If It Feels Normal, It's Not Equity: Assessment for Racial Equity

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Where are you? Who was there before?

The land where I am is part of the original ancestral homelands of the Muwekma Ohlone.

We pay respect to the Muwekma Ohlone peoples – past, present, and future – and their continuing presence in the homeland and throughout their historical diaspora.

The thing I'm most expert in is not being an expert.
Myles Horton
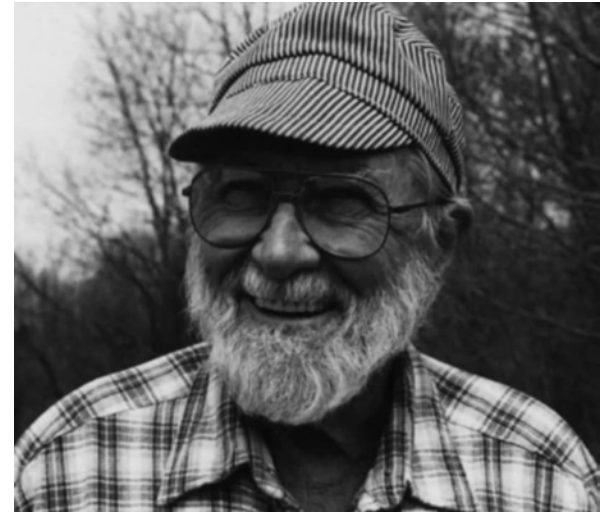
Race	Gender	Age
Appearance Size/Weight	Class	Ability
Language	Education	Sexuality / Orientation
Religion	Marriage & Family	Citizenship Status

White	Male	Senior
Height/Weight Proportional	Upper Middle Class	Temporarily Abled
Native Speaker of English	Advanced Degree	Cis-Gendered Straight
Atheist Raised Catholic	Divorced No Children	Native-Born U.S. Citizen

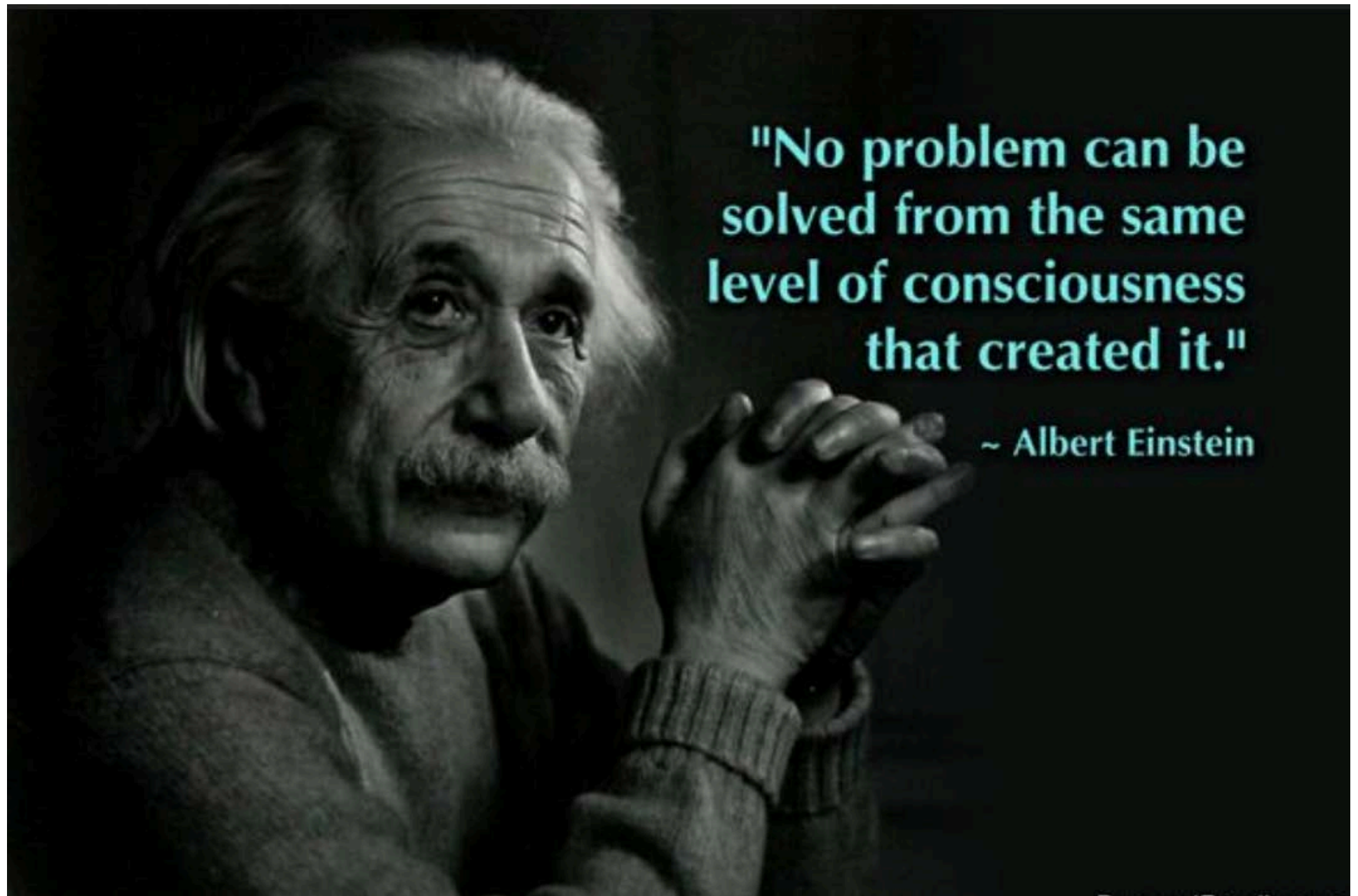| Academic Field	Tenure Status
Math	Tenured

What we see depends heavily
on what our culture
has trained us to look for.

Nell Irvin Painter
Princeton University
The History of White People (2010)

"No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it."

~ Albert Einstein

I believe

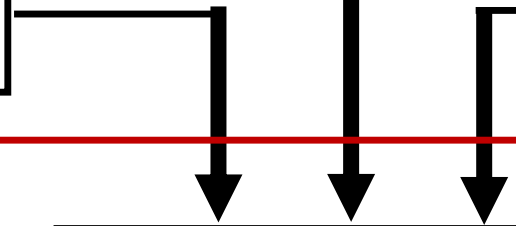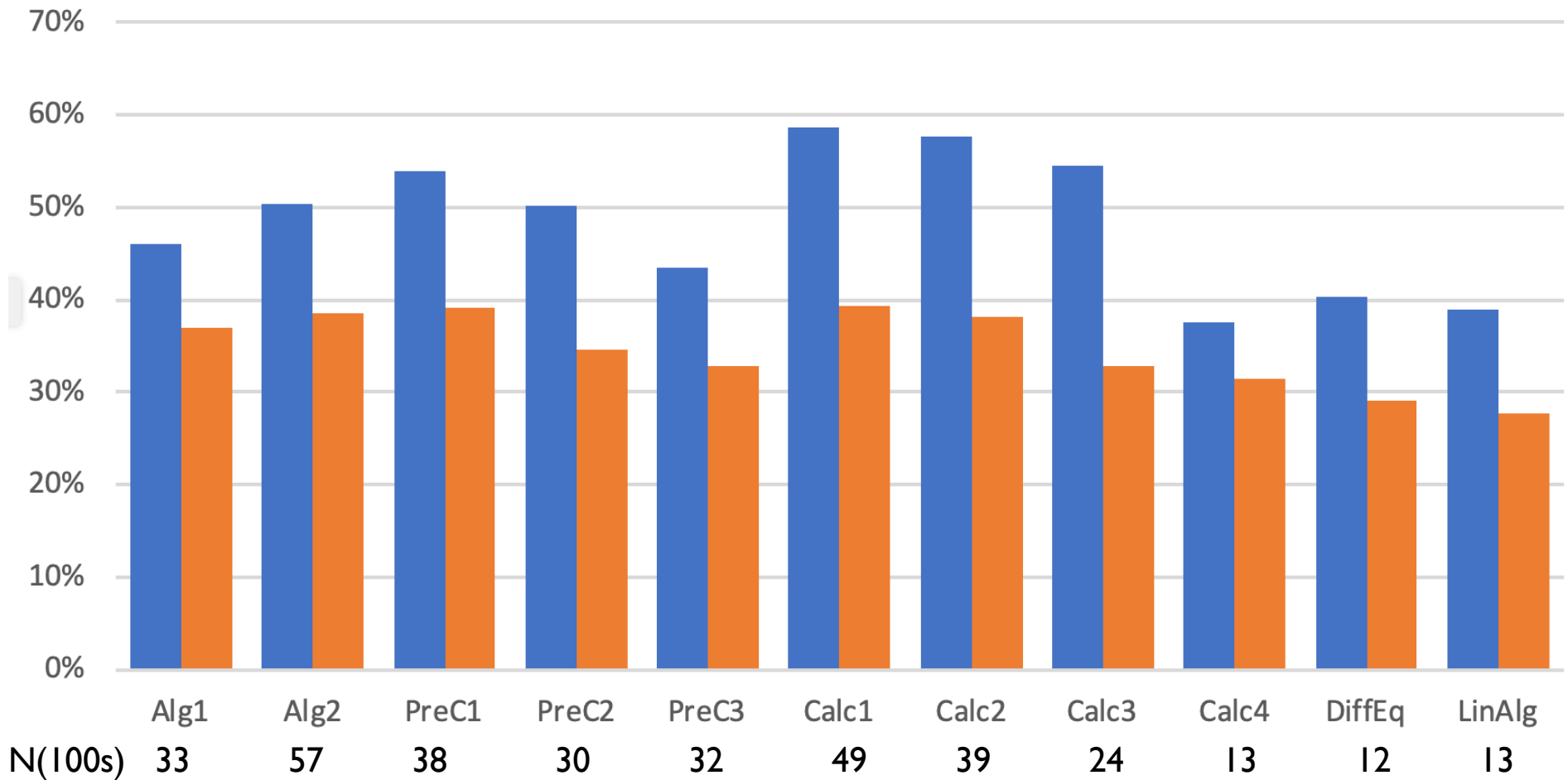- **Normal** assessment policies perpetuate racist educational outcomes.

- **Assessment for racial equity** can interrupt this systemic racism in education.

Racial Inequity in Education

Foothill College STEM Math Sequence
Failure Rates by Population 2012-2017

	Alg1	Alg2	PreC1	PreC2	PreC3	Calc1	Calc2	Calc3	Calc4	DiffEq	LinAlg
N(100s)	33	57	38	30	32	49	39	24	13	12	13

Foothill College STEM Math Sequence
Presence by Population 2012-17

N(100s)	Alg1	Alg2	PreC1	PreC2	PreC3	Calc1	Calc2	Calc3	Calc4	DiffEq	LinAlg
	33	57	38	30	32	49	39	24	13	12	13
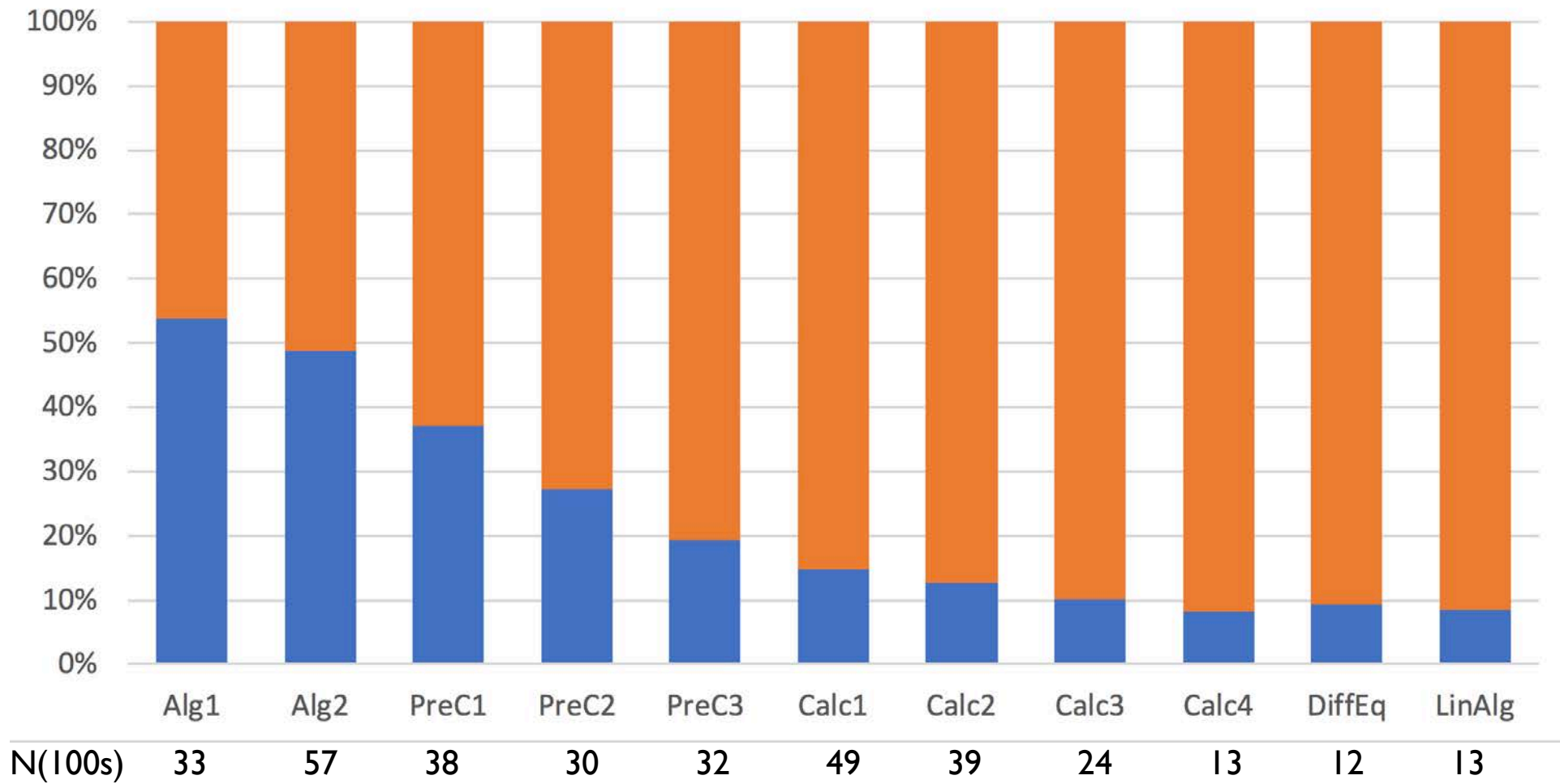
We need to let go of the myth that our schools are failing our Black and Brown students. They're not. Our schools are **succeeding** with our Black and Brown students. They're doing **exactly** what we designed them to do.
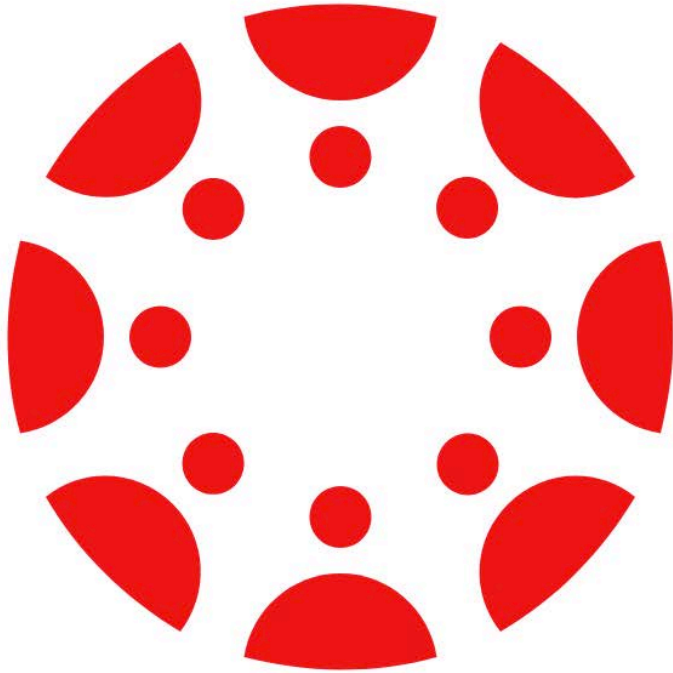
Tim Wise

The "equity gap"

Racial Inequity in Education

Quantitative Assessment Policies

Total
71.35%
87.57%
90.15%
87.63%
93.83%
99.47%

Learning is a
psychological event
with *neurophysiological* effects
that takes place
in a *socio-cultural* environment
with *historical* context.

Racial Inequity in Education

Quantitative Assessment Policies

Myth of Objectivity

Culture of Skepticism

A Selective Timeline of the Eugenics Movement

- 1877 Reconstruction ends, racial segregation begins
- 1883 Francis Galton: "Inquiries into Human Faculty and Development"
- 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson: "Separate but equal"
- 1902 David Starr Jordan: "Blood of a Nation"
- 1907 First U.S. state law: Involuntary sterilization of the "unfit"
- 1909 **Karl Pearson**: "Groundwork of Eugenics"
- 1912 **Ronald Fisher** stewards first International Eugenics Conference
- 1915 D.W. Griffith: "Birth of a Nation"
- 1916 Height of the lynching era; beginnings of the great migration
- 1916 **Lewis Terman**: "Study of American Intelligence"
- 1923 **Carl Brigham**: "Measurement of Intelligence"
- 1925 Mein Kampf
- 1926 Brigham's further work
- 1927 Buck v. Bell: "Three generations of imbeciles are enough."
- 1934 Nazis model German race laws on Jim Crow
- 1946 Nuremburg defendants quote American laws

Myth of
Objectivity

Terman & Brigham

Lewis Terman
Stanford University
A Study of American Intelligence (1916)
President, American Psychological Association (1923)

Carl Brigham
Princeton University
The Measurement of Intelligence (1923)

The army mental tests had proven beyond any scientific doubt that, like the American Negroes, the Italians and the Jews were genetically ineducable.

It would be a waste of good money even to attempt to try to give these born morons and imbeciles a good Anglo-Saxon education, let alone admit them into our fine medical, law, and engineering graduate schools.

Carl Brigham
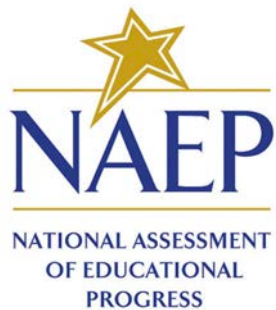**The Measurement of Intelligence** (1923)

In 1926, Carl Brigham wrote the SAT.
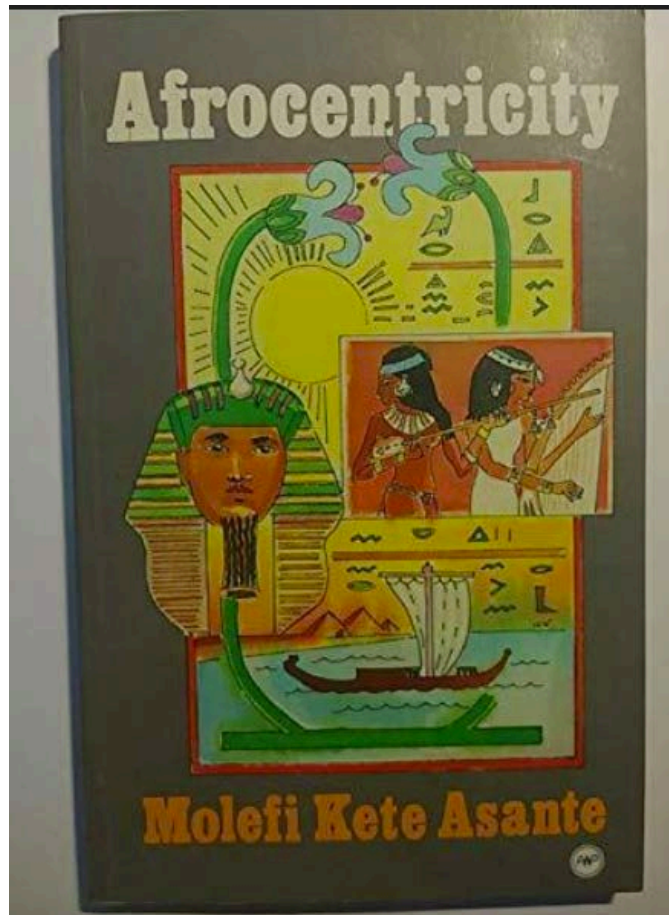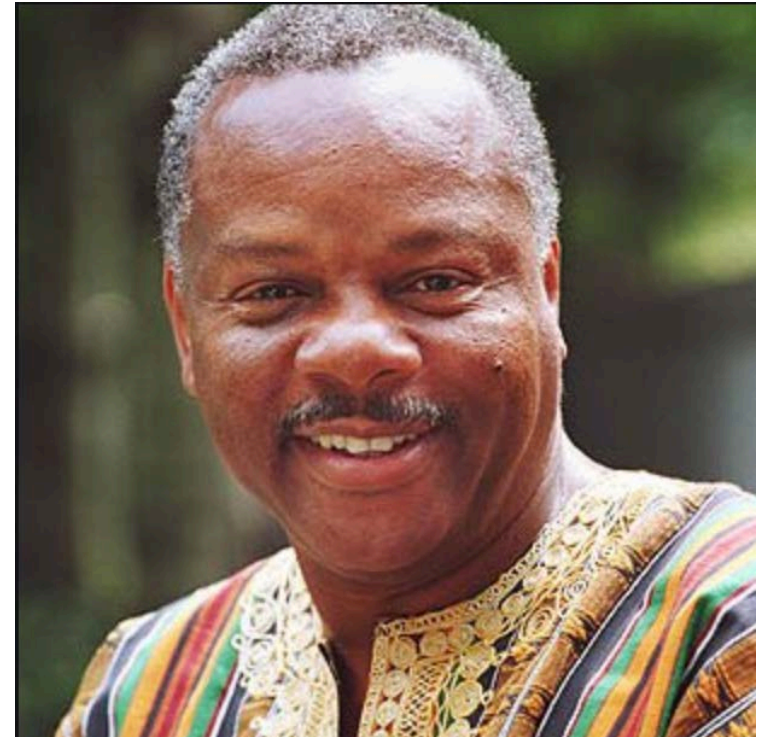
'Objectivity' is nothing more than collective subjectivity.
It is impossible to be objective.

Molefi Kete Asante
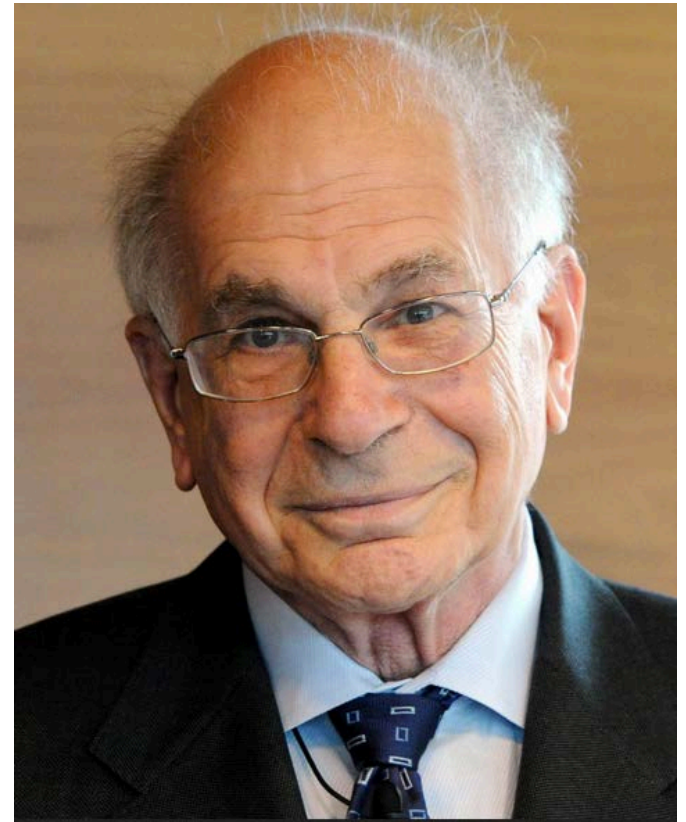Temple University
Afrocentricity (1980)
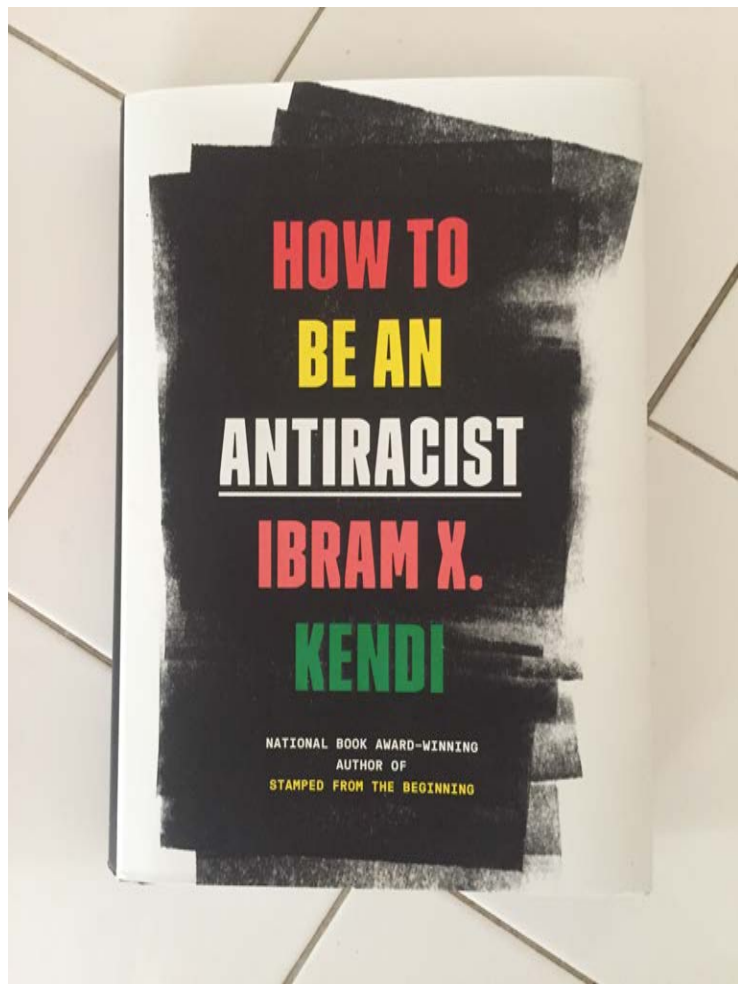
THINKING, FAST and SLOW

DANIEL KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

We do not – CANNOT – make decisions by objectively considering data.

Daniel Kahneman
Cognitive Scientist
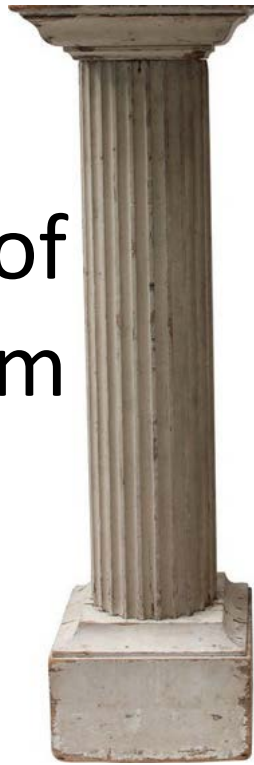Nobel Laureate in Economics
Thinking Fast and Slow (2011)

The use of standardized tests to measure aptitude and intelligence is one of the most effective racist policies ever devised to degrade Black minds and legally exclude Black bodies.

Ibram X. Kendi
Boston University
How to be an Antiracist (2019)

Culture of Skepticism

Fisher & Pearson

Ronald Fisher
as a Steward at the
First International Eugenics Conference
1912

Later Sir Ronald Fisher, FRS

Karl Pearson, FRS
University College – London
1912

Illustration of the Degeneracy which would follow the Association of the Superfertile 25 % of the Population with the 25 % of lesser Cranial Capacity.

IV.   III.   II.   I.

THE GROUNDWORK OF EUGENICS.

PLATE I.

The Groundwork of Eugenics

BY

KARL PEARSON, F.R.S.

" You ask whether I shall discuss 'man.' I think I shall avoid the subject, as so surrounded with prejudices ; though I fully admit it is the highest and most interesting problem for the naturalist."—*Letter of Darwin to Wallace*, 1857

LONDON
PUBLISHED BY DULAU AND CO.
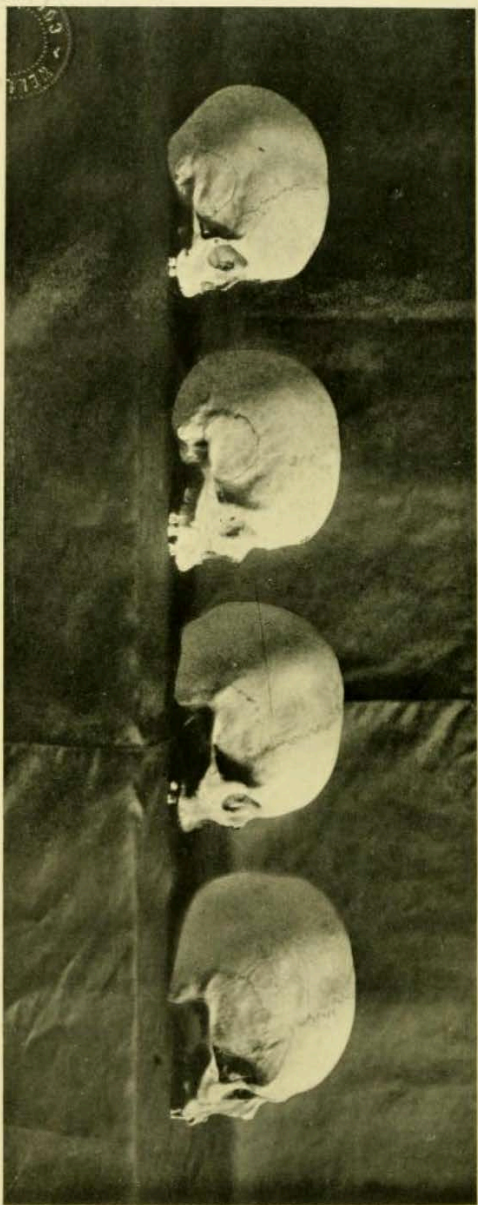37 SOHO SQUARE, W.
1909
Price One Shilling

Fisher & Pearson on decision-making…

- Data speak for themselves

- It's **much worse to believe** something that's not true **than to not believe** something that is true

- Type I errors are **much worse than** Type II errors

- Do not accept evidence supporting a claim unless, based on this experiment **considered in isolation**, the odds in its favor are at least 19 to 1

- $p < 0.05$

Question facing instructor: Is this student qualified?

	Is the student truly qualified?	
Instructor's Decision	YES	NO
YES, they are	✅	❌
NO, they're not	❌	✅

- What are the consequences of each type of error?
- Which error is worse, in your view?

Instructor's decision about whether the student is qualified	Is the student truly qualified?	
	YES	NO
YES, they are	✅	❌
NO, they're not	❌	✅

YES ✅ — Instructor correctly passes a qualified student.

YES ❌ — Instructor made a Type I error.
Unqualified student passes the class.

NO ❌ — Instructor made a Type II error.
Qualified student fails the class.

NO ✅ — Instructor correctly fails an unqualified student.

Thanks to Dr. Gavin Henning, New England College, and Dr. Anne Lundquist, Anthology.com Higher Education Assessment Conference May 2021. Used with permission.

We must
decolonize
our minds.

bell hooks

Teacher's Decision	Is the student truly qualified?	
	Yes	No
Yes	✅	Type I Error
No	Type II Error	✅

Myth of Objectivity

Culture of Skepticism

Foothill College - Patrick Morriss
Failure Rates by Population 2014-2018

	Alg2	Stats	LibArts	Discrete	DiffEq
N	33	361	57	145	66
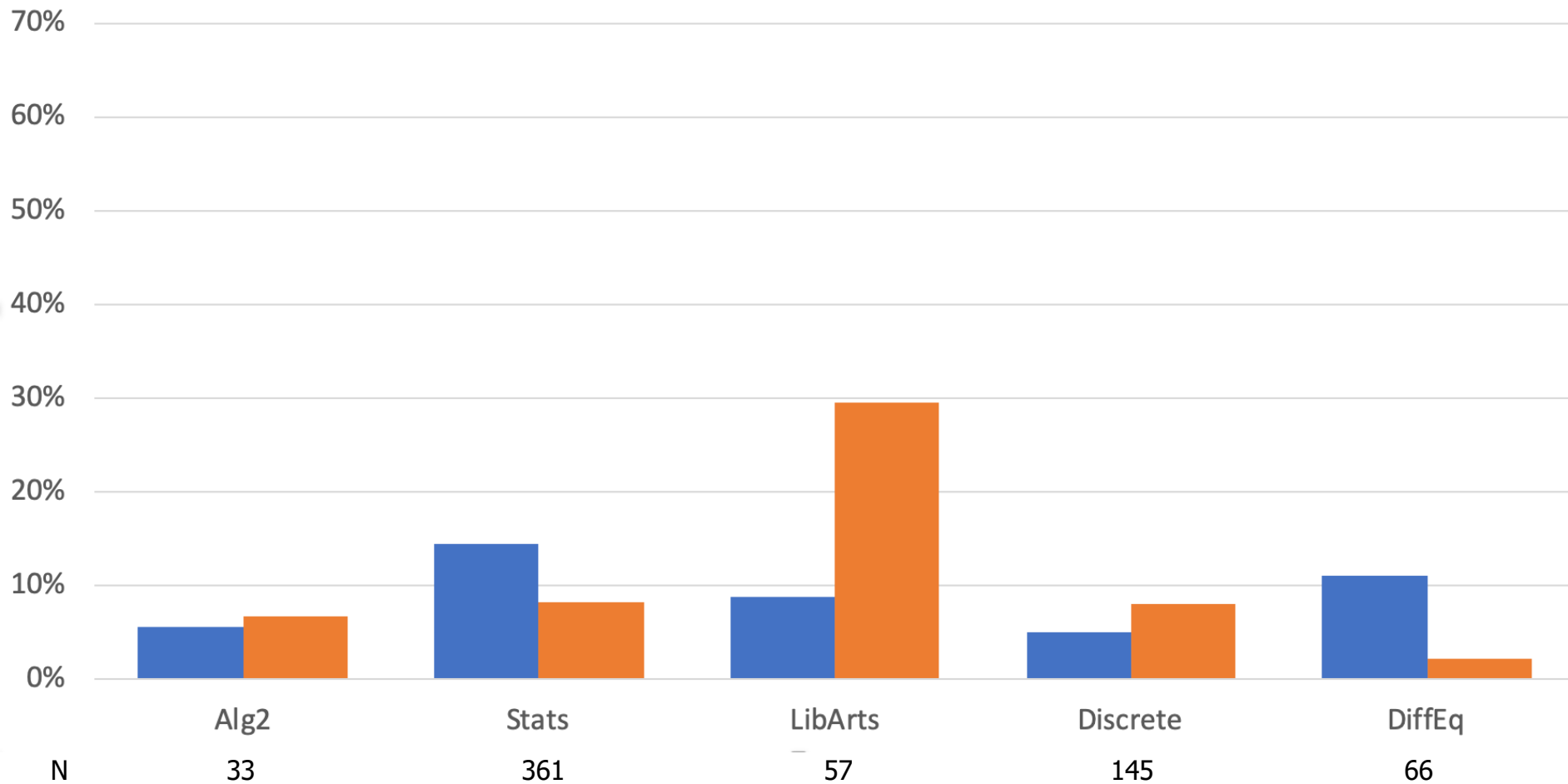
Foothill College Math 10 Elementary Statistics
Failure Rates by Student Population, 2015-2019
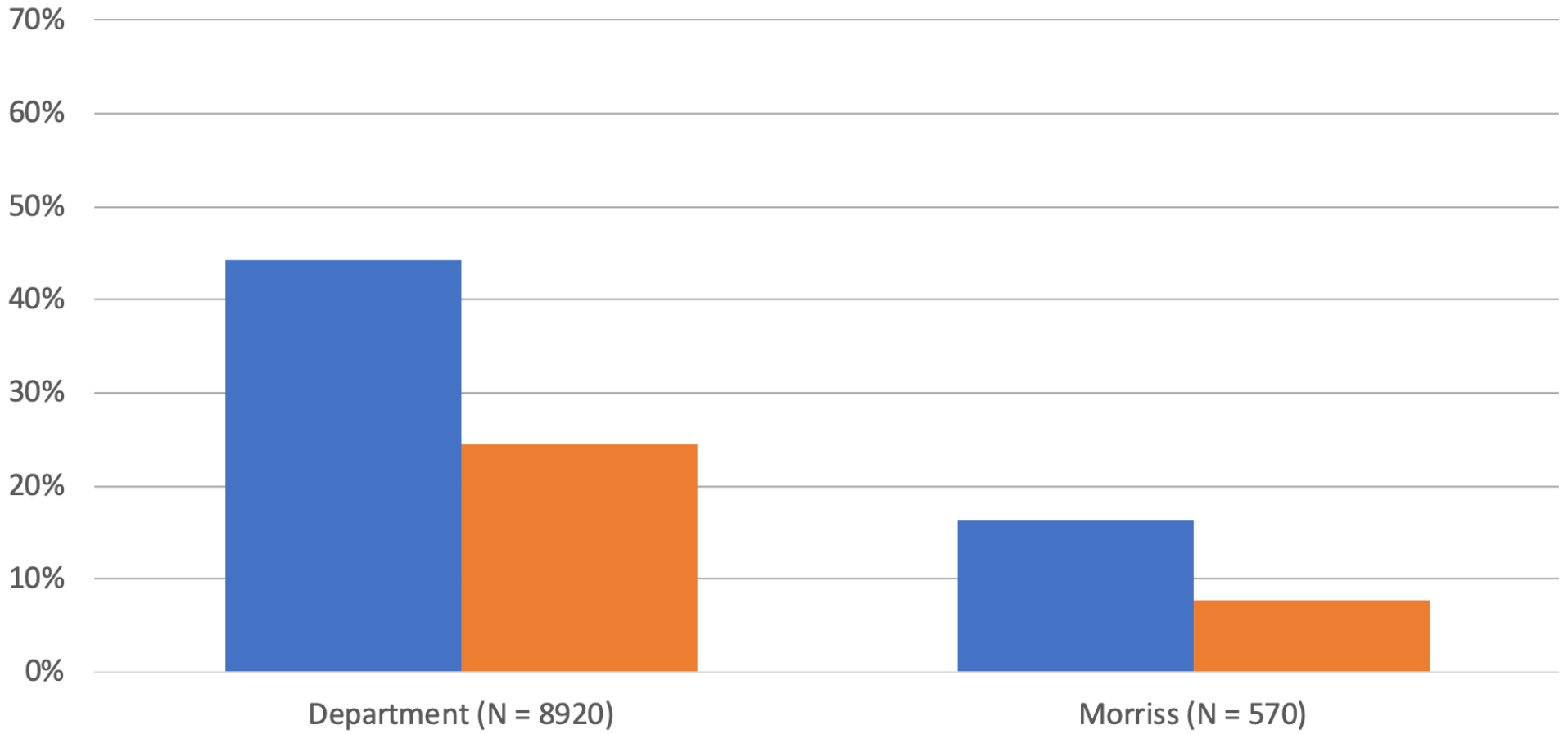
I get it.
I'm on board.
What do I do now?

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

BELIEVING   THINKING   FEELING   ACTING

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

BELIEVING · THINKING · FEELING · ACTING
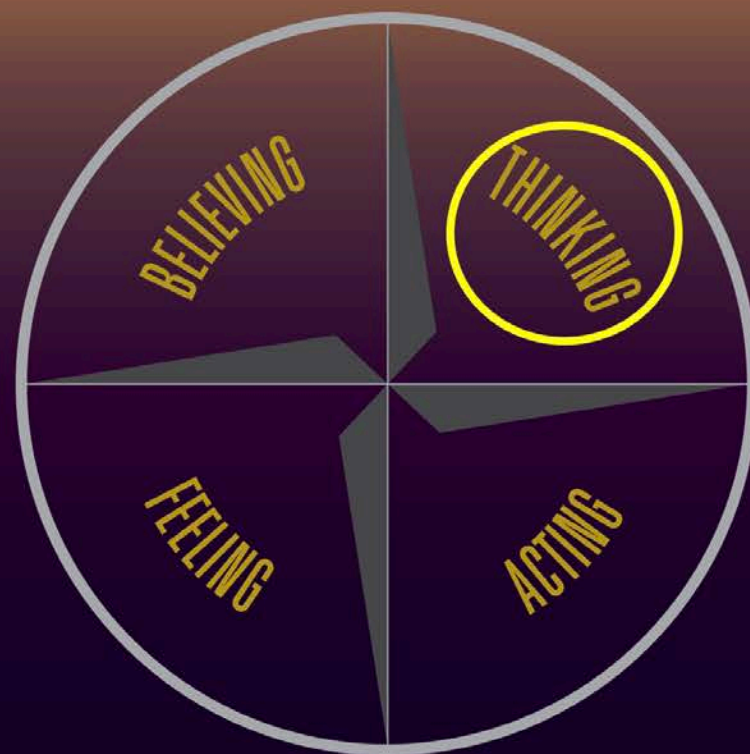
The way
is shut.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS
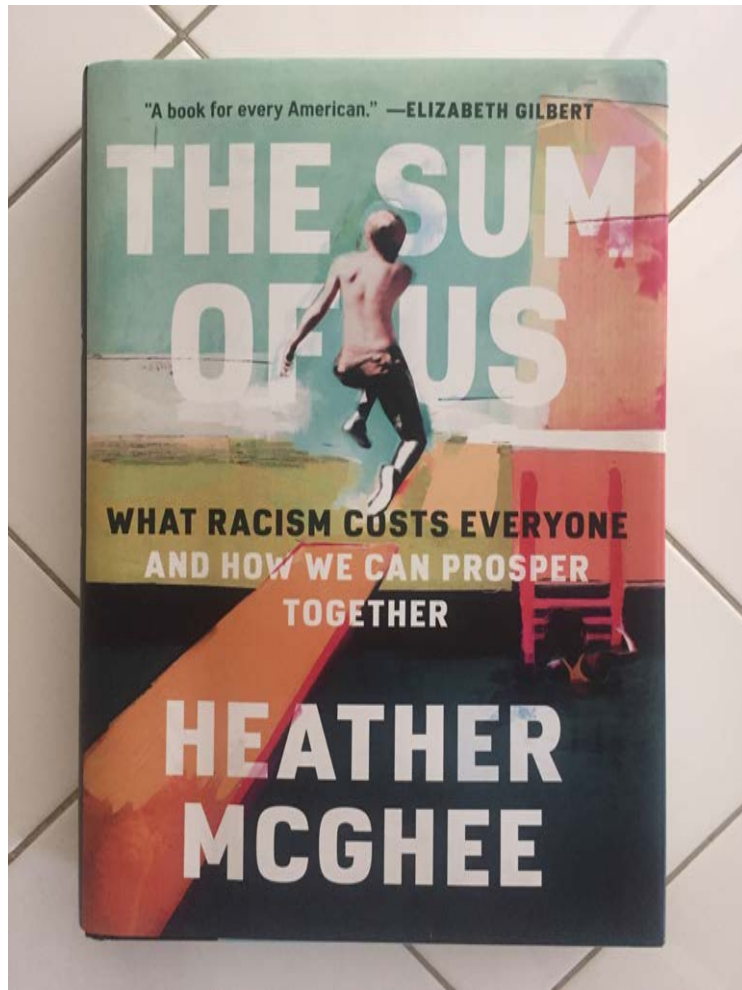
It's the beliefs that must shift in order for outcomes to change. When policies change in advance of beliefs, we are often surprised that the problem is still with us.

Heather McGhee
The Sum of Us (2021)

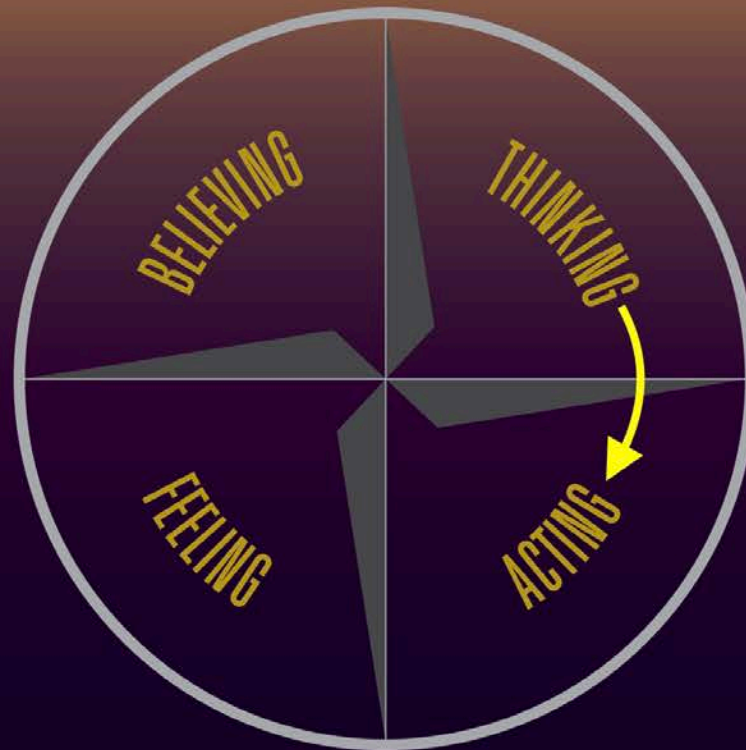# COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

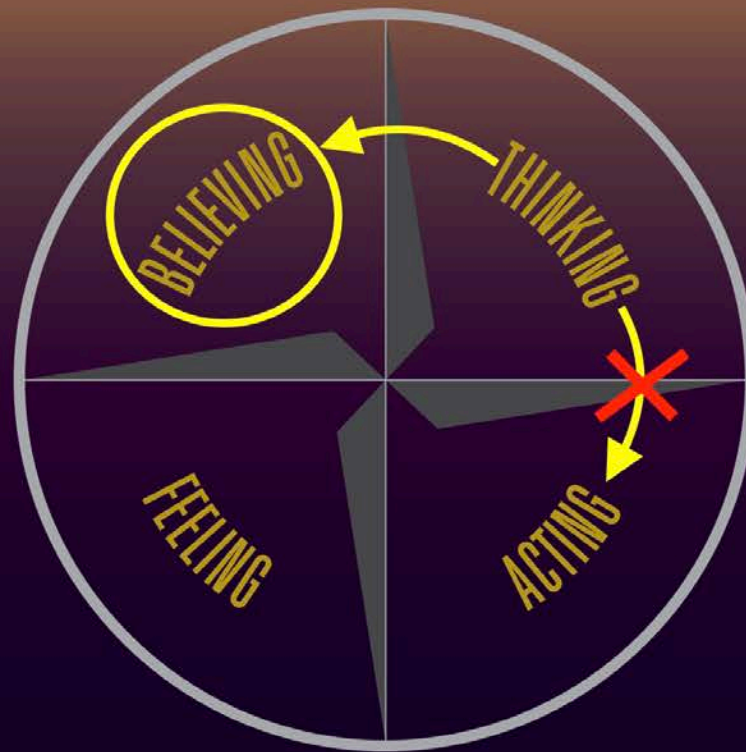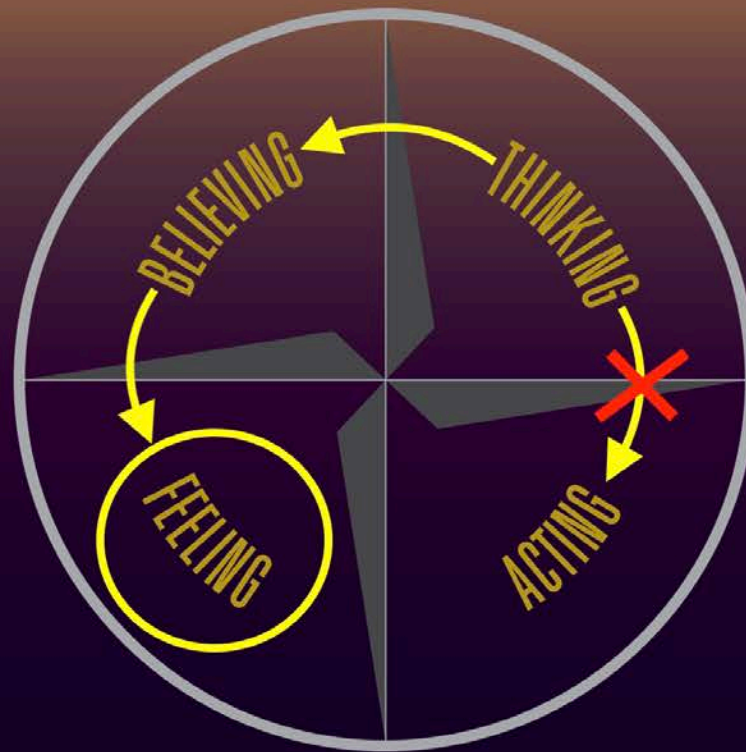COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

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COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS

If It Feels Normal, It's Not Equity: Assessment for Racial Equity

Molefi Kete Asante	Revolutionary Pedagogy
Susan Blum	Ungrading
Carol Dweck	Growth Mindset & Not Yet Grading
Christopher Emdin	Reality Pedagogy
Joe Feldman	Grading for Equity
Paolo Friere	Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Rochelle Gutierrez	Rehumanizing Mathematics & Creative Insubordination
Zaretta Hammond	Culturally Relevant Teaching and the Brain
bell hooks	Teaching to Transgress
Myles Horton	Highlander Folk School
Tyrone Howard	Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools
Asao Inoue	Contract Grading
Gloria Ladson-Billings	Culturally Relevant Teaching & Critical Race Theory
Alexs Pate	Innocent Classroom
Laura Rendon	Sentipensante Pedagogy
Trabian Shorters	Asset-Framing
Grant Wiggins	Authentic Assessment
Tara Yosso	Cultural Capital

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IU IUPUI

2021 Assessment Institute
October 24-27
https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/

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How do grades work?

No points & no percentages. Just a dozen or so B tasks and two or three A tasks.

What's a B task?

B tasks are problems for collaboration during our virtual sessions. I'll put you & your group in a Zoom breakout room to work on them together. Submit your responses through the Discussions tab in Canvas.

We can work together?

Yes. Learning is a social activity. Actually, it's a psychological event, but it occurs in a social context. Consult with others, construct your own understanding, submit your own work, and give credit to the people who helped you by citing the people and resources you found helpful. That's academic integrity.

What's an A task?

A tasks are more involved than B tasks. They require a lot more work (outside of our virtual meeting time), and require in-depth analysis and connections between topics. They're opportunities for you to show that you really know what you're doing.

So how do I get, say, a B?

Show up to the virtual sessions & do the B tasks with us.

That's it?

That's it.

What if I only want a C?

Why would you want that? You can get a B. Just do the B tasks.

OK. How do I get an A?

Do the B tasks and the A tasks.

The A tasks sound hard.

Yes. That's why you'll get an A. But they're totally doable, especially with a good group.

_____

We can do A tasks in groups?

    Yes. See "*We can work together?*"

How do I find a good group?

    Ay, there's the rub. Surround yourself with excellent people. Sooner or later, you'll be mistaken for one. Trust me, I've been doing that my whole life.

How do you grade the tasks?

    I use these symbols, like in the diagram:
     + means "complete"
     *   means "exemplary"
     # means "not yet complete"
     ? means "no work submitted"
   # and ? are temporary marks;
    they last about two weeks.

+ We're good 🙂

* Awesome! 😎

Not yet 🤔

? What up? I got nothin' 🙄

What's "not yet" mean?

    It means you haven't (yet) completed that task. When you complete the task, I change the # to a +. 🙂 If you totally kill it, I can even change the # to a *. 😎 If you don't complete the task within about two weeks, and you don't let me know you're still working on it, I change the # to a ~, which means "thank you for trying." 🙄 Time to focus on more recent work.

What if I miss a B Task & get a "?" ?

    Like a #, a ? is temporary & lasts about two weeks. When you complete the task, I change the ? to a + 🙂 We're good. If you submit some work that still doesn't measure up, I'll change the ? to a ~ 🙄 Thank you for trying. If you don't submit any work in that time, and you don't let me know you're still working on it, I change the ? to a - 😑 which means "let it go." The learning value of all tasks expires eventually; at some point they're not worth doing anymore. Focus on more recent work. Here's how the temporary grades work:

🤔 (+/- two weeks) → + We're good 🙂
→ * Awesome! 😎
→ ~ Thank you for trying 🙄

? 🙄 (+/- two weeks) → + We're good 🙂
→ ~ Thank you for trying 🙄
→ - Let it go 😑

_____

*Can I get an A if I get * marks on all the B tasks?*

No. Those are B tasks. See "*How do I get an A?*" But earning several * marks on B tasks sounds a lot like a B+, doesn't it? I think it does...

What if I do all the B tasks and try the A tasks but can't really complete them?

I dunno. If you give them a good try, seems like a B+ at least would be fair, doesn't it? Did you do some work that was really good, just not all of it? Maybe an A-? Seems like it kinda depends on the quality of what you do. What do you think? What feels right?

What if I don't or can't complete all the B tasks?

There are other grades available (B-, C+, C, D, & F) depending on how many and which tasks you don't complete. COVID is real & it's not the only challenge out there.

Got that right. Can I still get a B if I get some ~ marks on the B tasks?

Seems like it should depend on how many ~ marks you get, and which tasks you get them on. A single ~ mark doesn't seem too meaningful to me. More than that means there's some work you didn't complete, so it doesn't feel like anything higher than a B- would be right, does it? What do you think?

What if I get some - marks?

To get a - mark means you didn't hand in any work for a task when it was due or at any time in the two weeks after. No shame in not handing it in on the due date, that happens sometimes. That's why I leave tasks open for a while, to give you a chance to recover from a setback. If you don't or can't recover within a couple weeks, then it's time to let that one go and focus on more recent work. But if you're letting stuff go, I'll notice & be in touch to see what you need, maybe connect you with my network. Foothill's got lots of good people who want you to succeed as much as you do.

Is there extra credit?

Nope.

Got it. What about midterms?

Just say no to midterms. I haven't given a midterm since 2007. They don't reveal anything meaningful about learning. But really? You want a midterm? Fine. I'll write you a midterm...

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No, no. That's OK. I'm good with no midterm. What about the final exam?

>   If you want, I can send you some problems and arrange a ten-minute Zoom conference where you tell me about your work. If you demonstrate that you really know what you're doing, I can use that evidence to support a higher grade. Nothing lower, though.

Anything else?

>   Yeah. Sometimes people say or do stuff that shows deep understanding and really helps other people learn. I can't predict how or when that might happen, but when I see it, I record a +1😊. At the end, I can use +1😊s to justify a higher grade.

Isn't that like extra credit?

>   You really want extra credit, don't you? I can't assign any task for a +1😊, I just try to catch it when it happens. How about this? I'll also record +1😊 every time someone gives you credit for helping them. (See "*We can work together?*") Can we go with that?

Sure. So can I give +1😊s to other people?

>   Yep. Every task ends with this integrity practice: "Please cite any people or sources you found helpful." When you cite a helpful classmate, I'll record a +1😊 for them.

Cool! Can I give a +1😊 to myself?

>   Really? Did you just ask that? No, you can't give a +1😊 to yourself. You get them from other people when you're helpful in a way that works for them. Try that.

I will. Are there -1😊 s?

>   Nah. That'd just be mean. Could you imagine +1😟? Got some people in mind you'd like to give those to? Yeah, let's not do that...

What if I have more questions?

>   Hang out for student time after class or at my other scheduled times, message me in Canvas, or email me at morrisspatrick<at>foothill<dot>edu. I know, email is pretty 2005. It's what the college gives me. Pretend you're trying to reach your grandfather.

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