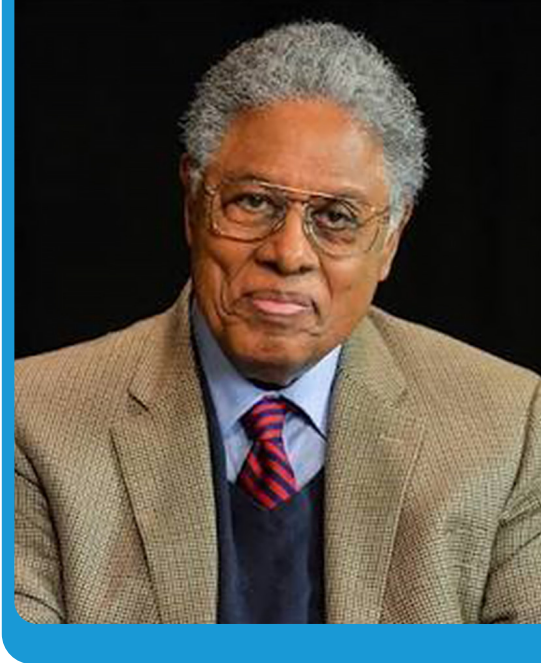


REALITY CHECK

Read the Toronto District School Board's "Challenging Oppression" guide for yourself—and our critique



Mark Milke | February 2024

The Toronto District School Board recently sent a "teaching resource" out to TDSB staff. The 40-page document is entitled "[Facilitating Critical Conversations: A Teaching Resource for Challenging Oppression in Toronto District School Board Classrooms.](#)"

Here are four excerpts that illustrate the school board's claim of racism in schools:

- "Schooling in North America is inherently designed for the benefit of the dominant culture (i.e., white, middle-upper class, male, Christian, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, neurotypical, etc.)."
- "Race matters – it is a visible and dominant identity factor in determining peoples' social, political, economic, and cultural experiences."
- "Education is a colonial structure that centres whiteness and Eurocentricity and therefore it must be actively decolonized."
- "White Supremacy is a structural reality that impacts all students and must be discussed and dismantled in classrooms, schools, and communities."

About us



The Aristotle Foundation's mission is to champion reason, democracy, and civilization so that all can participate in a free, flourishing Canada.

www.aristotlefoundation.org

Download the TDSB document

The problem with the TDSB document: Its assumptions

The TDSB document has been [withdrawn](#), for now. However, the ideas in it will show up again. They are widespread in the education system including in universities and in education ministries.

A problem: The TDSB document and its authors assume any differences in education or economic outcomes must be due mainly to racism. That's obvious in the claim that race is a "dominant identity factor in determining peoples' social, political, economic, and cultural experiences."

Reality Check: That's monocausal and mistaken. Such assumptions omit the effect of education levels, geography (rural citizens earn less than those in urban locations), culture, family dynamics, the length of time a new cohort has lived in a country, and other "inputs." They thus omit how many factors and not just racism can impact economic outcomes.

TDSB staff should read Thomas Sowell

- The world expert on race, culture, and incomes is [Hoover Institution](#) economist [Dr. Thomas Sowell](#), who has researched, analyzed, and published on these topics for 60 years including 58 books.
- As the Hoover Institution [summarizes](#) Dr. Sowell's findings, "[he] argues that discrimination has significantly less of a role to play in inequality than contemporary politicians give it credit for, and that something as incontrovertible as birth order of children has a more significant and statistically higher impact on success than discrimination."

TDSB staff should read Canadian data

In Canada, the Aristotle Foundation for Public Policy has published [several studies](#) and [commentaries](#) on this mistaken, monocausal approach to racism claims and the data.

Toronto financial analyst Matthew Lau examined whether Canada is systemically racist in his October 2023 Aristotle Foundation Reality Check, "[Systemic racism claims in Canada: A fact-based analysis](#)."

Lau found that, “[c]ontrary to claims that racial minorities in Canada suffer widespread systemic disadvantages, Statistics Canada data show that Canadian-born individuals of many visible minority groups are succeeding relative to the rest of the population.”

Lau examined various ethnic cohorts in Canada for earnings, education levels, professional occupations, and public-school test scores. Here are some selected findings:

- Education: Percentage of ethnic groups with a bachelor’s degree or higher:
 - Highest: Korean (60.5%) and Chinese (56.4%)
 - Total population average (32.9%)
 - Lowest: Southeast Asian (30.5%) and other racialized groups (28.1%)
- Average weekly earnings of Canadian-born men
 - Highest: Japanese ancestry, \$1,750
 - Lowest: Latin American ancestry, \$1,160
- Average weekly earnings of Canadian-born women
 - Highest: Korean ancestry, \$1,450
 - Lowest: Latin American ancestry, \$1,000
- Success in occupations: South Asians constitute 7.3% of the working-age population but account for:
 - 12.4% of engineers
 - 12.5% of doctors
 - 19.0% of computing professionals

In February 2024, Wilfrid Laurier political science professor David Millard Haskell reviewed the literature on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training in his Aristotle Foundation Reality Check, [“What DEI research concludes about diversity training.”](#)

Haskell found that

- Past research claiming the DEI instruction is effective at producing lasting, positive behavioral change suffers from serious weaknesses in its “internal and external validity” and “troubling indications of publication bias”;
- Recent meta-analyses of the extant DEI literature have identified a troubling trend: DEI instruction has grown exponentially while proof that it does anything positive has not materialized;
- Various studies have shown that DEI instruction, generally, can activate bigotry rather than suppress it, and
- Core concepts promoted as “facts” during DEI instructions have been found to lack empirical support (e.g., claims of systemic racism).

Watch and share Matthew Lau's video on systemic racism

For a summary look at why monocausal claims of racism are in error, watch Matthew Lau's video "[Is Canada systemically racist?](#)"

About the Aristotle Foundation for Public Policy

Who we are

The Aristotle Foundation for Public Policy is a new education and public policy think tank that aims to renew a civil, common-sense approach to public discourse and public policy in Canada.

Our vision

A Canada where the sacrifices and successes of past generations are cherished and built upon; where citizens value each other for their character and merit; and where open inquiry and free expression are prized as the best path to a flourishing future for all.

Our mission

We champion reason, democracy, and civilization so that all can participate in a free, flourishing Canada.

Our theory of change: Canada's idea culture is critical

Ideas—what people believe—come first in any change for ill or good. We will challenge ideas and policies where in error and buttress ideas anchored in reality and excellence.

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