help initiate the creation of NEXGEN clubs of their own. Our advisor has many outside connections to superintendents, school districts, and government officials. This gives us an overall advantage to spread NEXGEN and impact to schools that are in need of this kind of intervention.

REFINE CURRICULUM

For our next future NEXGEN CEO, we recommend they review our current curriculum and readjust based on our experiences. It is up for debate if the current version of Through Our Eyes will be implemented into the curriculum until it needs to be updated. In this case, there will be many meeting adjustments to be made and more overall focus on the expansion of NEXGEN. The curriculum will need to inform new members on the work that has been done and the long term goal of NEXGEN, which is to **change student culture**.



VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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VIII. APPENDIX

Support from Ms. Janelle Ridley



THE HELLER SCHOOL
FOR SOCIAL POLICY
AND MANAGEMENT
Institute for Economic
and Racial Equity

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to confirm that I, Janelle Ridley, former Director of Strategic Initiatives in the Mayor's Office, City of Boston, and current Associate Director of Racial Justice and Tech Policy at Brandeis, The Heller School for Social Management, I highly support Ava Newton, Katie Newman, and Tristan Hanson to lead NEXGEN. I have known these leaders for the past year where they enrolled into the newly established Leadership Through Game Design program. A program designed to empower student voice on issues of race, equity, generational challenges, mental health amongst current peers pertaining to social media and leadership distinction. Being impactful and doing intentional work requires deep passion and compassion to create change. It requires a deep understanding of the assets and needs of youth, their families, and their communities. It requires the skills to build lasting, authentic, and collaborative relationships with children and adults.

It requires the ability to build capacity throughout a school system to support this current generation of young people, and they possess every one of these last attributes. What distinguishes them as phenomenal individuals is their skill set, which has allowed their love of being change makers and leaders combined with social-emotional intelligence and produce an application of that knowledge in creating games, programming, and curriculum for the future students of Danvers High School.

They are exceptional leaders who represent the best of the intersection of their generation's trauma of social media, dependency on technology, and the intellect and humanity needed to rebuild their peer's identity. They innovate and lead with a perspective that embodies the work at hand while always staying mindful of purpose and compassion. Their work ethic, commitment to generational change in school environments, peer's well-being, while being devoted to mission and purpose. Their relentless approach to self-empowerment, youth voice and equity are models to all who know them.

A few of the work they have demonstrated and done over the past year are as follows:

- ♣ **Academic learning: apply classroom learning to real-world settings.**
- ♣ **Career exploration: provide substantive responsibilities allowing students to explore a field in game design, storytelling and research to obtain workplace experience;**
- ♣ **Industry knowledge and skill development: gain industry-specific knowledge and career-building skills to support students' career development.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at JanelleRidley@brandeis.edu

Sincerely,
Janelle Ridley, M.A.
Associate Director of Racial Justice and Tech Policy
Master in Public Policy Concentration Char
The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

The email sent to our principal to discuss planning for NEXGEN

Google Classroom Principal ☆



me Oct 6, 2022

to Adam, Ava, Tristan, Isiah ▾



Hello Mr. Federico,

As you know, our group NEXGEN, or known as Leadership Game Design, is presenting at a freshman assembly to inform students on our club.

We were wondering if there could be a Google Classroom made, with us listed as teachers, so that we could post information in a formal manner for this group of students who decide to participate.

We finished the survey that we plan on presenting to the freshman, if you could please review it and make sure that it is okay to give out.

<https://forms.gle/D7LKFNxkptXdQoU88>

We are still working on the presentation, but we are planning on having Ms. Ridley present for the assembly as well.

Thank you,
Katie Newman, Ava Newton, Tristan Hanson, and Isiah Young



Adam Federico Oct 12, 2022

Also, can you make me a collaborator on the survey so...



Adam Federico Oct 12, 2022

Hi all: We have the assembly with Grade 9 on Friday. C...