

Is black culture the problem with US education?

Written by Anton Barnard

Saturday, 27 December 2008 06:13 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 February 2009 23:28

(Article courtesy of American Renaissance, <http://www.amren.com>)

Interview with Luke Visconti, Diversity, Inc., Dec. 19, 2008.

Q: Why should public schools receive equal funding? If some communities choose to pay higher property taxes, why shouldn't they be entitled to a more well-funded education if they so choose? Why must the state ENFORCE a faux equality? We all know the D.C. public schools and the California public schools receive some of the highest funding in the country, yet perform miserably. Yet when you look at the states that succeed the most academically, you'll note that while Wisconsin and Minnesota pour money into their public schools, Wyoming and Montana don't. Yet all four states perform in the top 10 in the country. The one common denominator? They all have predominantly white populations.

Let's be honest: This is a cultural thing, if we're going to throw the genetic component out (and I think for sanity's sake, we should). Name for me a single Black community that outscores the state average for white students. I'll be waiting awhile.

The problem isn't an uneven playing field. The problem is that Blacks are simply not even playing the same game as Asians and whites. Until a cultural emphasis is placed on success in the Black community (and it's decidedly not), things simply will not change.

A: It's not intellectually honest to discuss Black educational underperformance as if it is something that arrived on the current scene fully formed. The state isn't trying to force "faux equality." It's (ineffectively) dealing with centuries of oppression. Equality in opportunity has never been part of the American experience. We can't run away from that reality because it is responsible for the disparities in outcome by race in the facts you cite.

The good news is that getting to a solution for the disparities in education is not difficult when you accept that we are genetically all one human race.

This doesn't mean everyone is of equal talent, but it does mean that every group of people has an equal percentage of talented people. Therefore, if education is managed correctly, every town—Black or white—SHOULD have the same outcome if the process assumes equal outcome as the only acceptable result.

So let's not worry about the past—let's worry about the future. If our country is going to be sustainable in this global economy, we need to develop ALL of our talent. It doesn't make economic sense to under-educate talented people.

Is black culture the problem with US education?

Written by Anton Barnard

Saturday, 27 December 2008 06:13 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 February 2009 23:28

If we believe that all people are created equally (and that's a genetic fact), then the only sensible thing for us to do is make sure that all students graduate from public schools with the same qualifications (within the statistical spread that accounts for all individual performance, measured not by group but by the entire United States).

If we accept equity in outcome, then we will be forced to reverse our thinking about education. Instead of applying the same failed solutions to the same problems and hoping for the best (or in your case, blaming the victim), we would have to impose conditions on the end result (percent graduating with the same skills, verified by testing).

What I think we'll quickly find is that we IMMEDIATELY have to keep schools in low-income areas open 24/7/365 and serve hot meals three times a day—for the parents too, if they're hungry. And while they're there, let's give skill assessments to the parents and give them education if they need it.

Studies show that people who are malnourished have behavior problems—and I'm sure even you would admit that you can't learn if you're hungry. And please, let's not have talk about the responsibility of parents when it comes to hungry children. Let's just feed the kids.

To get to equity in outcome, we'll have to come to grips with the fact that the typical school schedule is simply inappropriate for most places in the country—especially underperforming districts. There are no cows to milk in the inner cities, so there's no reason for students to go home at 3 p.m. In most cities, there are no crops to tend to in the summer—so the students can stay in school all year long. Further, a recent New Yorker article presented research that demonstrated that poor teachers have a higher impact than poor schools. Let's get to a place where we pay teachers for accomplishment, not just the amount of time on the job.

You didn't mention immigrants in your e-mail, but let me add that studies show that learning English is more important than learning the coursework. If we're going to have secure borders and a coherent society, then we need a common language and it's the obligation of "we the people" to provide that education up front.

Is this going to cost money? You bet it will, but not over the long run. Imposing the condition of equitable outcome would create the greatest economic development boom ever seen in our country. The government conducted a study and found that the GI Bill (which gave returning World War II and Korean War veterans free higher education) had a SEVEN to ONE return on investment when you consider tax revenue from better-educated people.**

In this time of economic crisis, is there a better way to spend federal and state funds?

In closing, I agree with you about a shift in "cultural emphasis," but not in the way you framed it. The burden isn't on just Black people—it's on all Americans. The change in "cultural emphasis" needs to be that we no longer accept differences in outcome that are based on race. Equity in outcome is the only way to build a sustainable country in a global economic environment.

Is black culture the problem with US education?

Written by Anton Barnard

Saturday, 27 December 2008 06:13 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 February 2009 23:28

Editor's note: perhaps the person being interviewed should not be that quick to dismiss a possible genetic factor. He seems bewildered by the demonstrable fact that different human groups have different abilities, as evidenced in different educational outcomes. It may be possible that [Occam's Razor](#) applies in this case - a simple explanation, genetics, could possibly go a long way towards explaining several phenomena.