THE PROBLEM with GRIT

DISMANTLING DEFICIT MODELS in INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION

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Slides: tinyurl.com/GritAndInfoLit | Handout: tinyurl.com/GritAndInfoLitHandout

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OVERVIEW

1. Deficit models of education
2. Deficit thinking and information literacy
3. Alternatives
4. Ideas and examples

Deficit models shape our approaches to information literacy and library instruction without our being aware of it. We must actively resist deficit thinking to provide meaningful education.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does deficit thinking play out within academic libraries and information literacy?
- How are these values adopted and reinscribed in information literacy instruction?
- How can we reject deficit models but encourage effort and engagement, especially for our most vulnerable students?

DEFICIT MODELS of EDUCATION

The deficit model "posit[s] that the student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies...it take[s] different forms to conform to what is politically acceptable at the moment."

- Richard R. Valencia

"Conceptualizing the Notion of Deficit Thinking," 1997

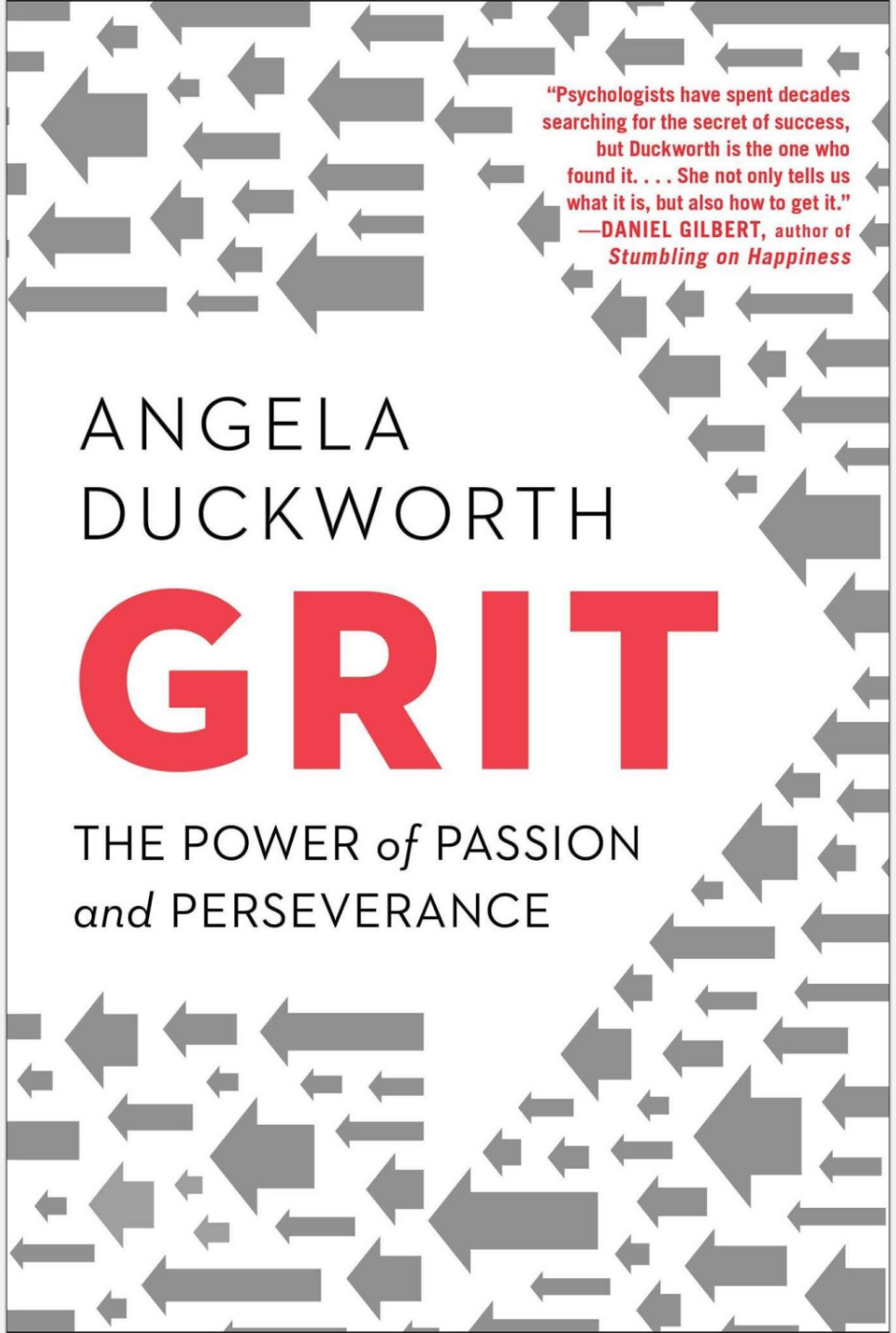
WHAT'S the PROBLEM?

- Ignores systemic inequalities and injustices
- Locating the problem at the individual level results in inadequate solutions
- Places the burden on students and teachers instead of those with power
- This burden falls disproportionately onto marginalized students, who often have the least support

"While we might like to believe that grit and effort can make it possible to use education to overcome adversity… rather than providing social mobility, more often than not, schools actually perpetuate the status quo."

- Pedro Noguera

"Grit, Overemphasized Agency, Overlooked," 2015


"Psychologists have spent decades searching for the secret of success, but Duckworth is the one who found it. . . . She not only tells us what it is, but also how to get it."
—DANIEL GILBERT, author of Stumbling on Happiness
ANGELA DUCKWORTH
GRIT
THE POWER of PASSION and PERSEVERANCE

"Grit resonates with so many people who believe in the popular American adage that if you work hard and pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you can achieve anything. This belief unfortunately assumes that individuals have the power, privilege, and access to craft their own futures, regardless of circumstance and systemic barriers."

- Christine Yeh

"Forget Grit. Focus on Inequality," 2017

Louisa 🌹🍞🌹
@LouisatheLast

Follow

Reminder that “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” was initially a joke about an absurd, impossible thing to do, and that it is not a real thing one can do

> "The term appears to have **originated** in the early 19th-century United States (particularly in the phrase "pull oneself over a fence by one's **bootstraps**") to mean an absurdly impossible action, an adynaton."
>
> Bootstrapping - Wikipedia
> https://en.m.wikipedia.org › wiki › Boots...

1:40 PM - 19 Apr 2018

"Both the 'grit' narrative and the rugged individualism myth focus an accusatory and evaluative gaze on the individual, leaving systemic forces that control individual behavior unexamined."

- Paul L. Thomas

"The 'Grit' Narrative, 'Grit' Research, and Codes that Blind," 2014

Paul Gorski
@pgorski

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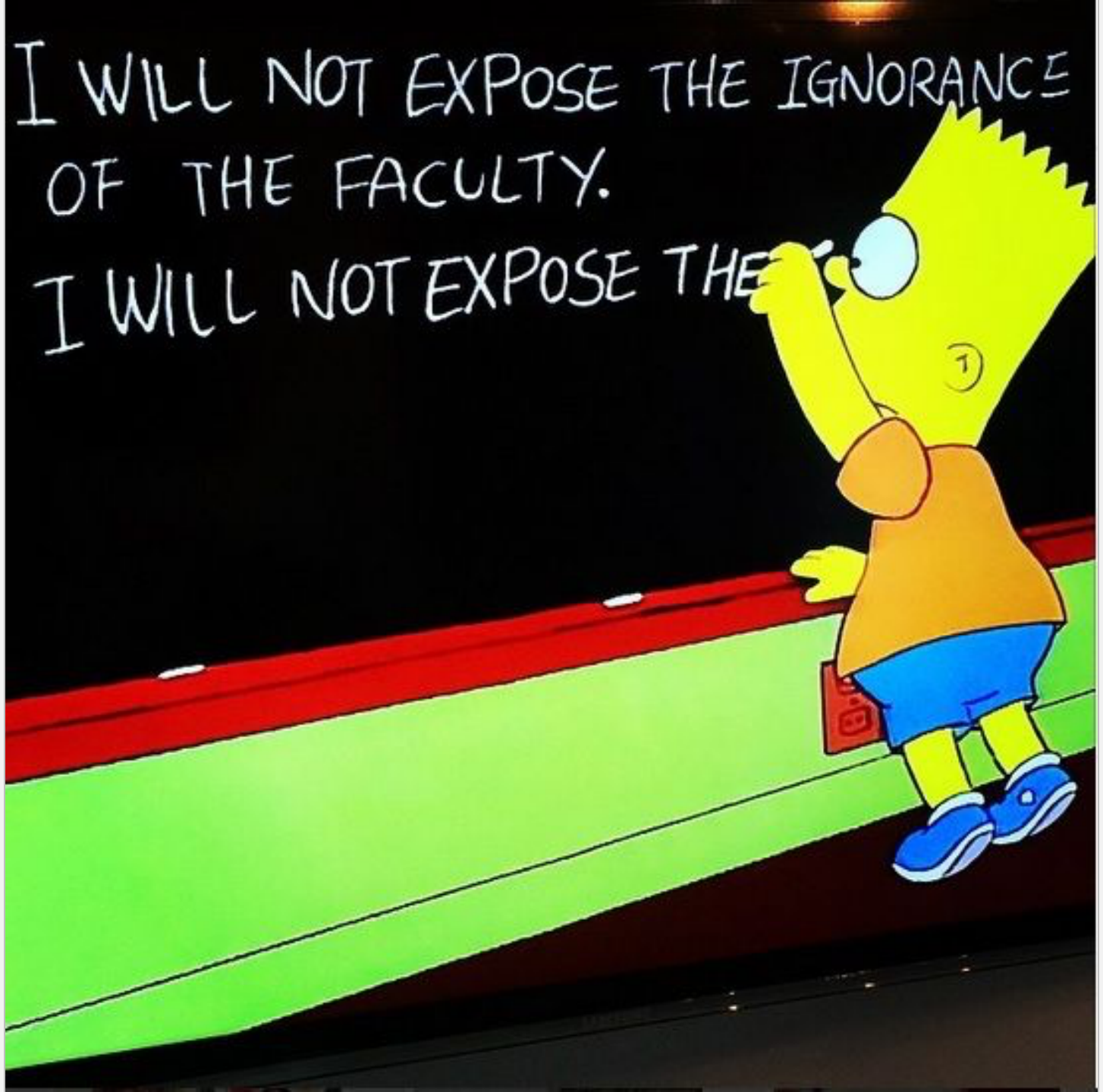
JUSTICE mindset: We stop critiquing mindsets of kids and focus on efforts of schools to be equitable and just. #FixInjusticeNotKids

George Couros @gcouros

Fixed vs Growth vs #InnovatorsMindset in different situations #IMMOOC

8:53 AM - 1 Nov 2017


I WILL NOT EXPOSE THE IGNORANCE
OF THE FACULTY.
I WILL NOT EXPOSE THE

Q: HOW DOES DEFICIT THINKING INFORM INFORMATION LITERACY?
HOW DOES IT INFORM LIBRARY INSTRUCTION?

DEFICIT THINKING and INFORMATION LITERACY

What is information literacy?

CILIP defines information literacy as:

"The ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society."

"The current dominant paradigm of information literacy emphasizes the importance of connecting with textual information. This produces a deficit model of information literacy which does not take into account the importance of informal learning or other sources of information which are accessed through communication or action."

- Annemaree Lloyd

"Information Literacy: Different Contexts, Different Concepts, Different Truths?" 2005

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

- Database demonstrations
- Lecture-focused
- Limited to academic information sources

Resilience: The Most Undervalued Information Literacy Disposition

Chapter Five: Cultivating a Growth Mindset

Making Students Gritty

We Need a Growth Mindset for Learning Library Research

Charleston Conf
@chsconf

Follow

"Libraries need a competition mindset."
#ChsFutLab #chs17 #chsconf2017

6:07 PM - 6 Nov 2017

How you define a problem determines your solution and approach.

Q: WHAT DOES DEFICIT THINKING TELL US
about INFORMATION LITERACY
in the CASE of FAKE NEWS?

ALTERNATIVES

CRITICAL INFORMATION LITERACY

- Asks librarians to work with their patrons and communities to co-investigate the political, social, and economic dimensions of information, including its creation, access, and use.

- Seeks to involve learners in better understanding systems of oppression while also identifying opportunities to take action upon them.

INFORMATION PRIVILEGE and QUESTIONING ACADEMIC AUTHORITY

Explore the economics of scholarly communication and who has access to paywalled information:

- Why can't we access just any article?
- How much do you think the *Journal of* __ costs?
- What does this mean for someone who needs articles but isn't affiliated with a university?

Have students examine search results and respond to:

- Who tends to publish on this topic?
- Whose perspectives are not represented?

CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PEDAGOGY

"'Culturally sustaining' requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence."

- Django Paris

"Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice," 2012

CREATING COUNTER-NARRATIVES

"Asset-based approaches are not predicated on identifying assets before the educational encounter. Rather students and teachers are continually identifying and translating assets for use in the academic environment."

- Kim L. Morrison

"Informed Asset-Based Pedagogy:
Coming Correct, Counter-stories from an Information Literacy Classroom," 2017

Q: HOW CAN INSTRUCTION BE REFRAMED to COUNTER DEFICIT THINKING?

IDEAS and EXAMPLES

ACTIVITY 1: SOURCE EVALUATION

1. Divide students into groups of 3-5

2. Assign each group an information source
   a. Wikipedia
   b. Google
   c. Library catalog
   d. Library database

3. Group answers questions about source

4. Group presents findings to classmates

ACTIVITY 1 QUESTIONS

- Who wrote or contributed to this source?
  How can you tell?
- How might this particular source be useful to you?
  What are its disadvantages?
- Do you think this is a trustworthy source?
  Why or why not?
- Who can publish on this specific topic?
  Whose voice might be included or excluded?

ACTIVITY 2: COLLABORATIVE CRITERIA

1. Divide students into groups of 3-5
2. Group writes down the 3-5 places they go most often for information in their personal lives
3. Group ranks these sources by frequency of use
4. One person from each group writes down the sources on a whiteboard

ACTIVITY 2: COLLABORATIVE CRITERIA

- Discuss as a class: “what stands out about these lists?”
- Get back into small groups to write down 3-5 criteria they use for deciding if information is good or bad
- As a class, students suggest different criteria based on their lists
- Criteria are discussed, and ones the class agrees are useful are added to the whiteboard

1. Recognize deficit thinking when we see it

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2. Build upon the knowledge students bring to the classroom

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3. Teach at the level we want students to learn, while recognizing differences in familiarity with academic cultures and expectations

THANK YOU

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Booth, Char. "On information privilege." *info-mational* (2014). https://infomational.com/2014/12/01/on-information-privilege/

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