

Reasons Behind the Lack of Achievement Among Minority Students

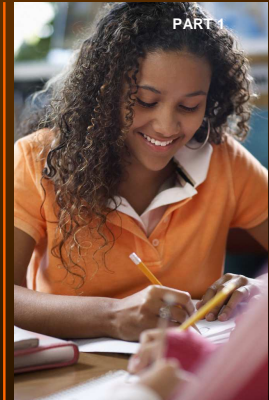
Reasons Behind the Lack of Academic Achievement Among Minority Students ©



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What are some of the challenges that African-American and Hispanic students face?



can do to increase the academic achievement of Hispanic and Black students?



What students like you are saying...

1 Students don't have the "kind of" support they need from their parents.

Their parents...

- Have a low academic background
- Are not proficient in English
- Have perceptions towards their children's education that are not conducive to academic success
- Are struggling with family and financial problems
- Don't know how to navigate the American educational system

"I also think that the culture you come from has a lot to do with the emphasis placed on education, which is a direct correlation to the amount of determination you have. Asian countries tend to emphasize the importance of education, so when Asians immigrate they carry that emphasis with them. The importance of education emphasized by their prior countries makes it one of their first priorities once they settle into the United States."

"Many African Americans lack a support system in their homes. There is no one pushing them or motivating them to do better. Therefore, it reflects in their test scores. If students had parents who cared about their children's education, then they wouldn't accept grades like that from their children or low test scores. They would get in trouble; and if children felt as if they would get in trouble for not doing their homework or scoring low on tests, they would do better."

2 Students have to attend other responsibilities at home.

Students can't make their education a priority because they:

- Work too many hours to help support their families
- Have to take care of their younger siblings or the elders in their families
- Assist their families as "cultural brokers" or translators

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"More times than not, children of Hispanic decent have to deal with not only aspects of school, but also family and financial problems. Those that do have an education may be asked to help family members that are lacking basic life skills that we learn in American schools."

"Many Hispanic parents come here to work and make money; but, some don't succeed in that. So, the Hispanic students have to help their families somehow and find a job for themselves so they can help their families, making their jobs their first priority and forgetting about school."

"There are many successful entrepreneurs in America, but many are white and very few are Hispanics. Perhaps Hispanics don't see role models to look up to. They can see it as impossible to succeed if no one of their race has succeeded."

"Many Black and Hispanic students have lower scores than their White and Asian peers because they really have no role models to set them in the right direction. Most of the successful people that they do look up to are only singers and rappers. Hispanics need someone to guide them in the right direction; they don't have to be famous. It could be one of their peers or their friends that could guide them."

"Many of my white friends say little racist jokes here and there, but I know they are only joking. For some Hispanics, it may put them down. They might think to themselves that they can't accomplish anything because it hasn't been proven yet that Hispanics are able to take those upper level courses that allow you to get a good job and a good college education after high school."

"I think that African-American students score lower on tests than their peers because there's no real expectation for them to succeed coming from the administration, in general. It is still a stereotype that black students don't care about their high school education and it is a hard stereotype to break free from because it instills in them the mentality that they won't succeed, despite their effort; so why bother trying?"

3 Students lack role models – professionals they can look up to.

Students lack motivation to excel in school because they:

- Don't have relatives who they can look up to as academic role-models
- Don't see teachers, guidance counselors or other school staff that "look like themselves" and succeeded academically
- Are constantly targeted by non-academic celebrities or negative role models through the media

4 People have negative perceptions about African American and Hispanic students.

Students believe that society at large does not think that African American and Hispanic students can excel academically because they are:

- Portrayed by the media as a race/ethnicity that excels mostly in sports or in the performing arts
- Under-represented in high academic courses such as honors and AP classes and in careers that require a solid academic background
- Over-represented among students who have discipline problems or people who are in the correctional system
- Over-represented in low-skilled/low wage jobs

5 Students lack the knowledge and skills to achieve academic success.

The students do poorly on the State test (PSAE) and other college entrance tests such as the ACT and SAT because they:

- Are either reading below grade level, are not proficient in the English language or don't have the vocabulary and/or fluency for reading comprehension
- Lack the mathematics skills and/or are enrolled in mathematic courses that don't prepare them for high stake tests
- Don't know how to navigate the American educational system; that is, which courses to take, which careers to choose, how to get financial aid, etc.

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"Their scores are also low because of the stuff some of those standardized tests test on are just way over what they are learning and maybe the things they have learned are not to that level. They see these tests being at a much higher level of school, or shall I say, of what they are learning. They feel as if they are insignificant or just stupid or maybe even they are just a waste of an education and the teachers should be focusing their time on others and not wasting it on them."

"African-American students may also feel out of place or uncomfortable with being surrounded by students that seem to understand things better than they do. They may feel stupid because they don't comprehend things as quickly as the next person, which stops them from going to get help from teachers or outside sources."

"Their mindset is telling them that they cannot become anything greater than their fellow peers. They fear what is beyond them, like the 'what if?' statement. When they see good things coming to them they automatically shut down. So all in all, maybe it's fear that is driving them away from greatness, from good test scores and anything else."

"African American students' scores could be lower because their goals are lower than those of Whites. One can only go as far as they see themselves going."

"We need the help and advice to get us through it. With some confidence, it will make each one of us able to perform better because I honestly can say that every time I'm in a class with only whites, I feel worthless because I am different from them and probably not as smart."

"Some might just fail because they think that they are 'cool'. They believe that if they act stupid, then they are going to be more popular with their friends."

"They can do the work and be smart, but they don't want the other hardcore kids to make fun of them. Since African Americans have a reputation for being drug addicts and gangsters, the students feel proud and want to continue that bad reputation. They feel like it's a good thing and something to be proud of, but really it's not."

6 Students have low self-esteem and lack self-confidence.

The students believe that many of them don't have the necessary self-confidence or self-esteem to:

- Dream and set academic and career goals
- Put greater effort towards excelling in school
- Enroll in advanced, honor or AP courses
- Seek assistance when in need

7 Students have a "need" to belong and/or are afraid of isolation.

The students believe that many minority students behave in a way that is not conducive to academic success because:

- They belong to a group that is not perceived by others as high achievers
- It is not popular to be studious or to work hard to excel in school
- They are afraid of rejection by being perceived as "acting white" or "acting güero" by their peers

8 Students don't want to be held accountable for their own academic success.

The students articulated that some minority students believe that they're not responsible for their lack of academic achievement because:

- They are simply the victims of social injustices
- There is nothing they can do to achieve academic success
- It is very difficult for people like them to get a career (outside of sports and/or performing arts) that will allow them to enjoy a quality life
- They are not being provided with what they need to achieve academic success

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"African American students' scores are lower than their counterparts' scores because of their lack of responsibility for their own actions. I believe that most of the black community believes that their success and or failure lie within the hands of others, when in fact no one can be held accountable for their actions but themselves."

"I think that it's not only the lack of motivation, but it's also the responsibility that students feel they shouldn't have. African American students are so quick to point the finger at someone else as a reason as to why they didn't succeed, but in reality it's their own fault."

A4: Advocate for in-service training on topics such as diversity, culturally responsive teaching and counseling and model appropriate behavior in efforts to improve the in-school educational experiences of minority students

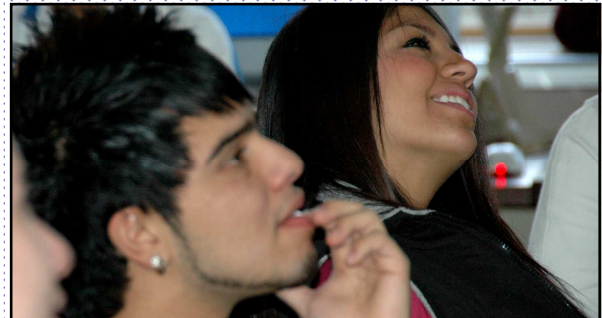
A5: Become an academic advocate for those students who lack a caring adult who supports their academic achievement

A6: Facilitate nurturing social engagements that promotes psychological anchorage and acceptance

A7: Connect students with civic/social organizations that can reinforce Black and Hispanic culture, instill confidence, and provide positive peer groups and adult role models for the students

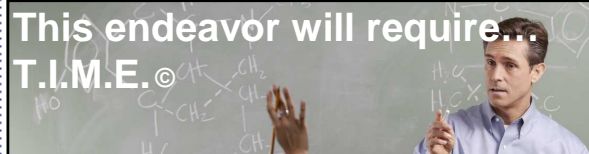
These civic and social organizations often have youth components aimed at promoting healthy identity functioning, civic responsibility, leadership training, and racial uplift.

A8: Promote bi-cultural and bi-lingual functioning by affirming and validating the students' cultural backgrounds; normalizing the demands and expectations of each culture; and, helping students navigate fluidly between cultures



A9: Support focus groups to permit students to process their individual and collective experiences, learn coping strategies, and feel less isolated

This endeavor will require...
T.I.M.E. ©



T - Transformational experiences
I - Intentional persuasive communication
M - Mentoring
E - Exposure to role models



No child left behind means
no teacher left alone...
no parent left apart...
no principal left aside and
no district left unfunded.
- Dr. Lourdes Ferrer

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