

Annotated Bibliography:
Teacher Data Use
&
Talking About Race, Guided By Data

This annotated bibliography reviews the current literature on data-based dialogues around race and achievement. The first purpose of this document is to aid coaches, and district and school leaders as they deliberate on how to strengthen the professional development for educators in building the skill and will in raising all students' achievement. The second purpose of this review is to assemble the thin but growing body of research on processes and structures that can strengthen educators' ability and skill in narrowing the achievement gap between racial and ethnic groups that plagues our schools. The review is structured as follows:

- The first section explores the literature on using data and assessment to improve instruction.
- The second section details the literature on using data to guide discussions around race and racism with the purpose of improving the achievement of students of color. It assembles the literature of the many scholars who point out the difficulty and what they describe as the “danger” of talking explicitly about race and racism.
- The third section offers research that suggests it's imperative to have these conversations. This section explores institutionalized racism in schools and the salience of race as it pertains to school policies, practices, pedagogy, and teacher beliefs.
- The fourth section focuses on the literature that outlines a slate of promising practices culled from discussions of educators' efforts to reduce racism and the consideration of conditions necessary to explicitly address race and racism.
- The final section examines the literature on improving schools to better serve students of color.

1) Using data to improve instruction

Bernhardt, V.L., (1998). *Data analysis for comprehensive schoolwide improvement*.

Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

In her work with schools and districts on systemic reform, Bernhardt found that data analysis was a common challenge. Bernhardt wrote this book to help schools and districts overcome barriers to using data regularly to improve instruction, assess effectiveness, and institutionalize systemic change. This book presents a case for why using data is critical for schoolwide improvement and provides tools, examples and a step-by-step process for collecting data (including data on student learning and instructional practices), analyzing data, and communicating results.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). Performance-based assessment and educational equity. *Harvard Educational Review*. Spring 1994: 5-30.

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

In this article, Darling-Hammond reflects on the historical uses and consequences of testing in American schools and examines the promise of alternative assessment methods. Darling-Hammond points out that, for much of our history, traditional, norm-referenced tests have been used as a sorting mechanism and have reinforced and extended social inequalities. Darling-Hammond cautions, however, that alternative forms of student assessment, such as performance-based assessments, will not automatically lead to more equitable outcomes. She recommends that educators pay careful attention to the ways in which assessments are used, ensuring that assessments support “more informed and student-centered teaching” and allow for multiple ways of demonstrating competence.

Holcomb, E.L. (1999). *Getting excited about data: How to combine people, passion and proof*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Holcomb wrote this book for teachers and administrators who are at the beginning stages of using data to improve student learning. Holcomb maintains that external accountability measures don't provide sufficient motivation for teachers and administrators to learn how to use data well. She proposes a number of processes to build a more authentic desire to use data as a force for change.

Love, N. (2002). *Using data/getting results: A practical guide for school improvement in mathematics and science*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

In this book, Love stresses the importance of data as a catalyst for individual and collective learning. Love argues that schools need accessible, disaggregated data at every level; the skills and time to use the data well; and, most importantly, a learning community that works together to make sense of data, uncover inequities, question practices, and improve instruction. A chapter of this book deals explicitly with issues of equity, access, and bias. Although the overall focus of this book is on math and science, Love's tools, resources, and inquiry questions (such as “to what extent do some students [poor, minority, English language learners, girls, others] have less opportunity to learn mathematics and science than others?”) are applicable to all subjects.

Schmoker, M. (1996). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schmoker writes in this book that “we talk as though we want results, but we generally fail to make the kind of systematic, organized effort that produces them.” In this book, Schmoker describes how school improvement can be achieved through meaningful collaboration; establishing (and reaching) clear, measurable goals; and the regular collection and analysis of performance data. Schmoker acknowledges that collecting and analyzing data is a threatening activity in that it often points to the need for significant changes, but he also offers guidelines for reducing the threat and bolstering educators' abilities to use data to improve instruction.

2) Using data to guide discussions around race and racism and improve schooling

Johnson, R.S. (2002). *Using data to close the achievement gap: How to measure equity in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

This book evolved out of Johnson's own experiences as a teacher and her desire to have access to data that could improve her teaching and prove that her students were capable of reaching high standards. Johnson argues that data is indispensable in assessing, challenging, and addressing inequitable school practices. In this book, Johnson outlines the stages of an equity-focused reform effort and explains how data fits into each stage. Johnson also includes an entire chapter on talking about data.

Olsen, L. (1996) The data dialogue for moving school equity. *California Perspectives*, Winter 1996: 48-65.

In this article, Olsen reflects on her experiences working with teachers, administrators and parent groups to understand and use student achievement data. Olsen argues that without looking at data, many educators simply don't see exclusionary or inequitable practices and outcomes. Olsen describes some of the reasons why educators are resistant to looking at data and then provides guidelines for effective dialogue and inquiry using data to create more equitable schools.

Olsen, L. & Jaramillo, A. (1999). *Turning the tides of exclusion: A guide for educators and advocates for immigrant students*. Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow.

This book documents some of California Tomorrow's work with schools and school districts throughout California engaged in reform efforts to better meet the needs of their students of color and English language learners. Olsen and Jaramillo argue in this book that using data and inquiry is a necessary strategy for schools that want a clear picture of how their students are doing and what needs to be done to produce higher achievement and broader access for underachieving students. Olsen and Jaramillo offer a toolkit of activities, strategies and resources to guide educators in using data to encourage reflection, spark dialogue, and inform planning.

Stokes, L. (1999). "When you're talking about race, you're talking about people": *Teachers learning about race and equity through diverse forms of inquiry*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1999.

This paper summarizes findings from the author's five-year study of one California urban elementary school. Stokes explores the school's use of three different types of inquiry: 1) whole school assessment of learning outcomes; 2) small-group action research projects; and 3) individual reflection with small group support. Stokes describes how each type of inquiry had different structures and norms, varied in its use of data, and enabled different kinds of teacher dialogue and learning. Stokes argues that, for this case study school, the individual reflection was most conducive to confronting issues of race and racism that affected one's own practices, which many teachers came to see as the heart of the problem of inequitable achievement.

Symonds, K.W. (2003). *After the test: How schools are using data to close the achievement gap*. San Francisco, CA: Bay Area School Reform Collaborative.

In this paper, Symonds presents findings from a year-long study of three elementary schools that are narrowing the achievement gap between lower-achieving African-

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

American and Latino/Hispanic students and their higher-achieving peers. Drawing on survey data and case study data, Symonds describes the characteristics of “gap-closing” schools, where data is used regularly to understand students’ skills gaps, teachers receive professional development on linking data to instructional strategies, staffs focus on in-school causes of the achievement gap, leaders set measurable goals for closing the gap, and leaders provide structured opportunities for discussing race and racism. Symonds offers several recommendations for practitioners and policymakers and concludes by pointing out that promising approaches to closing the achievement gap require working on both the technical processes of teaching and the more personal issues of confronting race and racism.

3) Race matters

Diamond, J.B., Randolph, A. & Spillane, J.P. (2003). *Teachers’ beliefs and sense of responsibility for student learning: The implications of race, class and context*. Evanston, IL: Distributed Leadership Project, Northwestern University.

In this study, the authors examine the ways in which schools reproduce race and class stratification. The authors argue that it’s necessary to look beyond interactions between individual teachers and students and look at the school context. The authors contend that teachers’ beliefs about students’ abilities and teachers’ sense of responsibility for student learning is heavily influenced by student demographics. Based on data from five elementary schools, the authors show that when African-American and/or low-income students make up the majority of the school population, teachers are more likely to emphasize their students’ deficits and, when deficits are emphasized, teachers have a decreased sense of responsibility for student achievement. The authors propose that schools, as sites that recreate race and class stratification, are also positioned to disrupt that process of reproduction.

Gordon, R., Della Piana, L., & Keleher, T. (2000) *Facing the consequences: An examination of racial discrimination in U.S. public schools*. Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center.

The authors of this report researched twelve school districts across the country to examine the quality of education provided to students of color as compared to white students. They found that students of color experience widespread and persistent institutional racism as evidenced by disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion; higher drop-out rates; and less access to advanced classes. The authors provide several recommendations to address racial inequalities, including requiring all districts to disaggregate data for key indicators (student achievement data as well as disciplinary and graduation data); promoting the use of “racial equity plans” that outline comprehensive

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

action plans with clear measurable goals and timetables; and addressing the discrepancies in suspension and expulsion rates.

Ferguson, R.F. (1998). Teachers' perceptions and expectations and the black-white test score gap. In C. Jencks & M. Phillips, (Eds.) *The black-white test score gap* (pp. 273-317). Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

In an effort to understand why it is that the achievement gap often widens for African-American students as they go through school, Ferguson examines the theory that teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors affect students' achievement and can perpetuate the achievement gap. Ferguson reviews a number of conflicting research studies and points out that researchers have not reached a consensus about whether teachers are racially biased because researchers have different conceptions of "racial neutrality." Ferguson ultimately concludes that "teachers' perceptions, expectations, and beliefs probably do help to sustain, and perhaps even expand, the black-white test score gap." Ferguson recommends professional development for teachers that will help them challenge their long-held perceptions and expectations.

McIntosh, P. (1989) White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom*. July/August, 1989: 10-12.

In this article, McIntosh traces the evolution of her understanding of white privilege – an unacknowledged set of advantages that whites have learned to accept as natural and normative. McIntosh argues that recognizing white privilege requires a re-conceptualization of racism from individual acts of bias to a systemic problem. Although she acknowledges that changing social systems is a daunting task, McIntosh recommends ending the silence and denials around unearned privilege and power as a necessary first step.

Noguera, P. & Akom, A. (2000). Disparities demystified. *The Nation*. June 5, 2000: 29-31.

Recognizing that widely accepted explanations of the achievement gap determine choices about what kinds of remedies are pursued, Noguera and Akom attempt to broaden the debate around causes of the achievement gap to reflect the realities of institutionalized racism in American schools. In this article, Noguera and Akom discuss some of the cultural factors and educational practices that favor white students and hinder the achievement of African-American and Latino students. The authors offer three solutions to remedy the effects of racial and economic inequality in schools: raise teachers salaries; provide adequate resources, including highly qualified teachers, to students who need them most; and enable parents to exert greater influence over their children's schools.

Sleeter, S.E. (1993) How white teachers construct race. In C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race, identity, and representation in education* (pp. 157-171) New York, NY: Routledge.

In this chapter, Sleeter presents findings from a study she conducted of thirty teachers involved in a two year staff development program for teachers in schools with sizable populations of poor students and/or students of color. Sleeter found that white teachers,

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

for the most part, are strongly resistant to transforming their understanding of race and structural oppression. Instead, she found that teachers tended to selectively pick and choose information and strategies that would fit into their pre-existing framework for understanding race. Sleeter makes the case that it is inadequate to address inequality and structural racism in schools primarily by educating white teachers and that it is unrealistic to expect white people to significantly alter institutions that benefit them. Sleeter's solution involves continuing the education of white teachers, recruiting greater numbers of teachers of color, and reversing the current policies that favor white people's admittance into the teaching profession.

Weissglass, J. (2001). Racism and the achievement gap. *Education Week*. August 8, 2001.

In this article, Weissglass offers his explanation as to why there has been such little progress in closing the achievement gap. Weissglass attributes this lack of progress to persistent race and class bias, including unconscious personal bias and institutional racism. Weissglass offers several reasons for why racism persists and then recommends actions for eliminating racism in schools. What's needed, Weissglass argues, are "healing communities" – "communities in which people can speak honestly and productively about racism and heal from its hurts."

4) Addressing race and reducing racism

Bryk, A. & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership*, March 2003: 41-44.

In this article, Bryk and Schneider draw on data from a multi-year study of 400 Chicago elementary schools to explore the idea that social trust is essential for school reform to take root. By correlating longitudinal data on student achievement with survey results on school trust, the authors conclude that those schools with high levels of trust among teachers, administrators, and parents are more likely to demonstrate improvements in student learning. The authors recommend that schools pay closer attention to developing trust at their schools and provide examples of conditions that foster the development of trust.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1995). Uncertain allies: Understanding the boundaries of race and teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65, 4: 541-570.

In this article, Cochran-Smith, a director of a teacher education program, examines the impact of discussions about race and teaching on student teachers. In looking at data from two cohorts of student teachers, Cochran-Smith finds that her students have two primary responses: 1) they reconsider their past experiences with a heightened awareness of the role race has played in their lives and 2) they go through an often discomfiting period of constructing new meaning around race, racism, and teaching. Cochran-Smith argues that providing student teachers with these kinds of experiences is important, but teacher educators also need to examine their own pedagogy, including how they include multiple perspectives and how they talk about "others". Cochran-Smith recommends that all teacher educators look honestly at their own teaching and their own programs to ensure

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

that what is being communicated implicitly is aligned with what is being communicated explicitly.

Howard, G. (1999) *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Howard wrote this book to address the challenges of schools where teachers are mostly white and the student populations are increasingly diverse. Howard argues that educators are still struggling with problems of inequity and achievement gaps because they have not adequately addressed why so many students of color are not succeeding and they have not looked critically at their own role in the problem. Howard recommends that white educators to do both the "inner work of multicultural growth", that is examining deeply held assumptions about race (and whiteness in particular) and the dynamics of power and privilege, as well as engage in social change by empowering their students to identify and address the realities of injustice and inequality.

Kailin, J.(2002) *Anti-racist education: From theory to practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

This book is a result of Kailin's work as an anti-racist educator. In this book, Kailin presents a curricular framework for anti-racist education, along with an ethnographic study in one school district where teachers tried to put her ideas into practice. Kailin argues for the need to implement anti-racist education, which she describes in part as a "strategy of incorporating into the teaching practice a pedagogy that sensitizes teachers to the racist constructions of reality in their curricula and behavior." Kailin recommends several guidelines for anti-racist staff development, including the imperative to focus on both the structural and the personal dimensions of racism.

Lawrence, S.M. & Tatum, B.D. (1997). Teachers in transition: The impact of anti-racist professional development on classroom practice. *Teachers College Record*. Fall 1997: 162-178.

In this article, Lawrence and Tatum present findings from a study of an anti-racist professional development course offered to eighty-four white teachers. Lawrence and Tatum attempt to determine whether teachers involved in the anti-racist professional development project made concrete changes to their daily teaching practice as a result of the course. Their data reveal that forty-eight of the eighty-four participants did take anti-racist actions in three arenas: 1) improving relationships among teachers, students and parents; 2) altering curriculum to be more inclusive and sensitive to their students of color; and 3) making changes to better support students of color. Lawrence and Tatum offer several reasons for why the professional development course enabled teachers to make changes, including their explicit discussions of racism; the length and depth of the professional development course; and the fact that participants had time to process this information with their peers.

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

Tatum, B.D. (1997). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race: A psychologist explains the development of racial identity*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Throughout her career, Tatum has taught courses and workshops on the psychology of racism. This book outlines a framework for understanding racism and addresses many of the questions she's been asked in her courses. Tatum argues that both black and white people go through a process of racial identity development. Tatum believes that understanding the psychological causes and the emotional realities of racism can help people better talk about and deal with the racial dynamics of their everyday lives. Tatum argues that breaking the silence about race and racism is critical. She recommends educating oneself ("learn the history we were not taught"); focusing on one's sphere of influence; and finding allies, like-minded people who will be supportive in the ongoing struggle against racism.

Weissglass, J. (1997). Deepening our dialogue about equity. *Educational Leadership*, April, 1997: 78-81.

In this article, Weissglass addresses some of the barriers to discussing issues of racism and inequity. Weissglass argues that, while these conversations are often complex, risky, uncomfortable, and possibly painful, the consequences of doing nothing is riskier for everyone involved, and especially for students. Weissglass offers several guidelines and structures for groups to use to facilitate conversations around race and equity.

5) Improving schooling to better serve students of color

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.

In this book, Delpit attempts to address some of the assumptions that she sees as pervasive in American schools. Delpit argues that poor children and children of color are short changed by teachers and administrators who, while well-intentioned, interpret the skills, abilities and behavior of "other people's children" through a lens that is clouded by assumptions and cultural stereotypes. Delpit provides several recommendations, including explicitly teaching student of color the "codes of power" that they'll need to be successful, while also valuing students' home languages and culture.

Haycock, K. (1998). *Good Teaching Matters, A Lot*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust.

In this paper, Haycock reviews a number of studies that demonstrate that the quality of teachers make a significant difference in students' achievement. Haycock discusses the inequity in the distribution of effective teachers, arguing that race matters even more than class in a student's likeliness to be taught by an ineffective teacher. Her recommendations include training, recruitment and professional development strategies as well as policies to connect schools with high poverty and minority student rates with qualified teachers.

Ladsen-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American Children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004

This book is a result of Ladsen-Billings' study of eight successful teachers in a low-income predominately African-American school district. Using data from her ethnographic study, Ladsen-Billings offers examples of effective pedagogy, which she characterizes as "culturally relevant teaching". Ladsen-Billings proposes that the principles of culturally relevant teaching support and empower African-American students to succeed in school. Ladsen-Billings concludes this book with a set of recommendations, expressed by the teachers she studied, for changing teacher practice and creating culturally relevant schools.

Lewis, A.E. (2003). *Race in the schoolyard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

This book is a result of a year-long ethnographic study in three California elementary schools. Lewis argues that race, far from being simply a variable in student achievement statistics or discipline statistics, is a socially constructed phenomenon that is, in part, constructed through the process of schooling. Although race is socially constructed, Lewis argues, its effects are real and children of color have significantly different schooling experiences than their white peers. Lewis argues that schools play a large part in reproducing racial inequality, but she also offers examples of how schools can actively challenge the status quo.

Nieto, S.M. (2003). Profoundly multicultural questions. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 4: 6-10.

In this article, Nieto addresses what she sees as an implementation of multicultural education that is far too simplistic and superficial. Nieto argues that addressing the needs of students of color cannot be achieved simply by adopting a multicultural basal reader. According to Nieto, increased cultural awareness is good, but not sufficient. Educators must also examine deeper issues of equity and access. Nieto recommends that schools examine their policies and practices and ask them themselves hard questions such as: 1) who's taking calculus? 2) which classes meet in the basement? and 3) who's teaching the children?

Zeichner, K. (1996) Educating teachers to close the achievement gap: Issues of pedagogy, knowledge, and teacher preparation. In B. Williams, *Closing the achievement gap: A vision for changing beliefs and practices* (pp 56-76). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

In this chapter, Zeichner reviews the literature on key elements of teaching, curriculum, and classroom environments that support all students to achieve high standards, but makes the point that it's not enough to simply identify effective curriculum and instructional practices and expect to train teachers to use these practices. Zeichner argues that teacher education programs must be more comprehensive and recommends that teacher education programs admit only people who are committed to teaching all children to high standards, develop teachers' cultural awareness, and examine their own institutional commitment to diversity.

Annotated Bibliography:

Teacher Data Use & Talking about race, guided by data, to improve schooling for students of color

April, 2004