

to racial discrimination, nor is there discussion of the gender bias which is so destructive to all too many of our young women of all races. Rather he focuses in depth only on the acknowledged challenges facing Black males in our society. Also missing is a discussion of the challenges facing our gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender young people – particularly those of color – among whom there are all too many suicides. Suicide is but one dramatic indicator of the tremendous challenges they face.

Furthermore, although I recognize that his two books are specifically addressing issues of race, I would argue that this discussion is incomplete without actual discussions – courageous conversations and exercises – to help educators work more effectively with

students of all races, all sexes and genders, from all economic backgrounds, and sexual preferences, as well as students who have learning disabilities and physical handicaps, thus facing doubly difficult challenges as second-class citizens. Thus, I look forward to a third book by Singleton in which he addresses these disparities in our education system.

Lastly, I Aspire to the same kinds of things that Singleton hopes for and longs to see – more demonstrably effective changes in our schools and school systems, addressing the needs of students of color. And I admire the thoughtfulness and thoroughness with which Singleton presents the chapters in his latest book, **MORE Courageous Conversations About Race**. Would that all educators, not only White, but

of all races, genders, cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and income level could work through Singleton's exercises, reflections, and essential questions, doing the personal work needed to carry on the struggle for social justice.

For me, personally then – beyond being a writer of book reviews and articles for **Connections** – I know, and accept that my work as an NSRF National Facilitator has “no closure” as Singleton puts it. It is a life-long commitment to which I aspire.

So I recommend you get a copy of **More Courageous Conversations About Race** and let us know at NSRF what you think; how it might help you and the people with whom you work in education? 🍃

## Improve the effectiveness of your audiovisual presentations

In the September issue of the journal, **Mind, Brain and Education**, an excellent article on “The Neuroscience of PowerPoint” includes research-based tips on preparing Powerpoint presentations.

- 1) Written text with spoken word does not work.
- 2) Visual images with spoken word is much more effective.
- 3) Utilizing the “point” in PPT can help.

Drawing not only on years of research from earlier behavioral studies, but on current neuro-imaging studies, the author, Jared Cooney Horvath (Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Australia), reports on recent findings from brain scans of students and others when looking at visual PPT slides and text while listening to an accompanying aural presentation.

The researchers observed that the same region of the brain is involved in reading text on a PPT slide as listening to the concurrent oration of the presenter. Reading competes with listening rather than enhances it. So, drop text slides from your presentations and give people a chance to really hear what you're saying.

The “modality principle” of multi-media learning theory is now supported by other current neuro-imaging studies. These studies tell us that aural presentations supported with relevant IMAGES (rather than words) enhance learning. Scans of these test subjects show that combined visual and auditory presentations activate different, complementary regions of the brain. So, keep

those slides with images and illustrations, but make sure they're relevant and don't overdo it.

Another key concept in multi-media theory, the “signaling principle,” suggests that learning can be enhanced when attentional cues are used to highlight essential learning during a presentation. For example, circling or adding an arrow to highlight a slide's details (such as a graph or chart) can focus the observer's attention to key aspects of your presentation. So, try using graphic signals as a way of emphasizing key points.

Lastly, keep those slides to a reasonable number – remember that old principle, less is more!

## More on improving presentations

Nancy Duarte has written several books about presentations, and coaches many of the greatest TED speakers. Her talk at TEDxEast offers more great advice on presentations and is a wonderful example of the power of simple slides. <http://bit.ly/1A7WuqN>

