

SpeakUp at The Learning Lab

The *SpeakUp* is a forum that asks the audience to raise their voice and express their thoughts and opinions on the issues of education inequality, fake news, and race. The producers are six seniors from The Journalism and Media Academy who have spent two and a half hours a day, five days a week working on the project.

The audience was mostly juniors from JAM along with staff of NPR and CPBN, and the topics were presented to them in one-minute videos. The videos were very engaging and well produced and prompted a lot of discussion.

They were about the education learning gap, the fact that while the dollars spent per student in the Hartford Public Schools are similar to many of the suburbs, the test results are still remarkably different; The problem with fake news and the problem of race.

The students, seated 6-8 to a table were asked to then discuss the issue among themselves and then voice their opinions as to the reasons why and offer suggestions as to what needs to be done. There was no shortage of ideas. The videos did their job with great efficiency and the students didn't hold back. Especially when the topic of fake news came up, while most of them listed social media as their main source for news, they didn't allow much room for human error. It wasn't until John Dankowsky the Executive Editor of the NENC asked if they saw a difference between human error in a detail of a report versus intentional fabrication for political gain that they looked a little deeper into the subject. The entire event was heartening to see the education of tomorrow's citizens taking shape. Their idealism was matched with their willingness to think deeply about today's issues and to care passionately about the future. More photos are available at <https://goo.gl/photos/3VZqt97LVeAzumub8> and for more information go to <http://ctlearninglab.org/thespeakup-22417/>

