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Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding effective strategies to address the achievement gap among Black, Hispanic, and Asian students when compared to their peers. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource

**Question:** *What strategies will effectively address the achievement gap among black, Hispanic and Asian students when compared to their peers?*

### **Search Process**

**Key words and search strings used in the search:** *Instructional Strategies AND to close achievement gap OR for African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians OR for Blacks, Hispanics and Asians; Achievement gap between AND African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and White students; academic achievement strategies; instruction to close achievement gap*

### **Search databases and websites:**

1. ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
2. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
3. Google Scholar: [www.google.com/scholar](http://www.google.com/scholar)
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov>
5. What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

**Sample Citations Retrieved: (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):**

Aronson, J., Cohen, G., McColsky, W., Montrosse, B., Lewis, K., & Mooney, K. (2009). *Reducing stereotype threat in classrooms: a review of social-psychological intervention studies on improving the achievement of Black students* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009–No. 076). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education



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Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

**Abstract/summary:** Stereotype threat arises from a fear among members of a group of reinforcing negative stereotypes about the intellectual ability of the group. The report identifies three randomized controlled trial studies that use classroom-based strategies to reduce stereotype threat and improve the academic performance of Black students, narrowing their achievement gap with White students.

Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009). *Structuring out-of-school time to improve academic achievement: A practice guide* (NCEE #2009-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wvc/publications/practiceguides>

**Abstract/summary:** The goal of this practice guide is to formulate specific and coherent evidence-based recommendations for use by educators using out-of-school time programming to address the challenge of improving student academic achievement. The guide provides practical, clear information on critical topics related to out-of-school time and is based on the best available evidence as judged by the panel. Recommendations presented in this guide should not be construed to imply that no further research is warranted on the effectiveness of particular strategies for out-of-school time.

Bennett, A., Bridglall, B. L., Cauce, A. M., Everson, H. T., Gordon, E. W., Lee, C. D., Mendoza-Denton, R., Renzulli, J. S., & Stewart, J. K. (2004). *All students reaching the top: Strategies for closing academic achievement gaps*. (Contract #ED-01-CO0011). Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

**Abstract/summary:** A mission of public schools is to produce students who are intellectually competent and prepared for postsecondary education and the increasingly competitive workforce. An urgent concern among education stakeholders today is the underrepresentation of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans among high-achieving students. Despite increased efforts to maximize educational outcomes and to respond to the challenge of educating increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and disadvantaged students, more work is necessary to continue to improve student performance. It is recommended that affirmative development of academic ability be nurtured and developed through (1) high-quality teaching and instruction in



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the classroom, (2) trusting relationships in school, and (3) supports for pro-academic behavior in the school and community.

Culture, abilities, resilience, effort (CARE): Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap (2011). *National Education Association*. (4th edition). Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/CAREguide2011.pdf>

**Abstract/Summary:** C.A.R.E.: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps is research-based and was developed through the collaborative efforts of teachers, education support professionals, researchers, community advocates, parents, and practitioners. This new Fourth Edition also includes video clips of leading experts in cultural competence, English Language Learners, and teaching diverse students sharing what they know from their research and practice.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R.M., & Noguera, P.A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Research*, 39(1), 59-68.  
doi: 10.3102/0013189X09357621

**Abstract/Summary:** The gap in achievement across racial and ethnic groups has been a focus of education research for decades, but the disproportionate suspension and expulsion of Black, Latino, and American Indian students has received less attention. This article synthesizes research on racial and ethnic patterns in school sanctions and considers how disproportionate discipline might contribute to lagging achievement among students of color. It further examines the evidence for student, school, and community contributors to the racial and ethnic patterns in school sanctions, and it offers promising directions for gap-reducing discipline policies and practices.

Hirsch, S. (2005). Professional development and closing the achievement gap. *Theory into Practice*. 44(1) 38-44.

**Abstract/Summary:** A significant challenge to schools is selecting the staff development approach that aligns most clearly with the assumptions and beliefs of staff members and produces the results desired for students. When beliefs are in alignment, change in behavior accelerates; when beliefs underlying a new staff development program contradict long-held beliefs of participants change can come much slower or not at all. To expedite the change process and successfully close the achievement gap, educators might begin the process by ensuring a thorough understanding of the assumptions and beliefs underlying staff development



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programs. According to Sparks (2003), effective professional development will deepen participant understanding, transform beliefs and assumptions, and create a stream of continuous actions that change habits and affect practice. Four powerful approaches advanced by four successful educators (Kati Haycock, Ron Ferguson, Jerry and Monique Sternin, and Glenn Singleton) focus toward this goal and are grounded in varying underlying guiding principles that offer educators substantive choices and direction for their work.

Irvin, J. L., & Darling, D. (2005). What research says: Improving minority student achievement by making cultural connections. *Middle School Journal*, 36(4), 46-50.

**Abstract/Summary:** In this article, what the literature says about culture, the importance of acknowledging culture, and alternatives to closing the achievement gap among minority students are discussed to provide a perspective for those committed to improving the educational opportunities of minority youth.

Johnson, J. F., & Uline C. L. (2005). Preparing educational leaders to close achievement gaps. *Theory into Practice*, 44(1), 45-52.

**Abstract/Summary:** For more than 25 years, researchers have described the critical roles leaders play in creating effective schools and school districts. If U.S. schools are to close achievement gaps, their leaders must possess the appropriate knowledge, dispositions, and skills to assume these critical roles. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards inform the preparation and continued professional development of school administrators. These standards address six broad areas influencing student learning, including vision, culture, management, community relationships, ethics, and the larger political, economic, legal, and cultural context. The attributes of leaders in schools that have closed achievement gaps fit within these six comprehensive standards; however, critical nuances could easily be lost in the broad categories. In a manner that adds depth and specificity to the ISLLC standards, the authors of this article describe the specific knowledge, dispositions, and performances demonstrated by leaders in schools and districts that have closed achievement gaps.

Kober, N. (2001). *It takes more than testing: Closing the achievement gap*. Washington, D.C. Center on Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cep-dc.org>

**Abstract/Summary:** This report provides educational stakeholders with information about how to close the achievement gap in education. Researchers reviewed several analyses of test score

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data and various studies of the gap and its causes. Part 1 contains background information and discusses why this gap has become such a critical issue, reviews basic principles, and explains data sources. Part 2 analyzes the nature and extent of the achievement gap on various tests and summarizes trends in the gap over time. Part 3 reviews the main factors proposed by researchers to explain the achievement gap and outlines leading strategies for closing it. Part 4 contains suggestions to policymakers about how to evaluate various strategies for closing the gap and discusses why a comprehensive approach is needed. Promising strategies highlighted in this review include: increasing the participation of minority students in challenging academic programs; providing extended and intensive support for low-performing students; lowering class size in high minority schools; and strengthening parent and community support for achievement.

Miranda, A., Webb, L., Brigman, G., & Peluso P. (2007). Student success skills: A promising program to close the academic achievement gap for African American and Latino students. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(5), 490-497.

**Abstract/Summary:** Academic achievement data from four previous Student Success Skills (SSS) studies were aggregated and examined to determine if there were differential effects in improved test scores among White, Latino, and African American students. Results showed that posttest scores for the treatment groups were significantly higher than the comparison group in math as well as reading. There were no interactions or main effects for ethnicity. White, Latino, and African American student showed similar gains after SSS participation.

Murphy, J. (2009). Closing achievement gaps: Lessons from the last 15 years. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(3), 8-12.

**Abstract/Summary:** How educators look at achievement gaps will determine their success in reducing them. The guidelines and caveats presented here will help educators get a good start.

Wenglinsky, H. (2004). Closing the racial achievement gap: The role of reforming instructional practices. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12(64). doi: 10.14507/epaa.v12n64.2004

**Abstract/Summary:** No Child Left Behind Act calls for schools to close the achievement gap between races in math and reading. One possible way for schools to do so is to encourage their teachers to engage in practices that disproportionately benefit their minority students. The current study applies the technique of Hierarchical Linear Modeling to a nationally representative sample of 13,000 fourth graders who took the 2000 National Assessment of



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Educational Progress in mathematics to identify instructional practices that reduce the achievement gap. It finds that, even when taking student background into account, various instructional practices can make a substantial difference.

### **Referrals**

#### **Organizations:**

- Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence (CREDE), <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/coe/crede/>
- National Education Association, <http://www.nea.org/>

#### **Federally Funded Resources:**

- US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources, <http://ies.ed.gov/>
- What Works Clearinghouse, <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

### **Disclaimer:**

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