

Dissin' Blacks in the Name of Science

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Part 7

According to a study released by Princeton University, smaller class sizes in lower grades improves academic success and reduces the achievement gap between Black and White students. The study was conducted by Alan Krueger and titled "Would Smaller Classes Help the Black White Achievement Gap?" Krueger studied the work of 11,600 grade school students at 79 schools at Project Star, a test pilot program in Tennessee.

Krueger discovered that smaller class sizes had a more dramatic impact on the performance of Black students than on White students. For Black students, the gap decreased by 38 percent and continued to be 15 percent lower after the students returned to bigger classes. Moreover, in smaller classes, Black students were more inclined to take ACT or SAT tests, having a larger increase than White students in smaller classes.

There have been many instances of high-profile individuals, especially African Americans, that had been deemed learning disabled, only to have illustrious careers. A great example is Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, the brilliant African American surgeon famous for separating conjoined (or Siamese) twins. (Award-winning actor Cuba Gooding Jr. portrayed Carson on a "Lifetime" television program.) Writing in *The New York Times*, Claudia Dreifus stated:

For most of elementary school, he was a problem child with miserable grades. But his mother, Sonja, a domestic worker, pushed young Benjamin to read books and eventually turn his grades around...."There is a lot of personal satisfaction," Dr. Carson admits, "in coming this far from an environment where no one thought you could achieve.... (January 4, 2000, p. D7.)

Dreifus was conducting an interview with Dr. Carson. Carson related:

When I thought I was stupid, I acted like a stupid person. And when I thought I was smart, I acted like a smart person and achieved like a smart person....You know, even as late as my first year in medical school, my faculty adviser advised me to drop out. He said I wasn't medical school material....I know tons and tons of people who grew up in environments like mine who are doing fantastic things intellectually and nobody knows about them. (ibid.)

DeWayne Wickham, an African-American columnist with *USA TODAY*, is another great example of a Black person achieving greatness despite the odds against him or her. He wrote in one column:

"I'm one of those people Charles Murray dooms to failure....I was kicked out of one high school, denied admission into two others, and finally dropped out of a fourth....Eventually I changed my environment, earned a high school GED and went on to get two college degrees - in each case with higher cumulative averages than most of my white classmates."

Then there is Billy Hawkins, Vice President for Academic Affairs/Professor at Saint Paul's College in Lawrence, Virginia. Many assumed that Hawkins was mentally retarded and he was placed in a

program for special education. However, during high school his genius came to the fore when he was able to carry out complex plays as a star quarterback of his high school football team. He eventually went on to earn a master's degree with a 4.0 average, and later, a Ph.D. He became successful because, eventually, many teachers spent extra time helping him to learn. He is the author of at least two books, including *Reaching for the Stars*.

It might come as a surprise to learn that one of history's greatest scientific geniuses, Albert Einstein, did not excel in all subjects. He did not speak his first words until the age of three. His father thought he was destined to become a failure, and a young woman reportedly declined to marry him because he was not smart enough!

And let's not forget about Thomas Edison. According to writer Mort Grimm, Edison had an IQ of 81, far below the average, and was deeply troubled as a child. He was not expected to amount to very much, yet he went on to become one of the greatest inventors in American history.

All of this raises the question as to just how important IQ really is in determining one's destiny. The bio-determinists believe it is everything. Earl Ofari Hutchinson, father of Black atheist/feminist/activist Sikivu Hutchinson, writing in the now-defunct Brooklyn newspaper, *The City Sun*, thinks otherwise:

Murray and Herrnstein claim that IQ correlates with professional and business success. It doesn't In that claim they ignored the work of psychologists Donald P. Hoyt, Ann Roe and Donald MacKinnon. In 40 separate studies, Hoyt found near zero correlation between college grade point and occupational success in business, engineering, medicine, law and science.

Roe administered IQ tests to 64 of the nation's eminent scientists. Some scored very high, but many didn't. She concluded that their scores did not "give the slightest clue that the subject was a scientist of renown."

Mackinnon tested the correlation between IQ scores and creative achievement. He administered the *Terman Concept Mastery Test* to mathematicians, creative writers, architects, research scientists and electronic engineers. The correlation was zero. He also found that the average IQ scores of a group of "outstanding" architects did not differ from those of 'undistinguished' architects. (From "*The Bell Curve* Continues to Toll," December 21, 1994 - January 10, 1995, p. 29.)

There was also a study that found that the occupational success of Chinese Americans possessing an IQ of 100 was about the same as that of White Americans with an IQ of 120. If IQ is so important in determining success, why is that those with a lower IQ are able to surpass those with a higher IQ?

It seems that IQ might not be the sine qua non that bio-determinists imagine it to be. But you will never hear them concede this possibility.