

The Foundations of Urban Education

The Foundations of Urban Education:

Key Issues

Edited by

Tiffany A. Flowers

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FOREWORD

The foundation of urban education is a subfield of education. This area focuses on the historical, societal, and cultural factors which can impact schools. More specifically, this interdisciplinary focus includes historical, anthropological, and theoretical educational issues and debates regarding historical marginalized groups within schools. This volume will include issues often excluded from traditional urban education texts related to foundational issues. The issues in this volume include topics related to the achievement gap, school and community partnerships, charter schools, teacher pay and compensation, culturally relevant pedagogy, teacher motivation, and school-based racial battle fatigue.

To craft this volume, each author provides a unique approach to teaching about these persistent and foundational subjects within the subfield of urban education. The strategies employed in this text include focusing on key vocabulary, activities, and recommended websites and readings to help reinforce the teaching of these concepts. Each chapter is either a critical and/or historical review of the current research literature in this area or an empirical research study on the topic. For example, examining the issue of the achievement gap during the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most serious issues of the 21st century. As educators, we will deal with the long-lasting impact of COVID on the learning experiences of children Pre K-Adult. *Dr. Delphia S. Smith* raises valid concerns in her chapter pertaining to how educators will tackle these issues for the next decade. Additionally, charter schools remain a hotly debated topic. However, few people understand why we have school choice and the original purpose behind these schools. *Dr. L. Trenton Marsh* and *Dr. Liliana Belkin* both examine the entire movement of charter schools and lay the foundation for understanding how these schools operate. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is another hot button issue within education. *Dr. Andrew Johnson* reexamines the research literature to help educators understand the philosophical and pedagogical implications for educators. Teacher pay and compensation sparked protests in recent years pertaining to the undervaluing of educators. *Dr. Cortez Moss* focuses on what pay models look like in a single state. This chapters helps educators understand the calculation and formula for both teacher pay and compensation. As issues of race, class, and equity within

the field of education are debated by politicians and academics within the field of education, *Dr. Manya Whitakers* chapter is critical to understanding teachers' motivations to take positions in urban communities of color. *Dr. Jennifer Nelson and Katrina Hasan Hamilton* focus on racial classroom and school fatigue within classrooms. *Dr. Jana Noel* culminates the foundations volume by focusing on school-to-community partnerships in urban schools with an emphasis on urban school partnerships.

It is our hope that students in undergraduate and graduate urban education, foundations of education, social foundations of education, and sociological issues in schools will find this book salient and useful. Often, practicing teachers express concern over the lack of realities and experience they get within urban schools prior to employment. This volume can help to ground teachers to the authentic realities of what is currently happening within urban schools.

Respectfully,

Dr. Tiffany A. Flowers
Series Editor

COVID-19, EDUCATION DISPARITIES, AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MINORITY STUDENTS

DR. DELPHIA S. SMITH

Objectives: The reader will be able to: 1. Distinguish between equity v. equality and achievement gap v. opportunity gap; 2. Examine/Evaluate how COVID-19 has exacerbated the gap (achievement vs. opportunity) between minority students and their white counterparts; and 3. Understand the implications COVID-19 and education disparities have for minority students

Overview: Racial and economic disparities in America's educational system have been a longstanding issue affecting minority students and those from low-SES backgrounds. With the transition of in-person classes to virtual/remote learning due to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) during the 2019-2021 school years, racial and economic disparities have been amplified.

Keywords: *Achievement gap, education debt, education disparities, opportunity gap, equity, equality

Introduction

Achievement and opportunity gaps are used to measure the educational disparities that exist and are often considered inextricably linked, however, they are separate issues. Extensive research on the achievement gap tends to focus on school experiences such as learning opportunities, access to well-qualified teachers, high-quality curriculum, standardized testing, and small schools and class sizes that differ between minority and white students. The opportunity gap, which is based on arbitrary factors such as race, ethnicity, ZIP code, SES status, and policy decisions determine the opportunities students are afforded. Ladson-Billings (2006) argued that disparities in education between minority and low-SES students and their white peers exist far beyond the achievement gap. As a result, she coined the term "education debt" that outlines the growing impact fewer resources

have on minority students involving historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components. Using a critical race theoretical underpinning and Ladson-Billings' concept of education debt, this chapter will examine the impact COVID-19 has had and continue to have on education disparities and the implications for minority students.

Literature Review

Disparities in education have a long history in America dating back to the 1954 landmark ruling of *Brown v. Board of education* where the Supreme Court found racial segregation of schools unconstitutional. The school experiences of minority students in the United States continue to be considered separate and unequal (Darling-Hammond, 2000). COVID-19 school and learning interruptions were unprecedented with 55 million students in the United States out of school while education systems worked to meet the needs of schools and families (Kuhfeld, Johnson, Solanda et al., 2020). As the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak increased throughout the United States and the world, the educational disparities that persist among minority students were heightened. Such disparities extend access to well-qualified teachers, high-quality curriculum, standardized testing, as well as small class sizes. The literature review examines the difference between equity and equality as well as the achievement gap and the opportunity gap. Moreover, it outlines the educational disparities that exist between minority students and their white counterparts.

Equity V. Equality

Equity and access are considered essential components of quality education for all children but have persisted as barriers in America's schools for decades (Thompson & Thompson, 2018). To ensure the success of all students, educational systems, programs, and practices must recognize and address the inequities that students often face throughout their learning experiences (McGraw Hill, 2018). A common misconception exists between the terms *equity* and *equality* in education and they are often used interchangeably. However, there is a distinct difference between the two. According to the Center for Public Education (2016), *equality* in education is achieved when students are given the same resources and are treated the same, whereas *equity* is achieved when all students receive the same resources they need to graduate prepared for success after high school.

Equity

Quality education directly correlates to students' standard of living during their subsequent years. Thus, all students must be afforded every opportunity and resource needed to succeed. Equity, which is considered a complex concept, depends on several factors, mainly political ideals (Jurado de Los Santos, et al., 2020). While the challenge of ensuring educational equity is alarming, structural barriers inclusive of inequitable funding systems impede progress in America's schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). There are many ways to define *equity*. OECD (2012) defines *equity* in education as personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background that are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion). OECD's definition incorporates diversity and social justice which differs from the view that reveals a link between resources where an imbalance persists among those who have and those who have not (Thompson & Thompson, 2018). In education, *equity* usually means something similar to "fairness" and justice (Thinking Maps, 2018).

Equality

A common misconception exists that *equity* and *equality* are synonymous and often used interchangeably, especially in education. Even though they appear to be similar in some aspects, the difference between the concepts is significant. *Equality* has become the same as "leveling the playing field" (Mann, 2014). *Equality*, which is more commonly associated with social issues, is defined as the state of being equal (Waterford.org, 2020). The study of *equality* continues to be a controversy among social scientists (Espinoza, 2007). Through the lens of functional researchers, they view *inequality* as a necessary 'given' in society; one that is natural, inevitable, essential, and beneficial to society at large (Davis & Moore, 1945; Coleman, 1968; Havighurst, 1973). Critical theorists on the other hand see inequality as a social ill in areas such as property, wealth, education, skill, knowledge, respect, influence, opportunities, and life changes that require treatment and are unnecessary (Roach, 1969; Anderson, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

The difference between *equity* and *equality* can be traced back to the musing of Aristotle in the 300s BC. It was during this time he identified a key difference between what he identified as proportional equality, which is comparable to the modern conception of equity and numerical equality, and

is just as its name suggests (Academy 4SC, 2021). *Equity* and *Equality* are often considered the same but are distinctly different. Educators, policymakers, and all stakeholders must recognize the difference between equity in education, and equality in education (McGraw Hill, 2018). Understanding the distinction between the two is essential for resolving issues faced by disadvantaged students (Waterford.org, 2020). Gauldin (2020) maintained that *equality* is more well-known than *equity* because of the social issues faced around *equality* and acceptance of diversity. *Equality*, which is the state of being equal, advocates for equal rights, opportunities, treatment, and resources for all and often does not address specific needs. Whereas *equity* ensures everyone receives what is needed to be successful; is considered more thoughtful while being harder work, and have considerably more impact and effect (Gauldin, 2020). From a classroom perspective, *equality* gives all students the same resources to accomplish their task. While *equity* acknowledges the different needs of each student and how each requires specific support to be able to reach a goal or complete a task. Moreover, *equity* in education seeks to reframe policy discussion that centers around ensuring schools afford all students the resources required to be successful, even if it means disseminating resources unequally.

Achievement Gap vs. Opportunity Gap

The *achievement gap*, which has plagued educators for years, is a persistent disparity in academic achievement between minority and disadvantaged students and their white peers (Porter, 2021). Comparison of grades, standardized test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college completion rates are all evidence of this gap. McClellan, McKnight, Isselhardt, & Jeffries (2018) contend that achievement gaps are sizable and persistent differences that exist in academic outcomes between different groups of students defined by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic (SES) status, English learner status, geographic location, and disability status. Much focus has been placed on achievement gaps through the authorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). Thus, the need to measure the academic achievement of America's students is undoubtedly significant. Yates (2018) argued that the *achievement gap* has sadly become a euphemism for a longstanding set of beliefs about minority students. Beliefs she added, characterize Black and Latino students as less curious and less driven than their white counterparts, while needing to be inspired to achieve in school. When using test scores as a gauge for the achievement gap, students are unfairly held accountable for their learning outcomes. Dobyns

(2020) affirmed this fact when she stated, “When we focus on the test scores as measures, we situate the problem as one with the student.”

Rather than saying “achievement gap,” there is a need to accurately frame the issue and hold everyone accountable for student outcomes (Mooney, 2018). This frame, which is referred to as the ‘*opportunity gap*,’ identifies how public education systems create and sustain an inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities that contribute to student success, while situating the problem as one with the system (Dobyns, 2020). McClellan, McKnight, Isselhardt, & Jeffries (2018) maintained that the ‘*opportunity gap*’ calls attention to the lack of opportunities minority students are afforded such as high-quality teachers, quality curriculum, resources, books, etc. when compared to their economically advantaged peers. It looks at ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, and other factors perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students. A lot is known about the ‘*achievement gap*’ and ‘*opportunity gap*,’ and it can be presumed from these terms that all students are afforded the same opportunities to succeed academically. Nevertheless, Yates (2018) confirmed that all students do not have the same opportunities when it comes to education access. He proposed that there should be no more attempt to close the achievement gap, but rather efforts should be redirected and aimed at equalizing the opportunity gap which describes complex issues that contribute to student performance.

Education Disparities in America’s Schools

Education, which is considered a gateway to many opportunities and a pathway to progress remains separate and unequal. The disparities that exist in America’s schools are alarming (United Negro College Fund, 2021) with high and rising inequality being a longstanding economic and societal issue (Garcia & Weiss, 2017). While the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* was ultimately successful in the desegregation of schools, there remain profound consequences for America’s students, especially students of color (Meatto, 2019). Black children continue to be racially and socioeconomically isolated, and as a result, the education achievement gap that persists between minority students and their white counterparts has widened (Han, Seabright, & Chen, 2020). The education achievement gap, which is defined as the difference in academic outcomes between historically advantaged and disadvantaged groups, is often looked at in terms of standardized test scores between Blacks, Latinos, and their white

peers (Porter, 2021). Although the United States has made some progress in closing the gap in educational outcomes, the continued large disparities in academic achievement offer clear evidence that minority students are afforded limited educational resources and opportunities in comparison to their white counterparts (Fahle & Reardon, 2017). Several factors such as access to math and science courses, college and career readiness, qualified teachers and school resources highlight the disparities between minority and white students.

Access to Math and Science Courses

The percentage of students of color who take high-level math and science courses continue to trail their white peers due to schools serving a disproportionate number of minority students and offering fewer advanced math and science courses in comparison to schools with more white students (Sawchuk, 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12 (2014a), minority students were less likely to have access to a full range of courses. The data revealed that 71% of white high school students attended high schools where the full range of math and science courses were offered. While 57% of black high school students and 67% of Latino high school students have access to the full range of courses in their high school. The latest data issued by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2018) that was collected from nearly every public school in America during the 2015-2016 school year reflects a broader problem with minority students lacking representation in math and science programs. This was attributed to a lack of resources and equipment in schools that serve a large population of minority students, a shortage of experienced math and science teachers, less access to early education, and low expectations in these subjects (Jones, 2018; Paterson, 2018). As Bryant (2015) maintained, students need access to high-level courses inclusive of quality instruction that would increase their content knowledge and cultivate their higher-order thinking skills, preparing them for the rigors of college.

College and Career Readiness

College and career readiness for high school students continue to be a major focus for the education reform movement (Bryant, 2015). This movement continues to address the alarming disparities that exist for certain racial and ethnic sub-groups, low-income, and first-generation college students, particularly African American students who are far less likely to be prepared

for college, and those in high-poverty schools being least prepared (ACT, 2013). Over the last several years, students' college and career readiness were measured using ACT and SAT scores, advance placement course taking and exam passage, enrollment in rigorous math and science courses, high school graduation rates, and high school exit exams (Camara, 2013; Musoba, 2011). According to ACT data findings, the pool of students who take this assessment continues to be diverse. However, it found that there were no gains made in student preparedness for college, with a gap remaining between students who take the ACT. There were only 12 % of African American and 16% of Latino 2019 high school graduates that were ACT-tested. As the ACT report also reveals, college readiness levels remain alarmingly low for students from underserved populations such as low-income, minority, and/or first-generation college students, and these students continue to lag behind their white counterparts in terms of college readiness.

Qualified Teachers

Having access to great teachers is one of the most important elements for college readiness, particularly for minority for students (Bryant, 2015). A significant difference between schools that serve a large population of minority students and those that do not is the percentage of well-qualified, highly experienced teachers (Flores, 2007). Access to well-qualified teachers is an especially important component of an equitable system (Thompson & Thompson, 2018). Nevertheless, minority and low-income students in urban settings most likely find themselves in classrooms staffed by inadequately prepared, inexperienced, and ill-qualified teachers due to funding inequities, distributions of local power, labor market conditions, and dysfunctional hiring practices (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Data from the 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) revealed that 7% of black students and 6% of Latino students attended schools where 20% of teachers were first-year teachers, compared to 3% of white students. The findings also revealed that 9% of teachers in schools with a high percentage of minority students are in their first year of teaching, in comparison to 5% of teachers in schools with a low percentage of minority student enrollment. While most U.S. teachers are certified, about half a million U.S. students attend schools where 60% or fewer teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014b).

School Resources

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that public education was not only a right but should be made available to all on equal terms (Spatig-Amerikaner, 2012). Yet, many minority students, underserved groups, and communities lack access to core elements of a quality education that include free, quality preschool; high, challenging standards, and engaged teaching and leadership in safe, supportive, and well-resourced schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Spatig-Amerikaner (2012) in her report revealed that schools with a population of 90% or more minority students spend a full \$733 less per student per year than schools with a population of 90% or more white students. Similarly, EdBuild (2019), a nonprofit which studies the ways schools are funded in the U.S. found that \$23 billion was how much more funding predominantly white school districts received in comparison to districts that serve mostly minority students. Despite continued integration efforts, the majority of America's students attend racially concentrated school systems that are given fewer resources, which are reflective of the long history of segregation that involves policies related to everything from voting to housing, which has drawn lines and divided our communities (EdBuild, 2019). As Knoff (2021) argued, the current state of educational equity is not good with the quality of instruction and availability of resources; in addition, the money in today's schools, for many students, especially minority and poor students, is unequal.

COVID-19 and Its Impact on Education

The American education system is centered around in-class experiences and in many communities serves as a place of support for school meals, mental health counseling, and childcare (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, 2020). K-12 education, like the rest of the world, experienced a disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which the World Bank (2020) refers to as 'learning poverty.' The World Bank's report further indicated that with the spread of COVID-19, among the many disruptions to normal life, more than 160 countries mandated temporary school closures, affecting 1.6 billion children and youth. Amidst this interruption and uncertainty, the pandemic highlighted the disparities that exist in America. It also represented how deeply inequity shapes the experiences and outcomes of America's students (Bombardieri, 2021). Access and availability of educational materials, food security, access to technology, a stable learning environment, and support for remote learning means lower-income minority students are less likely to struggle. Notably, the US education system was not built to deal with

extensive shutdowns like those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, 2020). Hence, causing disproportionate learning losses for minority students, while compounding existing gaps, and leading to an increased percentage in the high school dropout rate.

Rothstein (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic will take the existing academic achievement gap that exists between middle-class and low-income students and explode them. While many schools moved to virtual learning, many home environments, particularly those of black and brown families were not prepared to provide a comparable learning environment with internet access, a computer or tablet, and support for their children as opposed to their predominately white, and affluent counterparts. For some families, a parent may not be fluent in English or lack basic computer skills. Warikoo (2020) contends that for many students engaged in virtual learning, some have a parent, adult, or older sibling that can assist them, while others do not. In fact, in many wealthy neighborhoods across the country, some students safely continued their education via small “learning pods” where hundreds or thousands of dollars were spent for private instruction, that many argued put them at an unfair advantage (King and Gaudiano, 2020).

Each year, students are expected to learn new content as well as develop new skills. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused growing concerns about its potential impact on learning loss. Learning loss, as defined by Pier, et al., (2021) is the difference between what students would have learned in a normal year and what they learn during the pandemic. Student learning loss during school closures is dependent upon several factors, access to remote learning, quality of remote instruction, home support, and degree of engagement (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis & Viruleg, 2020). Kuhfeld, et al., (2020) in their study projected that COVID-19 would undo months of academic gains, leaving many students behind. As Majumdar (2020) suggested, Black, Latino, and Native American student groups were more affected by learning disruptions than any other groups with an average learning loss of seven months. The significant impact on education due to the COVID-19 disruption will continue beyond education.

From Gap to Debt: Rethinking the Achievement Gap through a Critical Race Theory Lens

Social activist and education critic, Jonathan Kozol outlined inequities in schooling experiences that existed between white-middle class students and poor minority students; with many questioning the likelihood of his views.

Even so, inequalities existed then as they do today because of the racialized society that continues to silence and marginalize the conversation surrounding race and racism (Kozol, 1991). As Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) suggested, if racism were solely isolated, unrelated, individual acts, there would be evidence of educational excellence and equity in US public schools. Decades of data found that poor children, regardless of race and minority students often perform academically lower than their white peers. The achievement gap which exists along racial and poverty lines has plagued American education and society for decades (Zhao, 2016). Greater focus had been placed on identifying the achievement gap by standardized test scores. Yet, this gap exists when we compare dropout rates, access to math and science classes, the percentage of students who are enrolled in advanced placement courses, honors, and gifted classes, and the percentage of students admitted to college programs. Many scholars have offered varied explanations for this gap, most notably the 1966 Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et al.) which lauded the significance of placing students in racially integrated classrooms, and was further used as a catalyst for cultural deficit theories, suggesting there was not much that schools could have done to improve the achievement of minority students.

It is important to note that, language matters. Ladson-Billings (2007) pointedly encouraged scholars and educators to shift the discourse from *achievement gap* to *education debt*, which she argued perpetuates a deficit paradigm. When the focus is placed on the *achievement gap*, it shifts sole responsibility to the student and absolves educators of the burden to provide equitable opportunities for all students to succeed. Moving the conversation to *education debt* removes the burden of responsibility for the challenges and inequities that minority students continue to face. The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (2018) embraced this perspective and argued that the relative disenfranchisement of the communities of color has allowed policymakers to pursue priorities that deny millions of children the educational opportunities they deserve. Ladson-Billings (2006) likens the focus on the achievement gap to the focus on the budget deficit. She maintained that what is happening to minority students is considered the national debt; and that there exists an *education debt* and not an *achievement gap*. Further, as Haveman & Ladson-Billings (2006) explained, the education debt is forgoing school resources that should have been invested in low-income students, hence creating a deficit that leads to social issues such as crime, low productivity, low wages, and low labor force participation that all require ongoing public investment.

Covid-19, Education Disparities and the Implications for Minority Students

The expounding impact of COVID-19 on the education of minority students has significant implications for research and policy at federal, state, and district levels. Even before the pandemic, inequalities existed in America's schools, overwhelmingly affecting minority students the most, with race being a consequential factor in determining inequities in America. Continued study of this issue is necessary for closing the existing gap between minority students and their white peers and ensuring a more equitable educational system by affording all students opportunities and access to be successful. There is an urgent need to reinvest in education through the increase and expansion of resources for schools, particularly those serving low-income and minority students. This involves the protection and sustainability of the education budget at federal, state, and district levels. To add, by expanding resources, schools would be able to invest in early childhood education; hire more experienced teachers, resulting in smaller class sizes; invest in continued summer and in-school programs; increase access to honors and advanced placement courses, and increase student spending. More importantly, continued reinvestment in education helps to create a more equitable education system, while ensuring all of America's students, reach high levels of achievement, so that they can compete globally. Further, the quality of life students receive will determine their quality of life years later. Until equality in education is prevalent, society will remain unequal.

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Chapter Activities

Vocabulary (Define five terms in this chapter for readers outside of the field)

- Education Debt: cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at students of color.
- racial disparities: refers to disparities in educational achievement between differing ethnic/racial groups
- economic disparities: refers to the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in society.
- opportunity gap: the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities; it describes how the education playing field is not leveled for all students, even before the first day of class.

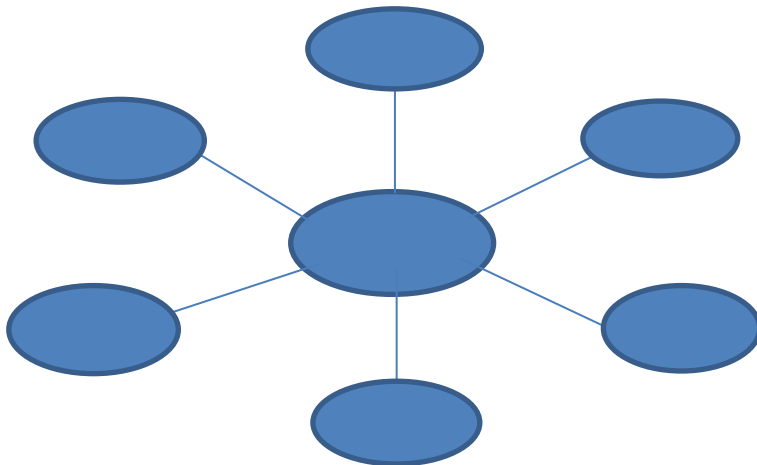
- SES status: the social standing or class of an individual or group, which is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation.

**Topic Questions (Please include
5 relevant chapter questions)**

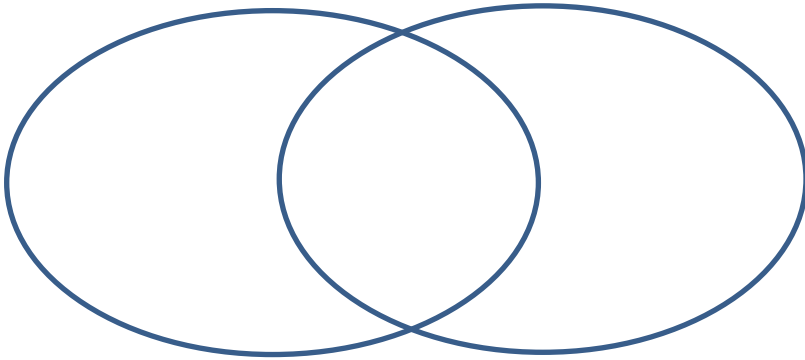
- Equity v. Equality: Are they two sides to the same coin?
- What is the achievement gap v. opportunity gap? Are these terms synonymous in how they impact different groups of students?
- What impact has COVID-19 had on the academic achievement of America's students?
- How can America's educational system seek to reshape deficit thinking, particularly when it comes to minority students?
- How can all stakeholders (school, home, community, government) move towards a more equitable educational environment for all students?

Activities

- A. Complete the semantic map below by adding any new words you encounter as you read:**



B. Using the Venn diagram below, write the differences and similarities about a topic or source from this chapter of your choosing:



Further Reading

The Coleman Report

Coleman, J. S. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity [summary report]. Washington: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education.

The State of Unequal Educational Opportunity: The Coleman Report 50 Years Later

Jackson, M., & Moffitt, S. (2017). The State of Unequal Educational Opportunity: The Coleman Report 50 Years Later. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 674(1)

Closing the opportunity gap: what America must do to give every child an even chance

In Carter, P. L., & In Welner, K. G. (2013). Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance.

EdBuild

EdBuild. (2019). 23 Billion. Retrieved from <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion>

World Bank

World Bank. (2020). "Simulating the potential impacts of the COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: A set of global estimates." Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/simulating-potential-impacts-of-covid-19-school-closures-learning-outcomes-a-set-of-global-estimates>.

Relevant Websites/Links

- US Department of Education: Data
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/landing.jhtml?src=pn>
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/topics.html>
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE U.S.

DR. LILIANA BELKIN AND
DR. L. TRENTON S. MARSH

Objectives: 1. Understand the historical context of school choice in the U.S.; 2. Review shared characteristics of public charter schools, regardless of curricular foci and pedagogical philosophies; 3. Distill popular public charter school models that have been offered in urban environments, targeting historically marginalized student populations; and 4. Offer a balanced discussion on student-level achievement data across various charter school models

Overview: This chapter reveals the history of school choice in the U.S., focuses on charter schools as a public, market-driven schooling option, unearths the conceptualization of public charter models, reviews the intersectional attributions of charters, and concludes how charters are complicated as a solution to the failing of American public education.

Keywords: public charters, school-choice, curricular focus, philosophy

Introduction

History of School Choice

It is tempting to start with America's Founding Fathers and the ways in which they conceived the idea of public education (and school choice) as a nation-building endeavor designed to inculcate American values, (Stulberg, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995), but the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision seems most relevant. In 1954, the Court's unanimous decision declared "segregation in public schools unconstitutional" (UScourts.gov, n.d.). The Board of Education of Topeka violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because separate facilities are "inherently unequal" (Justice Warren, *Brown v. Board Decision*, 1954). Despite the landmark ruling, the Court failed to provide clarity to local communities and school districts with regards to how the