



# THINK FORWARD EDUCATORS

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**Jasmine Lane**

**AT THE INTERSECTION OF  
INSTRUCTION AND RACE**

**Leveraging effective instruction to  
advance educational equity**

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# **At the Intersection of Instruction and Race:** *Leveraging Effective Instruction to Advance Educational Equity*

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# Overview

Effective instruction is a prerequisite to critical and culturally responsive pedagogy

Cognitive science gives us insights about how the brain learns irrespective of race

Using cognitive principles to improve instruction and outcomes

# What's Critical Race Theory Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?

- Derrick Bell & Alan Freedman
- Critical Legal Studies

the constraint of race

Linda  
Faye  
Williams

legacies of  
white skin privilege  
in america

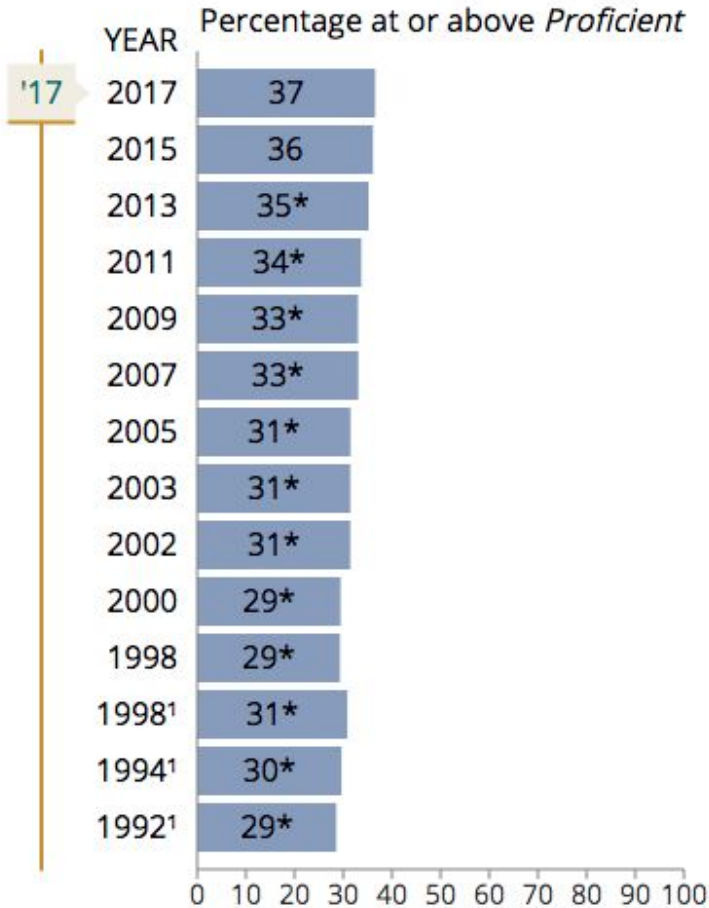
# What's Critical Race Theory Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?

**Central Question:** How is race positioned within education? Have member of racial groups shared in the same education benefits?

*(Ladson-Billings, 1998)*

# Nation's Report Card

- NAEP proficient
- 4th grade trends
- 2019



Reading  
Nation public schools  
Grade 4

Key:

- = white US students
- + = Black US students

SCALE  
SCORE

500

240

230

220

210

200

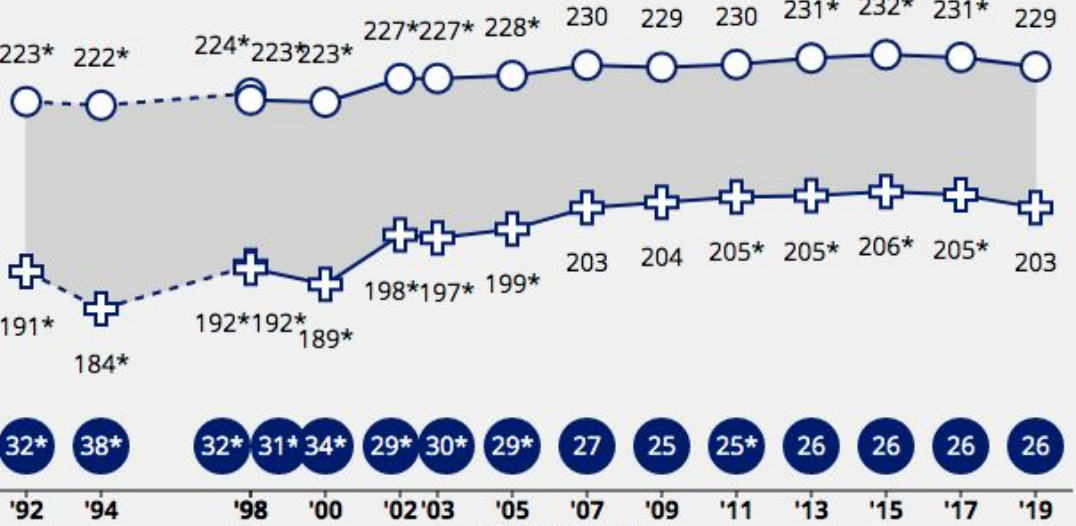
190

180

170

160

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ASSESSMENT YEAR

# What's Critical Race Theory Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?

- 35% nationwide **at or above** proficient
  - White students 45%
  - Black students 18%



# Curriculum AND Instruction

## Curriculum

Critical fictions

Engagement with the  
world

Windows, sliding doors  
mirrors

Relevance

## Instruction

Choice novels

Child-led inquiry

Independent reading

# Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & C&I

- “Culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers attend to students’ academic needs (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- “... pretending the gatekeeping points don’t exist is to ensure that many students will not pass through them” (Delpit, 39).
- “Success becomes possible in situations where failure once seemed inevitable. ... schools need ordinary teachers doing exceptional things” (Tatum, 135).

# Process vs Skills orientation: The Silenced Dialogue

1. Issues of power are enacted in the classroom
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a 'culture of power'
3. The rules of the culture are a reflection of the rules of those who have power
4. If you are not already a participant, being told explicitly the rules of that culture make acquiring power easier

# Process vs Skills orientation: The Silenced Dialogue

5. Those with power are frequently unaware of-- or unwilling to acknowledge-- its existence. Those with less power are often aware of its existence.

# Process vs Skills orientation: The Silenced Dialogue

## DiSTAR

- Direct instruction
- Phonics, blending
- Full attention of students

## 'Progressive' Methods

- Choice of books at a 'level'
- 'Authentic experiences' with books
- Confer with classmates instead of teacher

# Process vs Skills orientation: The Silenced Dialogue

- Being a strong reader yourself, but saying teaching using systematic phonics doesn't matter
- Be able to read complex texts but saying it doesn't matter
- “authenticity”

# The Progressive Teacher's Dilemma

## Curriculum

Critical fictions

Engagement with the world

Windows, glass doors  
siding mirrors

\*Relevance

## Instruction

Teacher-led

Fluency drills

Explicit Vocabulary

Syntax, text structure,

# Cognitive Science: Relevance Matters

- Knowledge is essential to comprehension (Recht and Leslie, 1988)
- We understand things in the context of what we already know
- You need to practice & receive feedback to improve performance
- Children are more alike than different in terms of how they learn

(Willingham, 2009)



# Cognitive Science Relevance Matters

I have selected this day on which to address you, because it is the anniversary of my emancipation; and knowing of no better way, I am led to this as the best mode of celebrating that truly important event. Just ten years ago this beautiful September morning, yon bright sun beheld me a slave—a poor degraded chattel—trembling at the sound of your voice, lamenting that I was a man, and wishing myself a brute. The hopes which I had treasured up for weeks of a safe and successful escape from your grasp, were powerfully confronted at this last hour by dark clouds of doubt and fear, making my person shake and my bosom to heave with the heavy contest between hope and fear. I have no words to describe to you the deep agony of soul which I experienced on that never to be forgotten morning—for I left by daylight). I was making a leap in the dark. The probabilities, so far as I could by reason determine them, were stoutly against the undertaking. The preliminaries and precautions I had adopted previously, all worked badly. I was like one going to war without weapons—ten chances of defeat to one of victory. One in whom I had confided, and one who had promised me assistance, appalled by fear at the trial hour, deserted me, thus leaving the responsibility of success or failure solely with myself. You, sir, can never know my feelings. As I look back to

# Cognitive Science: Curriculum Planning

## **Schema:**

Random, individual teachers choose everything →  
giant gaps

Organize, sequentially, how topics are connected to  
one another; consider framing an essential question

## To change the bond that exists between law and power....

1. accept that you have power, utilize it, and teach using methods we *know* to work
2. Understand teaching dominant discourse isn't white supremacy, it's a requirement for accessing cultures of power
3. Framing is everything.

*To change the bond that exists between  
law and power....*

Relevant, diverse, varied curriculum is the what

Cognitive science gives us a “how”.

Thank you!

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