



Issues in Children's and Families' Lives

Series Editors: Thomas P. Gullotta,
Herbert J. Walberg, and Roger F. Weisberg

NARROWING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Strategies for Educating
Latino, Black, and
Asian Students

Edited by

Susan J. Paik

and

Herbert J. Walberg



LEARNING STYLES AND STRATEGIES



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Narrowing the Achievement Gap

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Thomas P. Gullotta, *Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut,
New London, Connecticut*

Herbert J. Walberg, *University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois*

Roger P. Weissberg, *University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois*

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Susan J. Paik and Herbert J. Walberg
Editors

Narrowing the Achievement Gap

Strategies for Educating Latino, Black, and Asian Students

Foreword by

EDMUND W. GORDON



 Springer

Susan J. Paik
Claremont Graduate University
USA

Herbert J. Walberg
University of Illinois at Chicago
USA

Library of Congress Control Number: 2006939321

ISBN-10: 0-387-44609-5

e-ISBN-10: 0-387-44611-7

ISBN-13: 978-0-387-44609-7

e-ISBN-13: 978-0-387-44611-0

Printed on acid-free paper.

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Foreword

The subject of minority children's learning has long been the concern of civic leaders, parents, scholars, and educators. The federal legislation, 'No Child Left Behind' emphasizes the concern even more. It specifically requires assessing the academic achievement of minority students, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, and holding schools accountable for their progress. Schools that fail to attain "Adequate Yearly Progress" face the real possibility of being forced to close if they continually fail to perform. Unlike the past, these are increasingly "high stakes" consequences for educators, parents, students and the schools that serve them. This book is timely and relevant because it addresses these issues, and recommends solutions for Latino, Black, and Asian students. This book also has implications for the problems the nation faces in helping all students to learn well, particularly those that lag in academic achievement.

In considering the broad problems and in recommending solutions, the book provides breadth, concision, and unique organization. As the introductory chapter makes clear, the book simultaneously considers not only the three most visible minority groups in the U.S., but draws upon the perspectives of anthropology, education, ethnic studies, psychology, and sociology. From these several perspectives, this book is organized within three broad sections: 1) culturally diverse families and schooling; 2) issues of immigration and schooling experiences; and 3) socio-cultural perspectives on teaching, learning, and development. Within each section, the authors marshal research literature regarding each ethnic minority group. The book not only summarizes and evaluates voluminous scholarship but sets forth policy and practice recommendations in each chapter for scholars, legislators, and practitioners.

As a participant in the national conference in Washington, DC, I saw that the contributing scholars were truly interdisciplinary in spirit. Not only did they draw from their deep scholarship in their special fields but they also reached out to sister disciplines both in their writing and in the discussions. During

the conference, the scholars, practitioners, and policymakers collaborated in developing recommendations and next steps. The ideas and recommendations in this book will certainly contribute to the national debate concerning how we face the challenge to help all our children learn well.

EDMUND W. GORDON

Senior Scholar in Residence

The College Board

John M. Musser Professor of Psychology, Emeritus

Yale University

Richard March Hoe Professor of Education and Psychology, Emeritus

Teacher's College, Columbia University

Series Preface

Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Strategies for Educating Latino, Black, and Asian Students is a volume in The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Series on Issues in Children's and Families' Lives. The UIC series began in response to the "Great Cities" initiative taken by our former chancellor and president of the University of Illinois system, James Stukel. At its inception, Lascelles Anderson helped establish a working group of UIC faculty to design and offer advice on this series. Currently, the series is sponsored by Sylvia Manning, the current UIC chancellor, as well as other senior administrators, trustees, and civic leaders in Chicago. The purpose of this series is to marshal scholarly resources to facilitate understanding and solutions to problems within American cities by including ideas with far-reaching implications.

Books in this series provide an interdisciplinary and "interprofessional" approach to problems facing children and the adults who care for them. The intended readers for the series includes policymakers, practitioners, scholars, students, and lay citizens who seek a greater understanding of ideas for social and educational reform. Given the wide spectrum of intended audiences, the volumes in the series are unlike many other academic volumes. Rather than emphasizing norms within a particular discipline, the series draws upon knowledge and guidance from nearly all the social, educational, and health sciences. These fields include psychology, sociology, education, economics, social work, criminal justice, law, public policy, and the allied health fields. The common thread within each book concerns programs and policies for use in solving particular social and individual problems.

Reflecting this broad approach, the first volume in the UIC Series set the stage for later more specialized volumes. Titled *Children and Youth: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, it reviews diverse ways in which families, schools, and the health care system influence and enhance the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of young people (Walberg, Reyes, & Weissberg, 1997). The second volume, *Promoting Positive Outcomes*, focuses on solutions to the problems

facing children and youth. It features education and child development programs, policies, and practices (Reynolds, Walberg & Weissberg, 1999). *Long Term Trends in the Well-being of Children and Youth* shows scholars and practitioners how successive cohorts of children and youth have been changing over long time periods with respect to a variety of specialized fields such as education and health (Weissberg, Walberg, O'Brien, & Kuster, 2003).

Early Childhood Programs for a New Century highlights trends in preschool education and care, evidence-based programs and practices, and policies that will enhance the quality of wide-scale programming for children (Reynolds, Walberg, & Wang, 2003). *Preventing Youth Problems* discusses policies and practices that prevent smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual risk behaviors, and antisocial behavior (Biglan, Wang, & Walberg, 2003). The title of *Changing Welfare* is intended to reflect both how welfare policy and practice has been changing in recent years and how it should be changed (Gordon & Walberg, 2003). *Nurturing Morality* (Thorkildsen & Walberg, 2004) addresses personal and environmental supports as well as impediments to moral functioning in a wide variety of societal institutions. This current volume, *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Strategies for Educating Latino, Black, and Asian Students* provides insight on issues regarding culturally diverse families and schooling experiences for the three most visible minority groups in the United States.

We greatly appreciate the many people who helped make both this volume and the UIC Series on Children and Youth a reality. We thank the distinguished members of our UIC Advisory Board and our National Advisory Board. They provided helpful comments and recommendations on the proposed structure and topic for these volumes.

The initial drafts of these chapters were reviewed by participants in a conference sponsored by the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), through a contract with The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U. S. Department of Education. We are grateful to LSS for their support and help in organizing the conference and disseminating the ideas in this book to interested constituencies. We are also grateful for the thoughtful conversations sustained by everyone who participated in the event.

Finally, we thank Susan J. Paik for her intellectual leadership in organizing this volume and recruiting a highly talented group of scholars to share their ample wisdom, for which we are also grateful. We also are very appreciative of the professionals at Springer in producing this volume effectively and efficiently.

HERBERT J. WALBERG
ROGER P. WEISSBERG
THOMAS P. GULLOTTA
Series Editors

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1

Introduction and Overview

Susan J. Paik and Herbert J. Walberg

We must teach our children to prepare for the future – how to set goals for their lives and for their careers. We must do more to inspire, train, and motivate them. (p. 82)
Every home and neighborhood [school and community] in this country needs to be a safe, warm, healthy place – a place fit for human beings as citizens of the United States. It is a big job, but there is no one better to do it than those who live here. (p. 44)

– Rosa Parks (1994)

The chapters of this book originated from a national invitational conference in Washington D.C. sponsored by the Laboratory for Student Success in November of 2005. The conference took place just blocks away from the Capitol Rotunda where, days before, Rosa Parks' body laid in state as the nation mourned her passing. The conference began with the quotes above that reflected her views. The quotes, though simple, were profound as was the life of Rosa Parks. Her life and efforts were significant not only because of her leadership in the civil rights movement but also because of her other passion, “young people and education.”

The purpose of the book and conference was founded on the importance of education for minority children and a belief that research should be useful in practice and policy. The conference participants included researchers, practitioners, and policymakers who shared the same passions and were eager to develop recommendations for improving minority education. The book is a means to that end since it discusses both the strengths and challenges of minority children and provides recommendations in each chapter. Based on work group sessions at the conference, the last chapter summarizes consensual recommendations for research, policy, and practice.

In developing this conference and subsequent book, several important questions were asked, such as:

- Who are these minority students?
- How can we best understand them?
- What are their challenges and strengths?
- What are the similarities and not just the differences among the groups?

How can we collaborate and develop a collective voice in discussing the three groups?

How can we best serve them?

What recommendations can we provide?

We wanted to understand these questions by developing a systematic design focused on three minority groups: Latino, Black, and Asian students in each of the three sections in the book.

Why were these groups chosen? Latino, Black, and Asian ethnic minority groups are the most visible, and are rapidly growing as shown by [U.S. Census](#) data. As suggested by the book title, the groups are listed in terms of their population size. Latinos, for example, are now the largest minority group in the U.S. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has also emphasized these groups as a concern, especially in economically disadvantaged areas. A growing number of minority and immigrant families now reside in urban areas ([Fix & Passel, 2003](#)); and these families tend to be poorer, less educated, and have lower proficiency levels in English ([Rong & Preissle, 1998](#)). For purposes of accountability, the NCLB Act also mandates that educators report separate achievement scores for each of these minority groups as well as English language learners.

The achievement gap continues to persist between minority and non-minority groups in the U.S., as well as growing gaps even within minority groups. How can we diminish the achievement gaps especially with the growing number of minority students? Educators and allied professionals are interested in improving the efforts of these growing minority populations.

In trying to understand these groups, we found that there were few books that offered an array of research expertise on Latino, Black, and Asian children in a single collective volume. This motivated us to bring together the research represented in this book. In addition, a better understanding of socio-cultural issues and experiences regarding the home, school, and community provide insight into the three groups. Consequently, the following three themes emerged:

Part 1: Culturally Diverse Families and Schooling

Part 2: Histories, Issues of Immigration, and Schooling Experiences

Part 3: Socio-cultural Issues on Teaching, Learning, and Development

Within each section is a chapter on each of the three minority groups. Rather than sorting themes by three distinctive groups, this organization allows comparisons and contrasts of the cultural groups within each section. Learning about similarities and differences among the groups provides greater insight into the myriad of problems and contexts that affect minority and immigrant children.

The invited authors are top scholars and leaders in the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, education, and ethnic studies. The interdisciplinary selection of scholars was a challenging task, but the editors went to great lengths to identify the most qualified contributors. Without question, the authors complemented each other in terms of the purpose and scope of this book.

We are aware of the complexities in cultures, subcultures, and topics in this area of research. In inviting the chapter authors, we acknowledged the cultural differences within each minority group. Although there are differences among and within the groups, there are also some similarities in history, culture, language, customs, and traditions both in the originating countries and their experiences in the U.S. Since it was impossible to represent all the groups, we sought to represent not only the largest minority groups, but those subgroups addressed in the NCLB Act.

The chapters in the book are represented by a variety of perspectives, and we acknowledge they are a starting point in understanding the complexities involved in minority groups and subgroups. Each of the authors brought their own expertise and perspectives to address these points and was asked to provide clear recommendations based on their research. The authors also defined and used various terms as appropriate in their respective chapters (e.g., Latino, Hispanic, Black, African American, Asian Pacific American, or Asian American usage, etc.). They also employed language and distinctions in their field of expertise that would make most sense particularly with respect to how minority children can best be served.

While it was impossible to cover everything, this book provides the breadth and organization of synthesized research on the three groups. The chapters synthesize research-based findings on the practices in homes, schools, and communities to help increase our understanding of psychological resilience, academic performance, and pro-social behavior. Classrooms have now changed and it is imperative to understand the background of culturally diverse families and students in order to shape effective schooling experiences. Each author offers recommendations for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to improve their success in school and life.

The following sections in this chapter provide descriptive statistics about the school and life experiences of the three minority groups in general. This information is presented to the reader to provide a demographic overview in the context of minority education. Followed by summaries of each chapter, the chapter ends with concluding remarks regarding the conference and book.

1.1. Background on Minority Learning

On January 8, 2002, Congress enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which has strongly affected education for all students and minority students in particular. The NCLB Act requires new state academic standards for stronger accountability, better teacher training, and research-based educational practices. Allocating an additional \$26.5 billion for the support of public K-12 schools, Republicans and Democrats joined to support this legislation to help all children learn as implied by the Act's title (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The Act mandates that academic achievement progress be reported separately for students by race, ethnicity, SES, English proficiency, and disability. The information