

# **The Ability of Teachers to Close the Minority Achievement Gap Through Multicultural Teacher Training**

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Education is much like a journey. Many enter this path, follow its twists and turns and successfully end at their final destination. Some however, enter the path with less resources and equipment and therefore have a more difficult time following the twists and turns. Some of these explorers will still reach their destination despite hardships and barriers, while others will get lost in the journey. Many of these lost explorers will be from a minority race and therefore have to overcome obstacles many of their White peers will not have to. For this reason, there is a large disparity between the educational quality and attainment of minority students compared to their White counterparts. This disparity in educational and economic outcomes between America's minority and non-minority populations is known as the minority achievement gap. It can be seen in a wide range of educational indicators including grades, test scores, drop-out rates, college entrance rates, and college completion rates. It can be seen in every school district and all socioeconomic groups. As our nation's children enter their long journey of education, some children's success will be related to their race and ethnicity. If this minority achievement gap persists at the same degree, when these students reach 17 ninety-five percent of White students will be in high school reading 12<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks, while twenty five percent of African American students will have dropped out. Those who are still in school will be reading only at an eighth grade level (D'Amico 2001). White children are nearly twice as likely as their African American counterparts to go to college and three times as likely as their Hispanic counterparts (D'Amico 2001). These statistics only begin to explain the complex attributes that compose the minority achievement gap.

This paper will attempt to address the different attributes that have caused explorers to get lost within the achievement gap, it will discuss the problems with “No Child Left Behind” which was prescribed to solve this disparity and finally, it will conclude by offering an alternative method to effectively alleviate the minority achievement gap. With some effort, every explorer will be able to venture down the educational path, gain the same resources along the way, and attain the same degree of education.

### **Causes of the Minority Gap: Socio-cultural Attributes**

Although the minority achievement gap is a race related gap, it is not driven solely by race. The achievement gap is a complex, interacting mixture of socio-cultural and school related factors. It has been shown that Hispanic children are twice as likely and African American children are three times as likely as White children to be raised in low income homes (Lee 2002). A minority status in combination with poverty strengthens the probability of a low educational attainment. This is because these conditions have detrimental effects directly related to schooling. Many of these children receive inadequate health care and nutrition, they have fewer educational resources in the home, family members tend to have lower educational attainments and therefore don't know how to sufficiently prepare and supervise their child's education, there is a weak family support system, and these children tend to move more frequently. All of these attributes work against schooling and make educational success less of a priority. Wealth and the expectations of higher education accumulate over time. The expectations placed upon a particular student depend on the educational attainment of their parents and

grandparents. For those children who are having a hard time finding food for dinner, completing an essay or taking a college preparatory class does not seem as important.

The importance of socio-cultural factors is affirmed in a study done by Jaekyung Lee. Lee found that the Black-White gaps in socioeconomic status and family conditions narrowed from 1970-1990 but the narrowing slowed down in the late 1980's and 1990's (2002). This acceleration and deceleration of the narrowing in family conditions closely parallels the narrowing and widening of the Black-White achievement gap. Lee concludes that socioeconomic status co-varies and is related to the achievement gap but it is not the only variable (2002). Vincent Roscigno emphasizes these findings in his work on the racial inequalities of achievement (1998). Roscigno found a significant 6.7 point standardized test score difference in math between the achievement of Black students compared to the achievement of White students. Thirty percent of this racial gap is accounted for by family differences. When there is a one percent increase in family income, there is a consecutive increase in math scores of 0.4 points. Students who have 50 or more books in the house have a 2.6 point advantage than those students who have no resources in the home. Students whose parents have at least a high school diploma have a 2.1 point advantage in math and students living in single parent homes have a 0.7 point disadvantage. Roscigno concludes that socioeconomic factors do play a role in the disparity between minority and non-minority children but these factors are only part of the problem. Roscigno found a disturbing fourteen percent of the racial gap in math to be accounted for by educational processes that are not tied to family attributes.

## **Causes of the Minority Gap: Educational Attributes**

While it is easy to cluster the causes of the minority gap into two general paths, the socio-cultural and educational paths, it is important to remember that these two paths are not independent and they constantly overlap. Family income, parental structure, and parental education affect where the child will attend school and what the class and racial character of the school will be. Minorities generally attend schools where the student body is composed of primarily minority students. A study done by Goldsmith in 1994 found that ninety-four percent of Whites attend separate, White schools. Almost three quarters of Black and Latino/a students attend predominantly non-White schools (Ladson-Billings 2006). This has an overwhelming impact on the quality of teachers and resources found in the school. Ladson-Billings concluded that money and resources follow White middle-class students (2006). She studied the education systems in 49 states and found that the highest poverty schools in 27 of the states received fewer resources than schools in affluent communities. In 30 of the states, the highest minority districts received less money per child than the low minority districts. The race and class segregation in school makes material resources and funding different between high minority districts and low minority districts.

Family backgrounds also affect achievement indirectly through teacher expectations. It has been found that teachers have lower expectations for their African American students when compared to White students (D'Amico 2001). This leads African American students to have lower expectations of themselves, ultimately leading to lower achievement. Roscigno discovered that students whose teachers believe they will attend college score 6.8 standardized test points higher than their peers (1998). This

statistic accentuates the fact that teachers' beliefs have a strong impact on the educational outcome of their students.

Connected to teacher expectations is teacher instruction. It has been found that poorly aligned instruction appears disproportionately in schools enrolling minority students (D'Amico 2001). Research suggests that those who teach minority students rely on drill, lecture, and memorization; ineffective techniques for low achieving students (D'Amico 2001). This emphasizes that there are inequities in the distribution of teacher expertise. In Texas, Haycock found that poor, White children have a higher likelihood of having well qualified teachers than poor Black children (1998). Students who attend predominantly minority secondary schools in Virginia are more likely to be taught by underqualified teachers (Viadero & Johnston 2000). This disparity in teacher quality explains why an A student in a high poverty school scores about the same as a C or D student in wealthier schools (Viadero & Johnston 2000). Those students who need the best teachers are getting just the opposite. In New York City, the percentage of teachers who have failed the national teacher certification exams are three times higher than elsewhere in the state (Viadero & Johnston 2000). These concerning statistics help perpetuate the gap and prove that there is a considerable amount of work schools need to do in order to alleviate the gap.

School partially reproduces the inequalities with which children enter with. Family socioeconomic status and structure play out in the classroom. Education has helped achieve this through the segregation of students, the placement of expectations, and the allocation of resources. The linkage between family and educational institutions

is the same linkage that produces broad patterns of societal inequality (Resnick et al. 2007).

### **History of Racial Disparity**

The above paragraphs explain socio-cultural and educational qualities that help create the minority gap. These qualities make up only half of the causes for the gap (Roscigno 1998). The other half is caused by what Gloria Ladson-Billings terms, the “educational debt” (2006). Professor Haveman at the University of Wisconsin defined the education debt as, “the foregone schooling resources that we could have been investing in low income kids, which deficit leads to a variety of social problems (crime, low productivity, low wages, low labor force participation) that require on-going public investment. This required investment sucks away resources that could go to reducing the achievement gap. Without the education debt we could narrow the achievement debt” (Ladson-Billings 2006). Furthermore, the history of the civil rights movement and the following court decisions emphasize that the gap has been a major political, economic, and educational concern for this country for many years. These racial discrepancies and their subsequent court decisions have accumulated over time, creating an education debt. Many of this nation’s leaders adopted ideas about the inferiority of Black, Latina/o, and Native peoples. African Americans were enslaved and prohibited from schooling for much of our history. Black students in the South didn’t experience universal secondary schooling until 1968. With all of these recent milestones, how can we not expect a gap?

Many of these inequities are still apparent today. There is an obvious disparity in the funding of predominantly minority schools and predominantly White schools. This

sends an underlying message about the value we place on the education of different students.

The quality of schooling is also associated with higher earnings. The minority gap in education has caused a wealth gap between White citizens and minority citizens. The gap in wealth has implications for the social position of minorities, which in turn affects their quality of housing, the neighborhoods and schools their family has access to, and the ability to finance higher education (Ladson-Billings 2006). Friend and family ties tend to be within racial groups which works to amplify this effect. There has been a disparity between the economic and educational attainments of minorities in this country for centuries. These disparities have accumulated over time creating a debt to these citizens that can not be erased without much time and effort. The best and most beneficial place to begin is with our education system.

### **Stereotype Threat**

The inequities described above have helped to build an education debt and have also worked to create the phenomena known as stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is when the minority culture fears being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype and worries they may do something that would confirm this stereotype (Steele 1999). The perception among minority students is that the majority culture sees them as less capable, expects little of them, and therefore treats them as if they will accomplish little (D'Amico 2001). Minority students may internalize this idea and put a lot of pressure on themselves to disprove this way of thinking. This can cause them to choke up and actually fail. In this way, racial stereotypes can affect grades, test scores, and academic identity. To reduce the threat of a stereotype stress, some may learn to detach themselves

from their education. They may adjust themselves so that they are no longer affected by the pressures placed upon them through stereotype threat. This type of withdrawal may be supported by other members in the stereotype group, to the point where it may even become the group norm. Steele tested the effect stereotype threat has on the test taking performance of Black students (1999). When the test was administered in such a way that the students believed it did not measure intellectual ability, Black students performed at a comparable level to White students. When students believed the test was one that proved their intellectual competence, Black students did significantly worse. Steele concluded that the Black students internalized the negative stereotype which led to performance anxiety. With the vast examples of race and racism that permeate our society, it is difficult to expect minority children to not internalize what is constantly surrounding them.

### **No Child Left Behind**

The minority achievement gap has far reaching implications beyond the educational setting. The gap predicts low minority college attendance rates, poorer minority college performance, and lower rates of college completion (D'Amico 2001). This can cause economic and quality of life gaps in employment, salary, future earnings, and earning potential. The racial and ethnic nature of the minority achievement gap helps to perpetuate the trend of institutionalized discrimination. For all these reasons, it is pertinent that a means of ending the gap is realized. The government believed it had found this means in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Part of this legislation is an accountability system that requires all students to become proficient in reading and math. This proficiency is rated based on the scores of standardized tests. The goal of

these tests is to ensure that all students- minority, low-income, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency- meet the same achievement goals (Kim & Sunderman 2004). A study by Kim and Sunderman analyzed the effectiveness of the NCLB legislation on state accountability systems for high minority districts in six politically, geographically, and demographically diverse states (2004). Their study discovered four main findings. First, the federal accountability rules caused problems in creating a coherent accountability system because the state added the federal accountability requirements on top of the pre-existing state plans. This created mixed messages about what was expected for school performance. The federal rules forced unrealistic expectations for test score gains and held schools in different states to different standards. In Arizona, 289 schools were labeled as “needing improvement” under NCLB regulations but these same schools met the state’s performance targets and were labeled as either “performing” or “highly performing.” This doesn’t mean that the state’s requirements were lower than federal requirements; it means the state acknowledged other means of achievement besides standardized testing. The second discovery this study reported is that the term proficiency has different meanings depending on the state. In Georgia, the schools identified as “needing improvement” had 75% of their students meeting proficiency in reading, however in California the schools that did not need improvement had only 34% of their students meeting proficiency in reading. This example supports this study’s third finding; the federal government labels schools as “needing improvement” based on the demographics of the school and not its contribution to student learning. NCLB relies heavily on standardized test scores which reflect differences in students’ backgrounds more than differences in school quality. In

all six states, the schools that were identified as “needing improvement” enrolled large numbers of minority and low income students. When another measure of achievement was used to show the trends of improvement over time, the average improvement in math and reading proficiency were similar for schools needing improvement compared to schools already identified as performing. This confirms that both types of schools are contributing to learning equally; one just educates a larger number of minority and low-income students. Lastly, this study found that the subgroup accountability rules put disadvantaged schools segregated by race and poverty at a higher risk of failing. This is because schools that need improvement are held accountable for more achievement targets than White, middle class schools. Schools needing improvement are working harder to make larger jumps in improvement every year than White, middle class schools. No Child Left Behind does not require all districts to have equal access to educational resources which are directly linked to test score gains. This has unintended consequences with little to no benefits for minority and low-income students and their schools.

### **Standardized Testing**

The No Child Left Behind legislation relies heavily on standardized test scores. For this to be a fair comparison of different students’ achievement, the test needs to be culturally relevant and educationally sufficient. Many studies have found this not to be true (Kim & Sunderman 2004, Williams 2000, Lomax et al. 1995). Teachers have complained that the performance on high stakes testing do not generalize to other assessments that cover similar substance (Kim & Sunderman 2004). This discrepancy can be found in the language and content of the standardized tests. Current tests are biased against certain ethnic and racial groups. They ignore the relevance of culturally

dissimilar experiences that foster different but important components of knowledge. The test is based on the language and beliefs of the majority culture which makes test taking difficult for minority students. The failure to consider other backgrounds in testing permeates into curriculum planning and instruction. Lomax and colleagues looked at the six most widely used standardized tests in the U.S. to determine their validity in evaluating math and science ability (1995). They surveyed data from 2,229 math and science teachers of high and low minority classes and found that the tests failed to sample high order thinking and high conceptual or procedural knowledge in either subject. The teachers surveyed believed that the tests reflected the majority culture so much so that minority performance was given an unfair representation of what the students know and can do. This can deny minorities opportunities into courses necessary for higher learning and negatively bias their chances for higher education. This unjust testing regime is how the federal government determines students' abilities and tracks them through their education career. These tests are skewed in favor of the majority culture, giving minorities an extra obstacle to overcome in order to demonstrate their intelligence.

### **Multicultural Teacher Training**

With all these different factors, it is hard to know where to begin in closing the gap. Many believe we should tackle the larger socio-cultural aspects underlying the achievement gap, but research has identified educational correlates of the gap that can be focused on immediately in the classroom. It is important to attend to the inequities and imbalances existing in society overall but educators should pay close attention to these as they appear in the classroom. The NCLB legislation is not going to be replaced in the

near future, therefore educators need to focus on what can be done to improve the education of their students.

Many teachers claim they are color blind; they teach in a manner that is general across all races. In society, it may be important to have this “everybody’s equal” mindset, but in the classroom this can perpetuate the gap. Teachers need to understand that ways of thinking, behaving, and existing are affected by a person’s class, ethnicity, race, and language. These characteristics affect the resources students bring into the classroom and affect the way students learn. For this reason, it is important for educators to have an understanding of different races and ethnicities and the ability to incorporate these differences into their curriculum. This can be learned and reinforced through multicultural teacher training.

## **Background**

The current student population is racially and ethnically diverse causing an increasing gap between the backgrounds of teachers and students. Thirty-eight percent of the student population is non-White and 69% of student’s in the nation’s 100 largest public school districts are non-White (Dalhouse & Walker-Dalhouse 2006). By the year 2020, it is expected that culturally diverse students will compromise half of the public school population in the U.S. (Cho & De Castro-Ambrosetti 2006). Ninety percent of teachers in public schools are White, making it highly likely that some of these teachers will end up teaching minority students (Dalhouse & Walker-Dalhouse 2006).

If teachers are not familiar with children’s home culture and languages, they are at a greater risk of misjudging the children developmentally and teaching them inappropriately. If teachers are not educated on racial backgrounds, they may reinforce

stereotypes and exacerbate the gap. If great advancement is going to be made in alleviating the achievement gap, teachers will distribute most of the instructional services needed to make it happen. This advancement can't be made if some teacher practices are widening the gap.

A study done by Dalhouse and Walker-Dalhouse demonstrates the beliefs about culture pre-service teachers have before entering a classroom (2006). This study surveyed 92 White, middle to upper class, pre-service teachers before and after a diversity seminar. The results showed that these future educators had different expectations for students in urban versus suburban settings and students from different racial backgrounds. They had lower levels of comfort with Black students, a limited interaction with them, and a limited knowledge of their historical contributions. These pre-service teachers were unsure about the effectiveness of their teacher education preparation in developing the ability to teach and communicate with students and parents of different cultural backgrounds. This shows a lack of self-esteem in one's own ability, so much so that 64% of the pre-service teachers preferred placement in White suburban schools. If teacher education programs want to make changes, they need to include curriculum that is sensitive to cultural diversity in the classroom. These programs can provide opportunities to discuss issues of insecurity and raise teachers' morale. This is exemplified in the fact that after a diversity seminar, the pre-service teachers noticed the differences among children and believed students should be identified by ethnic groups. The impact of multicultural teacher training can be felt throughout the education system. It affects the confidence of educators and ultimately affects the quality of education for all students.

## **Goals**

The goal of multicultural teacher training is to enhance educators' understanding of their students and to use this understanding to create a more comprehensive curriculum that reaches out to all students. Multicultural education should be more than an enhanced awareness; it should be a complete transformation of one's way of thinking (Bo-Yuen Ngai 2004). This should include the ability to link the conditions of others to one's own circumstances, allowing a sensitivity for different values and traditions. In the end, multicultural teacher training will help teachers show all students (minority and majority) how to develop the multicultural awareness needed for a successful citizenship in this diverse society. This will construct a mutual and respectful learning environment among culturally diverse people and create a just society for all.

## **Performance Criteria for a Successful Multicultural Program**

There are five components that are crucial to a successful training agenda. If each component is mastered, the comfort level of teachers and their ability to influence the lives of every student will be greatly enhanced. A brief description of each component is given along with sample questions to help facilitate conversation.

*Self Discovery:* The line between "we," the White middle class, and "they," poor people of color needs to be replaced with more appropriate distinctions about ethnic traditions and perspectives. To facilitate this, teachers need to acknowledge differences in diversity by engaging in their own self-awareness and sensitivity. If educators are going to bridge the gap between themselves and their students they first need an understanding of their

own background and beliefs. This can be accomplished by having teachers analyze their own race/ethnicity, social class, religion, gender/sexuality, language, and learning ability. During this process, educators will be able to realize and confront their own prejudices and stereotypes. This may require an unlearning of misinformation and stereotypes educators have internalized about others and themselves because of the media or other forms of institutionalized discrimination.

Once educators have an understanding of themselves, they can move to connecting this understanding with the lives and cultures of their students. A focus on one's own experiences, privileges, and struggles in relation to one's students will help to see oneself as a racialized being. This new sense of self will allow for an expansion of one's reference group to include others, including one's students. Once this is realized, teachers will be able to reflect on the racial composition of their school and community in an effort to realize the discriminatory school practices and policies that may be at play. This realization will help educators step into the shoes of their students and gain a deeper understanding of the beliefs and feelings their students bring into the classroom. This stage of training will give teachers the ability to recognize differences among perspectives, experiences, values, and beliefs of their own culture compared to those of their students, in order to see the color of their students and the diverse interactions that are happening in their classroom.

How does my own school treat minority students? Are there any programs that are biased for or against minority students and how can these programs be better adapted? Can I really tell a person's race or culture by just looking at them? How are my beliefs different shaped by other individuals' in my life (ie: parents, significant other, etc)? How

have I incorporated their beliefs into my own and where did my own personal beliefs come from? Where do my students' beliefs come from?

*Identity of Students:* Teachers may see students different from them as “others.”

Grouping students together under this label sets up an unhealthy dichotomy between the teacher and students. This dichotomy prevents teachers from truly understanding their students' learning styles and abilities. A way to truly understand the students is by realizing the connection between the community students are from and the students themselves. This connects community experiences to the way students encounter education in the classroom and gives the educator an understanding of his/herself in relation to the students. Gaining a deeper understanding of the students also helps educators empathize with the students. Empathy helps put the teacher in the students' shoes and allows the teacher to take on the perspective of another culture. Empathizing with students is different from pitying them. It is not about “those poor students.” It is about understanding the students on a personal level. Teachers don't need to “save” their students, but they do need to create a caring and supportive learning environment that applies appropriate pressure to perform. Many teachers may feel sorry for their disadvantaged students and give them lots of emotional support without pushing them academically. This stage of training hopes to show the importance of maintaining an environment that doesn't exacerbate the minority gap but instead of fosters a supportive setting that encourages growth and achievement.

Are my actions conveying empathy or pity? What is my personal level of emotional involvement in my students? How can I be emotionally invested while still maintaining an academically rigorous classroom?

*Bridging Theory and Practice:* Multicultural teacher training needs to include an element of fieldwork or observation of a successful multicultural classroom. This stems from the belief that teachers need an interaction or immersion into an environment that is inconsistent with where they went to school. This will permit all the discussions and self-reflections during teacher training to be realized within a classroom setting. The ideas and accomplishments that are made during teacher training will seem obsolete if they are not acknowledged in a true classroom setting. This stage hopes to give educators more confidence when preparing to enter their own diverse classroom.

What did I like about the teaching strategies I encountered and what didn't I like? How could I incorporate some of these strategies or adapt them into my own classroom? Was I comfortable with the interactions I saw? Was there ever a moment where the teacher seemed flustered or unsure about the next step? If so, what did the teacher do to maintain the classroom?

*Infusing Multicultural Aspects Into Own Curriculum:* Once educators have mastered the stage of self-discovery, they can use this to build a deeper curriculum that encompasses the lives of everyone in the classroom. With a new sense of what it means to be a racialized being and interact with a diverse body, teachers should try to infuse this knowledge into their own curriculum and encourage their students to come to the same actualization. The education structure in schools is based on the dominant culture's values and beliefs and this shows through in the curriculum and materials used in the classroom. Teachers need to understand that using classroom curriculum based on the dominant group marginalizes minorities and decreases learning ability. Curriculum can be created by either analyzing the existing curriculum and materials for bias and adapting

to correct the bias or by developing a new curriculum that takes advantage of the knowledge about the local community. A new curriculum should include social, economic, and political realms that encompass minorities' lives in an effort to develop student's awareness of the organization and function of society that embraces and maintains inequalities.

Included in this curriculum needs to be a broader definition of what it means to be intelligent. A more complete definition of intelligence is part of the solution in eliminating barriers to minority achievement. Culture plays a role in the development of intelligence and different cultures place different values on abilities. Some aspects of intelligence are highly evolved in one culture, while the same intelligence may be less developed in another. Teachers should think of all intelligences as equally important and structure their curriculum to include all intelligences. Since students come to the classroom with different sets of developed intelligences, each child will have their own set of strengths and weaknesses. It is the teacher's responsibility to capitalize on the strengths and improve the weaknesses. A new definition of intelligence poses a problem with assessment. Standardized tests do not incorporate all types of intelligence and therefore do not give an accurate account of students' knowledge. Children often underperform or outperform IQ scores depending on the context they are received in and the encouragement they get from others. For this reason, it is more effective to use performance based assessments when identifying achievement. This type of assessment takes cultural factors into consideration, includes life-like situations, considers both the process and the product in evaluation, and utilizes higher order thinking skills. In this way, multiple intelligences has the possibility of identifying more gifted minority

students because its assessment is not based on the majority culture and because it includes a larger range of what it means to be smart (Sarouphim 2003). This reduces the problem of minority under-representation in gifted programs. This stage hopes to show the importance of adding aspects of culture into the curriculum and using an assessment that acknowledges cultural differences in intelligence in an effort to effectively narrow the minority achievement gap.

What are the influences of classroom curriculum that endeavor to prepare students for a multicultural world? Is there a way to encourage speaking more equitably throughout the room? How should teachers group students in ways that promote learning from one another's differences? How can teachers design curriculum that allows students to apply their intercultural action skills in problem solving? All these questions give educators a means to help students explore what it means to participate in a global community.

*Reflection:* Reflecting on diversity issues in the classroom transforms these issues into knowledge and skills that educators can utilize in the future. Exposing teachers' awareness and opening their eyes to diversity allows them to use this expanded knowledge to become researchers and learners in their own classroom. Teachers need to think back over situations in their class, analyze what they did and why, and consider how they can improve the learning for all. This requires an ability to be adaptive to different situation and this ability can not be based on assumed superiority or inferiority. This adaptive ability helps nurture skills that assess one's own growth and progress which are essential in maintaining a successful multicultural outlook. This will help to continually strengthen one's own knowledge about issues of diversity. Reflection keeps

educators aware of their own beliefs and how these are playing out in the classroom.

This stage sets out to prove that reflection ensures the existence of a bias free learning environment.

Did my actions affect one group of students differently? What went well in class today and what could've gone better? How did I facilitate these good and bad situations? Did anything happen in class today that made me feel uncomfortable or seemed out of my control?

### **Implementation**

The most important educational investment a state can make is in highly qualified teachers. Teachers supply students with all the learning resources they need to live in our society. As of now, only 67% of states require some type of preparation in diversity for a teaching licensure (Dalhouse & Walker-Dalhouse 2006). All states should require a multicultural training course because of the diversity of our student body. If all teachers become effective in teaching our society's minorities, the grades and achievement of these students will increase. Under the rule of NCLB, this will help schools earn more money from the federal government.

It was also found that a single 10 week course for multicultural teacher preparation produced short term changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs and no long term effects on beliefs toward race, class, and gender (Dalhouse & Walker-Dalhouse 2006). This requires that teachers should have a multicultural course before they become a teacher and again after they have been teaching for some years. Teachers want to do what is best for their students and want to learn new ways of implementing curriculum. This innate desire to increase achievement for their students is enough to encourage

teachers to take extra courses on multicultural education. These courses should be used for teachers of all grades and ages. It is never too early to start learning about diversity.

The last important aspect of multicultural teacher training is that it needs to be integrated into all aspects of teacher training. If teacher training isn't infused with multicultural aspects throughout the program then teachers have only a vague outlook on how to implement this aspect into their curriculum. Teacher programs usually have an isolated approach with one or two add-on courses dealing with multicultural issues instead of incorporating these issues into all areas of teacher preparation. This type of implementation is not sufficient for educators to successfully incorporate multicultural attributes into all aspects of a classroom setting. If diversity is not within all areas of education, it will not effectively prepare students for a globalized society.

### **Setbacks**

Many of the setbacks include getting others to realize the value and potential to teaching in a way that recognizes and embraces different cultures and ethnicities. This way of thinking is new to the education system and it is hard to replace long standing ideals. Some of the barriers include getting principals to acknowledge the importance of multicultural training and making this part of their training regime. Along these same lines is getting teachers to replace their color blind mind-set in an effort to adapt to new techniques that don't add to already existing stereotypes. The last major setback is creating a cohesive multicultural teacher training curriculum that all programs can implement. These challenges need to be overcome so the significance of multicultural training is realized and the impact it has in the classroom is seen. Diversity training and multicultural curriculum is becoming an even more important aspect of our school system

because of the changing student body. If our schools are not going to affirm the importance of these minority students, how can we expect society to?

### **Dissemination Plan**

There are some key steps that are needed to help this reform become implemented into the education system. First, information on the growing diversity of our society along with information on multicultural teacher training and its effects in the classroom, need to be available to all people. Once others see the importance and necessity of this reform, it will make it easier to put in into practice. This can be accomplished by making this information available on the world wide web. Next, this information and reform idea needs to be presented to teachers in all school districts. A significant portion of this reform is related to teachers, making it imperative that their input and feelings are taken into consideration. The feedback teachers can give on the type of diversity training they had, how prepared they felt to teach to a multicultural class, and ideas on how they could've felt better prepared, would all help to strengthen the effectiveness of this reform. Lastly, this information needs to be presented to principles. Principles know the type of resources they have to pay for this reform and also the resources they have to encourage and reward teachers for repeatedly going to multicultural courses.

### **Conclusion**

In order to advance K-12 education, effective teaching and learning must start at the teacher education level. There is still uncertainty in what makes a successful cross-cultural teacher. Multicultural teacher training just hopes to give teachers the skills and framework needed to branch out and do what they feel is right for their students. In the hands of the best teachers, the effects of poverty and racism melt away allowing minority

students to go to the same heights as White students. If minority students stay in the hands of bad teachers then these students will continue to fulfill society's limited expectations of them. After multicultural teacher training, educators enter the classroom with strong positive beliefs about their students and see them as a resource rather than a problem. This attitude is needed if any advancement is going to be made in narrowing the minority achievement gap.

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## Annotated References

D'Amico, J. 2001. "A Closer Look at the Minority Achievement Gap." *ERS Spectrum* Vol. 19, No. 2: 4-10.

This article supplies a thorough overview of the achievement gap and its many causes. It's generalized look at the gap gives many ideas for future study.

Kim, J., Sunderman G. 2004. "Large Mandates and Limited Resources: State Response to the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the Implications for Accountability." The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, online at: <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu>.

This study focuses on how the NCLB legislation has effected state accountability systems. It thoroughly explains the difficulties with NCLB and the unintended consequences it has for minority and low-income students.

Ladson-Billings, G. 2006. "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools." *Educational Research* Vol. 35 (7): 3-13.

This article introduced a new way of looking at the minority achievement gap. Many papers and studies focus on the disparity in society now and how these can be alleviated to close the gap. This paper looks at the inequities that have accumulated over time to give a better explanation of why the gap exists.

Lomax, G., M. West, M. Harmon, K. Viator, G. Madaus. 1995. "The Impact of Mandated Standardized Testing on Minority Students." *The Journal of Negro Education* Vol. 64(2): 171-185.

This study focuses on standardized testing and the problems it poses for teachers and minority students.

Roscigno, V. 1998. "Race and the Reproduction of Educational Disadvantage." *Social Forces* (March 1998).

This article emphasizes the point that socio-cultural and educational attributes contributing to the minority gap are interconnected and rely on each other. At the same time, this paper is able to identify and separate how much each attribute contributed separately. This helps to see the importance of each attribute.

Sarouphim, K. 2000. "Use of DISCOVER Assessment for Identification Purposes: Concurrent Validity and Gender Issues." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans April 2000.

A specific type of performance based assessment is discussed along with a description of the different aspects of the test used to identify gifted students.

Sarouphim, K. 1999. "Discovering Multiple Intelligences Through a Performance-Based Assessment: Consistency with Independent Ratings." *Exceptional Children* Vol. 65(2).

The ability of multiple intelligences and performance based assessment to identify gifted minority students is discussed and its validity in a classroom setting is identified.

Steele, C. 1999. "Thin Ice, Stereotype Threat and Black College Students." *The Atlantic Monthly* Vol. 284(2).

This is a comprehensive study on the stereotype threat and its effects on Black students.

Walker-Dalhouse, D., A. Dalhouse. 2006. "Investigating White Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching in Culturally Diverse Classrooms." *The Negro Educational Review* Vol. 57(1-2).

This study concentrates on the feelings and beliefs of White, pre-service teachers before and after a diversity seminar. It emphasizes the insecurities they felt and the lack of training they had received.