



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2011 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Ella C. Stein	Project Number 31810
Project Title We've Come a Long Way Since Brown vs. The Board of Education. Or Have We? A Study of Racial Bias in Students	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The objective of the study was to determine the status of student's racial beliefs, attitudes and preferences. The researcher's hypothesis was that when given a questionnaire, students would assign more of the positive attributes to the lighter skinned man and more of the negative attributes to the darker skinned man. Methods/Materials Permission for students to participate in the study was obtained with an opt-out form. A questionnaire was developed based on photographs of four men with different skin colors. 12 of the 14 questions were original questions written by the researcher. Two questions were taken from a 2010 CNN study. Teachers were given a script to go with the questionnaire. 231 students in grades 3-8, from two different schools, participated in the study. The results were categorized by positive attributes, negative attributes, skin color most people want, skin color most people don't want, blue collar jobs and white collar jobs. Results The results of the collected data showed that there was not a significant difference between the light and dark skinned men for the positive and negative attribute questions. There was however, significance when asked about the skin color most people want and the skin color most people don't want. The white man was most often chosen for the skin color most people want (71%), and the black man was most often chosen for the skin color most people don't want (63%). Conclusions/Discussion The results of the study demonstrate that lighter skin is more valued in our culture. However, students in this study did not assign the other positive or negative attributes to any particular skin color. This may be due to a number of reasons including the students knowing they were being studied (Hawthorne Effect) or a lack of racial bias. The researcher suggests further studies to be conducted.	
Summary Statement This project is about determining if students have racial biases.	
Help Received Principals and teachers at two local schools helped implement the questionnaire. Mother helped edit report.	