

Closing the Opportunity Gap Through Culturally Responsive Teaching

Mississippi 2018 Elevate Teacher Conference

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Anticipated Outcomes

Participants will ...

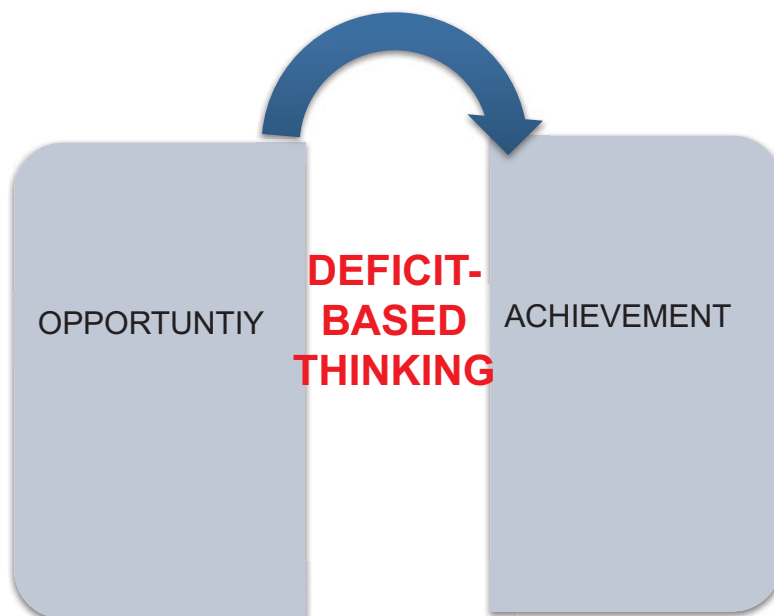
- Explore opportunity gaps and other structural and systemic barriers that shape beliefs about student achievement trends.
- Examine culturally responsive teaching (CRT) as a mechanism for advancing growth for all learners and for narrowing opportunity gaps.
- Confront their beliefs and perceptions regarding their conceptions of self and others, the manner in which they structure social relations, and their conceptions of knowledge.
- Develop a lesson plan that incorporates CRT practices.

“The opportunity to learn—the necessary resources, the curriculum opportunities, the quality teachers—that affluent students have, is what determines what people can do in life.”

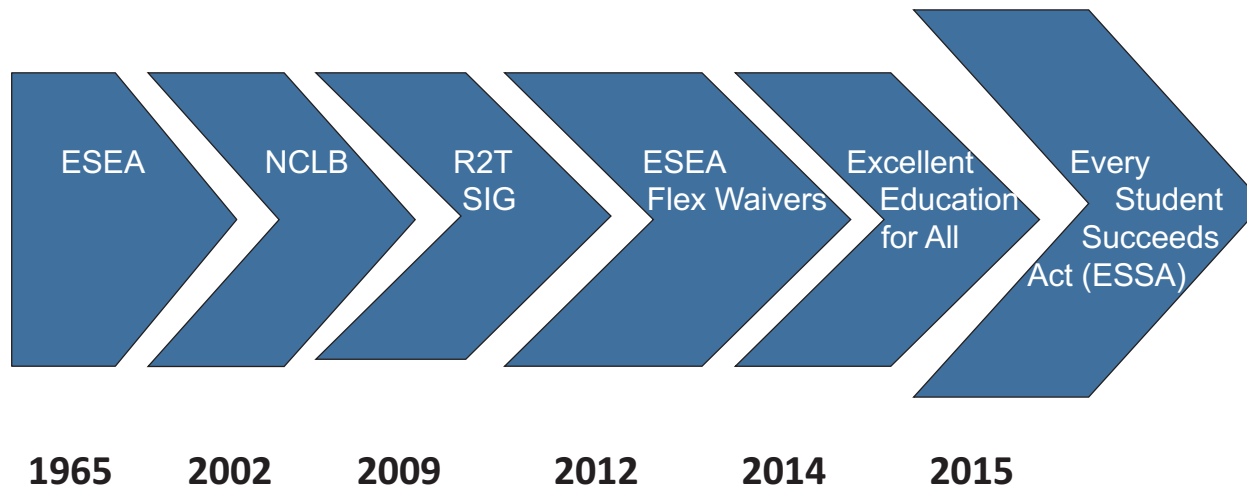
–Linda Darling-Hammond (Stanford University)

Rethinking the Achievement Gap

What’s Hanging in the Gap?



Decades In Pursuit of ...
Educational Opportunity for All
A TIMELINE



Remembering “Every Student”
in the
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

*“What the best and wisest parent wants for his child,
that must we want for all the children of the
community. Anything less is unlovely,
and left unchecked, destroys our democracy.”*

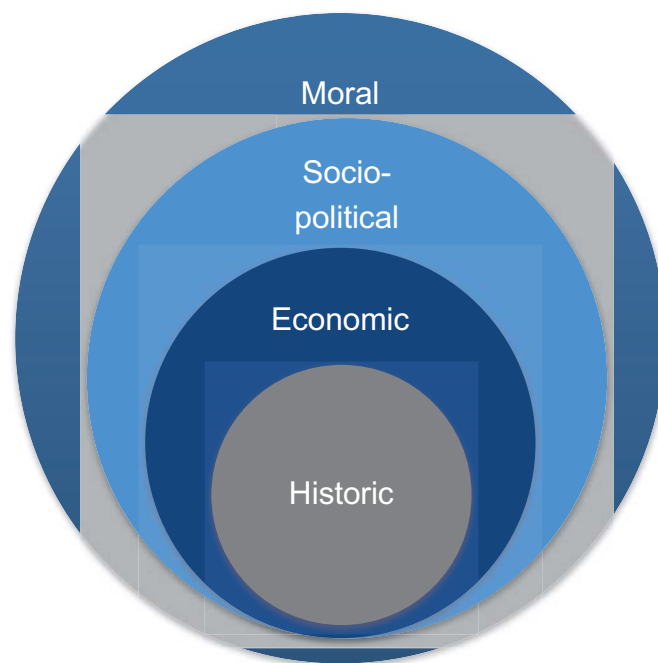
-John Dewey, 1907

What is an Opportunity Gap?

Opportunity gaps occur when “one group of students consistently receives more educational inputs than another group.” (National Conference Of State Legislators, March 8, 2018)

An opportunity gap represents what Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) refers to as an “education debt” owed by the education system to under-served students.

Features of the “Education Debt”



The Education Debt

Historic

- **Negative life outcomes**, including completion of fewer years of schooling, increased likelihood of reporting poor health; lower wages as adult and fewer working hours as an adult in the workforce (2012, Children Defense Fund).
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners have been **historically misdiagnosed, misidentified and overrepresented in programs serving students with high-incidence disabilities** (e.g., learning disabilities, speech/language impairments; CLD learners are also **underrepresented in gifted education and advanced educational programming** (Tomlinson, 2003).

The Education Debt

Historic

- Based on the Schott Foundation's Opportunity to Learn Index, **students from historically disadvantaged families have just a 51 percent opportunity to learn** when compared to White, non-Latino students.

The Education Debt

Economic

- **National cost of nearly \$500 billion annually related to childhood poverty** (Children Defense Fund, 2012).
- **Exorbitant monetary cost associated with school dropouts;** the one million 2010 school dropouts will cost the nation \$154 billion in additional income during their lifetimes (Children Defense Fund, 2012).
- The **highest-poverty districts** in the U.S. **receive \$1,200 less per student** in funding than the lowest-poverty districts; districts serving the most students of color receive 15% less in funding or \$2,000 per student less than districts serving the fewest students of color (Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015).

The Education Debt

Sociopolitical

- Diverse students are **disproportionally suspended and expelled;** some 1.2 million African American students were suspended from K–12 public schools in 1 academic year (Smith & Harper, 2015).
- High- and low-/moderately-performing **schools perform similarly poorly in their preparation of low-income students and students of color** (Ushomirsky & Williams, March 2015).

The Education Debt

Sociopolitical

- School-to-prison pipeline data reveal that youth in the juvenile justice system are often denied procedural protections in the courts; in one state, up to **80% of court-involved children did not have lawyers** (ACLU, 2018).
- When surveyed, **84.4% of juveniles sentenced to life in prison without parole** reported being **suspended or expelled** from school at a point (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).
- **There also is insufficient preparation for the job market** (Freeman, 2006).

The Education Debt

Moral

- From 2003-2006, **direct medical costs linked to health inequities** among African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans **approached \$230 billion** (LaVeist, Gaskin, & Richard (2009).
- When figuring in **diminished productivity and lost tax revenue** resulting from **illness and premature death**, the **cost exceeded \$1.24 trillion** (LaVeist, Gaskin, & Richard (2009).
- In 2010, nearly **7.95 million children** (1 in 6 Hispanic; 1 in 9 African American, and 1 in 10 White, non-Hispanic) were **without health insurance** (2012, Children Defense Fund, State of American's Children Handbook).

Perpetuating Failure Through Lack

The Function of Opportunity Gaps

- Fewer chances to receive a quality education from preK–12th grade
- Reduced access to effective teachers
- Enrollment at less-resourced schools
- Limited access to gifted programs and college preparatory coursework
- Disproportionality
- Constraints of poverty and geography
- Low enrollment in postsecondary education programs
- Low college completion rates
- Over-representation in the criminal justice system
- Underutilization of human potential
- Exclusion from the labor force

Locating Opportunity Gaps in Education



Return on Investment in the Early Years

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Early Years Podcast

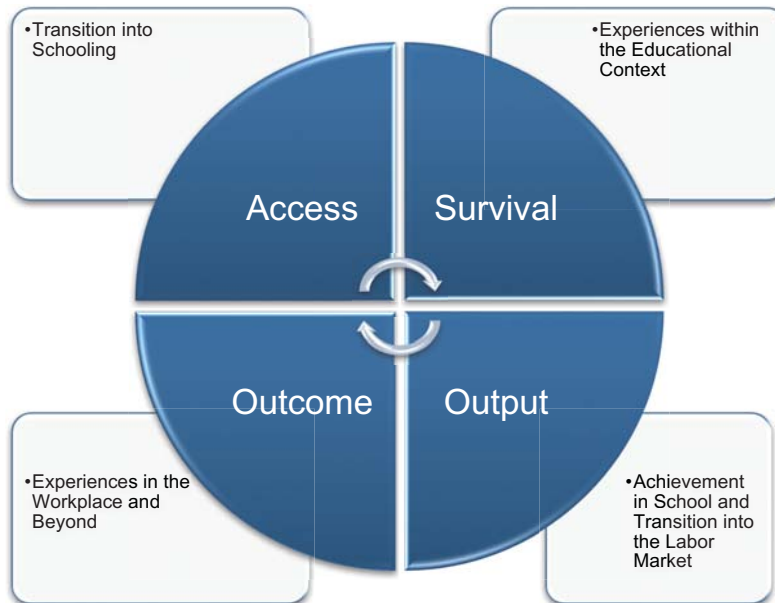
<http://www.ncsl.org/our-american-states/2018/03/08/the-economic-argument-for-early-childhood-education-oas-episode-29.aspx>

Other Structural and Systemic Gaps & Underservice

- Teacher quality gap
- Teacher training gap
- Challenging curriculum gap
- School integration gap
- Quality childcare gap
- School funding gap
- Digital divide gap
- Health care gap
- Nutrition gap
- Employment opportunity gap
- Wealth and income gap
- Affordable housing gap

Education –The Great Emancipator

Educational Attainment → Social Advantage



Source: Farrell, 1992

What Governs Access to Opportunity?

Deficit-Based Assumptions

Asset-Based Assumptions



Assumptions that Define Access to Opportunity

Deficit-Based Considerations

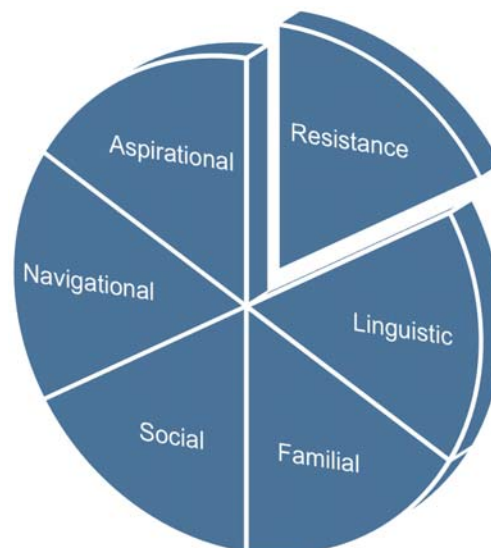
- Colorblindness
- Cultural Conflicts
- Myth of Meritocracy
- Low Expectations and Deficit Mindsets
- Context-Neutral Mindsets and Practices (Milner, 2013)

Asset-Based Considerations

Cultural Capital and Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005)

- Aspirational Capital
- Resistance Capital
- Linguistic Capital
- Familial Capital
- Social Capital
- Navigational Capital

Community Cultural Wealth An Asset-Based Theory (Yosso, 2005)



What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

“Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning .”

–Gloria Ladson Billings (University of Wisconsin)

Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Affirming views of and positive regard for parents and families
- Articulation of high expectations
- Learning situated within the context of culture
- Student-centered instruction
- Culturally-mediated instruction
- Reshaping the curriculum through a critical review process
- Teacher as facilitator of learning—nurturing and cultivating competence in both home and school cultures.

Culturally Responsive Teaching ...

- Leverages learners' values, prior cultural and linguistic knowledge, and experiences as assets to build upon rather than as deficits to overcome (Gay, 2000)
- Recognizes the importance of positive relationships among school and family as sources of knowledge for negotiating social contexts and informing educational methodologies for the academic success of every learner (Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Culturally Responsive Teaching ...

- Incorporates learners' authentic problem-solving, higher order thinking, and agency for societal reforms
- Results in the establishment of learning environments conducive to advancing growth for learners from all ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Frey, 2010)
- Requires educators to interrogate their practices through an equity lens to ensure that they are satisfying their moral and ethical responsibility to help all learners reach their highest potential (Ford, 2010)

CRT and Opportunity Gap Closing How Does it Work for Students?

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a “pedagogy of opposition” (Ladson-Billings, 1995) that provides students with opportunities, dispositions, and tools for ...

- Experiencing individual and collective empowerment
- Choosing to achieve academic success
- Developing and maintaining cultural competence
- Developing a critical consciousness through which they are enabled to challenge and dismantle systems that produce and sustain social inequities

CRT and Opportunity Gap Closing How Does it Work for Teachers?

Culturally Responsive Teaching ...

- Draws educators’ attention to their conceptions of self and others, the manner in which they structure social relations, and their conceptions of knowledge
- Advances educators’ awareness of sociopolitical contexts that perpetuate structural and systemic inequities and helps them to clarify their role and responsibility in addressing such inequities
- Is grounded in educators’ high expectations for each learner, coupled with the provision of educational opportunities essential to promoting achievement gains for every learner

CRT and Opportunity Gap Closing How Does it Work for Teachers?

Culturally Responsive Teaching ...

- Requires educators to learn about and respect themselves and all other people, honoring their many diverse cultural characteristics (Nieto, 2004).
- Normalizes educators' use of their students' cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2002).
- Situates academic knowledge and skills within the learners' lived experiences and frames of reference (Gay, 2000).

Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices ...

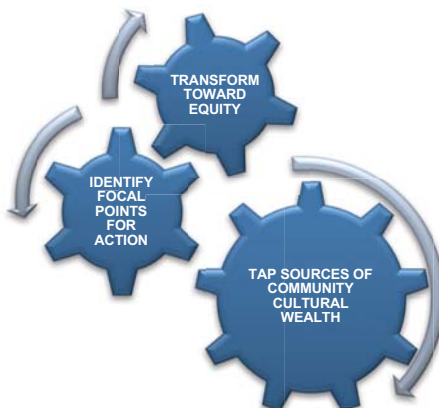
- Make the culture of the classroom inclusive of all students.
- Involve all students in the construction of knowledge.
- Tap students' personal and cultural strengths to enable academic success.
- Help students examine the curriculum and the world around them from multiple perspectives and through a lens of cultural competence.
- Include the use of varied assessment practices that promote learning.

Who is Benefiting from the Gap? Why *Not* Challenge the Gap?

- Whose mobility have you been sponsoring?
- How would your teaching practices change if you embraced every learner as if he/she were your own child?
- What do CRT practices require of you?
- What additional support, tools, and resources will you need to initiate and refine your CRT work and extend its positive impact?
- How will you use CRT practices to close the opportunity gap?
- What is your vision for learners?
 - What impediments exist for realizing this vision for all learners?
 - What policies and practices can be put in place to dismantle the impediments?

Take the Challenge! Close the Opportunity Gap—One Learner at a Time.

Start with the **Individual Opportunity Plan**



Next Steps



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Thank you



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