3

Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

In this chapter, we expose the foundations of Standard 3, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. Because of the overlap between these two concepts, we intertwine them in the analysis below; that is, we treat them as two strands in a model of DNA. We begin with the picture of cultural marginalization and inequity in the instructional programs for children of color and students from low-income homes. We end with an in-depth discussion of solution strategies that district and school leaders can put into play to address these two dimensions of Standard 3.

CULTURAL MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUITY

Teachers and Teaching

Roscigno (1998) informs us that "the institution of education shapes achievement through the stratifying and segregating of students, through the placement of expectations, and through the allocation of resources" (p. 1051). And it is here that we find the pathway by which schools contribute to or fail to offset patterned learning differentials by race and social class (Conchas, 2001; Kleinfeld, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 1994). On the general front, "American public schools [do] not provide equitable and excellent education for all children" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 33). There are "pointed differences in resources and quality between schools" (Stiefel, Schwartz, & Ellen, 2006, p. 10; Lee & Burkam, 2002). Specifically,

students of different social classes and races often "experience dramatically different learning environments" (Stiefel et al., 2006, p. 19), "receive dramatically different learning opportunities" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 127), and are exposed to "dramatically different learning experiences" (Raudenbush, Fotiu, & Cheong, 1998, p. 254). "Given that blacks and whites have little overlap in the schools they attend, differences in school quality are plausible explanations for why black students are losing ground" (Fryer & Levitt, 2004, p. 456).

Poor and minority youngsters often have "unequal access to key educational resources" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 128). Black and low-income students are often underserved in the schools they attend (Hughes, 2003; Murphy, 2010; Norman, Ault, Bentz, & Meskimen, 2001). As Haycock (2001) asserts, "we take the students who have less to begin with and then systematically give them less in school" (p. 8). Analysts regularly confirm "that low-income and minority students encounter less opportunity to learn, inadequate instruction and support, and lower expectations from their schools and teachers" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 9).

Teachers

One of the most important lines of research on equity focuses on "distributional equity" (Bali & Alvarez, 2003, p. 487) in the assignment of qualified teachers to students from different races, ethnicities, and social classes. The issue here is about "the distribution of assignment of teachers" (Thompson, 2002, p. 16) to youngsters in schools (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2005; Rumberger & Gandara, 2004). The findings are highly consistent. "On virtually every measure, teacher qualifications vary by the status of the children they serve" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 138): "The poorest, least prepared minority children systematically are assigned to the least prepared instructors in the poorest quality schools" (Mickelson, 2003, p. 1073); "schools with particularly disadvantaged students are likely to have less-educated and less-experienced teachers" (Hertert & Teague, 2003, p. 19). More forceful versions of this narrative maintain that these youngsters are routinely exposed to "underqualified" (Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002, p. 502), "not qualified" (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002, p. 71), "weak" (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2006, p. 144), and "unqualified" (Barton, 2003, p. 10; Haycock, 1998, p. 14) teachers.

On the issue of degrees earned, similar patterns are evident. "Students in high-poverty schools are . . . least likely to have teachers with higher levels of education—a master's, specialist, or doctoral degree" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 138). For example, Stiefel and team (2006) using New York City data reveal that while 80 percent of white eighth graders had teachers with master's degrees in the 2000 to 2001 school year, only 68 percent of black students did so. And on this measure of preparation, there

is a positive association between master's degrees and student achievement scores, at least through the middle school grades (Ferguson, 1991).

Likewise, the California Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning reports "that in schools with the highest percentages of minority students, more than 20% of teachers are underqualified as compared with less than 5% of teachers in schools serving the lowest percentage of minorities" (Hertert & Teague, 2003, p. 20). And Scales and colleagues (Scales, Roehlkepartain, Keilsmeier, & Benson, 2006) find that "in elementary, middle, and high schools . . . [disadvantaged] children are twice as likely to attend schools with less-qualified and less-experienced teachers" (p. 401; see also Haycock, 1998).

It is also important to remind ourselves that "teachers matter" (Ferguson, 1991, p. 7)—teacher quality is crucial for student learning (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2004). Indeed, "recent studies have found that differences in teacher quality may represent the single most important school resource differential between minority and white children" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 128). Teacher quality is a keystone plank in the effort to narrow social class and racial learning differentials (Lubienski, 2002; Myers, Kim, & Mandala, 2004).

When we examine *licensure/certification*, similar results surface. We discover that low-income and children of color are disproportionately taught by non-certified teachers or "teachers who are not fully credentialed" (Rumberger & Gandara, 2004, p. 2037; also Bol & Berry, 2005; Land & Legters, 2002; Spradlin et al., 2005; Velez, 1989). For example, Hertert and Teague (2003), relying on data from the California Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, show that "in schools where 76%–100% of students are poor, 19% of teachers are not fully credentialed. In contrast, in schools with the lowest percentages of poor students, on average only 8% of teachers are not fully credentialed" (p. 20). They also report that "in the lowest-performing schools, as ranked in the Academic Performance Index (API), on average 21% of teachers are not fully credentialed" (p. 20). Darling-Hammond and Post (2000), in turn, reveal that "in schools with the highest minority enrollments, students had less than a 50 percent chance of getting a science or mathematics teacher who held a license and a degree in the field he or she taught" (p. 138).

Given everything that we have observed to this point in the area of teacher qualifications, it will come as no surprise to learn that children of color and low-income youngsters often receive less-experienced teachers than white and middle-class children (Irvine, 1990; Thompson & O'Quinn, 2001; Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002), what is referred to by Hughes (2003) as "the practice of first-year teacher student assignments" (p. 300).

Some examples from the research on teacher experience are informative. Barton (2003) confirms this assessment for low-income students, reporting that these children are also twice as likely to have teachers with three or fewer years of experience—20 percent of teachers in high-poverty

schools versus 11 percent in low-poverty schools (p. 13). Clotfelter and team (2005) find that "black 7th graders in North Carolina are far more likely to face a novice teacher in math and English than are their white counterparts. The differences are about 54 percent in math and 38 percent in English for the state as a whole, over 50 percent in some of the large urban districts (p. 391).

Also emerging as one dimension of experience is an understanding of the deleterious impact of teacher turnover on student achievement and knowledge about the types of students most likely to be effected by this turnover. Research confirms, for example, that teacher turnover is more pronounced in schools with high concentrations of minority and low-income children (Harris & Herrington, 2006; Williams, 2003). Analysts regularly conclude that teachers "tend to transfer out of low-income minority schools as they gain experience. Excessive test pressure tends to accelerate this process, compounding the schools' problems since experienced teachers are a precious resource for schools" (Lee, 2006, p. 7). For example, in his work Barton (2003) observes that "fourth-grade students who are Black are much less likely to be in schools where the same teachers who started the year were there when the year ended" (p. 12). He unearths similar findings with students from low-income families as well.

Assessments of teacher qualifications in the domain of performance come in five forms that cluster into three categories: inputs, processes, and outputs. Across all forms and categories, researchers consistently document that teachers working with children from low-income homes and minority youngsters score less well than colleagues teaching more-advanced children (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000). To begin with, we know that teachers who work in schools with concentrations of minority and poor students, on average, attend less selective colleges and earn lower grades while there (Reynolds, 2002; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Second, researchers confirm that "teachers with high test scores are . . . quite unequally distributed" (Jencks & Phillips, 1998, p. 49) and that children from low-income homes and children of color "are far more likely to be taught by teachers who scored poorly" (Haycock, 1998, p. 16) on end-of-program licensure examinations (Ferguson, 1991). Furthermore, "the average scores of white teachers who teach in proportionately more black districts tend to be lower than the scores of white teachers in white districts (p. 15). Thus, "where the percentage of black children in a Texas school district is higher, the average score on the TECAT is typically lower for each race of teachers—black, Hispanic and white" (p. 2). Borman and Kimball (2005) also unearth evidence showing that "Classrooms with high concentrations of minority students [are] taught by teachers with lower evaluation scores than classrooms with low concentrations of minority children" (p. 10). Teachers who instruct low-income and minority children are more likely to be absent from school than peers teaching other youngsters. For example, Barton (2003) explains that "Black twelfth-grade students are more than twice as likely as White

students to be in schools where 6 to 10 percent of their teachers are absent on an average day" (p. 12). Finally, "there is strong evidence that minority students are assigned to the least effective teachers, as measured by value added" (Harris & Herrington, 2006, p. 224) to student achievement.

What is important to remember is that these measures of performance have power in the student achievement equation. For example, Borman and Kimball (2005) inform us "that fourth-grade teachers with higher evaluation scores made some progress in closing the achievement gap separating poor and nonpoor children in reading and, to a lesser extent, in math" (p. 16). And perhaps most importantly, researchers confirm "that students learn more from teachers with higher test scores" (Wayne & Youngs, 2003, p. 100). As Ferguson (1991) notes in general, "the fact that teachers in Texas who instruct children of color tend to have weaker language skills appears, other things equal, to account for more than one quarter of the reading and math score differential between black and white children in Texas" (p. 1).

Teaching

In the previous section, we explored the topic of equity through teacher qualifications. We saw how these qualifications influence student learning and how greater exposure to teachers with more limited qualifications disadvantages students of color and students from low-income homes. Here we introduce our discussion of patterns of instructional practices often found in schools and classrooms heavily populated by minority and poor children.

Research in the area of instruction based on race and social class clusters into four categories: anemic instructional designs, inordinate focus on lower-level skills, inappropriate learning contexts, and low teacher expectations for students (Alder, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Murphy, 2010). On the first two issues (design and focus), analysts suggest that classrooms dominated by students from low-income homes and students of color are marked by a heavy emphasis on "passive instruction." In some cases, this is defined by an inordinate amount of didactic instruction, or more accurately teacher-centered instruction in which students are passive rather than active participants (Hattie, 2009), a pattern that Gamoran (2000) labels "repetitive teaching" (p. 103). Culpability here is linked less to teacher centeredness than to student inaction.

Critics find that disadvantaged youngsters receive a disproportionate amount of worksheets and drill-based skill work (Bennett et al., 2007; Lubienski, 2002; Strutchens & Silver, 2000), often decontextualized assignments with little relevance to either the academic goals of the class or the lives of the students (Bempechat, 1992; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). The focus is often on memorization and low-level skills (Lubienski, 2002), what Irvine (1990) calls "rote learning" (p. 7). Students "work at

a low cognitive level of boring tasks that are not connected to the skills they need to learn" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 142). Students of color and poor children are "typically given more routine highly structured class work focused on low-level intellectual activities" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 33). Low-level assessments are commonplace (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2000; Strutchens & Silver, 2000). The center of gravity is "lecture, drill and practice, and remediation, and student seatwork consisting mainly of worksheets" (Padron et al., 2002, p. 70). Undifferentiated whole-class instruction dominates (Cooper, 2000; Hattie, 2009; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002). Students are often in classes where "the skills tested on the assessments become the entire curriculum" (Murnane & Levy, 1996, p. 408). The DNA of instruction here becomes behavioral control rather than intellectual engagement and mastery (Cooper, 2000; Murphy & Torre, 2014): "Consequently, teachers spend more time controlling students and trying to neutralize potential behavior problems than in [real] teaching" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 32). Orderliness displaces the goal of learning (Irvine, 1990; Murphy, 2015a; Norman et al., 2001). Students are occupied in "routine busywork," although they remain "intellectually unengaged" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 33). Teachers act as "custodians or referral agents" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 23).

This "drill and practice," it is argued, "may be particularly damaging to minority students" (Learning Point Associates, 2004, p. 9). The focus "retards their learning and their development of higher cognitive skills" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 29). Indeed, missing in this framework of "inappropriate teaching practices" (Waxman, Padron, & Garcia, 2007, p. 134), "low level intellectual activity" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 33), and "steady diet of worksheets and rote learning" (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000, p. 142) is any commitment to mastering higher-level skills. Conspicuous by their absence are topics, such as "non-routine problem solving" (Strutchens & Silver, 2000, p. 47) and reasoning (Raudenbush et al., 1998). Thus, "low-achieving students continue to fall behind their high-achieving counterparts" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 33).

Studies confirm the conclusion that the instruction provided to students in lower-track classes is of a lesser quality than that provided to their peers in more academically oriented groups (Irvine, 1990; Murphy, 2015a; Oakes, 1985). At the secondary level, one of the reasons for this is the implicit assumption that teachers who must teach outside of their areas of expertise can more easily handle lower-level courses. As we reported above, such classes are often assigned to the least well-prepared teachers. Teachers also report less interest in working with lower-track students (Cooper, 2000; Heyns, 1974), and they frequently confess to a lack of knowledge about how to prepare and conduct classes for both "general" and lower-track students (California State Department of Education, 1984). Also, they spend less time preparing for nonacademic

classes (Gamoran, 2000). At the elementary level, students in lower-ability compensatory education classes sometimes receive a large amount of their instruction from aides rather than regular classroom teachers (Brookover, Brady, & Warfield, 1981). Finally, there is evidence that teachers use less demanding standards to judge their own performance with nonacademic track students and lower-ability groups (Gamoran, 2000; Schwartz, 1981).

Students in lower-ability curricular tracks also seem to be disadvantaged in the type of instruction they receive (Ferguson, 1998; Irvine, 1990). The following teaching activities have been shown to be associated with student achievement: (a) providing the class with an overview of the lesson; (b) reviewing lesson objectives; (c) spending time actively teaching new content; and (d) maintaining an academic focus (Hattie, 2009). Evertson (1982) found that objectives were explained and materials introduced more clearly in higher-ability classes. In an effort to get students working, there is some evidence that teachers are more likely to skip important introductory learning activities in lower-track classes (Page, 1984; Schwartz, 1981).

Moreover, teachers often engage in less interactive teaching in their lower-track classes. In lower-track classes, face-to-face interactions within a group context are often threatening to teachers. To avoid these exchanges, teachers use films and worksheets in lieu of direct instruction and dialogues with students (Irvine, 1990; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002). In addition, other important instructional resources that are associated with student learning, such as teacher clarity, provision of work standards, teacher efforts to hold students accountable for their work, emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills, and teacher enthusiasm and warmth, seem to be disproportionately allocated to higher-ability groups (Cooper, 2000; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002).

Finally, a number of authors have concluded that lower-track groups are characterized by limited "task orientation" and "academic focus" (Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Evertson, 1982; Mickelson, 2003). In her classic study of lower-track classes at a college-preparatory high school, Page (1984) reported that teachers and students often appear "to go through the motions of teaching and learning" (p. 18). She noted that "genuine academic encounters" (p. 18) are rare in these classes (Murphy, 2015a).

Four aspects of academic focus differentiate lower- and higher-ability tracks. First, the content of lower-track classes is less academically oriented (Gamoran, 2000; Irvine, 1990). Teachers tend to talk of meeting the personal and social needs of students rather than academic goals; they use more "relevant" subject matter, and they tend to blur academic content by trying to present it in an entertaining manner. Therapeutic goals often displace academic ones. There are also fewer task-related interactions between teachers and students in lower-track classes (Irvine, 1990; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Second, teachers of lower-track classes and

groups, even after controlling for ability, require less academic work of students. Material is covered at a slower pace, lower-level objectives are emphasized, fewer academic standards are specified, fewer reports and projects are assigned, less academic feedback is provided, and fewer tests are given (Gamoran, 2000; Strutchens & Silver, 2000). Third, work within individual classes in lower-ability tracks is less sequential and integrated than in the academic streams. In addition, because the assorted activities on which lower-track students work are often unrelated, there is a lack of coherence and meaning to their learning (Page, 1984, Powell et al., 1985). Finally, while teachers in higher-track classes stress achievement more than behavior, the situation is often reversed in lower-ability classes. For example, in higher-ability classes, teachers use selected teaching functions within lessons to promote academic objectives, while these same functions (e.g., asking questions, providing feedback) are often directed toward the control of student behavior in lower-ability classes (Allington, 1983; Murphy, 2015a).

Time is another instructional variable that has been correlated with student learning. Students who spend more time on academic tasks and are more actively engaged with these tasks learn more than their non-engaged peers (Hattie, 2009). Yet it appears that students in nonacademic curricular tracks are discriminated against in the distribution of this critical condition of learning (Hallinan, 2001; Meehan, Cowley, Schumacher, Hauser, & Croom, 2003; Strutchens & Silver, 2000). Within individual class periods, instruction in low groups tends to start later and end earlier than in high-ability classes. Students in low-ability groups lose more time during transitions and experience more "dead time," or time with no work assignment, than their peers in more academically oriented classes. More time is lost due to student and teacher interruptions in low-ability groups. Homework is also more likely to be assigned as an in-class activity in low groups, thus encroaching on rather than extending learning time (Hall, 2001; Neuman & Celano, 2006). Finally, students in lower-ability groups are generally off task more, or less actively engaged with their work, than pupils in higher-track groups.

Several factors contributing to the poorer use of time in low groups have been identified, including an instructional milieu that lacks an academic focus and the failure to differentiate learning activity formats in an appropriate way. Researchers have noted that students in lower-ability groups can benefit from exposure to a greater variety of learning activities of short duration and fewer sustained periods of seatwork. Yet students in those groups often receive fewer learning activities and are expected to maintain attention on each one for longer periods of time than pupils in other groups. Periods of uninterrupted seatwork are as long or longer than those experienced by higher-ability students. Page (1984) has attributed the higher rates of off-task activity in low-ability groups to the blurred and confused participation structures that often

characterize nonacademic tracks in American schools. Whereas the structures that establish how students in high-ability groups are to participate in classes tend to be clear and stable, students in lower-track classes experience "ambiguous classroom situations, generated by frequently shifting and unclearly marked participation structures" (Eder, 1981, p. 160). In a similar vein, Allington (1983) and Eder (1981) argue that higher rates of off-task activity in elementary reading groups may be due to weaknesses in the instructional environment and inappropriately differentiated instructional treatments. Eder (1981) noted in her study that the higher number of student disruptions in lower-ability groups was due to the fact that the teacher created many more opportunities for disruption in these groups.

"Established structure," the patterned set of rules and procedures that guide classroom interactions, is also an important variable for which we find inappropriate differences between high and low learning groups in classrooms. Where such structure exists and is internalized by students, on-task student behaviors increase, interactions between teacher and students on behavioral matters decrease, and student learning is enhanced. Evidence confirms that "established structure" characterizes more academically oriented groups, while a more chaotic condition is often found in low-ability classes and groups. More important in terms of equity, it appears that this condition is often attributable not to the characteristics of students, but to the instructional environment of the classroom and the specific practices and behaviors of teachers (Murphy, 2015a, b). Thus a number of studies have found that teachers in low-ability groups invest considerably more time than teachers in high-ability groups in controlling and managing student behavior (Downey et al., 2004; Eder, 1981; Oakes, 1985). This has often been attributed to the characteristics of students in low-ability groups, for example lack of motivation and a short attention span. While there is merit to the argument that students in low groups often make it difficult to develop and maintain "established structure," research suggests that a combination of classroom conditions and teacher behaviors characterizes low groups and makes the situation especially problematic: lower teacher expectations for student behavior, greater willingness on the part of teachers to trade structure for student compliance, greater confusion about appropriate modes of student participation, and undifferentiated instructional forms (Evertson, 1982; Page, 1984; Powell et al., 1985; Reeves, 1982; Schwartz, 1981). In addition, there is evidence that tracking at all levels of schooling often promotes the formation of lower stream peer groups that actively resist institutional norms and subvert classroom educational encounters (Good & Marshall, 1984; Murphy, 2010, 2016; Oakes, 1985). Rather than passively accepting the negative messages of schooling, students in lower-ability groups often "act back" on the expectations embedded in the fabric of educational institutions (Weis, n.d., p. 8).

Interpersonal relations comprise a final area in which conditions that are positively related to important student outcomes are inequitably distributed across instructional groups. There is often a lower quality of student-teacher interactions in low tracks (Conchas, 2001; Goodlad, 1984; Oakes, 1985). Teachers of lower-track classes tend to distance themselves from their students. Teachers rely heavily on student feedback, especially evidence of student achievement, as a basis of personal rewards (Lortie, 1975). Since such rewards are generally less evident in low-ability classes, teachers tend not to form close relations with students in these groups. Second, as noted earlier, within low groups, teachers are more likely to trade behavioral and academic performance expectations for student goodwill. Goodwill, however, is not a strong base for forming meaningful relationships. Third, since teaching higher-track classes is often considered more prestigious, teachers tend to invest more time working with students in these classes. Finally, teachers often find it easier to form relationships with those who share backgrounds and aspirations that are similar to their own.

There is some research that suggests that the context or environment in which learning occurs may be connected to inequitable outcomes. Specifically, it is maintained that certain contexts hinder efforts to close gaps. Most generally, the problem is traced to a system of education in which minority children are forced to fit into a design developed for white and more affluent youngsters (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Seiler & Elmesky, 2007). Scholars expose several dimensions of learning context that are in play. First, they find that a key element of traditional learning environments—competitive individualism (Jagers & Carroll, 2002)—is often inconsistent with, if not oppositional to, the more communal dynamic of the lives of children of color (Irvine, 1990). These analysts maintain that teachers of black youngsters "need to design classroom activities and promote students' intellectual camaraderie and attitudes toward learning that build a sense of community and responsibility for each other" (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 261).

Second, these analysts also show that classroom "participation structures—the interactional arrangements and rules operating in the learning environment" (Norman et al., 2001, p. 1108)—are often at odds with accepted patterns in minority and low-income communities. They find that the well-grooved structures common in most schools are "more problematic for Black students than for White students" (p. 1108).

Third, reviewers here condemn schools for the near absence of culturally relevant environments and culturally responsive instruction (Hughes, 2003; Norman et al., 2001; Steele, 1992, 1997), for their failure to "attempt to identify the distinctive cultural retentions of black students and to develop teaching strategies that are compatible with them" (Irvine, 1990, p. 93). According to Hughes (2003), in the instructional domain "ineffective teachers tend to use the most common pedagogy in U.S. schools, which

assumes that the dominant White middle-class cultural way of schooling is universal, or should be universal and most appropriate for all" (p. 302). According to Norman and team (2001), in the learning environment domain, teachers of children of color are often found to be ill-prepared to "navigate the complexities of cultural interface zones" (p. 1107) that ribbon classrooms, thus dumbing down learning (Kleinfeld, 1975).

The larger context of this chapter posits that "schools often collaborate in the maintenance of poverty, inequality, and the unequal status of black people" (Irvine, 1990, p. 9), other children of color, and people from the bottom rungs of the social class ladder. The mechanism engaged is the unequal treatment of certain children based on biosocial markers, such as race and class (Ferguson, 2003; Miller, 1995). The result then is differential outcomes, especially academic success, for students in these groups. The particular theme in this larger narrative that occupies us here is teacher expectations.

To begin with, there is considerable evidence that socioeconomic conditions and racial status have bearing on the expectations and beliefs that teachers form about children (Hertert & Teague, 2003; Miller, 1995). "Teachers' expectations of students indeed are often influenced by student characteristics, such as social class" (Becker & Luthar, 2002, p. 202). The logic here is "that part of the reason some students do not excel academically is that schools do not ask them to" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 12).

More importantly, these differences in expectations are tilted against minority children (Burns, Keyes, & Kusimo, 2005; Darity, Castellino, Tyson, Cobb, & McMillen, 2001; Ferguson, 2003; Hale-Benson, 1990; Irvine, 1990; Stinson, 2006) and youngsters from poor families (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Hallinan, 2001; Haycock, 2001; Lewis, 2008). That is, "many teachers internalize negative assumptions about the intellectual competencies of low-income African American students. More specifically, "teachers expect poor students to do less well than their middle- and upper-class counterparts regardless of ability" (Roscigno, 1998, p. 1035). And, according to Irvine (1990), teachers have more positive expectations for white students than for minority students. "Disadvantaged and minority youth are more commonly expected to do poorly" (Becker & Luthar, 2002, p. 202).

The essential point here is that expectations are consequential (Ferguson, 2003; Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Land & Legters, 2002; Peng, Wright, & Hill, 1995). "Teacher expectations are crucial to student performance" (Roscigno, 1998, p. 1039); they "affect how much black youngsters learn" (Wilson, 1998, p. 504)—they are a "contributing factor in student achievement" (Spradlin et al., 2005, p. 21). At a minimum, they "sustain differences in student performance levels" (Irvine, 1990, p. 54). In the worst case, they exacerbate learning problems and gaps (Bol & Berry, 2005; Ferguson, 2003; Irvine, 1990), especially as they are cumulated across a school career (Ferguson, 2003). On the other hand, when set more appropriately, that is, higher, expectations "can improve learning and reduce

inequality" (Gamoran, 2000, p. 114): "High expectations disproportionately lead to high self-efficacy and high subsequent performance among Black students" (Hughes, 2003, pp. 301–302).

It is important to start by reminding ourselves that teacher expectations are mediated by teacher actions and student responses to those actions (Murphy, 2016). According to Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, and Shuan (1990), "teacher's reduced expectations lower students' self-image and effort and lead the teacher to present less-demanding material, resulting in reduced cognitive achievement" (p. 128). Alternatively, low expectations can lead to teacher behaviors that lower motivation and effort thus reinforcing low teacher expectations about the academic potential of low-income and African American students (Reynolds, 2002): "Low expectations that teachers have of poor and minority students . . . affect teachers' determination to help students and also affect students' determination to succeed" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 11).

CURRICULUM

Access

In this chapter, we are exploring the equity and cultural responsiveness between the instructional program in the school and learning. And, as the structure of the chapter conveys, instructional program is composed of two overlapping components, teachers and teaching and curriculum. Our conclusion on the first element presented above (teachers and teaching) is that high teacher qualifications and effective instructional practices are allocated inequitably (less favorably) to minority and low-income students. Our position here on the second element (curriculum) is that poor children and black students score worse on academic measures of performance "because they have not been exposed to the curriculum that would best prepare them to be successful on tests" (Darity et al., 2001, p. 17); that is, they "encounter a weaker curriculum" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 14) than their more advantaged peers.

We show that the major engine that produces this condition is curricular ability grouping/tracking, demonstrating that low-SES (socioeconomic status) children and black youngsters are clustered together and "taught a less demanding curriculum" (Farkas, 2003, p. 1123). We present evidence that this effect unfolds on three levels. First, we show that these students are disproportionately found in schools where, on average, this weaker curriculum dominates the educational program (Raudenbush et al., 1998). Second, we document that "minority and low-income students are [also] . . . disproportionately placed in lower-ability groups and that these assignments seriously reduce their opportunities for learning" (Farkas, 2003, p. 1126). Third, we review findings exposing that what transpires in these

lower-level classes and groups is of significantly less quality than what takes place in higher-track classes.

Student exposure to academic content in schools is influenced by a variety of factors—teacher qualifications, parental expectations, counselor efforts, student motivation and career plans, and so forth. But no factor is more critical, especially for students of color and from low-income homes, than the way students are sorted into curricular-focused programs of study (Conchas, 2001). The first thing we need to remember about curriculum tracking is that it is a direct proxy for one of the two most critical elements in the student learning algorithm, opportunity to learn (Murphy & Hallinger, 1989). On this point, we know that "tracking functions as a major source of unequal opportunities to learn" (Mickelson & Heath, 1999, p. 569; O'Connor, 1997). It is also an indirect proxy for the second critical element, quality of instruction. On this point, we will see that tracking serves as a conduit to differentiated instructional quality, both in terms of teacher qualifications and instructional effectiveness. Earlier we examined some of the instructional aspects of tracking. Here we explore the curricular dimensions of tracking.

The second acknowledgment to be made about tracking is that "track placements are strongly correlated with students' race and social class" (Mickelson & Heath, 1999, p. 567). The "assignment process . . . favors whites over blacks of equal ability" (Thompson & O'Quinn, 2001, p. 13) and affluent children over children from low-income homes of similar abilities (Conchas, 2001; Miller, 1995). On this front, we know that these assignments have deep historical roots, beginning in the early 20th century with the inculcation of the social efficiency philosophy into education (Murphy, Beck, Crawford, & Hodges, 2001). Under this banner, schools became places in which youngsters were tapped and then educated to fill slots in the larger economy, a process notoriously decoupled from merit and laced with both classism and racism (Kliebard, 1995; Krug, 1964, 1972; Wraga, 1994). Thus, "from the early beginnings of 'tracked' educational programs to contemporary schools, white and more affluent students have had opportunities and access to an education that differs markedly from the education provided for students of color and poverty (Conchas, 2001; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 29). We also know that for all the "research demonstrating the ineffectiveness of low-track classes and of tracking in general, schools continue the practice" (Burris & Welner, 2005, p. 595).

The third point to be made about curriculum tracking/ability grouping is that it is highly consequential. It "can reproduce or even exacerbate inequality" (Downey et al., 2004, p. 615) and translate into lower-income and "Black student disadvantage" (Roscigno, 1999, p. 161). Here we concentrate our attention on the link between tracking and learning outcomes. However, it is important to acknowledge that tracking is associated with other outcomes as well (Murphy & Torre, 2014; Rosenbaum, 1980). For example, research informs us that track placements "affect students'

self-concepts" (Irvine, 1990, p. 15) and self-esteem (Alexander & McDill, 1976; Land & Legters, 2002) as well as exposure to "friendship networks" (Lucas & Gamoran, 2002, p. 175) in general and to motivated (or unmotivated) peers in particular (Berends, Lucas, Sullivan, & Briggs, 2005).

Track curriculum assignments also shape an especially key variable in the student success storyline, "aspirations for the future" (Lucas & Gamoran, 2002, p. 175). There is considerable evidence that track membership has marked consequences for the development of academic orientations and for aspirations for continued education, and particularly post-high-school education plans (Alexander, Cook, & McDill, 1978; Murphy, 2010; Oakes, 1985). Alexander and Cook (1982) and Heyns (1974) suggest that schools exercise their primary influence over pupil socioeconomic attainment through their role in helping students establish orientations toward educational goals. As Heyns (1974) notes, "it is possible that schools play a more decisive role in the stratification system through encouraging and implementing aspirations than through altering patterns of achievement" (p. 1445). Work on the reproduction of cultural inequalities in American education through differential teaching of both the formal and the "hidden curriculum" at different track levels and at schools with students of varying biosocial backgrounds lends support to this position. Since they cluster students of color, track placements and ability groupings have also been implicated in the resegregation of education, this time within schools, by race and class (Irvine, 1990; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005), what Mickelson and Heath (1999) call "second-generation segregation within schools" (p. 577). As such, it is held, "tracking policies and practices serve as the major vehicle to institutionalize and perpetuate racial divisions" (Cooper, 2000, p. 620) among school-age youth and adults (Land & Legters, 2002).

Turning to student learning outcomes, research confirms that sorting students into curricular tracks is associated with high school graduation (Camara & Schmidt, 1999) and degree completion in college (Singham, 2003): "The academic rigor of the courses taken in middle school and high school not only affects students' current achievement, but also is the single most important predictor of college success" (Kober, 2001, p. 27). Studies also reveal the linkage between track assignment and measures of academic achievement (Alexander et al., 1978; Gamoran, 2000; Hallinan, 1984; Roscigno, 1998; Strutchens & Silver, 2000; Tate, 1997; Weinstein, 1976). Here we find that students in the lower-level track with the "less challenging courses do less well on standardized examinations" (Hall, 2001, p. 227). Overall, Gamoran (2000) concludes, "Grouping and tracking not only magnify the differences between high and low achievers, they expand inequality of achievement among students of different social class backgrounds" (p. 104).

The critical issue here is that group placements and track assignments provide a direct measure of opportunity to learn, one of the most important causes of student achievement (Murphy & Hallinger, 1989). More

specifically, we will see that students at the lower end of these arrangements are often provided with "a substandard education" (Land & Legters, 2002, p. 18). They are "taught less" (Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002, p. 503)—they receive less rigorous and less challenging material (Murnane & Levy, 1996; Spradlin et al., 2005). They are denied the "opportunity to learn the more advanced material available to students in higher groups" (Thompson, 2002, p. 29). The consequence is "a qualitatively different schooling experience" (Cooper, 2000, p. 601), inequality in access to knowledge and less opportunity to learn (Mickelson & Heath, 1999; Peng et al., 1995).

Four summary findings are of interest here. First, at the broadest level there is evidence that schools heavily populated with children from low-income homes and children of color have access to a less rigorous curricular program, fewer mathematics and science courses for example than what is generally found in schools serving more advantaged youngsters (Gamoran, 2000; Raudenbush et al., 1998). And although course enrollment not offerings is the critical issue (Gamoran, 2000), students cannot enroll in courses that are not offered (Norman et al., 2001).

Second, there is evidence that minority youngsters and children from low-income homes enroll in fewer semesters of coursework in the core academic subjects (Haycock, 2001; Strutchens & Silver, 2000), although there has been some significant improvements here since 2000. Barton (2003) reports that while 46 percent of white high school graduates in 1998 completed four years of English, three years of social science and mathematics, and two years of foreign language, only 40 percent of black students did so (p. 9).

Third, children of color and low-income students are much more likely to be found in lower tracks and lower-track classes than are their white and more affluent peers. Children from the wrong side "of the street" are dramatically overrepresented in special education, remedial, compensatory, general, and vocational tracks, or their modern-day equivalents (Cooper, 2000; Miller, 1995; Oakes, 1985)—in the "nonacademic tracks" (Mickelson & Heath, 1999, p. 569) and in the "non-college preparation programs" (Peng et al., 1995, p. 73). On the special education front, Bingham (1994) reports that "black students are approximately three times as likely to be in a class for the educable mentally retarded" (p. 5) as whites—and alternatively only "half as likely to be in a class for the gifted and talented" (p. 5). Mickelson and Heath (1999) in a district that they were examining found that "special education classes are overwhelmingly Black" (p. 572). Researchers also routinely conclude that minority students are overrepresented in remedial tracks and remedial classes (Clotfelter et al., 2005). On the vocational track front, Bempechat and Ginsburg (1989) report enrollments of 51 percent for blacks and 34 percent for whites. Finally, turning to the general track, Peng and team (1995) find that about 40 percent of black 10th graders are in general mathematics courses as compared to about one-fourth of white students (p. 50), a finding echoed by Mickelson and Heath (1999).

Fourth, low-income and "black students are underrepresented in higher-track classes" (Land & Legters, 2002, p. 18) and "high-level courses" (Spradlin et al., 2005, p. 3). In particular, researchers document "the underrepresentation of the children of the poor and several minority groups in the college preparatory track in secondary school" (Miller, 1995, p. 330), in "gifted and talented classes [and] enrichment classes" (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p. 29), and in more advanced and challenging courses in general, such as advanced placement offerings (Mickelson & Heath, 1999).

Turning to gifted and talented coursework, there is a discernible sense in the research that "one factor that . . . contributes to the Black-White . . . gap is the inequitable selection of students into gifted programs" (Hughes, 2003, p. 301). Mickelson and Heath (1999) in their research find that "elementary gifted and talented students [are] overwhelmingly white" (p. 576). According to Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008) "Black students are underrepresented by as much as 55% nationally in gifted education; although Black students compose 17.2% of school districts, they represent 8.4% of those identified as gifted" (p. 217). Studies in North Carolina add to the evidence, noting and quantifying underrepresentation: "African-American students are sharply underrepresented in programs for academically and intellectually gifted (AIG) students. During the 1999–2000 school year, black students represented about 30% of the overall student population, but only about 10% of the enrollment in AIG programs" (Thompson & O'Quinn, 2001, p. 12). And Burns and team (2005) reveal similar patterns in honor society membership.

Relevance

Cultural relevance is an important curricular topic as well. At a minimum, culture responsiveness and cultural congruence means "creat[ing] a schooling environment that is not in conflict with the student's cultural background" (Howard, 2001, p. 145). More forcefully, it means nurturing "an environment that respects students cultural background" (p. 145). The starting point is that "students bring certain human characteristics that have been shaped by their socializing group to the classroom. . . . The cultural, social, and historical backgrounds of children have a major impact on how they perceive school and the educational process" (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997, p. 11). Authentic school work is work that honors students' cultures, that reinforces cultural identity (Murphy, 2015a, b) "in a manner compatible with academic pursuit" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 203). Before delving into the concept of culturally relevant academic work, we pause to remind ourselves that this hallmark aspect of curricular authenticity has been honored more in the breech than in action. That is, "delegitimizing" (Zanger, 1993, p. 184) is more common, as is disregard for intellectual-cultural capital that rests outside the mainstream culture (Alder, 2000; Murtadha, 2009).

> Using culture as a way of interpreting children's behavior and learning style is not an approach to which teachers are accustomed. Up to this point, the students are judged by the cultural norms of the school or the teacher and are expected to learn in the same way. Any variation is considered inappropriate or deficient. This is a typical response for people who are not acquainted with other ways of functioning or who see the world only from their perspective. (Shade et al., 1997, p. 19)

We also remind ourselves of a key conclusion noted earlier, that is, this deficit-based understanding of knowledge and the resultant marginalization place students at academic peril.

> Culturally congruent academic focus on the other hand is an attempt to create a schooling experience that enables students to pursue academic excellence without abandoning their cultural integrity. Thus, the ways of communicating conceptions of knowledge, methods of learning, and the overall context of the educative process are situated within a framework that is consistent with the students' cultural background. (Howard, 2001, p. 136)

It is constructed learning designed "to meet the challenge of teaching to individual differences with a particular emphasis on the variation that occurs because of a student's cultural background" (Shade et al., 1997, p. 9). "Cultural integrity and support for academic excellence" (Lipman, 1995, p. 205) are ribboned together. "Features of the students' cultural capital are incorporated into pedagogical practices" (Howard, 2001, p. 145). The pathway from "acknowledging the culturally constituted nature of students' lives" (O'Loughlin, 1995, p. 111) to culturally relevant learning has been well laid out for children of color by Howard (2001, p. 147).

> Teachers need to abandon the deficit-based thinking about the cognitive capacity, sociocultural backgrounds, and overall learning potential of students. Second, there must be a willingness on behalf of teachers to make modifications in their teaching styles to align them more closely with students' ways of knowing, communicating, and being. Finally, teachers must have the will and the courage to learn about the culture, life, and history of African-American people. The acquisition of this knowledge requires more than reading various literature about the African-American experience. It entails talking to parents, students, and community members and immersing oneself in various facets of the day-to-day environment that students experience.

More tangibly, three avenues of effort are viable: recognizing and understanding ways of knowing of non-mainstream "children; build[ing]

cultural bridges between the school culture and the culture of the community from which children come" (Shade et al., 1997, p. 81); and using materials that reflect the contributions of diverse cultures.

On the first point, we know that what is appropriate at home in some cultures is inconsistent with the norms of conducting the business of learning in classrooms (Shade et al., 1997). Authenticity is nurtured when both congruencies and differences between home cultures and school cultures are acknowledged, respected, and employed in the learning process (Tyson, 2002; Zanger, 1993), "when cultural communication styles are incorporated into instruction" (Shade et al., 1997, p. 92). The second point links authenticity to a framework that seeks to establish cultural continuity between home and the school (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006) "using various directives, monitoring, interactional styles, and participation structures within the classroom that were congruent with the interaction and learning situations commonly found in the students' homes" (Howard, 2001, p. 135).

> The litmus test for the accessibility of an educational system is the degree to which the instructional language and teaching practices match the unofficial teaching practices and informal communication systems of the students' homes and communities. It would appear that if we are to hear students' voices, we must be willing to explore culturally relevant forms of teaching. (O'Loughlin, 1995, p. 110)

The third point shows us that authenticity is deepened when "culture specific" (Shade et al., 1997, p. 120) artifacts and materials, "cultural specific information" (p. 90) and "students' cultural capital or funds of knowledge" (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006, p. 412) are employed to "ensure that the curriculum and materials reflect contributions of a variety of people" (Cabello & Terrell, 1994, p. 22), when educators "privilege the funds of knowledge that students and their respective communities bring to the school" (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006, p. 409) and "transcend the boundaries of traditional schooling and create social conditions and relationships that are aligned with students' cultural orientations" (p. 421).

The major conclusion of the analysis in this section is that differences among student outcomes are, to a small but important extent, the result of differences in access to knowledge and culturally responsive education. The available evidence indicates that curriculum assignment, in addition to its sorting function, is an institutional mechanism for the systematic and selective allocation of important learning resources; systematic in that the allocation occurs in regular patterns and selective in that the resources are distributed in a different manner to various curricular groups. Students in lower-ability groups and nonacademic tracks are systematically discriminated against vis-à-vis their peers in more academically oriented groups. Even after controlling for ability and biosocial background factors, students in these less academically oriented groups perform less well than academic-track students.