

African American Learners Project

Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

This collection of readings reflects the contributions of the Thinking and Development Team (TDT) for the African American Learners Project (AALP). These readings are intended to inform the thinking and practice of individual teacher-consultants and/or writing project sites interested in addressing the racial gap in achievement by expanding their own knowledge base as they seek to enhance the academic performance of African American learners.

The contributors offer texts that they have found informative, provocative, affirming, and in many cases, inspiring. These texts have helped the contributors examine the history and status of African American education in our nation in the context of the landmark decision rendered in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954; 1955).

As you explore this bibliography, you may wish to communicate with the contributor to initiate a discussion about the text. For that reason, a directory of the contributors follows the annotated entries; the directory provides each contributor's name and writing project site. Contributors can be contacted through the NWP website using the "[Find an NWP Colleague](#)" feature of NWPi.

Background Readings on the Racial Achievement Gap

As a precursor to exploring the annotated texts offered by the AALP Thinking and Development Team, we offer the following articles from highly respected organizations:

- *Rethinking Schools*: [Race and the Achievement Gap](#)
- [Education Trust](#)
- Public Broadcasting Service (PBS): [Closing the Achievement Gap](#)
- *Forbes Magazine*: [The Achievement Gap](#)
- *Sacramento Bee*: [Tests Show Racial Achievement Gap](#)

Annotated Entries

Alim, H. Samy, and John Baugh, eds. 2007. *Talkin Black Talk: Language, Education, and Social Change*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN: 0-8077-47846-7]

Bringing together educators, poets, and educator/poets, Alim and Baugh celebrate the fifty-plus years since the *Brown* decision with an insightful blend of ideas, strategies, approaches, and activities designed to bring language study alive and connect it to the lives of students. Calling on such powerful scholars as Geneva Smitherman, June Jordan, and Sonia Sanchez, the editors have fashioned themes that help teachers create lessons that enable students to see language as liberation rather than incarceration.

- Bob Fecho

Bigelow, Bill, Bob Peterson, Linda Christensen, and Stan Karp, eds. 1994. *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Vol. 1. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools Ltd. [ISBN: 0942961188]

Creative teaching ideas, compelling narratives, and hands-on examples of ways teachers can promote values of community, justice, and equality and build academic skills. This volume includes over 75 articles, essays, poems, reproducible handouts, lesson plans, and resource lists.

- Elizabeth Davis

Christensen, Linda. 2002. *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools Ltd. [ISBN0-942961-25-0]

This book provides essays, actual student writing, and lesson plans, all of which promote the use of “real” writing exercises. In addition, it offers a rich variety of teacher and student narrative work that reveals the need for emotional healing, within the writing experience, from life’s ongoing struggles. As students attend conventional classes daily, carrying challenges untouched within school curriculum, there is a need to provide an alternative in order to successfully reach those learners. This very important book serves as a tool by giving a means of providing real subjects and methods that African American students welcome.

- Patsy Lockhart

Delpit, Lisa. 1995. *Other People’s Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press. [ISBN 1-56584-180-8]

Delpit has compiled essays that address controversies facing those engaged in promoting effective progress in American schools working with African American learners. Included in this book is “Skills and Other Dilemmas of a Progressive Black Educator,” which confronts the absence of teachers of color within the discussion of literacy education that specifically relates to the writing process, with an emphasis on content and teaching direct skills. In another article, “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People’s Children,” Delpit addresses her concerns about building

literacy, which may contradict strategies aligned with the White conservative view. Both articles in this text remain controversial and for several years were the most requested reprints in the *Harvard Educational Review*. As long as there is need for educators of color in pedagogical conversations, this book is highly recommended to represent the important missing voice.

- Patsy Lockhart

This text presents essays in which the author, an African American teacher, chronicles her efforts to understand the perspectives her multiracial students bring to the classroom, discussing the reasons why many White and middle-class African American teachers encounter problems teaching students from different cultures.

- Elizabeth Davis

Delpit, Lisa, and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, eds. 2002. *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press. [ISBN: 1565848209]

This cutting-edge book delves into how many “Englishes” are spoken—African-American, Caribbean-American, and Appalachian, among others—and the layers of politics, power, and identity they carry.

- Elizabeth Davis

Fecho, Bob. 2004. *“Is This English?”: Race, Language, and Culture in the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN: 0807744085]

This book is less a how-to and more of a here’s-why. Building from over twenty years’ experience coconstructing knowledge with African American and Caribbean American adolescents, Fecho uses close studies of interactions with students to examine what it means to be a White teacher in a Black classroom. The intent is not to show best practice but, instead, to graphically illustrate how practice is complex and how relationships are at the heart of that complexity.

- Bob Fecho

Fisher, Maisha T. 2007. *Writing in Rhythm: Spoken Word Poetry in Urban Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN: 080774770X]

This work focuses on the historical and contemporary link between orality and literacy in the Black community. Fisher, in her insightful and vibrant narrative, documents the dynamic poetry community coconstructed by a teacher and students in a high school in the Bronx. Grounding her work in both theory and the life of a classroom, Fisher does a great job of showing the literacies students bring to school and the ways such literacies can be built upon in the classroom.

- Bob Fecho

Goodlad, John I., Roger Soder, and Kenneth A. Sirotnik, eds. 1990. *Places Where Teachers Are Taught*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [ISBN: 1-55542-276-4]

This book presents historical case studies that cover the history of American higher education. In doing so, the editors ground the contemporary racial achievement gap in a past cluttered by systemic inequities in learner expectations and educational funding. A comprehensive study of the Normal School movement is shared, as well as a discussion about the effects of institutional racism on access to quality educational opportunities.

- Pamela Morgan

Foster, Michele. 1998. *Black Teachers on Teaching*. New York: The New Press. [ISBN 978-1-56584-453-7]

Michelle Foster has collected twenty life history interviews with teachers of color at various ages and stages in their careers. Together they present a rich well of insights, experiences, and approaches from committed African American teachers who bring their specific knowledge and life experiences to the teaching of African American learners (including their experiences *as* African American learners in a diverse set of schools). Particularly interesting is seeing how the experiences of these educators were shaped by the opportunities and challenges faced by different generations of teachers: the elders, the veterans, and new teachers. For writing project sites seeking to find new ways to bring new voices into their conversations about teaching, this book will add twenty provocative colleagues to your local community.

- Elyse Eidman-Aadah

Hale, Janice E. 2001. *Learning While Black*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. [ISBN 0-8018-6776-2]

This is an excellent book! It offers a dual perspective—that of a well-educated African American single parent whose son attends a prestigious private school, and that of a well-respected professor and educational consultant. *Learning While Black* targets teachers, administrators, and parents. Hale not only provides data to substantiate what we all know and believe about the achievement gap, but critiques existing models and suggests more culturally responsive models. Parental involvement is the underlying message throughout. However, since the majority of students at the lower end of the achievement gap do not have the level of support needed to overcome racism that is institutionalized in both private and public education, she offers two keys to minimizing the gap. These are 1) instructional leadership provided by building administrators or their designees, and 2) schools becoming the coordinators of support services for children whose parents do not have the resources to coordinate support. The author provides personal anecdotes as well as research to make *Learning While Black* extremely engaging, readable, and informative.

- Sylvia Bailey

Hankins, Karen Hale. 1998, Spring. "Cacophony to Symphony: Memoirs in Teacher Research." *Harvard Educational Review, Voices Inside Schools* 68 (1). Available through [ProQuest Research Library](#).

This article encourages White teachers to honor their stories and to mine important lessons within them. It invites us to think about how our personal histories color our classroom practice and asks us to make connections with *every* student, not just those who happen to look like us.

- Denise VanBriggle

Harris, Joyce L., Alan G. Kamhi, and Karen E. Pollock, eds. 2001. *Literacy in African American Communities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. [ISBN 0-8058-3402-8]

The book focuses on a variety of literacy issues that impact African Americans from preschool through adulthood. Readers may find two chapters especially useful in thinking about African American achievement and literacy. In "Language Variation and Literacy Acquisition in African American Students," Noma LeMoine refers to the research of experts such as Labov, Smitherman, and Dillard as she explains the origins of African American language and discusses its impact on literacy. She examines six "nontraditional researched-based instructional strategies" and their advantages for facilitating literacy with Standard English language learners (SELLs). In "From the Pews to the Classroom," Beverly Moss looks at the importance of the church in African American literacy. The chapter touches first on the historical importance of the church in teaching literacy during and immediately after the end of slavery. The author devotes the rest of the chapter to exploring how literacy looks in three different Chicago area churches. She closes with a discussion of the implications for the classroom.

- Marlene Carter

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1983. *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ways with Words has become the classic text in the ethnography of literacy, a mainstay on introductory course reading lists. The core insight of this richly detailed look at literacy practices in three communities in the southeastern United States is as relevant and eye-opening today as it was in 1983. Heath looks carefully at the "ways with words" in a poor white community, an African American community, and a middle-class community to demonstrate how people's understandings, practices, and approaches to literacy make sense within the context of their local cultures—even when they do not match the practices valued and rewarded by schools. The detailed presentation of observed practices and activities resonates with what we see and experience as teachers when young people come to school, and the style of thinking in the book teaches us much about learning to see the world from our students' perspectives in order to make bridges among the cultures of school and community. This book teaches one important way to think about working on the racial achievement gap.

- Elyse Eidman-Aadahl

hooks, bell. 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge.
[ISBN: 0-415-96818-6]

This book allows one to examine how teachers who create teaching communities become “keepers of hope” and agents of change as they address race and racism, remove shame, recognize continued segregation, and share ways to teach with love. Teaching goes beyond instructional skills; African American students need skills and more because of their unique historical and cultural profile. The art of teaching touches the souls of students being taught as well as those doing the touching; it is called spirit. I find it to be a healthy exchange necessary to make a difference with the African American learner.

- Patsy Lockhart

Howard, Gary R. 1999. *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*. New York: Teacher's College Press. [ISBN: 0807746657]

With 25 years of teaching as a multicultural educator, experience collaborating with students and colleagues from diverse cultures, and extensive travel to draw on, Gary Howard looks into his own racial identity to discover what it means to be a culturally competent White teacher in racially diverse schools. His lively stories and compelling analysis offer a healing vision for the future of education in pluralistic nations.

- Elizabeth Davis

Johnston, Peter H. 2004. *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. [ISBN 1-57110-389-9]

In this provocative text, the author prompts educators to examine the impact that their word choice and manner of response has on students and their learning. He offers sample responses to given situations and analyzes the effect of each response on the child as well as on the learning environment. Though primarily focused on language and literacy acquisition, this text can offer us insights into the power of discourse and discourse analysis, especially regarding culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

- Pamela Morgan

King, Joyce Elaine, ed. 2005. *Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
[ISBN: 0-80585457-6]

This book is an extensive collection of selected contributions presented by the American Educational Research Association (AERA). It offers the reader an opportunity to rethink the manner in which education is provided to the African American learner. Since the commencement of public education in the 1800s, strategies for working with African American children have been under reform, but African American learners have yet to excel in America's school. Asa Hilliard says, “Reform only happens when there has been a system that actually worked at one time.”

Contributing writers I highly respect and honor are Carol D. Lee, “The State of Knowledge About the Education of African Americans,” and Linda Darling-Hammond, “New Standards and Old Inequalities: School Reform and the Education of African American Students.” The highlight for me is Joyce Elaine King’s “A Transformative Vision of Black Education for Human Freedom.”

- Patsy Lockhart

Kozol, Jonathan. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown Publishers. [ISBN: 1400052459]

Jonathan Kozol examines, through the lenses of the learners themselves, the soft bigotry of low expectations for disenfranchised children in our nation’s schools. His visits to nearly 60 public schools throughout the nation revealed that conditions have grown worse for urban learners in the 15 years since federal courts began dismantling the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He reveals a state of nearly absolute apartheid that prevails in thousands of our public schools. Kozol finds that the segregation of Black children has reverted to a level that the nation has not seen since 1968 and condemns the pathological and punitive measures of high-stakes testing for children of color. *The Shame of the Nation* pays tribute to those undefeated educators who persist against the odds and offers a humane challenge to our nation to fulfill at last the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

- Elizabeth Davis

Kunjufu, Jawanza. 2002. *Black Students. Middle Class Teachers*. Chicago: African American Images. [ISBN: 0913543-81-0]

At times, Kunjufu can oversimplify issues, from my point of view, but his books, and this one in particular, pull no punches when it comes to issues of teaching across racial boundaries. He raises important questions such as Can middle-income teachers educate low-income children? and How do we convince African American children it’s acceptable to be smart? Having posed such provocative questions, he then seeks to answer them. This book will push you, no matter what your race or income.

- Bob Fecho

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. 1994. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [ISBN: 0787903388]

This book paints portraits of eight exemplary teachers who differ in personal style and methods but share an approach to teaching that affirms and strengthens cultural identity.

- Elizabeth Davis

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. 2001. *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [ISBN: 0787950017]

The author of the best-selling book *The Dreamkeepers* shows how teachers can succeed in diverse classrooms. Educating teachers to work well in multicultural classrooms has

become an all-important educational priority in today's schools. In *Crossing Over to Canaan*, Ladson-Billings details the real-life stories of eight novice teachers participating in an innovative teacher education program called Teach for Diversity.

- Elizabeth Davis

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. 2006. *Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association*. (Video). Retrieved on December 4, 2007, at <http://www.softconference.com/MEDIA/WMP/260407/#49.010> (Internet Explorer required to use this link)

All Presidential Addresses at AERA are well intentioned. Many, however, seem rote and facile. But the talk by Ladson-Billings on that Sunday in April was something else altogether. Hers was a talk that was as personal as it was academic, as passionate as it was objective, as literary as it was steeped in the research. Fixing her gaze on everyone in the hall, Dr. Ladson-Billings held us all accountable and suggested we each figure out our role in paying back what is owed. It didn't make the rock any smaller or the mountain less steep and long, but it did remind the educators in that room that helping all children to embrace learning is a priority and concern for all Americans and that those who come too easily to their privilege need to consider what they can do to level the playing field in U.S. classrooms.

- Bob Fecho

Lawrence, Sandra M., and Beverly Daniel Tatum. 1997, Fall. "Teachers in Transition: The Impact of Antiracist Professional Development on Classroom Practice." *Teachers College Record* 99 (1): 162-178.
Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2000, May. "Examining Racial and Cultural Thinking." *Educational Leadership* 57 (8): 54-57.

These two articles focus on creating antiracist learning environments by prompting educators to become aware of their own racial identities as a means of becoming more cognizant of the impact of institutional racism on education and student performance. The authors advance the notion of personal and professional response expectations that are an outgrowth of effective professional development experiences.

The second article seems to be an update of the first, but both discuss a research study that focused on a one-semester professional development course that explicitly addressed antiracism in ways intended to help participants to "recognize the personal, cultural, and institutional manifestations of racism and to become more proactive in response to racism within their school settings."

- Pamela Morgan

Lee, Carol D. 2007. *Culture, Literacy, and Learning: Taking Bloom in the Midst of the Whirlwind*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN: 978-0-8077-4748-3]

Inspired by a Gwendolyn Brooks poem, Lee brings her considerable expertise in urban teaching to the forefront in this book. Describing what she calls the Cultural Modeling Project, Lee outlines how teachers can celebrate language strengths that students bring

with them to the classroom. She advocates working with language skills developed through immersion in homes, codes, and/or hip hop culture, and using those skills to interpret more traditional literature with students. Building on a lively blend of theory and practice, she examines the integral role that culture plays in all classrooms.

- Bob Fecho

Lester, Julius. 2005. *Let's Talk About Race*. New York: HarperCollins. [ISBN: 0-06-028596-6]

This book represents a valiant effort on the author's part to address with children the controversial issue of race and racism. His conversational tone and use of personal experiences and examples, accompanied by vivid illustrations, invite the reader into the discussion. He offers his readers a challenge as he closes this text—"I'll take off my skin. Will you take off yours?" Used with discretion and lots of explanation, this text can spark days of dialogue and other activities, especially when used with adult learners.

- Pamela Morgan

Lindsey, Tommie, and Randall McCutcheon. 2006. *It Doesn't Take a Genius: Five Truths to Inspire Success in Every Student*. New York: McGraw Hill. [ISBN 0-07-146084-5]

It Doesn't Take a Genius provides a fresh break from a teach-to-the-test environment. The book includes testimonies of successful experiences from two award-winning educators as well as from their students who learn from them. It promotes the important premise that students coming from vulnerable lifestyles can effectively transform their lives and become productive and successful. The book has five chapters: "Five Truths: Be the First Believer," "Class is Never Dismissed," "Words Seldom Fail You," "Writer's Block but Rarely Tackle," and "Paying Your Do's." The passionate voices in the stories being told are certainly a must for the critically conscious instructor.

- Patsy Lockhart

Meier, Deborah. 1995. *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for Americans from a Small School in Harlem*. Boston: Beacon Press. [ISBN 0-8070-3111-9]

Deborah Meier is a leading writer and contributor who addresses effective strategies that satisfy key issues for the African American learner. In this book, she creates an opportunity for teachers to examine how some students are encouraged to experience the power of what comes to their minds while others are denied such encouragement, based on the experience of the teacher. The book may motivate teachers to think about how much influence they have on students' success and failure as a result of the writing atmosphere created in the classroom. The book has become an opener for me as I lead other teachers to consider broadening their perspective when working with students with a background different from theirs.

- Patsy Lockhart

Morris, Vivian Gunn, and Curtis L. Morris. 2002. *The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African American Community*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN 0-8077-4235-X]

Morris and Morris provide the reader an opportunity to think about the impact desegregation had on teaching and learning for African American students. The authors interviewed graduates from a small northwest Alabama town who both attended the segregated Treholm High School and were also bused to Deshler High School. Many questions surface in 109 pages. Were the promises of desegregation met? Did African American students receive a better education before desegregation than they are receiving today? What role did the community play in educating our students? Do communities fulfill the same role today? Are students today in the nurturing, caring environments they were in before *Brown*? Is prescriptive teaching the answer? Is high-stakes testing the solution? We will probably all agree on the answers to these questions, but what can we do to reverse the situation. *The Price They Paid* is a must-read for communities of teachers, since it ties the past, with which some are unfamiliar, to the present. Often the past gives us the keys to the future.

- Sylvia Bailey

Murrell, Peter C., Jr. 2002. *African-Centered Pedagogy: Developing Schools of Achievement for African American Children*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. [ISBN 0-7914-5292-1]

This comprehensive volume, written in a comfortable, autobiographical style, provides a clear and specific guide to building and maintaining an atmosphere for learning and teaching. One can grasp the framework of this text through Murrell's own words: "I wish to reach all those who are invested in the academic achievement and personal development of African American children, including teachers, school administrators, scholars, and researchers, as well as parents and community members." He binds specific African American pedagogy with conventional theory and, more important, presents principles of just good old teaching practice that blends well with the African American experience. Key frameworks addressed in this book include constructive teaching, responsive teaching, child-centered learning, cognitively guided instruction, and innovations like project-based learning and cooperative learning. The importance of this text lies in its complete and totally necessary applicability.

- Patsy Lockhart

Nieto, Sonia. 1999. *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*. New York: Teachers College Press. [ISBN: 0807737828]

Sonia Nieto draws on research in learning styles, multiple intelligences, and cognitive theories to portray how students learn. She also discusses the social context of learning, the history and manifestations of educational equity, the influence of culture on learning, and critical pedagogy. She looks at how personal, social, political, cultural, and educational factors interact to affect the success or failure of students.

- Elizabeth Davis

Paley, Vivian Gussin. 1992. *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [ISBN: 0-674-96590-6]

This text captures the reader's attention and curiosity as the author demonstrates the role of the teacher as an advocate for students. Using the story-within-a-story technique, Paley offers her readers insights into her attempts to challenge the status quo notions about inclusion and exclusion that kindergarteners have embraced by the tender age of 5. She models the practice of examining her impact on the learning environment as she calls some of her own behavior into question. This book is an excellent successor to Paley's very early reflection on race in her teaching in her book *White Teacher*.

- Pamela Morgan

Perry, Theresa. 2004. "Up from the Parched Earth: Toward a Theory of African-American Achievement." In *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African American Students*, by Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III. Boston: Beacon Press. [ISBN 0807031054]

Perry argues that there is a distinctly African American educational philosophy equating literacy with freedom. The belief in "freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom" is rooted in the unique historical circumstances of the African American community, dating from slavery times to the present and embedded in narratives like those of Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X. Perry also critiques "competing theories of group achievement," including Ogbu's distinction between voluntary and involuntary immigrants. Finally, she urges that, to promote African American student achievement, schools be structured around recognition of the historical links between literacy, freedom, and narrative.

- Joe Check

Seiler, Gale 2005. "All My Life I Been Po': Oral Fluency as a Resource for Science Teaching and Learning." In *Improving Urban Science Education: New Roles for Teachers, Students and Researchers*, edited by Kenneth Tobin, Rowhea Elmesky, and Gale Seiler, 113-129. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

This article revisits the discourse on oracy habits and cultural styles, attributes, and patterns of engagement of African American learners, while positing that schools have been relatively ineffective in changing the life courses of too many disadvantaged students. Citing such factors as the lack of deep-seated understanding of African American experiences, culture, and heritage, and the way that such understanding informs successful teaching of African American children, the author goes on to point out that education has often failed to be "transformative" for children caught in the crossroads between school and the competitive global market. Seiler describes an ethnographic study that examines the oral fluency and cultural disposition displayed by a group of students in one Philadelphia high school science class and offers her research as an additional lens through which to examine the ways in which they use oral language to demonstrate knowledge and understanding when engaged in meaningful science

experiences related to their interests.

I found this article to be quite interesting. Seiler's transcriptions of student talk during science experiments was particularly meaningful, especially in light of the fact that most Philadelphia high schools still teach science straight from a textbook with little opportunity for hands-on experiments or talk among students. The author suggests that rethinking the way we teach science may have a distinct impact on the sustained engagement of students. Further, by rethinking what we count or acknowledge as academic talk and engaged behavior, we may find that students are demonstrating more understanding than they have been given credit for. I chose this article because of its focus on science-class behavior. Too often, we tend to look at achievement in English and reading without considering that our students may demonstrate significant literacies in other domains as well.

- Vanessa Brown

Singleton, Glenn Eric, and Curtis Linton. 2006. *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. [ISBN 0-7619-8877-7]

This book defines institutionalized racism and provides practical, step-by-step methods to assist individuals and educational institutions in engaging in discussions relating to race. Singleton contributes exercises previously offered only in rare, professional, expensive staff development programs in an effort to reduce achievement gaps academically and socially. Regardless of one's position on race, he shares an approach that moves theory right into a "Monday morning" practice. He presents six conditions to create "courageous conversations" in order to create an interracial dialogue. Since race affects progress in African American students, Singleton feels educators have to take responsibility by "engaging in difficult self-assessment." He feels that through addressing a racial achievement gap, the academic achievement gap can be lessened. This resource provides the opportunity to move away from historical silence.

- Patsy Lockhart

Steele, Claude. 2004. "Stereotype Threat and African American Student Achievement." In *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African American Students*, by Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III. Boston: Beacon Press. [ISBN 0807031054]

Steele's research began with the question, "Could something as abstract as stereotype threat really affect something as irrepressible as intelligence?" Here he reports on his empirical psychological evidence that when black students believe they are being judged as members of a stereotyped group rather than as individuals, they do worse on tests. He calls the mechanism at work "stereotype threat," reflects on its broad implications for schools, and presents concrete strategies that foster what he describes as "identity safety." The book *Young, Gifted, and Black* was a core text in BAWP's study group, and within it, we found that Steele's concept of stereotype threat became a key idea for us.

- Carol Tateishi

Takaki, Ronald. 1993. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. [ISBN 0316831123]

Ronald Takaki, a professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California in Berkeley, gives the reader a look at multiculturalism in the United States from a historical perspective and suggests how to view cultural diversity in the future to promote equality. Beginning with the colonization of the “New World” and ending with the Los Angeles riots of 1992, this book recounts U.S. history in the voices of Native Americans, African Americans, Jews, Irish Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and others. Takaki turns the Anglocentric historical viewpoint inside out and examines the ultimate question of what it means to be an American. He discusses issues such as class differences, bilingual education, affirmative action, and his distinction between race and ethnicity.

- Elizabeth Davis

Tatum, Alfred W. 2005. *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. [ISBN: 1 57110393 7]

Tatum taught in middle schools and has worked with middle school teachers across the country. He places his own experience into this book, so the result is a thoughtful, personal, useful, and insightful discussion of ways to engage African American adolescent males in reading and literature. The book rises from a solid theoretical foundation, but never swerves from its mission of providing teachers with substantive approaches that can be adapted for all classrooms.

- Bob Fecho

Tatum, Beverly. 2003. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race*. New York: Basic Books. [ISBN: 0-465-08361-7]

This bestseller offers a comprehensive discussion of race and racism. Its balanced approach encourages readers to demonstrate empathy and compassion in dealing with and attempting to understand others. This text offers such an extensive bibliography that it makes a great entry-level resource for exploring race and racism, as well as people’s need to feel supported in the process of exploration.

- Pamela Morgan

This book presents a detailed explanation of racial identity development for people of color and Whites. Based on four speeches that Tatum gave at Simmons College, this short, down-to-earth discussion of racism and multiculturalism would make an excellent book to use in a reading circle by teachers seeking a point of entry to discuss race. The author weaves together her personal history and experience with an analysis of the roots and manifestations of racism. For those looking for a road map to explore issues of race in schools and society, this remarkable book, infused with great wisdom and humanity, tells us where to start.

- Elizabeth Davis

Thernstrom, Abigail, and Stephan Thernstrom. 2003. *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*. New York: Simon and Schuster. [ISBN 0-7432-0446-8]

This book is written by two scholars who strongly support high-stakes testing, maintaining that “students need to learn basic . . . skills and how to think. . . . There is a seamless web between the two, and a really good test assesses both. If students are truly being taught ‘to think,’ they should be able to demonstrate the quality of their thinking in a test situation. . . . [T]est scores . . . tell us what students, educators, parents, and the general public need to hear.” The authors defend testing and deny racism in the same breath, quite a feat. They claim that the achievement gap is “the central civil rights issue of our time: our failure to provide first-class education for black and Hispanic students.”

- Ben Bates

Thomas, Velma Maia. 1997. *Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation*. New York: Crown Publishers. [ISBN: 0-609-60030-3]

This book captures the history of Blacks in America that begins with “Africa before the slave trade.” Thomas, creator of the Black Holocaust Exhibit in Atlanta, includes replicas of authentic artifacts from the exhibit, with which readers can interact as they experience the text and feel the evidence of man’s inhumanity to man.

- Pamela Morgan

Thomas, Vivien T. 1998. *Partners of the Heart: Vivien Thomas and His Work with Alfred Blalock*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [ISBN: 0-8122-1634-2]

This intriguing text conveys the autobiography of Dr. Vivien T. Thomas, an African American who played a crucial role in the evolution of cardiovascular surgery during the height of the Jim Crow era. Though a series of events limited his access to formal medical education, he was awarded an honorary doctor of medicine degree from Johns Hopkins University in acknowledgement of his contributions to the field. This text became the inspiration for *Something the Lord Made*, a Home Box Office (HBO) movie that recounts Thomas’s life and his collaboration with Dr. Alfred Blalock. The movie can be used to spark interest in reading the text.

- Pamela Morgan

Van Ausdale, Debra, and Joe R. Feagin. 2001. *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. [ISBN: 0847688623]

A yearlong observational study in a childcare center, this book gives an in-depth look at how young children begin to act out the power and other dynamics of racism. In a touching and revealing look at how kids learn racist attitudes, the authors present stories that will change the way parents, teachers, and other educators understand the world as seen by children.

- Elizabeth Davis

Woodson, Carter Godwin. 1998. *The Mis-education of the Negro*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press. (Originally published 1933). [ISBN: 0-86543-171-X]

Woodson, the father of Negro History Week, paints a picture of the history of Black education in America that sheds light on the contemporary status of African American learners. This seminal work was originally published in 1933; however, if the language were updated to current terminology and vernacular, the reader would think it was a very recent publication.

- *Pamela Morgan*

Pam calls this a “seminal work,” and that is exactly right. What we now talk about as the “achievement gap” has deep historical roots. Ideas about how to respond and how to provide a rich and full education for African American learners also have deep roots. This is a must-read for anyone in search of our educator-elders.

- *Elyse Eidman-Aadahl*

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