



## SPANNING BOUNDARIES: LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

The goal of this project is not to provide the reader with the latest PK-20 research. I will, at times, summarize articles published in the last 12 months, yet the intent is to share what I think are relevant, practical, high impact concepts from existing PK-20 research. Not all research presented in this newsletter is of equal methodological rigor. You might question the validity and reliability of some of the shared papers, yet this does not suggest that interesting and potentially useful ideas cannot be derived from questionable empirical practices. This belief is founded on what I think is the purpose of education research—it is not, as Marc Tucker writes, intended to be a prescriptive recipe to follow, but rather a set of ideas strung together to create effective systems for learning<sup>1</sup>. You will see a lot of “might”, “can,” “maybe,” “suggest,” and other words that emphasize *possibility*, not certainty.

The SB Newsletter contains research briefs. Some of the links will take you to the full article, others to the abstract. As discussed in the SB Manifesto, this process requires *joint work*. Should you be interested in learning more about a specific article, you will need to access it via other means. You can also contact us to talk more about it. Importantly, some papers are harder to summarize in two pages and require you to explore the original text to get a full understanding of the relevant concepts.

Some concepts will feel obvious. You might, as a school or district leader, be performing some of the techniques explained in the provided research. I experienced this as I combed through research on classroom instruction and organizational change. These papers added much needed conceptual depth and language to the work I had been doing. I hope they do the same for you.

Each article is one page, front and back. I want to save as many trees as possible, but interacting with a hard copy might increase your engagement.

Finally, future newsletters will not have as extensive an intro page. I felt it important to explain my “why” so that the reader better understands what I’m trying to do.

Happy Reading!

Matt Schneidman



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If there is a unifying theme among these articles, it is an examination of purpose and practice. The first two papers highlight the limitations and consequences of poorly designed and enacted school policy and practice while the third provides a theoretical approach that might ground conversations in school transformation. The Diamond & Lewis article shows how Black and Brown populations experience the same discipline policy in very different ways. Thompson's article presents a strategy to transform professional learning communities (PLCs)—a frequent yet often unproductive setting for teacher collaboration. In the third article, Biesta explores the need to reconnect with the purpose of the education. The three papers are:

- Diamond, J. B., Lewis, A. E. (2019). Race and discipline at a racially mixed high school: Status, capital, and the practice of organizational routines. *Urban Education*, 54(6), 831-859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918814581>
- Thompson, J. J., Hagenah, S., McDonald, S., Barchenger, C. (2019). Toward a practice-based theory of how professional learning communities engage in the improvement of tools and practices for scientific modeling. *Science Education*, 103(6), 1423-1455. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sc.21547>
- Biesta, G. (2008). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21, 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>

Race and Discipline explores the distinction between the ostensive and performative nature of discipline policy at a diverse suburban high school. Diamond and Lewis suggest that the actual enactment of school policy diverges from its stated intention. This results in racialized discipline disparities that disproportionately impact Black and Brown students. An examination of the intent vs. the enforcement of a school or district policy might help address disparities in outcomes. [Use this activity to help you do that.](#)

Toward a Practice-Based Theory of PLCs examines how a commonly used tool can act to both enhance teacher collaboration during a PLC and improve student achievement through the application of that tool. The tool served as a central object of critique—teachers used it to challenge each other's pedagogical choices as well as the decisions they themselves made in their classrooms. This article provides a potential strategy to transform PLCs in order to make them more productive adult learning environments.

Good Education in an Age of Measurement has significantly informed the way I think about the role of data in the K12 space. Data-informed decision making (explored in an article in the first Leadership newsletter) can be a useful practice, yet it must be grounded in a clear purpose. Biesta suggests that this purpose is often missing or misguided. To address this, school and district leaders should critically examine “the why” of their choices and reflect on the values symbolized by those decisions. This process can expose underlying value judgements and encourage practitioners to reconsider and reconnect with the question of purpose in education.



## OSTENSIVE VS. PERFORMATIVE POLICY

**Title:** Race and Discipline at a Racially Mixed High School: Status, Capital, and the Practice of Organizational Routines

**Author(s) + Year:** John B. Diamond & Amanda E. Lewis (2019)

**Keywords:** Race, Identity, Discipline Policies, Suburban Schooling, Organizational Routines

### Overview

Much has been written about racialized suspension and expulsion patterns in urban and suburban schools<sup>2</sup>. Because suburban schools have been predominantly white institutions, discipline disparities, although significant to the suburban Black and Brown students experiencing them, have at least been limited in absolute numbers. An influx of non-White populations into suburban localities has changed this calculus<sup>3</sup>. Diamond and Lewis (“D&L”) attempt to explain the implications of this evolving dynamic at Riverview High School, an “urban characteristic” racially diverse school bordering a large city. By combining organizational theory with a more traditional critical race theory approach to this problem, D&L suggest that daily interactional dynamics influenced by “broader cultural narratives that associate blackness with criminality and whiteness with innocence” lead to highly inequitable racial disciplinary outcomes. They demonstrate why Black and Brown populations, despite “race-neutral” policies, are both selected more frequently for disciplinary action and subjected to harsher punishments. In doing so, “[D&L] take up the challenge presented in previous scholarship to ‘develop theory about the conscious and unconscious processes that result in differential treatment of some racial and ethnic groups’ (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 64)”<sup>4</sup>.

### Theory

*Organizational Theory:* D&L conceptualize school discipline as an “organizational routine rather than as discrete moments of rule breaking and punishment”<sup>5</sup>. They draw upon the work of Feldman and Pentland<sup>6</sup> to identify and analyze two key components of Riverview’s disciplinary practices: the ostensive and performative. The ostensive is the narrative in an organization about how things *should* be done whereas the performative is how things are actually done. Understanding this distinction can prevent the parts—“either the ostensive and the performative—from being mistaken for the whole”<sup>7</sup>. The ostensive and performative can align with one another or diverge in dramatic and consequential ways.

*Contemporary Race Theory and Status Construction Theory:* D&L use contemporary race theory and status construction theory to show that policies stated in race-neutral terms can result in racially disparate disciplinary outcomes. “This is because race works symbolically [...] and structurally [...] when real people interact in specific contexts. The key here is understanding how everyday interactions are racially inflected (Lewis, 2003)”<sup>8</sup>. This is not a staffing problem but is instead due to a “widespread set of ideas or stereotypes about Black criminality and White innocence that shape daily interactions”<sup>9</sup>. D&L use status construction theory to conceptualize the school setting as a marketplace where various forms of capital—social, cultural, symbolic, and economic—are traded in an effort to secure educational resources for parents and their children. Parents with more capital—primarily White parents—are able to leverage their resources to shield their children from adverse disciplinary outcomes.

### Findings

Black students at Riverview made up 35% of the school population but accounted for 70% of in-school suspensions and 60% of out-of-school suspensions. D&L attribute this disparity to performative racialized responses to Riverview’s ostensive disciplinary policy. These responses occurred at three stages: (1) selection, (2) processing, and (3) enforcement. By focusing on daily interactional dynamics during these stages that resulted in *differential selection* and *differential processing*, D&L show (1) how disciplinary practices “communicate to all who is and is not a full member of the school community”; (2) that large disparities in outcomes originate from racialized responses to “minor, often subjective, offenses”; and (3) the ways “race and gender intersect in the practice of school discipline”<sup>10</sup>.

Performative practices not only led to disparities in who was picked out for wrongdoing, but also impacted the severity of enforced consequences. Black students were more likely to be sanctioned for behaviors that White students performed without penalty; they were also more likely to be referred for subjective and less serious



offenses<sup>11</sup>. Interestingly, it was not just the researchers or school personnel that observed these disparities—White students also noted how Black and Brown students were treated differently for the same forms of behavior.

## What It All Means...and What Can I Do With This

The manifestation of racism in the K12 space is “not the same as it was in the past”<sup>12</sup> yet its outcomes continue to negatively impact the non-white student community. Riverview’s handbook was written in “race-neutral terms.” A security guard stated that “the book [...] is our guide. It tells us the discipline rules. It tells us the consequences . . . We don’t care if you’re white, black Hispanic, Russian, Asian, Hebrew, Chinese. We’re going to follow that book. When I come into this building, I don’t see colors, I see people”; yet “as one teacher put it, [...] I would not say that [students] are all treated equally”<sup>13</sup>. The data show significant racialized discipline disparities. These patterns—the result not of Black students’ behavior, but rather a product of the way Black and Brown students are treated at Riverview—impact a student’s sense of belonging and their “ability to thrive academically”<sup>14</sup>.

Viewing disciplinary practice as an organizational routine provides a potentially useful lens for practitioners to both transform performative practice *and* question the underlying assumptions of the ostensive aspects of disciplinary policy. It can act not just as an analytical lens to understand racialized outcomes but as a concrete tool to address school policy. Disparities are, according to D&L, the result of differential selection and differential processing. Interested practitioners might use D&L’s conceptualization of performative vs. ostensive disciplinary policy to audit and transform practice. Comparing the ostensive to the performative can also be used for other policies that may or may not involve race, gender, or class<sup>15</sup>.

## Possible Critique

(1) Why don’t Black and Brown parents work collectively to advocate for their kids? (2) The second response is not as much a critique of Diamond’s work as it is an extension of his conclusion: What would happen if the rules were enforced the same for all students? Would well-resourced parents lobby Riverview’s principal and school board to demand a change in policy? (3) Which begs the question, is Riverview’s philosophy of discipline problematic? Is suspension or expulsion a logical and/or productive punishment for the presence of marijuana on campus? Despite its seemingly neutral appearance, this is a radical question, forcing an examination of what could be considered an unreasonably punitive approach to school discipline. Who benefits from these punitive policies? Students? Teachers? Parents? Does it make sense to remove a child from a school setting—literally taking away learning time from that student—for perceived misbehavior? Could a restorative or transformative justice approach to relationship building act an alternative? (4) This is also not a critique but rather an extension of D&L’s argument: Stovall might argue that a race-neutral policy carried out in a race-neutral manner (ostensive = performative) is not enough to address structural and historical forces that disproportionately impact Black and Brown students<sup>16</sup>.

## Response to the Critique

In D&L’s conclusion, they pose similar questions to the ones asked in the section above, although they do not go into much depth (this is not the purpose of their paper). One might respond by asking how a school can operate without clear, strict behavioral expectations? Although not addressed in D&L’s paper, there is scholarship focused on Black and Brown parental involvement—schools are often not welcoming places for these families<sup>17</sup>. They have experienced this both as parents and students, and subsequently have little faith that their grievances will be heard by the schooling system. Why spend your time advocating for your child if you know it will not amount to much? Furthermore, because these populations have often had negative experiences (including with school discipline), they might lack the social capital required to collectively address discipline disparities<sup>18</sup>.



## TOOLS TO ENHANCE PLCs

**Title:** Toward a Practice-Based Theory for How Professional Learning Communities Engage in the Improvement of Tools and Practices for Scientific Modeling.

**Author(s) + Year:** Jessica J. Thompson, Sara Hagenah, Scott McDonald, Christie Barchenger (2019)

**Topic:** Improvement Science. Professional Learning. Science Teaching Practice. Scientific Modeling. Tools.

### Overview

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide teachers an opportunity to “work together in peer groups [...to] develop pedagogical ideas about [their] teaching practices”<sup>19</sup>. However, PLCs are not always productive learning environments—educators often lack critical support(s) to have meaningful conversations about instructional practices<sup>20</sup>. Thompson, Hagenah, McDonald, and Barchenger (2019) (subsequently referred to as “Thompson”) explore how a PLC organized around a shared tool might create an adult learning environment that facilitates enhanced teacher collaboration and improved student learning<sup>21</sup>. The tool—in this case a modeling template developed for a science classroom—gave students the opportunity to show their thinking through writing and visual representation. It also gave teachers an *anchor* to “situate their conversations about student learning when debriefing a lesson”<sup>22</sup>. Thompson’s findings suggest that properly structured and supported PLCs can serve as lucrative settings for professional learning and pedagogical transformation.

### Theory

*Scientific Modeling and Ambitious Science Teaching (AST) Practices:* “AST recognizes that building, testing, and revising models and developing evidence-based explanations are central practices in scientific fields”<sup>23</sup>. They provide students an opportunity to “learn how to learn and do’ science”<sup>24</sup> by valuing their ideas, perspectives, and prior knowledge. Helping students model scientific phenomenon through the development of (scaffolded) visual representations (e.g. the modeling template used in this study) can provide (1) students a concrete tool to observe and reflect on their learning and (2) teachers a glimpse into student thinking<sup>25</sup>.

*PLCs:* Research suggests that PLCs support teacher learning when (a) teachers have collaborative opportunities to use artifacts (such as video and student work) to reflect on classroom practice; (b) PLC content is relevant to classroom practice; (c) teachers receive feedback on new pedagogical techniques; and (d) teachers have the space to “negotiate” the tension between desired practice and expected improvement goals<sup>26</sup>. These conditions can support the development of a sense of “trust and open-mindedness, curiosity about student learning and a willingness to engage in principles of risk-taking (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009)”<sup>27</sup>.

*Improvement Science:* The authors draw upon the work on improvement cycles to ground PLCs in a Plan-Do-Study-Act process<sup>28</sup>. Teachers plan together (Plan), teach a lesson based on that initial planning process (Do), analyze that lesson as a group (Study), and iterate upon the initial practice (Act).

*Sensemaking with Tools and Practices*<sup>29</sup>: PLCs can be a site for collaborative sensemaking conversations—“can” being the operative word<sup>30</sup>. Thompson argues that “anchoring” PLCs in classroom artifacts can avoid incoherence and encourage “shared histories of inquiry”<sup>31</sup>—what Grossman et al. would call a “shared grammar of practice” through the creation and iteration of *commonly* used tools<sup>32</sup>. Tools can function to make reasoning public by exposing the underlying assumptions of such tools—this happens as educators are forced to justify pedagogical choices for the tools they use and the modification they make to those tools.

### Findings

The modeling template became the “central shared tool negotiated as part of the PLC’s work”<sup>33</sup>. As the primary object of critique, it provided an anchor for participating teachers to ground conversations in pedagogical change. The examination of student work made more accessible and understandable through the common use of the template encouraged a shift in teacher thinking and practice. During the school year, 7th and 8th grade teachers modified both the template *and* their practice based on PLC conversations. Student work coupled with observational data (teachers observed one another) created a learning environment that allowed teachers to be more critical of pedagogical decisions—both their own and those of their colleagues. Temporal proximity also



mattered: debriefing immediately after a lesson and re-teaching that same lesson in a new way to a new group of students was beneficial. At its roots, this process became a sophisticated trial-and-error cycle.

Interestingly, the 7th and 8th grade teachers used the template in different ways. The 7th grade teachers modified the template throughout the course of a unit—a process that the research team referred to as “rapid cycles of development”—while the 8th grade team’s process was described as one of “incubation, then development”<sup>34</sup>—significant modifications to the template were considered and adopted at the end of the school year.

## What It All Means...and What Can I Do With This

The inability of PLCs to facilitate instructional improvement can be attributed to a lack of clear purpose and necessary support structures. This can result in feelings of resentment among teachers—time is limited, and time poorly spent is frustrating. Thompson’s findings suggest that PLCs can improve instruction “when they make a particular *problem of practice* and its related *tools* an object of study”<sup>35</sup>. Participating teachers deprivatized their classrooms, made their practice explicit through the use of a common tool, and encouraged each other during PLCs to articulate theories about how a tool or teaching strategy might impact student learning—all seemingly desirable teaching practices<sup>36</sup>. The PLC also “generated practice-based evidence (Bryk et al., 2015) linking specific structural changes in the tool to improvements in student thinking and participation”<sup>37</sup>.

Receiving constructive feedback can be an emotional activity for a lot of teachers. The PLC process used by Thompson provided a space for teacher teams to “explicitly push each other about the underlying assumptions of their instructional design”<sup>38</sup> without directly “attacking” each other’s individual teaching practice. The proposed model might allow educators to identify emerging problems of practice, engage in iterative cycles in which they examine student work, and systematically test parts of their practice and relevant tools in order to transform their instruction.

## Possible Critique

(1) These educators worked alongside trained professors in what is called a research-practice partnership (RPP)—a process that is hard to scale<sup>39</sup>. Most schools do not have access to K12 researchers nor the resources available to provide internal support (without the presence of more experienced academics). (2) Did the prescribed model constrain student thinking? Were there other ways that students might have been able to “show what they know”? Giving students more “ownership” over this process might be a better approach to expand student thinking. (3) Inconsistency in implementation across grade levels might confuse students. How will 7th grade students respond to the increased constraints of the 8th grade team’s approach to tool use and iteration?<sup>40</sup> (4) Students do not receive much Science instruction in elementary and middle school—how useful/applicable are these findings for most K-8 teachers?

## Response to the Critique

(1) This critique addresses an unfortunate reality of the K12 space. If PLCs are a largely unproductive setting for adult learning, your school should be asking: “Why is limited time being used for them?” and “If PLCs are viewed as a potentially lucrative context for pedagogical transformation, what can we do to create improved collaborative opportunities for teachers to reflect on and adapt their teaching?” (2) This critique is valid, yet it can be addressed by soliciting student feedback and providing other opportunities to express student thinking. (3) The third critique is real but is more complex than it might appear. Is it confusing for students to use different models in different grades? Or does the use of different models (provided they’re all “good”) further develop the various tools in students’ cognitive/scientific tool boxes? Does prescribing a model for all teachers limit their agency? It is not uncommon for teachers to have very different styles, and it is not often asked how these differing styles impact the student experience. (4) This approach can be used in all content areas.

Finally, it should be noted that mandating this type of PLC may not achieve your desired outcomes. Should you adopt a similar approach to PLCs, you should consider who is part of the design process and how tools are designed, implemented, analyzed, and modified—teachers should have a role in this work.



## RECONNECTING WITH PURPOSE

**Title:** Good Education In an Age of Measurement: On the Need to Reconnect with the Question of Purpose in Education

**Author(s) + Year:** Gert Biesta (2009)

**Topic:** Good Education. Evaluation. Accountability. Aims of Education. Evidence-Based.

### Overview

In a 2008 paper, Biesta states that “there is a need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education, particularly in the light of a recent tendency to focus discussions about education almost exclusively on the measurement and comparison of educational outcomes”<sup>41</sup>. The increased importance of comparative studies (e.g. TIMSS, PISA) has created an environment where “league tables” that measure local, state, national, and international performance act as a proxy for “student success.” This approach—what might also be called data-based decision making, a phenomenon appropriated from the medical profession—has resulted in a narrow focus on student outcomes, often to the detriment of “bigger” questions, specifically the question of purpose in education.

### Theory

International comparative studies result in “league tables that are assumed to indicate who is better and who is best. [...] These tables have a complicated rationale, combining accountability and choice elements with a social justice argument, which says that everyone should have access to the same quality [education.]”<sup>42</sup>. This framing is misleading: (1) Accountability lacks a democratic dimension because it is limited to a choice from a set menu (limited metrics to measure accountability)<sup>43</sup>; (2) The variety of school “choice” is limited; and (3) equality of opportunity rarely translates into equality of outcomes (due to structural factors). Despite these limitations, comparative studies and league tables have proliferated alongside an increased interest in educational measurement.

Proponents of evidence-based education are attempting to identify and isolate variables that make schooling more *effective* through the expansion of randomized controlled trials (RCTs). The use of RCTs has encouraged a shift toward more narrow outcomes and outputs<sup>44</sup>. Data collected through RCTs and local, state, national, and international assessments has “given the impression that decisions about the direction of educational policy, and the shape and form of educational practice can be based solely upon factual information”<sup>45</sup>. This is problematic for two reasons. (1) “What ought to be can never be logically derived from what is”<sup>46</sup>. This is what Biesta refers to as the “is-ought problem.” Whether we like it or not, admit it or not, conversations about the direction of education are always grounded in value judgements—judgements about what is educationally *desirable*. (2) There is a problem of technical validity—are we measuring what we intend to measure? Do we measure what we value or do we measure what is easy to measure and value that thing? This has manifested itself in “the rise of a culture of performativity in education — a culture in which means becomes ends in themselves so that targets and indicators of quality become mistaken for quality itself”<sup>47</sup>. The danger of this focus on evidence-based education is that we value what we measure instead of (attempting to) measure what we value.

The (above) example of effectiveness is useful. As a descriptor, “effective” says something about a *process*—an ability to bring about a certain outcome—but it does NOT comment on the desirability of that outcome (effective for what?). Biesta advocates for a shift away from process and toward “ultimate values: values about the aims and purposes of education”<sup>48</sup>. A pedagogical strategy may not appear to be “effective,” but it may fulfill other desirable means, such as helping students develop as critical thinkers and autonomous subjects. “Effective for whom?” and “effective for what?” are equally important questions that encourage practitioners to consider “what constitutes *good* education?”

Biesta believes that “what constitutes good education?” is a composite question—it must acknowledge what he defines as the three functions and possibilities in education. (1) *Qualification*: These are the skills to do something in society, often framed in economic arguments. (2) *Socialization*: How do we become individual members of particular social, cultural, and political groups? (3) *Subjectification*: This is the process of an individual becoming



a subject independent of social, political, and cultural orders (thinking and acting), i.e. more than a “specimen of a more encompassing order”<sup>49</sup>. Therefore, the *quality* of the subject (the individual) matters. The purpose of these three functions should inform decisions about what should and should not be measured. Interestingly, these three functions can conflict with one another, making the conversation about purpose more complex.

Biesta provides two examples—one on citizenship education and one on Math instruction—to illustrate the practical application of the question of purpose. In Math, there is a strong focus on qualification—students should receive explicit instruction that builds mathematical knowledge and skills so that they become proficient in Math. A second function—socialization—is just as important. A K12 student is able to observe that Math is considered essential to the schooling experience. It is one of two subjects (along with ELA) in which students are constantly tested. An elementary school student need not do more than look at the daily or weekly schedule to conclude that most “learning” time is dedicated to Math and ELA. This (maybe not so) subtle message delivered to lovers of Science, Social Studies, Music, and Art communicates that these potential areas of interest are less important. The elevation of Math in the K12 space therefore also serves a socialization function, suggesting that it is important to be good at math. Math also has a subjectification function. We can ask how the power of mathematical reasoning might allow a person to be more autonomous, or consider “the moral possibilities of mathematics — e.g., by treating division in relation to sharing or to questions about fairness and justice – and, through this, use the potential of mathematics to contribute to subjectification”<sup>50</sup>. Thus, even the assumed importance of mathematics instruction in the K-12 space is far more complex than it might appear.

## What It All Means...and What Can I Do With This

The title, “Good Education in an age of Measurement,” implies that we are living during a time in which data and measurement are considered critical to the K12 field. In an era of data-driven decision making, one might consider the following questions: What is being measured? Why are those things being measured? Are they being measured because they signify the outcomes that we genuinely desire? Or are they being measured because they are easy to measure? What do you do if desired outcomes are not measurable? As an education leader, do you know what outcomes you desire and why? What do you do if there exists a desired value that is not easily calculated and quantified? Do you try to find an alternative way to measure it? Or do you ignore it for more sustainable measurements? Should schools be so focused on measurement? “If we are not explicit about our views about the aims and ends of education — if we do not tackle the questions as to what constitutes good education head on — we run the risk that statistics and league tables will make these decisions for us” (pp. 43-44). I would argue that the attempt to critically examine (and potentially limit) the process of “quantification” in favor of addressing the essential components of a “good” education would benefit all constituents. We should first focus on what constitutes good education and good learning and use answers to these questions to decide whether or not the data we spend so much time and effort gathering and analyzing is worth all that time and effort.

## Possible Critique

Biesta suggests that we should engage more in the composite question of what constitutes good education, yet he himself does not offer (in this paper) much in the way of solutions. Furthermore, shouldn’t schools be held accountable for their performance? How do you do this without data? Despite the criticisms of K12 legislation such as No Child Left Behind, the data gathered through that national initiative has served a valuable function by exposing in concrete terms the inequities in student performance.

## Response to the Critique

Answering the question, “What constitutes good education,” would defeat the purpose of the exercise. It is not Biesta’s responsibility to tell others what education should be, but rather it is up to individuals and organizations to discover through critical conversations and self- and collective inquiry what is best for each school’s context. What one district thinks is best for its students might be different from a neighboring district or a district thousands of miles away. This is not to imply that desirable outcomes cannot be critiqued, yet it does suggest that this process should be one of self-exploration.

As for the second critique, I am not sure Biesta would argue that the total absence of data is ideal. However, I think he would argue that the absence of critical conversations about why specific forms of data are collected is doing a disservice to all K12 stakeholders.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Tucker 2019.
- <sup>2</sup> Diamond & Lewis 2019. See also Irby 2018. Morris & Perry 2016. Rios 2017. Skiba et. al, 2011.
- <sup>3</sup> Diamond & Lewis 2019.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 832.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 837.
- <sup>6</sup> Feldman & Pentland 2003.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 103.
- <sup>8</sup> Diamond & Lewis p. 837.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 845.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp. 833-834. See also Morris & Perry 2016. Skiba et al. 2011. Wun 2014.
- <sup>11</sup> See Gregory 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 851.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, first quote p. 842, second quote p. 836.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 853. “Disciplinary patterns serve as a hazard to creating such a sense of belonging among students when they contribute to creating a ‘threatening environment. [...] The kinds of racialized patterns in discipline we find at Riverview, and that exist widely, negatively affect not only how targeted students feel about the school, but also their ability to thrive academically (E. Morris & Perry, 2016; Steele, 2010)’” (Diamond & Lewis 2019, p. 853).
- <sup>15</sup> For example, the ostensive purpose of a locally developed benchmark exam might be to assess academic progress and adjust instruction accordingly. However, as the Bertrand & Marsh (2015) and Park, Daly, & Guerra (2012) articles in the [first edition](#) of the Spanning Boundaries newsletter illustrate, teachers are not always willing or capable to use student data to inform instruction. In situations such as this, the performative use of a benchmark exam might not be to inform instructional practices. Thus, the ostensive deviating from the performative becomes problematic, not just because precious school time is used for these types of exams.
- <sup>16</sup> Aviles & Stovall 2019.
- <sup>17</sup> For more information on this see Cooper 2009. DeMatthews & Izquierdo 2018. Johnson 2006. Khalifa 2018. Shields 2004. Yosso 2005.
- <sup>18</sup> See note 16.
- <sup>19</sup> Thompson et al. 2019, p. 1426. See also Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2009. Cogshall et al. 2012. Kazemi & Hubbard 2008. Wei et al. 2009.
- <sup>20</sup> Coburn 2003. See also Voulalas & Sharpe 2005.
- <sup>21</sup> Thompson et al. 2019.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 1439.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 1425.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 1424.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. See also Allen & Penuel 2015. Galluci et al., 2010. Knapp 2003.
- <sup>27</sup> Thompson et al. 2019, p. 1426.
- <sup>28</sup> Bryk et al. 2015.
- <sup>29</sup> “Research on teacher learning indicates shared tools and resources can support the accumulation and diffusion of social knowledge. [...] PLCs working with tools can support the development of a common vision and clarify members’ views on learning (Grossman et al., 1999; Horn & Little, 2010). Furthermore, tool theorists suggest that tools are more than just objects of activity; they support learning when they become a part of the process of knowledge work (Engestrom, 2004; Knorr Cetina, 1997)” (p. 1449). The tool—in this case, the modeling template—almost acts as a boundary object. It clarifies a hard to analyze phenomenon—student thinking—by initiating a conversation between the teacher and the student that is mediated by the student’s work.
- <sup>30</sup> The purpose of PLCs can be ambiguous and disconnected from classroom practice.
- <sup>31</sup> Thompson et al. 2019, p. 1427.
- <sup>32</sup> Grossman et al. 2009.
- <sup>33</sup> Thompson et al. 2019, p.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 1445.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 1452, emphasis mine
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.



<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 1450

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 1451.

<sup>39</sup> For more information on RPPs, see Coburn & Penuel 2016. Penuel 2017. Vedder-Weis et al. 2020.

<sup>40</sup> In a previous job supporting technology integration, I worked with a district that was piloting an iPad initiative in its fourth-grade classrooms. All students received an iPad to use both at school and at home. However, the fifth-grade classrooms did not have iPads. Students transitioning from fourth- to fifth-grade at the end of the school year would be moving to a less technologically rich learning environment. The presence of tech does NOT imply good pedagogy, but this still struck me as a strange arrangement. We had conversations about this and the district eventually decided to purchase iPads in fifth-grade, a decision that I thought made sense.

<sup>41</sup> Biesta 2008, p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid p. 34.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on what Biesta means by “democracy”, see Biesta 2004.

<sup>44</sup> See Gray 2004. Rutter and Maugham 2002.

<sup>45</sup> Biesta 2008, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 35. An example of performativity might be the presence of lots of new shiny tech—“the stuff”—that is not used particularly well.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

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