I know I found all of them because, first I drew all of the colors but then I ignored the won.
STAND UP FOR THE POWER OF SKILLFUL TEACHING

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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Distinguished Lecture Series
Tuesday, November 14, 2017 • Ann Arbor, MI
OUR NATION, AND OUR FUTURE

(How) Will we educate so that people stop **hating** and **killing** one another?

Adapted from Maisha Winn, inspired by Ihab Hassan

3 November 14, 2017
MY ASK OF YOU TODAY

To join the cause, at this moment in our history as a nation, of building and supporting a quality P–12 teaching force.
TWO BIG QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK ME

1. How can skillful teaching make a difference?
2. What would we have to do to ensure that beginning teachers are ready to be responsible teachers?
1. HOW CAN SKILLFUL TEACHING MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
MEET VIRSHAWN, A RISING FIFTH GRADER
THE TWO-CHECKER PROBLEM

What numbers are possible to make on the Minicomputer with exactly two positive checkers?

2 4
8 1
WHAT IF YOU CAN USE A NEGATIVE CHECKER?

The children found that 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15 were impossible with exactly two checkers.

EXTENSION:
Can you make 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15 if you have a negative checker?
You must use both positive checkers and you can use one negative checker if it is useful.

I think the negative checker is Awesome.
VIDEO: VIRSHAWN

Then the purple is a four, the red is a two, and the white is a one, so you couldn't do it without a- without if- without another negative number.

I think the negative checker is awesome.
VIRSHAWN’S EXPERIENCE IN FOURTH GRADE

- He liked to share his ideas in class, and was very clear, and he liked to write.
- He was in trouble often.
- He was often sent out of the room, to the hall or the principal’s office.
- He wasn’t doing well in math.
DAY 1 OF THE MINICOMPUTER

Virshawn between
11:19 – 11:25

Paper airplane

Noel (2014, in preparation)
How is Virshawn likely to be read—and what is likely to happen next?
At 11:26, the teacher says, "You know what, Virshawn, I am going to need you to come up here closer where you can see and hear and won’t be distracted."
Over the next minute, Virshawn is raising his hand to answer questions.
At 11:27, the teacher says, “Virshawn, you get to come up and make a number because you are the closest person to the board.” “You can have two checkers and you can put them wherever you want, and make a number, and then you can call on somebody.”
AT 11:28, VIRSHAWN TAKES THE ROLE OF “TEACHER”

What do you think about Virshawn?
WHAT SHAPES HOW HIS TEACHERS MIGHT PERCEIVE VIRSHAWN?

- Decisions about how to “read” him, and actions following those decisions
- Views about what counts as “engagement” or being “off-task”
- Preferences and practices about “control”
- That he is a Black boy
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

- Many studies that show effects of racial and gender bias in teachers’ perceptions, interpretations, and interactions with students
- These affect: assignment to special education and gifted/talented programs, discipline (including suspensions and expulsions)
- Transgressions by children of color are more often viewed as intentional and malicious (rather than the result of immature decision-making)
- Children of color disproportionately receive harsher discipline than their white peers
IT STARTS EARLY

- Black preschoolers 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than White children
- 19% of preschool population; 47% of suspensions

Yale study (2016) with 135 teachers
- Videos of Black boy and girl, White boy and girl
- No problematic behavior in either video
- Eye-tracking technology showed that teachers were watching the Black children more
- 42% of the teachers said that the Black boy’s behavior needed attention

Gilliam, Maupin, et al. (2016). Do Early Educators’ Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions? Yale University Child Study Center, New Haven, CT.

November 14, 2017
MEET ANIYAH AND TONI, RISING FIFTH GRADERS

ANIYAH

TONI
What number does the orange arrow point to? Explain how you figured it out.
What do Aniyah and Toni *know* and what can each *do*?
VIDEO: ANIYAH AND TONI

Teacher: Listen closely and see what you think about her reasoning and her answer.

This video and additional supporting materials are available online here.
WHAT DO MANY “HEAR” IN ANIYAH AND TONI?

ANIYAH
- She has the wrong answer: 1/7

TONI
- She is playing with her hair and trying to get attention
- She is trying to embarrass Aniyah
All this talk about not focusing on children’s deficits—why does this matter so much? Isn’t our job to figure out what children don’t know and help them grow?
All this talk about not focusing on children’s deficits—why does this matter so much? Isn’t our job to figure out what children don’t know and help them grow?

1. Learning occurs through a process of building on prior knowledge and experience.
2. Strong academic identities are a means to developing competence. They are also instructional goals.
3. For children of historically marginalized groups, stereotype threat and other biases interfere with and impede children’s performance.
All this talk about not focusing on children’s deficits—why does this matter so much? Isn’t our job to figure out what children don’t know and help them grow?

So—focusing on children’s strengths is crucial for effective and equitable instruction and for advancing justice.

1. Learning occurs through a process of building on prior knowledge and experience.
2. Strong academic identities are a means to developing competence. They are also instructional goals.
3. For children of historically marginalized groups, stereotype threat and other biases interfere with and impede children’s performance.
WHAT DO ANIYAH AND TONI KNOW AND WHAT CAN EACH DO?

ANIYAH

- Uses the definition for a fraction to explain
  - She identifies the “whole”
  - She makes sure the intervals are equal
  - She counts intervals and not tick marks
  - She knows how to write “one-seventh”
- Produces a mathematically well-structured explanation
- Presents her ideas clearly

TONI

- Listens closely to a classmate’s presentation
- Uses the definition for a fraction to ask
  - How Aniyah decided on 7 parts
- Asks a pointed mathematical question
WHERE IS THE WORK OF TEACHING?

INVISIBLE WORK

- Purposefully and efficiently reads students’ work while circulating
- Selects a student to present who will push the conceptual understanding forward, and for whom this positioning will be significant
- Disrupts racist and gendered patterns by:
  - Believing that Black girls are smart; knowing Aniyah and Toni and their smartness
  - Trusting the children to think, be engaged, try to learn
  - Making choices about how to read children and what not to make an issue of

VISIBLE WORK

- Supports Aniyah to present skillfully at the board, using representations; encourages Toni to ask her on-point question
- Disrupts marginalizing patterns that focus on “error” and focuses instead on concepts and reasoning
- Expects other children to listen and to ask questions and creates structures that support children to listen to others’ ideas
- Models and names “good questions” as an important mathematical practice
- Strategically names and highlights particular children displaying specific forms of competence
WHERE IS THE WORK OF TEACHING?

INVISIBLE WORK

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- Selects a student to present who will push the conceptual understanding forward, and for whom this positioning will be significant
- Disrupts racist and gendered patterns by: Believing that Black girls are smart; knowing Aniyah and Toni and their smartness; trusting the children to think, be engaged, try to learn; making choices about how to read children and what not to make an issue of

VISIBLE WORK

- Establishing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
- Leading group discussions
- Modeling and explaining content
- Eliciting and interpreting students’ thinking
- Building respectful relationships with and among students
- Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior
- Strategically names and highlights particular children displaying specific forms of competence
- Disrupts marginalizing patterns that focus on “error” and focuses instead on concepts and reasoning
- Expects other children to listen and to ask questions and creates structures that support children to listen to others’ ideas
- Supports Aniyah to present skillfully at the board, using representations; encourages Toni to ask on-point questions
- WHERE IS THE WORK OF TEACHING?
- Invisible work
- Visible work

32 November 14, 2017
ENTRY-LEVEL TEACHING AS A CRITICAL FOCUS

1. More U.S. schoolchildren have a teacher with fewer than five years of experience than a teacher with any other number of years of experience.

2. Most beginning teachers say they are underprepared for teaching, and on average they are less effective.

3. Distribution of beginning teaching is concentrated disproportionately in low-income and high-minority schools.
2. WHAT WOULD WE HAVE TO DO TO ENSURE THAT BEGINNING TEACHERS ARE READY TO BE RESPONSIBLE TEACHERS?
THREE-PART STRATEGY

1. Focus teacher preparation programs on practice
2. Strengthen licensure to focus on beginning teachers’ readiness to teach responsibly
3. Diversify and raise the quality of the teaching force
HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

- Leading a group discussion
- Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies
- Eliciting and interpreting individual students’ thinking
- Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject-matter domain
- Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
- Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson
- Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior
- Implementing organizational routines
- Setting up and managing small group work
- Building respectful relationships with students
- Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers
- Learning about students’ cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction
- Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students
- Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons
- Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons
- Selecting and designing formal assessments of student learning
- Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments
- Providing oral and written feedback to students
- Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it
IMPROVING CLINICAL TRAINING

Does not mean only:

- More time in classrooms
- Learning just from “experience”

Does mean:

- Focusing on specific aspects of practice
- Including a continuum of settings, including simulations, rehearsals, controlled deliberate in-classroom experience
PRACTICING DEFIBRILLATION
PRACTICING A GUIDED READING LESSON
ASSESSING PRACTICE

Goals:

- Assess actual skills of teaching, using content knowledge, attending to equity, not just reports of these and reflections
- Create common assessments to assess candidates’ progress fairly on a set of key knowledge, skills, and dispositions
DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE IN THE U.S.: K–12 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of Color</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

November 14, 2017
WHY IS THIS GAP SUCH A CRITICAL PROBLEM?

- The profession responsible for developing the primary human capital of our society should reflect our population.
- Importance of children interacting with adults in school with whom they can identify.
- Expanding the diversity of adults with whom children interact in school.
- The knowledge base of the profession requires the expertise and experience of people who are diverse with respect to race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, gender.
IT’S TIME TO STOP A LEGACY OF BENIGN NEGLECT

- High demand led to an occupation that was easy to enter, and high turnover
- A broadly shared belief that teaching cannot be taught, and depends on either
  - talent (the “natural born” teacher), or
  - “hard knocks” (figuring out what works through experience)
- The result? A “hit or miss” approach to supplying skillful teaching

It’s time to put a stop to this.
MY ASK OF YOU TODAY

To join the cause, at this moment in our history as a nation, of building and supporting a quality P–12 teaching force.
THANK YOU!

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Slides will be available on my website
https://deborahloewenbergball.com/
(“Google” Deborah Ball)
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