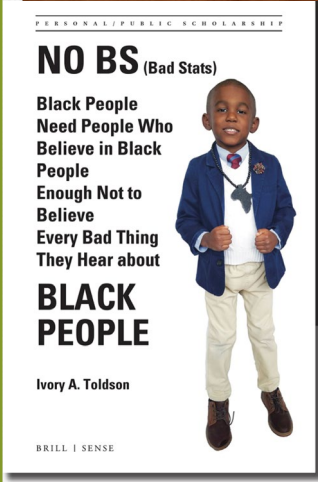# No BS: Using High Impact Data for Educational Equity
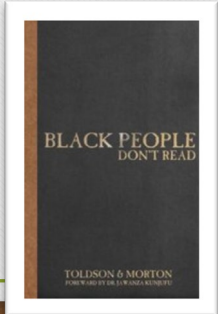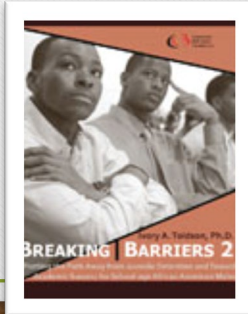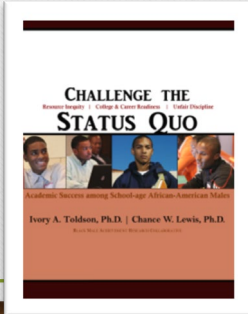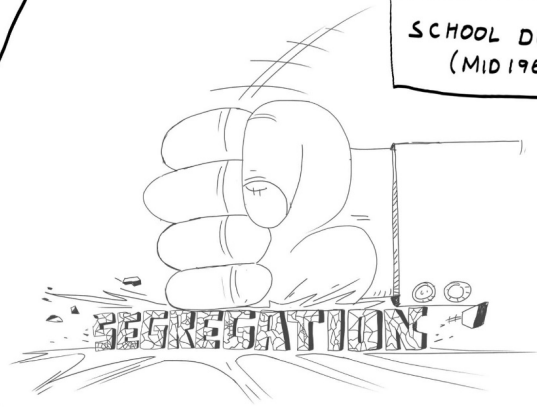
IVORY A. TOLDSON

What can data tell us?

- High School GPA – 2.7

- ACT/SAT – 17

- Reading Proficiency – Below Basic

- Great school score – 1/10 high school

- # Parents in household – 1

- Zip code – Highest Crime Rate in City

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/education/article_1819e600-f902-11ea-997c-9...

THE ADVOCATE

50 years after desegregation order, Baton Rouge schools look nothing like what was intended

BY CHARLES LUSSIER | STAFF WRITER   NOV 28, 2020 - 6:00 PM   8 min to read

5 of 5

Several African American students at newly integrated New Iberia, La. Senior High School on Thursday, August 28, 1969, pass Louisiana State Troopers and city police as they arrive for the first day of class... reported on Thursday but attendance wa... African American and white students. (AP...

Route 1 Box 1 B
Lake Providence, Louisiana
June 30, 1963

Mr. Roy Wilkins

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you that while I was attending a vote meeting, Friday night week, my wife and daughter were harrassed. My life was threaten to my daughter. They called again and told my wife they were going to kill me and rape her. She was called a "bitch" and they said they hated her because she was black. He said he hated me because I was an old N.A.A.C.P. man. He said he was speaking for the KKK. They said it sounded like a well learned white man talking. When I would leave the meeting to answer the phone they would hang up.

Things are bad here. Two churches have burned here recently. They were Pilgrim Rest Baptist and Cain Ridge Baptist Church. Both pastors are registed voters.

They are harassing the unwed mothers now.

You can give this to the press especially about a KKK wanting to rape a Negro woman.

Sincerely yours,

J. H. Scott

(Rev.) J. H. Scott
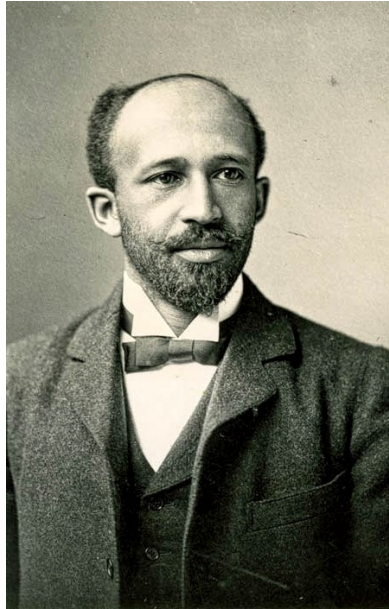
Using the past to guide our future

- In 1899, W.E.B. Du Bois revolutionized social science research by using **geocoding**, **immersive participatory research**, **archival research**, **non-deficit research paradigms**, and surveys, when he published *The Philadelphia Negro*.

- Du Bois lived in the same neighborhood as his research participants and coded a map of the area to demonstrate the in-group diversity of Black Philadelphians, as well as the complexities and nuances of their needs.

- Paved the way for modern, technology facilitated research strategies, such as **geographic information system** (GIS) **mapping** and **big data analytics**

Education in the Post-Reform Era

- More Diversity

- More Technology

- More Data

- Better use of Data
  - Data democratization
  - Data transparency

- No BS (Bad Stats)

Everyday, we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of **data**—so much that **90**% of the **data in the world** today has been **created** in the last two years alone.
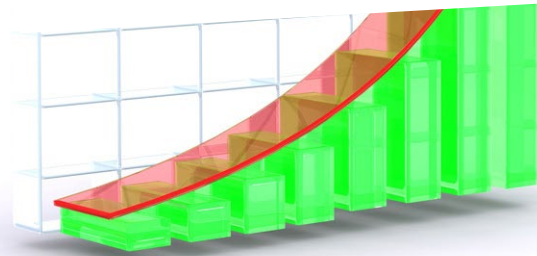
We can find good data…

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects and analyzes data related to education in the U.S. Data is publicly available to access and analyze (K-12 and Post-Secondary)

- The Common Core of Data (CCD) is the Department of Education's a comprehensive, annual database on all public elementary and secondary schools and school districts. (K-12)

- Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) collects and reports data on key education and civil rights issues in public schools. (K-12 and Post-Secondary Preparation)

- American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau is an annual survey of ancestry, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics. (Post-Secondary data)

- Current Population Survey School Enrollment Supplement is national survey on information about school enrollment for household members age 3 and older. It is a proxy response survey sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the United States Census Bureau. (https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/cps/) (K-12 and Post-Secondary)

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of students' aptitude in specific subject areas. (K-12)

But can we use good data for BS (Bad Stats)? next slide

Black Male Multiple Choice: Unemployed, High School Dropout or Incarcerated by Russell Simmons, for the Huffington Post

FALSE

If a black boy is born in the US today, he will have a 33 percent ▮▮▮▮▮ chance of going to prison in his lifetime. It has become a sad normality, almost a backwards rite of passage, for black young men to enter the penal system ▮▮▮▮▮. Black men represent 8 percent ▮▮▮▮▮ of the population of the United States but comprise 3 percent ▮▮▮▮▮ of all college undergrads, 48 percent of inmates in prison ▮▮▮▮▮... 50 percent of black boys do not finish high school ▮▮▮▮▮, 72 percent of black male dropouts in their 20s are unemployed and 60 percent of black male dropouts are eventually incarcerated (▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮).

57% OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STUDENTS DROP OUT.
100% NEED A BOOST.

boostup.c

CLEARCHANNEL

Question: Dr. Toldson, so many people say, "1 in 3 Black men will serve time in prison in his lifetime," so why do you call it a lie or BS (bad stats)?

- Answer: People say it because in 2003 a Bureau of Justice statistician named Thomas P. Bonczar published a report that stated: "About 1 in 3 black males, 1 in 6 Hispanic males, and 1 in 17 white males are expected to go to prison during their lifetime, if current incarceration rates remain unchanged."

- In a table called a "double decrement life table," Bonzar predicted the likelihood that a person would be incarcerated based on their race, gender and year of birth. The style of the study was very similar to John Diiulio's discredited "super- predator" research.

- The table header read "Percent ever going to prison during lifetime, born in___." According to Bonzar, if you were a Black man born in 1974 (closer to my age) the likelihood was 13.4%, 1991 was 29.4% and 2001 was 32.2% (1 in 3).

- IMPORTANT, the report was published in 2003, so the 1 in 3 was only applicable to 2-year-olds. Black men generally at the time was 22%, but even that figure is a bit suspect (it was merely the cumulative prediction, not the actual rate).

- So, about a decade and a half later, we still quote this 1 in 3 stat (usually without citing). Notwithstanding, those 2-year-olds, now at the brink of adulthood, can proudly proclaim to be the least violent generation of Black people in modern history.

- As a member of the generation that invented drive-bys, Jordan-jacking, crips and bloods, gangsta rap, and discharging guns at the movies, I'd like to thank today's Black teenagers for being so much better than the 1980s-90s version of my indignant-as-adult Black peers.

- This is the original 1 in 3 study: https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/piusp01.pdf

Thoughtful Analysis - What does this mean?

- **"Report: Only 13 Percent of 2011 Black Graduates Proficient in Reading."**
  - Based on a Harvard study, which also found that less than half of white graduates were proficient in reading (40 percent).

- **"Proficiency of Black Students Is Found to Be Far Lower Than Expected"**
  - In 2010, the Council of the Great City Schools found that only 12 percent (pdf) of black fourth-grade boys were proficient in reading, compared with 38 percent of white boys

Reading Proficiency - What it means *technically:*

1) On a national or state assessment of reading, the students achieved a score that was less than the scores achieved by the norm-reference group of students in the same grade. The calculated score is an estimate that reflects both actual reading ability and random error (e.g. motivation, fatigue, resentment, attentional deficits, etc.). And the unknown true score lies within a range of confidence, which varies based on the validity of the assessment and the testing circumstances.

2) *Some* of the students who are not reading on level, are missing basic level abilities to recognize and express words and understand the meaning of words. However, this is best assessed through oral reading, not silent examinations. These students will need extra care and attention to learn concepts they should have learned in previous grades.

3) *Many* students who are not reading on level, have scores that are marred with error (see definition above). They could care less about the tests (and honestly, why should they), or they didn't sleep the night before, or they don't like the educator, and see through the con (they know that you want them to do well because it helps the educator, not the students), or they have attentional deficits (which should be assessed independent to reading ability). These students need social support, inspiration to be re-engaged with the school, more agency over what they read and how they read it, and to know the educator actually cares about them.

Source: Toldson, I. A. (2019). No BS (Bad Stats): Black People Need People Who Believe in Black People Enough Not to Believe Every Bad Thing They Hear About Black People. Brill-Sense: Boston, MA

Reading Proficiency - What it means *practically:*

When educators do not know the specific assessment being used, the circumstances by which the test was administered, and do not understand the basic concepts of testing theory, they should not prognosticate the fate of students generally who don't read on grade level;

When educators have not taken the time to identify the specific students who need to learn basic concepts and are generalizing the needs of all students based on a standardized test, they should not prognosticate the fate of students generally who don't read on grade level; and

When educators have not taken the time to know, care for and inspire students, and are judging them based on a test, they should not prognosticate the fate of students generally who don't read on grade level.
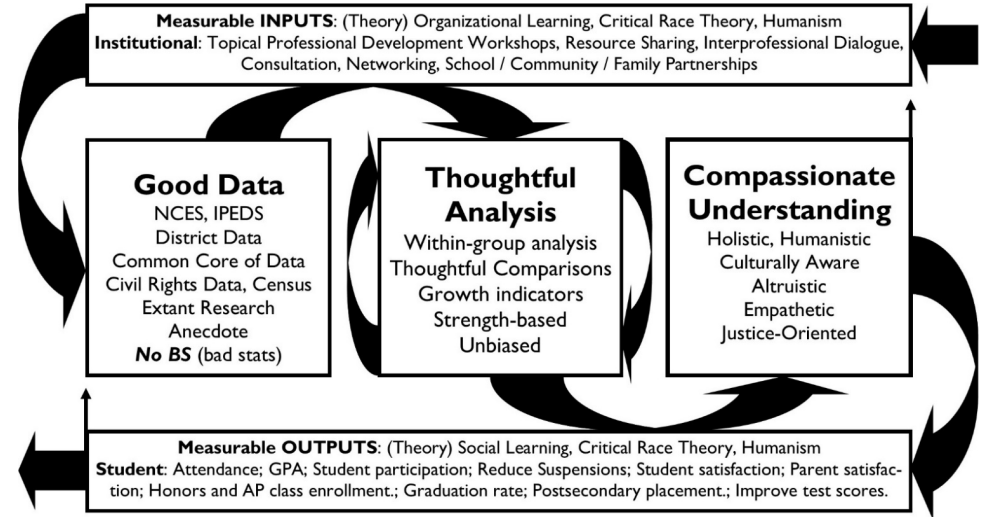
Source: Toldson, I. A. (2019). No BS (Bad Stats): Black People Need People Who Believe in Black People Enough Not to Believe Every Bad Thing They Hear About Black People. Brill-Sense: Boston, MA

What is good Data?

- From measurable inputs to postsecondary success.
- © Ivory A. Toldson

Measurable INPUTS: (Theory) Organizational Learning, Critical Race Theory, Humanism
Institutional: Topical Professional Development Workshops, Resource Sharing, Interprofessional Dialogue, Consultation, Networking, School / Community / Family Partnerships

Good Data
NCES, IPEDS
District Data
Common Core of Data
Civil Rights Data, Census
Extant Research
Anecdote
No BS (bad stats)

Thoughtful Analysis
Within-group analysis
Thoughtful Comparisons
Growth indicators
Strength-based
Unbiased

Compassionate Understanding
Holistic, Humanistic
Culturally Aware
Altruistic
Empathetic
Justice-Oriented

Measurable OUTPUTS: (Theory) Social Learning, Critical Race Theory, Humanism
Student: Attendance; GPA; Student participation; Reduce Suspensions; Student satisfaction; Parent satisfaction; Honors and AP class enrollment.; Graduation rate; Postsecondary placement.; Improve test scores.
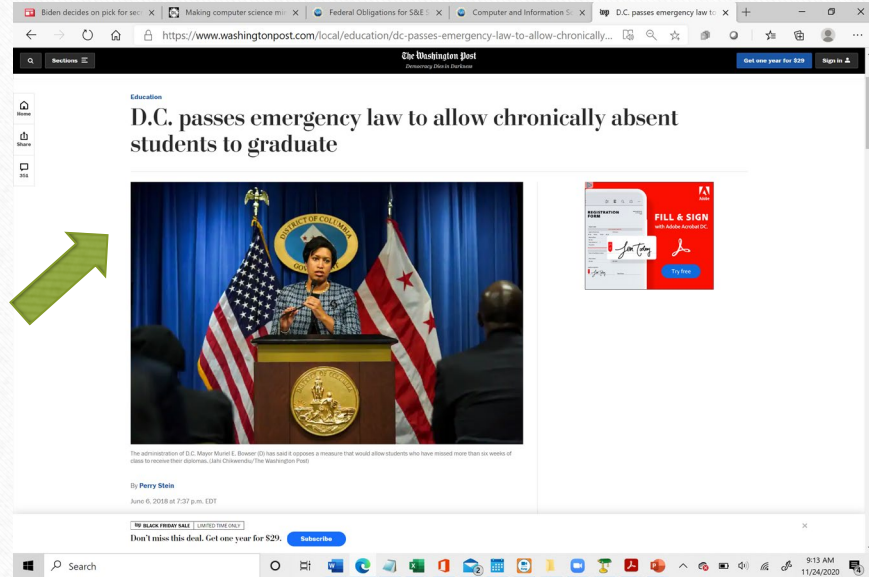
Humanizing Data

The Case of Truancy in DC

'Well, kids can miss 30 days and it's okay'' – DC Council Member

351 Comments

Interesting connection to postsecondary success.

Who Wants to go to College more, Black students or White Students?

- The survey "Health Behaviors In School-Age Children" found that **62% of Black males** (N = 1,133) **and 67% of Black females** (N = 1,542) **"plan" to go to a 4-year college after graduation**.

- The survey "Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth" found that **45% of Black males** (N = 556) and **51% of Black females** (N = 581) **"expect" to go to a 4-year college after graduation**.

- The survey "High School Longitudinal Survey of 2009" found that **51% of Black males** (N = 1,149) and **56% of Black females** (N = 1,297) "plan" to go to a 4-year college after graduation.

- Notably, across all **three surveys**, the **percentage of Black student's that aspired to attend college after high school was slightly higher than White students**. Therefore, any difference in college participation across races has nothing to do with Black students' attitude or desire, and everything to do with systemic inequities.

Why is this important?

Why is this Important?

- Many programs aimed at promoting college to Black students operate from a **deficit perspective**. Fundamentally, they use strategies aimed at teaching "**why**" college is important, when they should be focused on "**how**" to get there.

- Looking deeper at the data, we find that the **#1 reason that Black students do not go to college is because they do not think they can afford it**. Other factors that limit Black students' progress to college after graduation include:

  - not feeling adequately prepared for college,

  - not having enough information to make the best decision, and

  - competing family obligations.

This should change just about EVERYTHING about how most high schools promote college to black students.

Cultivating Happiness vs. Fetishizing Grit

In my Breaking Barriers reports:

- Health Behaviors in School-age Children (HBSC) - **academically successful Black males were almost twice as likely to report feeling "happy" about their life when compared to those with failing grades**.

- National Survey of America's Families (NSAF) - **strongest parenting indicators of academic success** were: (1) Parents who often told children they were proud of them; and (2) Parents who let students know when they did a good job. Interestingly, corrective actions, including punishing bad behavior, was not correlated with grades.

- NCVS: School Crime Supplement (NCVS-SCS) - Black male students who were successful perceived their **teachers to be respectful people who treated them like they matter, and nurturing people who build up their strengths, instead of making them "feel bad" about their weaknesses**.

Cultivating Happiness vs. Fetishizing Grit

- There is a mountain of empirical evidence that happy learners are the best learners. However, many schools, and some parents, have sadistic fantasies about beating Black males into submission.

- They grab a bat and harness their inner Joe Clark, binge on memories of "scared straight," and design programs that beat students down, rather than lift them up.

- They cut programs, like sports and music, that bring students joy, and double up on test prep. And if students fail, they blame it on their lack of "grit" and not on their healthy intolerance for BS.

- Black students need educational leaders to cultivate happiness in schools; not fetishize about them "gritting" through their oppressive programs.

The Academic Achievement as a Social Construct

- "Academic achievement" is a social construct. Indicators of academic achievement are meaningless without their relationship to positive life outcomes. Thus, in theory, indicators of academic achievement (like test scores and grades) should "predict" positive life outcomes. However, in practice, indicators of academic achievement "determine" positive life outcomes. This is a problem.

- Because, we can never know if the academic "things" we measure have any real relationship to positive life outcomes. Also, educators and parents become more fixated on "things," like test scores and grades, and we neglect fundamental social, developmental, and educational needs that likely have a stronger association with positive life outcomes than the "things" that we are fixated on.

- The academic achievement "gap" is also a social construct. In theory, indicators of the academic achievement gap should be able to "predict" social inequities. However, in practice, indicators of the academic achievement gap are used to help oppressors "create" social inequities.

- This is a problem.

Source: Toldson, I. A. (2019). No BS (Bad Stats): Black People Need People Who Believe in Black People Enough Not to Believe Every Bad Thing They Hear About Black People. Brill-Sense: Boston, MA
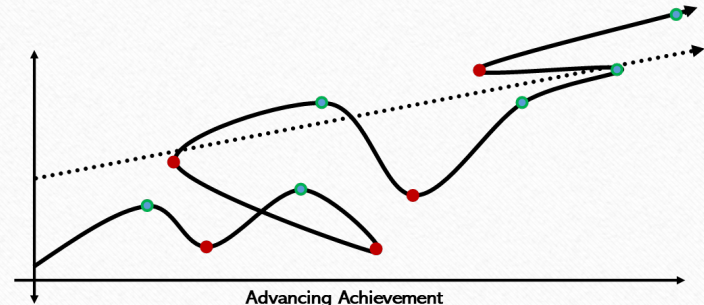
Plotting the Achievement Gap vs. Plotting Achievement

WE ARE CONDITIONED TO DO THIS: WHEN WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS:
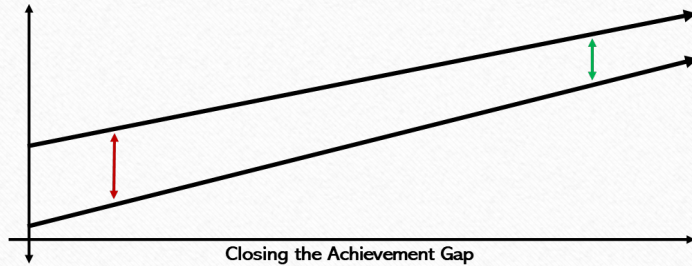
Closing the Achievement Gap
Comparative, Linear, Fixed

Advancing Achievement
Relative, Dynamic, Complex

We pervert the true character of achievement and marginalize Black learners when our primary objective is to close the achievement gap rather than to **ADVANCE ACHIEVEMENT**.

– Written and Illustrated by **Dr. Ivory A. Toldson**

Proximal school-related data to gather comprehensive and holistic information on student achievement and post-secondary success.

Average attendance	Postsecondary placement
Collective GPA	Percent of students advancing to 4-year colleges
Participation in competitions (science fairs, spelling bees, math competition)	Number of home visits
Suspension rate	Frequency of contact with parents
Student satisfaction surveys	Counselor to student ratio
Curriculum reviews	Teacher to student ratio
Teachers' total number of hours in professional development	Administrative tenure
Teacher's credential and certification	Number of enrichment programs
Percent of students participating in extracurricular activities	Age and quality of textbooks
Percent of students in honors and AP classes	Time using technology
Dropout rate	Time spent participating in laboratory experiences
Graduation rate	Student merit awards given

Numbers are People

- Many people use data to understand people. But we should use people to understand data.

- Every number is associated with human characteristics that researchers should not ignore. Behind every statistic, there is a person with dreams, aspirations, fears, and needs. Separating numbers from people allows people to oppress people without conscience or consequence.

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Primary: Toldson, I. A. (2019). *No BS (Bad Stats): Black people need people who believe in Black people enough not to believe every bad thing they hear about Black people.* Brill-Sense: Boston, MA

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