



Written by [Isabel Lyman](#) on October 15, 2010

## Flocabulary

Flocabulary, the grades 3-12 supplemental academic curriculum that features catchy hip-hop music and has been lauded by Oprah's best friend Gayle King, is under fire for the negative way in which it depicts America's early Presidents.

Public school teachers in Oklahoma City (The school district is committed to spending \$97,000 in federal monies with the goal of using this tuneful method to teach social studies facts, vocabulary words, and mathematics problems and reach "at-risk" students.) have [complained](#) about the contents of the U.S. history section — specifically about a rap song called "Old Dead White Men."



It includes this ditty about Old Hickory: "Andrew Jackson, thinks he's a tough guy./ Killing more Indians than there are stars in the sky./ Evil wars of Florida killing the Seminoles./ Saying hello, putting Creek in the hell holes./ Like Adolf Hitler he had the final solution./ 'No, Indians, I don't want you to live here anymore.'"

How's this for a rapid response?

Simplistic and crude./Biased against the dude.

The rap about James Monroe also dabbles in historical revisionism: "White men getting richer than Enron./They stepping on Indians, women and blacks./Era of Good Feeling doesn't come with the facts."

The Sooner State teachers were right to express their concerns, but one wonders why already-over-entertained schoolchildren have to be exposed to subjective rap in a state that's badly lagging when it comes to meeting education standards and which spends plenty of money on public schooling. (The Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs has estimated the [per pupil spending](#) cost to be a whopping \$10,257.)

A report released this summer called "Reforms With Results: What Oklahoma Can Learn from Florida's K-12 [Education Revolution](#)," by Dr. Matthew Ladner, revealed this startling piece of information: "Florida's Hispanic students, who for years were lagging in academic performance, are now scoring higher than the average of *all Oklahoma students* on NAEP's fourth-grade reading exam."

One reason for the success with immigrant children is the Sunshine State's movers-and-shakers' willingness to embrace serious education reforms, such as private school choice programs and alternative paths to teacher certification — not curriculum created by hipsters.

Blogger Andrew W. Griffin, who operates the [Oklahoma Watchdog](#) website, inquired of the Oklahoma City Public Schools why *Flocabulary* even made the cut. Spokesperson Kathleen Kennedy responded with a prickly, "You can't use conventional methods to teach children these days."



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My, my, such low expectations!

Meanwhile, *The New American* contacted *Flocabulary* to find out why the Brooklyn-based educational publishing company singled out "dead white men" for such a harsh review, while airbrushing the controversial parts of Martin Luther King's life.

Dr. King, by the way, was rapped about as follows:

MLK had a dream, took it mainstream./Civil Rights Bill, Voting Rights Acts, they passed./Modern day Jesus, turning the other cheek.

Also contacted was the Oklahoma City Public Schools' media relations manager for a comment about the status of the curriculum, which has been put on hold after the ruckus.

Neither entity has responded, to date./Will they skate./Around Flocabularygate?



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