THE POWER, POSSIBILITY, AND RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH TO CONTRIBUTE TO JUSTICE

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Stanford Graduate School of Education
5th Annual SWAYWO Conference
May 24, 2019 • Stanford, CA
This week alone, with more than 1,100 dead, Congo’s Ebola outbreak is only getting worse. Now doctors are forced to go undercover.

Faced with relentless American pressure, Iran starts to hit back.

Guatemalan Teen Becomes 5th Migrant Child to Die in U.S. Custody Since December

Protesters Take to the Streets Nationwide to Condemn Abortion Bans

New Zealand Police Charge Christchurch Massacre Suspect with Terrorism

May 24, 2019
How do we do research so that people stop hating and killing one another?

(Maisha Winn, 2016, 2017)
What does the research we do have to do with this?
One core thing we do is produce evidence, ideas, lenses, and arguments.

We seek to uncover what is not seen or understood and to challenge what is made invisible and misunderstood or misrepresented.

Education research itself should be educational.
VIDEO: IS THERE A TEACHER WHO HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON YOU?
Our responsibility is to **advance justice** and **combat injustice** through the power of education.
BLACK GIRLS’ RATES OF SUSPENSION

Epstein, Blake, & González (2017)

11 May 24, 2019
TEACHING EFFECTS

COMPOUND EFFECTS
- Teacher sequence can affect student achievement by up to 50 percentile points after only three years.
- Low achieving students have the most to gain from an effective teacher.
- The top quintile of teachers facilitate appropriate to excellent gains for students of all achievement levels.

Sanders & Rivers (1996)

VARIATION IN TEACHER QUALITY
- The most important in-school factor affecting student learning is the teacher.
- There is wide variation in effectiveness among teachers.

Wright, Horn, & Sanders (1997)

LONG-TERM IMPACT
- Children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out.
- Workers with a bachelor’s degree or more earned almost twice as much as workers with only a high school diploma.

Fiester (2013)

DISCIPLINE
- Latinx, Black, and Native/Indigenous students are punished more often and more harshly than other groups.
- Black girls are disproportionately subjected to exclusionary discipline practices.
- Students with disabilities are punished more often and more harshly than other groups.
- Discipline disparities for Black students, boys, and students with disabilities are observed as early as pre-K.

Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera (2010)
Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May, & Tobin (2011)
Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darenbourg (2011)
Morris (2016)
Noltemeyer & Moloughlin (2010)
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_Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Daresbourg (2011)_
_Morris (2016)_
_Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman (2008)_
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  Morris (2016)
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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT TEACHING?

1. Teaching is powerful.
How do macro-structures play out in the micro-moments of Black and Brown children’s experiences in classrooms?

Gholson & Wilkes, 2016
What number does the orange arrow point to?

Explain how you figured it out.
ANIYAH AND TONI

ANIYAH

TONI

May 24, 2019
VIDEO: ANIYAH AND TONI

This video and additional supporting materials are available online here.
20 in 1:28
Teacher

Who would like to try to explain what you think the answer is? And show us your reasoning by coming up to the board?

Dante

You did not!

Other children

Laying on arms
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Discursive aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Why would you try to explain what you think the answer is? And then use peer reasoning by coming up to the board.</td>
<td>2. Deciding what to do in a discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What would you do if the board and try to solve it? And you know, it might not be right. That's okay because we're learning something new.</td>
<td>3. Deciding whether to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It's like someone comes up and looks at the teacher and explain how you are thinking about it. Would you like to try that one tomorrow?</td>
<td>4. Framing the expectation for teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Okay, Am I right?</td>
<td>5. Framing of what is learning to the board's use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing with me?</td>
<td>6. Clarifying the meaning of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning on parts.</td>
<td>7. Deciding whether to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What elements are present on the board, what should you be doing?</td>
<td>8. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trying at first.</td>
<td>9. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oh wait!</td>
<td>10. Framing an individual student's learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You're trying to make what you think the number is and explain how you figured it out.</td>
<td>11. Clarifying the meaning of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You're trying to make what you think the number is and explain how you figured it out.</td>
<td>12. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen closely and see what you think about her reasoning and that answer. (point written 17 by the orange line)</td>
<td>13. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I put the seventh because there's</td>
<td>14. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you say one tomorrow?</td>
<td>15. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clearer Text: Here, it continues on time. Because there's seven equal parts, let me see, two, three, four, five, six, and then seven. (refer to figures on the board)</td>
<td>16. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before you agree or disagree, I want you to ask questions if there's something you don't understand about what she did.</td>
<td>17. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No arguing and disagreeing. Just, if you can do right now is see how questions. What is the number?</td>
<td>18. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Okay! That's what's your question for her?</td>
<td>19. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You did right.</td>
<td>20. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why did you put one less?</td>
<td>21. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why did you put one less?</td>
<td>22. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You did right.</td>
<td>23. Setting norms for what to do in a student presentation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Diagram

- **Students**
- **Teachers**
- **Environments**

20 in 1:28
TEACHING IS DENSE WITH “DISCRETIONARY SPACES”
These videos and additional supporting materials are available online [here](#).
DISCRETIONARY SPACES IN JUST THESE FEW SECONDS
DISCRETIONARY SPACES IN JUST THESE FEW SECONDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Toni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Who would like to try and explain what you think the answer is? And show us your reasoning by coming up to the board? What's it going to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Oh, I got it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Comments</td>
<td>Playing with age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teacher</td>
<td>What is the answer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>What is the answer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Who's going to start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teacher</td>
<td>Laying out an answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>Laying out a plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>What are we going to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teacher</td>
<td>September 1st.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>September 1st.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Yes, you need to pick one number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teacher</td>
<td>You want me to write it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>You want me to write it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>I want to know what you think this number is and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teacher</td>
<td>You're going to check what you think this number is and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>You're going to check what you think this number is and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Toni: Did she say one-seventh?

Toni: Why did—(laughs at another student who says something to her from across the room)

Toni: Why did you pick one-seventh?
DISCRETIONARY SPACES IN JUST THESE FEW SECONDS
IN THIS MOMENT, A MOVE CAN REPRODUCE PATTERNS OF MARGINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS AND OF REDUCTIONIST VIEWS OF MATH

NORMAlIZED NEXT MOVES

- “Can someone help Aniyah out and show what we call the whole on the number line?”

- “Thumbs up if you agree with Aniyah; thumbs down if you disagree.”

- “What do others think?”

RESULTS

- Aniyah’s answer is signaled to be incorrect and she is positioned as not having contributed to the work.

- Aniyah’s solution is “voted” on by her classmates.

- Aniyah is excluded and her mathematical point is sidelined.
IN THIS MOMENT, TOO

NORMALIZED NEXT MOVES

- “Toni, when you’re ready to participate appropriately by not playing with your hair and laughing, and have a question to ask, I will come back to you.”

- “You need to be a better listener, Toni. Aniyah already explained why she picked one-seventh. Who else has a real question for Aniyah?”

- “What do others think?”

RESULTS

- Toni is publicly excluded from the discussion.

- Toni is judged to not be listening, her question is judged as not good, and she is excluded from the discussion.

- Toni is excluded and her mathematical point is sidelined.
WHAT REGULARLY FILLS THE DISCRETIONARY SPACES IN TEACHING?

1. Teachers’ experiences in a society filled with racism and oppression.
2. Normalized practices in schools that institutionalize dominant values and habits.

Lortie (1975), Banks, Grant and Koskela, Moll
Anyon (1981), Heath, Martin, Tuck
WHAT REGULARLY FILLS THE DISCRETIONARY SPACES IN TEACHING?

1. Teachers’ experiences in a society filled with racism and oppression.
2. Normalized practices in schools that institutionalize dominant values and habits.

Professional education does not effectively intervene on these.

Lortie (1975), Banks, Grant and Koskela, Moll Anyon (1981), Heath, Martin, Tuck

Professional education and teaching experience often teach these.
BLACK GIRLS MORE LIKELY TO BE DISCIPLINED FOR SUBJECTIVE INFRACTIONS

2X
For minor violations
(dress code violations, inappropriate cell phone use, loitering)

2.5X
For disobedience

3X
For disruptive behavior

3X
For bullying/harassment

Epstein, Blake, & González (2017)
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DISRUPT THESE PATTERNS?

- Seeing Aniyah’s solution and Toni’s question as mathematically sophisticated and key to the class’s work
- Taking as axiomatic the brilliance of Black girls, and thus Aniyah and Toni
- . . . And having something different to do

(Gholson & Martin, 2014; Joseph, Viesca, Bianco, 2016; Martin, 2012; Leonard & Martin, 2013)
VIDEO: ANIYAH AND TONI

This video and additional supporting materials are available online here.
USING DISCRETION TO DELIBERATELY DISRUPT THE PATTERNS THROUGH WHICH BLACK GIRLS ARE MARGINALIZED

COUNTERING THE PATTERN

- Acknowledge publicly the importance of Toni’s question.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Toni is trusted, seen, and recognized for her contribution to the mathematical work:
  - The mathematical precision of her question
  - Asking Aniyah a question instead of disagreeing.
ANIYAH

- Identified the “whole” as 0 to 1 on the number line

TONI

- Modeled at the board a complete explanation of how to understand and identify a fraction on the line

THE OTHER CHILDREN

- Developed a depth of understanding of fractions as numbers on the line and how to explain them
- Saw Black girls’ brilliance
WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT TEACHING?

2. Teaching involves enormous discretion.

3. How that discretion is exercised can either reproduce oppression and inequity—or it can interrupt its persistence.
What about our work?
research shows
research-based
what works
use of data
theory
evidence-based
research shows the use of data evidence-based what works research-based theory grit SEL culturally relevant pedagogy direct interactive instruction complex instruction identity improvement science measurement comprehensive school reform post-humanism interventions children’s misconceptions classroom discourse culturally relevant pedagogy performance assessment phonemic awareness math reform school reform
WHAT ABOUT OUR WORK?

1. Education research can also be powerful.
2. It also involves enormous discretion.
3. How that discretion is exercised can either reproduce oppression and inequity—or it can interrupt its persistence.
1. What are the imperatives for our work as education researchers?
2. What are the intellectual, political, and ethical demands on us, individually and as a community?
3. What roles do we need to play?
Our responsibility is to **advance justice** and **combat injustice** through the power of education.
How do we do our research so that people stop hating and killing one another? (Maisha Winn, 2016, 2017)
1. Center ourselves and our work in the broad environments of our society.

- Articulate our own positions and identities and attend to and use them with wisdom.
- See teaching and learning in a culture of mass incarceration: Link the pervasive over-punishment of dark children (Bettina Love, 2019) to classroom and school practice.

How do we do our research so that people stop hating and killing one another? (Maisha Winn, 2016, 2017)
How can we confront ways our work contributes to the reproduction of racism and oppression?
2. Interrogate and challenge multiple forms of dominant taken-for-grantedness.

How can we confront ways our work contributes to the reproduction of racism and oppression?

- The values of the professional community (awards, selection, reviewing)
- The analytic stance (e.g., Lisbeth Lipari)
- Admissions, hiring, mentoring
- Approaches to assessment, “outcomes,” “impact”
- Practices we promote as “good”
- What comprises “content” (e.g., Megan Bang, Maisha Winn)
How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:

  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1: Interrupting patterns that reproduce racism
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

Example #1: Intervening on patterns that reproduce oppression
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:

Averting patterns of racism, sexism, ableism, heteronormativity…
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:
  Dismantling white supremacy
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:
  Advancing equity
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1: Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- Example #2: Student misconceptions
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:
  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- Example #2:
  Children's misconceptions
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:
  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- Example #2:
  Students’ thinking
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- Example #1:
  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- Example #2:
  Young people’s ideas
3. Language matters.

How can we better scrutinize and deliberately harness the power of language to shape perception and interpretation?

- **Example #1:**
  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- **Example #2:**
  Student conceptions
3. Language matters.

- Example #1:
  Disrupting patterns that reproduce racism

- Example #2:
  Student misconceptions
How can we challenge our assumptions, get more stuck, open up?
4. Confront tensions in realities.

How can we challenge our assumptions, get more stuck, open up?

- Focus on misconceptions and errors
- Asset-based perspectives
4. Confront tensions in realities.

- Focus on misconceptions and errors
- Freedom for teachers and students
- Asset-based perspectives
- Discretionary spaces in a racist and oppressive society

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How can we challenge our assumptions, get more stuck, open up?

- Focus on misconceptions and errors
- Freedom for teachers and students
- Individualism and cognition
- Asset-based perspectives
- Discretionary spaces in a racist and oppressive society
- Collective social & cultural lenses
4. Confront tensions in realities.

How can we challenge our assumptions, get more stuck, open up?

- Focus on misconceptions and errors
- Freedom for teachers and students
- Individualism and cognition
- “Achievement”
- Asset-based perspectives
- Discretionary spaces in a racist and oppressive society
- Collective social & cultural lenses
- Relationships and relating with others
What is our responsibility as a community?
Advancing justice and combating injustice is:

1. personal professional work,
2. collective work, and
3. a project that won’t ever be completed but to which we must commit.
So, what is the work for me?

- Articulate my own positioning and identity and attend to and use them with insight and care.
- Use my role as a senior white woman scholar and teacher to challenge reproductive norms and practices.
- See teaching and learning in a culture of mass incarceration: Situate research on the work of teaching squarely in the pervasive over-punishment of dark children and the white dominance of practice (Bettina Love, 2019; Maisha Winn, 2017)
- Scrutinize how my work, my language, and my actions are interpreted and taken up and by whom, and what negative impacts these might have.
What might be the work for us?

- See and change how our own language, dominant constructs, and practices reinforce patterns of whiteness, racism, sexism, ableism, and oppression.
- Interrogate and challenge multiple forms of dominant taken-for-grantedness.
- Challenge and change unjust policies and practices with solid arguments and evidence.
- Hold one another accountable.
1. All of these would require new learning to form a community that embraces difference in the fight for justice and freedom.

2. And it would require some of us to give things up and to learn to use our power and privilege to re-center who and what the education research community is—and must be.
Many people in this community do this every day in their work and in their lives.

We have a lot to contribute to this project. But we could do so much better.
THANK YOU!

dball@umich.edu

Slides will be available on my website
https://deborahloewenbergball.com/
(“Google” Deborah Ball)
Image on slide 2:
“Demonstrators with Black Lives Matter march during a protest in Washington, DC.”
[File: Joshua Roberts/Reuters]

Image on slide 2:
Photo from “New Revelations About Pulse Nightclub Shooting Highlight Everything Sick About America,” by Caitlin Johnstone

Image on slide 2:
Photo from “Why America is the World’s First Poor Rich Country,” by umair haque
Retrieved from https://eand.co/why-america-is-the-worlds-first-poor-rich-country-17f5a80e444a
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New Zealand Police Charge Christchurch Massacre Suspect with Terrorism
Retrieved from: https://www.democracynow.org/2019/5/21/headlines

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Health workers prepare a grave just outside of Beni, Congo, for a woman who died of Ebola. Many health workers are facing harassment and violence as the death toll in the country has risen. (Hugh Kinsella Cunningham/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)
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Iranians set ablaze an American flag last month in Tehran during a rally following the U.S. designation of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. (Rouzbeh Fouladi/NurPhoto/Getty Images)

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Guatemalan Teen Becomes 5th Migrant Child to Die in U.S. Custody Since December
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