



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 10, 2013

## When Teachers Aren't Smarter Than a Fifth-grader

When I've written about our listing mis-education system, my focus has mainly been on rampant political correctness, on how students learn few of the right things partially because of emphasis on teaching the wrong things. Yet there's another problem: in some cases the teachers couldn't teach the right things even if they wanted to — they don't know them.

Professor Walter Williams treated this in his latest syndicated column, "[Dishonest Educators](#)." He introduces the topic by talking about the fairly recent cheating scandals in places such as Atlanta, Philadelphia, Houston, New York, Detroit, and other large cities (in areas that, not coincidentally, also have high rates of vote fraud and other criminality). These are shocking instances in which teachers would commit transgressions such as reading answers aloud in class during the National Assessment of Educational Progress test. How did they justify this? Well, Williams quotes one teacher who told a fellow "educator," "I had to give your kids, or your students, the answers because they're dumb as hell."

But it seems the kids aren't the only ones. Now we learn that some teachers in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi paid surrogates between \$1,500 and \$3,000 to take the Praxis exam for them, the passing of which is necessary for teacher certification in 40 states. And how challenging is this test that some would fork over a few grand to a ringer sit-in? Williams describes a couple of representative questions, [writing](#):

Here's a practice Praxis I math question: Which of the following is equal to a quarter-million — 40,000, 250,000, 2,500,000, 1/4,000,000 or 4/1,000,000? The test taker is asked to click on the correct answer. A practice writing skills question is to identify the error in the following sentence: "The club members agreed that each would contribute ten days of voluntary work annually each year at the local hospital." The test taker is supposed to point out that "annually each year" is redundant.

Forget about the fact that adults would find such questions challenging; it's a sad statement about our society that we'd set the bar for teacher certification so low in the first place. I had to think: how young was I when I didn't know the answers to the above two questions? Ten? Nine? Maybe even eight?





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[Idiocracy](#) has arrived.

Professor Williams also touches on a third rail of American social commentary, mentioning that most of the teachers hiring the surrogates are likely black — and that most of the surrogates may very well be white. Now, before anyone thinks of “Summerizing” Williams (not as I have. Rather, this refers to application of the kind of politically correct social pressure that [drove Larry Summers from](#) Harvard), know that he is black himself. And his point in addressing race is that our leftist mis-educators’ tolerance of low-information black teachers puts the lie to their claim that they care about blacks. After all, as he writes in his closing line, “If they [the teachers] manage to get through the mockery of teacher certification, at what schools do you think they will teach?”

But never fear, Dr. Williams. I’m sure these molders of young minds are well versed in afro-centrism, critical-race theory, and the principles of white privilege.

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