
The Academic Achievement Gap

What is the Academic Achievement Gap?

- “The achievement gap refers to the observed, persistent disparity of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity and gender”
- Gap between African American students and white students

Before: “Cross- Over” ice breaker activity

Here: “performance”- Remember to point out importance of recognizing that the gap is due systematic forces working against groups of students and is not regarding the students’ ability or work ethic.

We are focusing on the gap between African Americans and whites in this lesson but the gap exists between all different groups including but not limited groups differing in gender, class, ethnicities, etc.

Looking Local

- **South Orange
Maplewood School
District**
- Leveling
- Deleveling 2013
- **Montclair Public
School District**
- Desegregation
- Reform 2016

Before: Explain that class will be separated into two groups responsible for looking at one district closely. One group will read hand out from Montclair's *Report of the Achievement Gap Advisory Panel*.

Here: Explain history of deleveling and describe the academic achievement gap in SOMSD. Explain history of attempts to correct academic achievement gap in MPSD and describe the academic achievement gap in MPSD.

Read and Discuss

1. How do they define the Academic Achievement gap in SOMSD/ MPSD?
2. Compare and contrast SOMSD and MPSD systems? Where do they differ? How are they the same? Do you agree with their methods?
3. What is the Academic Achievement gap and how does it affect minority students today? How does it affect you, even if you are not a student of color?

Before: Separate students to prepare for small group discussions.

Here: Encourage the students to think about these questions as they are reading and/ or watching the clip. They should also use these questions to guide their discussions in their small groups. Prepare guiding questions and walk around to both groups utilizing these questions to keep the conversations moving.

After: Allow time for reading and small group discussion. Invite the class to come together to discuss these questions and compare the two districts.

Assignment ---> Questions?

Here: Introduce the outline assigned homework and open to questions.

References

1. The Montclair, NJ Achievement Gap Advisory Panel. (2015). Report of the Achievement Gap Advisory Panel. Montclair Public School District. Montclair, NJ.
2. Gettleman, J. (2007). The Segregated Classrooms of a Proudly Diverse School. *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, 299- 301.
3. New Jersey Department of Education. (2015). Performance Report of (NJ Schools). [Data File].
4. Thorne, C. [Producer/ Director]. (2012). *Deleveling the System: Community Speaks*. [Documentary]. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/36917982>