



Written by [John Stossel](#) on April 26, 2023

Marxian Education

Some schools are ditching traditional grading.

Instead, they use “labor-based grading,” an idea promoted by Arizona State University professor Asao Inoue.

Labor-based grading means basing grades more on effort than the quality of work.

In addition, Inoue lectured a conference of rhetoric professors “stop saying that we have to teach this dominant English.... If you use a single standard to grade your students’ languaging, you engage in racism!”



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So I reported that Inoue opposes teaching standard English. He complained that I was being unfair.

“What I’m saying is that students should have choices,” says Inoue in my latest video. “Is it possible that a student comes in who wants to learn the standardized English in my classes? Absolutely.”

My German-speaking parents made me learn proper English. Where would I be if they hadn’t?

“There are absolutely benefits to a standardized English,” says Inoue. “But that same world creates those same benefits through certain kinds of biases. Those can be bad.”

Lecturing to professors, Inoue says, “White people like you ... built the steel cage of white language supremacy ... handmaiden to white bias in the world, the kind that kills Black men on the streets!”

What? Teaching standard English kills Black men?

“I think it can,” says Inoue. “We have Eric Garner saying, ‘I can’t breathe.’ But no one’s listening and he dies. That’s the logics that we get.”

I still don’t get it. Eric Garner died because white people teach standard English? He uses words like “logics”? “Languaging”?

Much of the time, I don’t understand what Inoue is talking about. If this is how professors speak now, I see why students are bored and depressed.

Twenty-six years ago, a school board in Oakland, California, announced that its Black students were “bilingual.” They spoke both Black English (Ebonics) and standard English, and the schools should give “instruction to African-American students in their primary language.”

Ebonics advocates told teachers not to correct students who “she here” instead of “she is here.”

When many people, including Black parents, objected, Oakland officials said that they never intended to teach Ebonics, just to recognize it as a legitimate language.

Inoue says that the Ebonics movement didn’t do enough.

“Everyone says, yes, we believe in that, but they didn’t do anything in their classrooms.”



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No wonder his students label him “easy grader.” I’m glad he doesn’t teach engineering.

Inoue identifies as “Japanese American.”

I tell him that Japanese Americans earn, on average, \$21,000 a year more than average Americans, yet he keeps talking about America’s “white supremacy.”

“What kind of white supremacist country lets that happen?” I joke.

Inoue replies, “Japanese American communities wanted to be seen as more American” and made great efforts to join American culture.

Exactly! Japanese Americans prospered because of it. So do other immigrant groups. Several now earn more than whites in America. They succeed by speaking standard English, and because America is relatively color blind.

“I get a little uncomfortable with colorblindness,” replies Inoue, “That’s not how humans work ... there’s no such thing as a neutrality.”

“But there *is*,” I say. “Hire people based on the highest test score, you’re being neutral about other factors.”

“Depends on how you see the test,” he answers. Tests may be biased. He also criticizes high school honors classes, calling them “pretty white spaces.”

Inoue says he believes in “Marxian” ideas, and asks things like, “Who owns the means of opportunity production in the classroom?”

“Where has Marxian philosophy ever helped people?” I ask.

Marxian philosophies “don’t give us a plan of action. They’re not socialism,” he says. As for capitalism, “I think we can do better.”

I doubt it. For years, intellectuals promised Marx’s ideas will work better than capitalism. Instead, socialism perpetuated poverty.

Nevertheless, on campuses today, Marx’s views thrive. Students often hear them unchallenged.

At least Inoue was willing to come on Stossel TV to debate. Most “Marxian” professors refuse.

Every Tuesday at JohnStossel.com, Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom. He is the author of Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media.

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