Summit Article Resources

Achievement Gap

Behind the Latino College Degree Gap

Latinos are the fastest and largest growing ethnic group in America. Despite this growth, Latinos are only half as likely as their white counterparts to obtain a college degree (Barshay 2018). One solution to this problem would be to heavily push college attainment for this group. However, it is important to recognize that the achievement gap is only a symptom of the greater problem, which is the opportunity gap. Without first addressing the opportunity gap issue, the achievement gap will continue.

Latino immigration provides deeper insight into understanding issues that impede graduation rates. While research shows that larger numbers of Latinos are graduating from high school than African Americans, Latinos are less likely to enroll in college. Immigration explains that 30% of the Latinos born on American soil have college degrees, which is very close to the achievement rate of blacks, although considerably lower than the rate of whites. Yet, only 17 percent of Latinos born abroad have a college education because many are unable to qualify for federal aid. Financially, college is not a viable option.

Latinos have greater graduation success rates in New York and Florida. Records show that higher populations of Cubans and Puerto Ricans obtain degrees in comparison to Mexicans who come from more impoverished conditions.


Education Leaders: Work Needed to Improve Degree Attainment

American Council on Education (ACE) President Dr. Ted Mitchell suggests that inequality in higher education degree attainment requires a doubled effort in morals as well as finances to close the gap that continues to grow between whites and students of color. Federal or Lumina Foundation benchmarks suggest that 60 percent of young adults between the ages 25 to 34 should have two- to four-year degrees. The benchmarks indicate that 60 percent of Americans, ages 25-64, have postsecondary degree attainment goals. However, Dr. Michael Nettles, Senior Vice President of the Policy Evaluation and Research Center at the Educational Testing Service, states that people of color will not make this benchmark by 2060.

Dr. Nettles notes that significant changes in many areas must be present before accelerated degree attainment for underrepresented students will occur. There must be a focus on college stop-outs, increased college enrollment for recent high school graduates, and improved
preparation to meet high expectations for K-12 students. In preparing underrepresented students for the workforce, we must find ways to invest in colleges and universities, particularly minority serving institutions. Dr. John B. King, the former U.S. Secretary, notes that intentional conversations need to take place to address the significant need. Dr. King states that those groups with the greatest need always receive the least.

Dr. Danette Howard, Vice President of the Lumina Foundation, adds that to obtain degree equity across certain groups, “…people need to understand who today’s students are.” Given the elements needed to increase graduation rates, Dr. Nettles highlights that higher education facilities are the best equipped to drive the changes needed to increase the quality of communities across the country. Resources exist to rationally strategize to increase the quality of schools, build new school buildings, and train teachers in the poorest communities.

Pennamon, T. (June 2018).  

5 Things You Can Do to Support First-Generation College Students

First-generation college students face challenges that other groups of students do not face. These challenges are often in the form of financial concerns, academic weaknesses, and an inability to utilize family members as a resource for struggles that college students experience. Students with these challenges often receive poor grades and experience high drop-out rates. The authors of this article recommend completion of the following 5 steps to better support first-generation college students.

1. Ensure that students are taught to develop a growth mindset to strengthen their ability to manage the highs and lows of being a college student.
2. Provide resources to better understand the financial aid process.
3. Be a mentor or direct students to mentoring programs that can support them.
4. Direct students to college preparatory or study skills courses to strengthen their skills and increase academic success.
5. Encourage students to get involved in organizations on campus to create a sense of belonging.

The attempts to support this group of students needs to be a collective effort. Community attention to the needs of this group will provide the support needed to increase academic outcomes.

In the Belief Gap. (July 2016) 
http://educationpost.org/5-things-you-can-do-to-support-first-generation-college-students/
Increasing Educational Attainment among Urban Minority Youth: A Model of University, School, and Community Partnerships.

Historically, college graduation rates for African Americans and Hispanics are considerably lower than that of their white counterparts. Often, low academic ability is recognized as the root of the problem. African American and Hispanic children rarely have access to social capital for enriching growth opportunities, or well-educated parents that can help navigate the path to and through college. Changing this statistic is believed possible by establishing college-going cultures at the primary and secondary levels of schooling. Studies find that African American and Hispanic students often aspire to attend college in the early years of schooling. However, if these students do graduate from high school, the biggest barrier is that they are not prepared to be college students. The lack of academic preparation makes them at-risk students that often do not survive the rigors of college.

The authors suggest that to generate greater interest in college and support attainment of degrees for minority youth requires that efforts begin at the primary and secondary levels. Educators must work towards establishing a college-going culture over time to ensure that goals are ingrained in student thinking. The process for establishing college-going cultures requires a deep understanding of the culture of these demographic groups, which includes complex ecologies such as personal, peer, family, school, and community influences, and their intersections. To better determine college attainment, educators should understand how these elements influence students’ attitudes and behaviors. “Establishing partnerships between universities, school districts, and community agencies to address educational attainment levels among low-income urban youth of color is a model that has demonstrated promise in recent years (Ward, 2006)” (Ward et al. 2013, 313).


Equity in the Burb: A High-Performing District Systematically Eliminates its Achievement Gap

The author highlights that misconceptions lead people to believe that academic inequities and the achievement gap are limited to specific kinds of locations and to students that have a certain appearance. Yet, the achievement gap is also present in affluent areas. Despite the outward successes of academic achievement noted by suburban school districts, children of color are not finding the same success as their white classmates. In addition, the power of data manipulation allows district leaders to hide underperforming students in small subgroups that are not reported.

It is important to note that parents of many students earn equivalent salaries to parents of high-performance students. Hence, socioeconomic is not the issue. The problem in reaching this demographic is low expectations, cultural differences between administrative and teaching staff, and ineffective pedagogy. Commitment to change in these areas will generate different student outcomes for the minority population.

The Black-White Education Gap in Connecticut: Indicators of Inequality in Access and Outcomes

In this brief, the author presents data that explains the potential for a decline in the pool of individuals qualified for the current workforce. With a decline in well-educated people in communities, the entire population will suffer. Businesses, investors and other resources needed in a thriving community will relocate to find places with stronger economic opportunities.

For black students, the academic process is impeded because of disparities in educational opportunities. Disparities exist within the classroom because there is little black teacher representation. When present, black teachers provide support to black students culturally, and in general, tend to have higher expectations that generate better results. A second disparity is absenteeism and poor attendance. When students are not in school, they miss information and cannot learn. Reasons for significant absences are often attributed to chronic health issues, fear due to poor school climates, and unhealthy caregivers. Another disparity is exclusionary disciplinary practices. Blacks are removed from classes at disproportionately high rates cannot learn if they are not present. The final recognized disparity is in student outcomes. Blacks have lower standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college entrance exam scores.

The author makes several recommendations to identify the problem and seek support options to solve these issues. One recommendation is to increase the numbers of black teachers and expand the cross-agency data system for chronically absent students. Another is to provide anti-bias and anti-racism training for all school personnel to bring about awareness, effective policy changes to combat exclusionary practices, and sufficient funding to ensure that a range of challenging courses are available to meet the diverse needs of the students.


Education Report Card

Black Students at Public Colleges and Universities a 50-State Report Card

This article describes the concept of equitable schooling experiences for minority students. The author recognizes that improvements are necessary to increase minority student graduation rates. He first acknowledges that the low graduation rate is not isolated to just a few schools but is a more systemic problem across the United States. The author suggests that higher education institutions are failing black students. He offers several criteria to determine the success of schools to educate this population.

The first is to compare the black undergraduate population to the black population of citizens in the town between the ages of 18-24 years. The second is to compare the percentages of black men and women within schools to the percentage of racially ethnic men and women nation-wide. The third criterion is to compare the number of black students that graduate within six years to the overall graduation rate. The final criterion is to compare the ratio of black students to black professors on campus. A letter grade is attached to each of the listed criteria.
The author suggests that to promote change, that people of color must be better represented on the university senior staff. Additionally, the recruitment office should adopt new strategies to attract more people of color.


Test Results: Stubborn Achievement Gaps Unchanged

The author recognizes that academic performance rates between students from high socio-economic groups versus those from lower groups remain unchanged. Despite three years of a new testing model, the gap in learning is still consistent. This long-standing achievement gap is causing the state of Connecticut to question whether they are meeting the state constitutional standards for appropriately educating lower income students. While the education commissioner is not satisfied by the test scores, she is focusing on long term goals, and identifying things that work in schools. The article includes some test score data from the state of Connecticut.


Many States Get Mediocre Grades in 2 Studies of Degree Attainment by Race and Ethnicity

The degree attainment gap is not new between African American, Latino students and white students. Although, two new reports from the Education Trust provide information that describes those states with the largest gaps and describes which states are doing better. Each report provides an A-F grade and outlines what progress has looked like since 2000. While the report does highlight some successes, less than a quarter of the states are listed as above average in degree attainment for African American or Latino students since 2000. Connecticut is identified as the lowest performing state for African Americans, while California is lowest for Latinos.

The Education Trust lists a few suggestions to change this inequity. Some suggestions include increasing funding for schools that attract more students from these ethnic groups, providing loan forgiveness programs, allowing state funding aid for undocumented students, and free tuition programs.


Community Involvement

The ‘Actually Existing Smart City’

The ‘Smart Cities’ model is utilized as a technological means to promote economic growth. Through technology, IBM suggests that computer models can be utilized to predict ways to
Recommendation for Changes in How we Educate our Youth

What are the Motivational factors of First-Generation Minority College Students Who Overcome their Family Histories to Pursue Higher Education?

Most first-generation college students are from low socio-economic backgrounds. For instance, 50 percent of high school graduates in 2008 came from households making less than $20,000 per year, while 16 percent of households were making less than $20,000 per year (McDonough, 2004). Those of low socioeconomic backgrounds and minorities face difficult challenges every step of the way. In addition to socioeconomic issues, inadequate academic preparation, lack of available information, and lack of peer counseling are also some of the daily roadblocks these students face as they strive to become the first in their extended family to attend college.

The author highlighted that students gained a greater sense of self-motivation when they were given autonomy for decision making while nurtured through the process. Self-efficacy is the motivator that determines behavior. When individuals believe that they can be successful, they are driven to produce positive outcomes. For this demographic, successful strategies to increase self-efficacy and ensure that graduation rates are to create a comfortable environment to increase self-efficacy and ensure that

Zeldin and Pajares (2000) state "self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment; unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties" (p.3). By striving to build students' beliefs in themselves, tremendous differences in how well they perform occurs.

Although this system is designed to highlight concentrated areas where cities can provide resources, some flaws are identified. In the past, the program guided governing bodies to focus on areas of economic development that were too narrow in scope with only minimal improvements to the economy for some cities. However, the foundational elements of the Smart City system do provide insight into the interconnectedness of urban communities that can provide positive strategies towards economic growth if utilized in tandem with other strategizing mechanisms.


**Participatory Action Research and City Youth: Methodological Insights from the Council of Youth Research**

The authors focus on participant-based research that utilizes a methodological approach that allows the participants to be knowledge producers. Participatory Action Research with Youth is a program that makes the youth responsible for identifying problems in the community. As students are engaged in this action-based research, the system teaches them how to use their voice in schools to promote change.

Typically, empirical research examines the impact that certain approaches to education have on student learning. Instead, an action-based research system takes the methods from the hands of the traditional researcher and puts the experiences into the hands of the students. This experience is made possible through a Council of Youth Research, which is composed of African American and Latino students, graduate students, teachers and professors. This study provides a comprehensive review of its methodology though the voice of the students.


**City Youth and the Pedagogy of Participatory Media**

As we consider the projection of urbanization around the globe, we must recognize the growing need to make changes to the way disadvantaged children are being presented with information in schools. While the current condition of the urban educational system has struggled to meet the diverse needs of the students and prepare them for the demands of 21st century employment, research shows that by 2050, 70 percent of the world will be classified as urban. For this reason, there is a call to incorporate a tool that is identified as an equalizer in terms of bringing resources and opportunities to the classroom.

Through participatory media, traditional practices of independent learning are shifted to opportunities of collaboration, which transforms literacy from an independent experience to community involvement. While a pedagogy of participatory media is inclusive of traditional media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, there must be recognition of broader issues of politics and power introduced through those platforms. Nonetheless, students should learn to navigate through the systems to gain greater access to opportunities that will broaden their learning experiences and better prepare them for the 21st century workforce.

The increasing Impact of Socioeconomics and Race on Standardized Academic Test Scores across Elementary, Middle, and High School

In the process of identifying issues that impact test scores, leaders look to make surface changes with only minimal impact on minority students test scores. Modifiable factors in school reform plans include reductions in class and school sizes, and teacher mobility. Yet, not enough attention is given to the elements that remain constant like socioeconomic status and race. Often, the combination of low socioeconomic status in segregated schools creates poor school climates that account for significant teacher turnover and significant gaps in student learning. High socioeconomic status carries benefits that support brain development and promote overall better living.

While race and low socioeconomic status have a negative impact on test scores, white students often have different experiences when they fall within a low socioeconomic range. The difference is that the minorities’ experience is intergenerational without opportunities to escape, while the experience for whites is episodic.

An impoverished lifestyle has one of the most significant effects on students’ test scores, as do segregated schools that house black and Latino students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. One recommendation is to reevaluate the role and structure of high stakes testing. Essentially, test scores may not increase for poor black and Hispanic students without addressing the far greater endemic issues outside of the classroom.


Teacher Preparation and Diversity: When American Pre-service Teachers aren’t White and Middle Class

Because of a tremendous shortage of minority teachers, approximately 70 percent of the teaching population is white middle-class females. Given this statistic, it is important to recognize that this demographic may come with a set of beliefs and norms that impact teaching in K-12 schools that ultimately filters into university classrooms. The author addresses the need to not only motivate change in the area of curriculum to address the growing diverse needs of students, but also to propose the necessity to incorporate changes into the experiences of pre-service teachers.

The belief that pre-service teachers should be required to take a diversity course comes from the idea that these individuals are preparing to work with diverse populations. It is important for these teachers to recognize their possible biases and learn to appreciate differences they will encounter when interacting with their future students. This awareness of differences is hopefully one that will promote greater success in classrooms filled with diverse students.
Pre-service teachers of color often bring a richer cultural awareness to the profession that results in greater commitments to teaching social justice, multicultural material and more authentically rich academic challenges for the growing populations of diverse students. The proposal to alter the educational experiences of pre-service teachers is ultimately designed to disrupt the status quo that suggest that the educational goals should be to educate children based on the norms of the dominant culture.


**What is needed to bridge cultural gaps**

**Cultural Competence: What does it Mean for Educators?**

Academic experts from across the United States were brought together by the National Education Association to share their thoughts on the importance of cultural competence for today’s educators.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U42MApeXi9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U42MApeXi9w)

**A Social Capital Framework for Understanding the Socialization of Racial Minority Children and Youths**

The author systematically outlines why social capital is so necessary for students and why it is missing from educational institutions that serve children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Social capital is reserved and used for instrumental or supportive relationships with institutional agents. In the article, the author offers several reasons to explain why it is difficult for youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to obtain social capital. These are:
1. Differing values placed on children from varied backgrounds;
2. Barriers and entrapments that make mainstream participation extremely uncomfortable for minority students;
3. Selection processes that make evaluating the ability and willingness to conform to the dominant culture's structural norms;
4. Institutionalized systems of distrust and disenfranchisement that purposefully decrease opportunities for growth in social capital;
5. The creation of mentalities that resist seeking help and help-giving behaviors.

Social capital translates into social ties, networks and convertible resources of support. High schools’ elite leave with experiences provided through a school network of teachers, guidance counselors, and coaches that will act as personal agents, channeling the resources needed to ensure a sound future. Those that are not recognized within this group struggle with the opposing experience of being excluded from certain opportunities because they lack an elite status. Through social capital, students gain knowledge through ways of using language and communication, growth in subject-area knowledge, understanding chains of command and the functionality of bureaucracy, networking ability, transferable skill knowledge (e.g., computer
literacy, study test-taking decision making and time management skills), job opportunities and knowledge of barriers to positions and problem-solving skills.


**What it Takes to be Racially Literate**

In a dynamic discussion, Vulchi and Guo pair the personal stories that they collected with research and statistics to reveal two fundamental gaps in our racial literacy, and how we can overcome them.

www.ted.com/talks/priya_vulchi_and_winona_guo_what_it_takes_to_be_racially_literate

**How Students of Color Confront Impostor Syndrome**

Dena Simmons knows that for students of color, success in school sometimes comes at the cost of living authentically. Now an educator herself, Simmons discusses how we might create a classroom that makes all students feel proud of who they are.

www.ted.com/talks/dena_simmons_how_students_of_color_confront_impostor_syndrome/discussion

**Implicit Bias**

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

The study describes two studies that identify problems with implicit unconscious biases of teachers who work with diverse groups of students. Researchers find that using culturally responsive teaching methods mitigates these biases and promotes mutual respect.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBZPHE1oPJ0

**The Consciousness Gap in Education: An Equity Imperative**

In this talk, Dorinda Carter Andrews challenges us to consider how gaps in critical consciousness and mindsets for adults and students in schools prevent us from providing equitable schooling experiences for all students. Specifically, Carter Andrews urges educators to consider how increased critical consciousness about the role of race and culture in teaching and learning.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOrgf3wTUbo
My Future, My Way Workbook for Middle School Students

This site provides a pathway workbook to higher education opportunities for middle school and high school students. The workbook is designed to engage students in relatable conversation around what is the academic requirement, and the financial need to become a college student. The worksheet can help students understand the long-term benefits of graduating from college.