



Written by [Ilana Mercer](#) on October 15, 2021

## American Kids Can't Read, Write or Do Math, But Are No. 1 in Critical Race Theory

America's crumbling education system is in the news. On October 5, Joe Biden managed to [disgorge](#) some dismal indicators as to the future prospects of America's youth compared to the rest of the developed world.

Joe didn't quite say it, but America's kids, the product of an obscenely well-funded school system, rank last in the developed world in reading, writing, and math, making homegrown retardation a far more pressing problem in modern-day America than homegrown terrorism.

Yet conservatives have kept insisting, throughout the COVID lockdowns and quarantines, that kids were missing out on an education because they were out of school.

To paraphrase Joan Rivers, how can you miss out on a rash? (When Madonna accused Lady Gaga of stealing her music, the great, late, lady Joan wanted to know how you could steal a rash.)

A particularly startling fact caught my attention in the [Economist](#). "At 15, children in Massachusetts, where education standards are higher than in most states, are so far behind their counterparts in Shanghai at math, that it would take them more than two years of regular education to catch up."

This last fact is enormously telling and alarming. It tells you that America's best schools and students can't compete with the world's best.

As the author further [quipped](#) cynically, "American children came top at thinking they were good at math, but bottom at math."

There's no doubt that American kids are drowning in self-esteem. As someone who had [warned](#), in the early 2000s, about unrealistic, dangerous levels of self-esteem — I would contend that inflated self-esteem and narcissism not only mask failure, but create pumped up nihilists, ready to unleash on their surrounds, unless met with palliative praise.

Yes, self-esteem is the royal jelly upon which America's children are raised. Our child-centered, non-hierarchical, collaborative, progressive schooling has produced kids who do not believe they can and should be corrected; and when corrected lash out in anger or bewilderment.

Indeed, to listen to our university students speak is to hear a foreboding amalgam of dumbness and supreme confidence combined. Yet they are often high achievers in the type of schools "tailored" for just such sub-par output. The achievement Bell Curve has been skewed.

With welcome exceptions, the young can hardly string together coherent, grammatical sentences. They open their mouths and out tumble nothing but inane, mind-numbing cliches and banalities spoken in



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gravelly, grating, staccato tones. Vocal fry, the linguists [call](#) this loathsome sound.

Once upon a time, linguists would have sent our Eliza Doolittles for elocution lessons. Make her sound less rough, more refined.

Eliza, of "[My Fair Lady](#)" fame, was treated paternalistically, no doubt. Pedagogic paternalism can be fixed; not so a student's studied ignorance. And these days, the Kardashian-style guttural growl is considered precious. Linguists name it and study it, instead of crushing it.

In fairness to the kids, anyone under 50 seems to be similarly afflicted: This cohort can't use tenses, prepositions and adjectives grammatically and creatively, or appreciate a clever turn-of-phrase, or conjugate verbs correctly. Has anyone noticed that the past perfect tense is dead in our country? People will relate that they "had *went*" to school or "had *came* back from the cinema." [Pidgin English](#) is what the young, high-school graduate now speaks.

Inanities and redundancies make their way into compositions, too, where sentences are audaciously prefaced with, "I feel like":

"Like, I want to give back."

"Like, I want to make the world a better place."

"I feel like, it's important to love myself" (teaching textbook narcissism).

"I feel like, we need to unite."

"Like, follow your passion."

Hallmark cards are edgier, more original, and intuitively truer than the monolithic minds of America's young, and those who've raised and taught them.

Clearly, people even more illiterate than the students are setting these sub-standards, giving kids A's for output that showcases an inability to distill, summarize, and generate ideas, and ethically cite sources. In use is only the most rudimentary, emotionally evocative language, for lack of a solid, ever-accreting vocabulary, higher-order thinking, and proper restraint in affect.

As to restraint: Not coincidentally, an asphyxiating hysteria simmers beneath the surface of the prose to match the vapid vocabulary, whereby breathy figures of speech are deployed to fit a febrile, emotionally overwrought state-of-mind:

"Unbelievable, incredibly embarrassing, amazing, OMG!" In short, exclamatory utterances.

As to edginess: America's young have not been given the analytical tools with which to question received opinion. And, in tackling the "tyranny and arrogant authority" tied to COVID and Critical Race Theory, the kids have been mostly establishment-compliant: [40 percent of millennials](#) favor the suppression of insensitive speech. It is the oldies who've stood up. Young people have, sadly, been readily inclined to accept and follow authority's orders at all time.

Language mediates thought — and actions. You cannot express or develop worthwhile thoughts without a command of the language.

I feel for the kids. They are not to blame. Their arrogant ignorance, inculcated in schools, is carefully cultivated and then reinforced with incontinent praise from pedagogues and parents alike, from K to university.

Progressive schools and teachers — overseen by teachers unions — are responsible for the quantifiable



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rot; for the monument-smashing, monumental ignorance among America's youth.

As to the formative figures in the child's life. More [shocking numbers](#): "Less than half (48%) of all American adults were proficient readers in 2017. American fourth graders (nine-to ten-year-olds) rank 15th on the Progress in International Literacy Study, an international exam."

"And only 12% [of us] are considered by the country's health department to be 'health-literate'. Over one-third struggle with basic health tasks, such as following prescription-drug directions." The numbers come [via the Economist](#).

Conservatives such as Candace Owens have equated keeping kids out of school with keeping kids dumb and compliant. How is that so, if schools are producing kids this banal, boorish, and bossy?

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WATCH: "American Kids Come Top At THINKING They're Good At Math, But Bottom At Math, Reading, Writing"



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