Dr. Lester,

First of all, thank you for taking time of your day to stop by to speak to us. Your presentation was very interesting, I really enjoyed it. I just wish that we could of had more time to actually sit there and listen to what you had to say, for the lack of time you didn’t get to explain thoroughly what it was that you were trying to say. I feel like it would of been better if we had enough time to talk about it as a group and not rush through the presentation. I learned something from it and it was the history of where the N word comes from and the actual meaning of why it affects the african americans a lot. I was not chosen to sit through the prep talk because I say the word, I volunteered to sit there and listen because I wanted to know what you had to say. I may not be affected by the N word as much as others but I would love for people to stop saying the N word so much! It’s annoying just hearing it all the time, especially how teens find it so easy to just blurt the word out that it has no meaning. I see the N word as I see the word ‘wetbacks’, ‘brown trash’, and all those insulting word that are said about us. I find it so ignorant how teenagers nowadays take things as a joke all the time, including myself. I can find serious things as a joke and I am not proud of it. After your talk most of the students walked out that classroom saying the N word repeatedly. Saying that they did not care about what it had to mean, that no one was going to change their vocabulary. I know that the reason of the presentation was not to tell us the right and wrong between what we say, it’s our decision and just like you said we are little grown adults we know exactly what are saying at all times. I feel like most kids my age find it easy to say that word just because everyone around them says it. It may be a way that they greet one another but they chose not to find a different word because they are trying to fit in with the others. I walked out the classroom having a better understanding of why it is so insulting to say the N word all the time. The fact that the N word was used in the Disney books and songs, I find it very ignorant. I would like for you to stop by more often and maybe change the way students here think about others. I know that it is impossible to prevent them from saying the N word for everything but maybe showing them that fitting in does not only make them look stupid but they are hurting others feelings. I have friends who use the N word A LOT. I get very annoyed of it and wish that they could think the way their actions affect others. Once again thank you for stopping by and I hope to see you around campus more often.

Sincerely,

Jessica

What I Learned.

I learned where the word N****r came from and that no matter how much you change the word it still has the same meaning to it. So many african american people usually don't care if another person of ethnicity says, it most of the time. His presentation really made me aware that I have to be careful with what I say because what I say could really affect someone is some way. I just want to thank Mr. Lester for taking his time to talk to us about this disturbing subject thank you.
Dr. Lester, the presentation on the ‘N’ word was both interesting and very informative, and because of the presentation, I started to use the ‘N’ word a lot less than I normally have, and I’m trying to completely stop using it in my daily life. My mom has talked to my siblings and I on several occasions about the ‘N’ word, and how often it is used, if at all, in our daily lives. My mom allows us to use the ‘N’ word with the ‘a’ at the end, and she is constantly reminding us that only Black or African American people can use THAT version of the word, because she is under the impression that black people took the ‘er’ and ‘flipped’ it to ‘a’ as to form a term of endearment. From what was shown in the presentation the ‘a’ word was not flipped by blacks, but rather used in racist songs and by other white people to further oppress blacks. The ‘n’ word also was used in children's books to help them count, by using black children and having them disappear slowly throughout the book. With all of the new knowledge acquired from the presentation, I will inform my mom and other people who think that way, that that isn’t the the case and thinking that using the ‘a’ version of the ‘n’ word is not endearing, but just as ignorant as saying it with the ‘er’. Even though It will be hard, I will try and get all of my friends to stop using the ‘n’ word, no matter what nationality they are, because they often don’t know the history of the word or they have the notion that because rappers use the word often that It Is now acceptable to use in public as a greeting, or the most common reasons, thinking only black people can say It, because otherwise It can be deemed as racist or, still only black people can use the word, but because we actually flipped the word to a positive, when In fact those are invalid reasons to say that word, because then that excuse can be used for any kind of curse word or inappropriate word.

(From Rodolfo)

I learned where the N word comes from how offensive it is. How rappers say they switched the meaning around but it still has the same meaning. I told my brothers why they can't say that word anymore. I told them that a teacher called a student the N word and he was acting like if it was okay to say that word. I also shared with them the youtube video of how a guy went around asking black people is they are okay with him saying the N word. My brothers just listen they were surprised about how people think its okay to say the word and how people do crazy things by trying to show people that the N word isn’t bad to use no more.

Here is my response Mr. Dershimer,

1) What I learned:
During the half hour that I was there, I actually learned something new that I hadn't thought of before. That word has much more weight than any other foreign and offensive word. It carries centuries of pain. That word defines generations and is beats any other insulting phrase or word.

2) What I will do I with what I learned:
With that information acquired, I feel like I can teach my cousins that the 'n' word has a much more deeper meaning. I say this because at school they are exposed to explicit songs. I know because I am too.
At the Asu prep talk there was a lot of amazing points that the speaker put on the table. For example, there is an argument that rappers and other individuals have flipped the meaning but how can we eliminate so many years of history full of violence and hate in 10-20 years. The pain and suffering is still embedded in the word and there is no way to flip the world nor the history behind it and there never will be. Also the argument of the ending of the word (nigga vs nigger) was brought up. The word nig is still insulting and the beginning of the word never changes as does the hurt. If you were to look up things that include white or black you would see that things with black have a bad meaning in most things as things with white is most represented as pure (black magic, white angel). These point changed my perspective on the word and my life. This word that I used to see as an okay word to use as long as you use it in the right context but there isn't a right context for such a word. Therefore, this word of great evil is erased from my vocabulary and I will spread this message to anyone I can.

Dear Dr. Lester,

I found your presentation and insight on the "N" word to be most informative. Throughout my life, I have always known that foul word to be a disgraceful one, however, I never knew or thought to understand it's origins. I feel that knowing where it came from helped me comprehend the negativity of it all. When you asked your audience to think of all the negative things that have the word "black" versus all the positive things labeled with "white" I got the whole picture. That simple exercise made me feel that all of that ugliness was hiding in plain sight. I found it surprising when children's books, nursery rhymes, and learning exercises featured the word so ordinarily. In these last few days after your presentation, I have found myself avoiding even the thought of the word at all costs. Although I believe I've never used the word toward a person (only in the lyrics of an unnecessary song), I have come to recognize that I don't need the word as part of my vocabulary. I can live my life, a better life, without it. When I do hear it though I will do my best to try to convince that person of it's ugliness. Thank you for coming to my school for such a inspiring presentation.

I never really thought that my words could effect people or even that words had a history at all. How words had effected the African American people for hundreds of years by discrimination and isolation from other races. Growing up in my hood I had always heard that word thrown around so freely and carelessly. No one ever thought twice of it when they would use it. So I did the same thing when I was with my friends, because I heard it everywhere such as in rap, music videos and my own sometimes with my own family members. And these are people that I looked up to and so did other people so I didn't think twice about it. So when professor Lester came in I didn't think to much about it because all I thought he was going to talk about was how it's a bad word and we shouldn't but it wasn't just that. He really explained
the history of it and where it originated from so for me when I heard all of those horrible events and how people used the word made me feel so ignorant because all this time I had no idea.

Dr. Lester,

First and foremost, I’d like to thank you for coming to ASU Preparatory Academy and speaking to the students about “the N word”. As a student, I really enjoy and appreciate the talks we’re able to have with the ASU professors, it really is a great opportunity. I especially enjoyed your talk because of the topic. Unlike the other talks we’ve had here at school, yours was thought provoking and it was something I brought home to my family to talk about. My family’s discussed the topic before, but going to your talk, it gave me a whole new perspective on the word.

The N word talk taught and brought new information to me which I had never heard before. I didn’t know the term minstrel before, but now it’s something that I’ve thought about a good amount since Wednesday. I thought I knew something about the N word preceding your talk, but clearly I was wrong. It’s amazing how people don’t see there’s an issue with using the word, no matter the form. Since the talk I’ve talked about it with other students who use the word, and it seems that they “don’t get it”. The word with the -a ending comes out of their mouth comfortably and fluidly, but when it’s the -er ending, the same students are hesitant and shy away from saying it. It’s still the same word!

In addition, the talk got me thinking about how people are sometimes shy about calling people “black”. Which is the correct form? Black or African-American? Or, is it the same thing? Blacks and whites are the only two races we call by color frequently. I’m an Asian-American student but I don’t think I’ve ever heard anyone refer to Asians as yellow like they do black and white. What you said about the color black being negative and the color white being positive, it makes sense.

Again, I’d like to thank you for taking time out of your day to come visit us. I hope to use the information I learned in a positive way. Once we get rid of racism, sexism and homophobia will follow. Or, vice versa. Hopefully one day, the discrimination will be extinct and the world may be a better and pleasant place.

Thank you for coming to our school, and explaining to us and describing the N-Word and the history behind it, as well as what this has been through during all these years to life today. To me your speech was very interesting and good to learn about. Although everybody knows who I am and I stick to what I believe. And I will think about where and how I use the N-Word to the people I say it to. I’ll be more cautious of where I’m at so I don’t offend anybody when I say it out of there respect. I don’t want anybody judging me in ways that they feel that they can because I like saying the word.