

## Achievement Gaps: The Path to Equity

*For all students to excel academically and thrive as individuals, we must raise the bar and close the achievement gap. Educators, policymakers, and the public must understand the grave consequences of persistent gaps in student achievement and demand that addressing these gaps become a policy and funding priority.*

—An Excerpt from ASCD Adopted Positions: The Achievement Gap (online)

Today's schools are challenged with bringing underachieving students up to satisfactory levels of performance while continuing to provide enriching instruction for students already ideally placed on the achievement continuum.

Easy solutions to this problem simply don't exist. In this course, we'll explore the many factors that contribute to unequal patterns of achievement among different groups of students, but one inescapable reality lies at the root of the problem: disparities in achievement occur because some students are better prepared to achieve than others. Although educators can address some of the issues that affect students' readiness to learn, it will take a network of concerned people and institutions to help students overcome other barriers to academic achievement.

Throughout the course, we will look to Dan Laitsch, the former senior policy analyst at ASCD who wrote *Policy Perspectives*, to help us make sense of the research about achievement gaps, as well as to provide insight about education policies that support educators' earnest efforts to attain equity in achievement.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to

#### Module 1

- Identify how language feeds inequity.
- Describe how negative mindsets affect learning.

#### Module 2

- Identify unconscious bias and microaggressions in and out of the classroom.
- Apply strategies, including mindfulness and self-reflection, to combat unconscious bias.

### Module 3

- Incorporate community partnerships into the school setting.
- Increase capacity for high quality teaching through successful professional development.

### Module 4

- Identify how to best measure learning.
- Use holistic accountability to help students achieve.

### Module 5

- Identify the need for high-quality teaching.
- Determine strategies to develop and retain excellent teachers.

### Module 6

- Describe the importance of professional learning for teachers.
- Create a learning community.
- Identify ways to improve early childhood education.

## Course Syllabus

<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Maintain High Expectations and Make Curriculum Relevant</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Module Welcome</li><li>• High Expectations</li><li>• Standards</li><li>• Reading 1: <i>EL</i>—How Our Language Feeds Inequity</li><li>• Video 1: How Negative Student Mindsets Begin</li><li>• Video 2: High Expectations for All</li><li>• Video 3: Tweaking Standards</li><li>• Knowledge Check</li><li>• Application 1: Putting Standards Into Context</li><li>• Application 2: Diversity Mapping</li><li>• Post-Module Reflection</li></ul>
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<p><b>Module 2</b></p>	<p><b>Eradicating Unconscious Bias</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Welcome</li> <li>• Reading 1: <i>EL</i>—Getting Mindful About Race in School</li> <li>• Video 1: <i>ASCD Express</i>—One Minute Mindfulness Strategy</li> <li>• Reading 2: <i>ASCD Express</i>—Mindfulness Won’t Save Us. Fixing the System Will.</li> <li>• Reading 3: <i>EL</i>—Unconscious Bias Hurts</li> <li>• Video 2: Microaggressions</li> <li>• Reading 4: <i>EL</i>—Combatting Race-Related Stress in the Classroom</li> <li>• Knowledge Check</li> <li>• Application: Disrupting Patterns of Bias</li> <li>• Post-Module Reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 3</b></p>	<p><b>Find Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Welcome</li> <li>• Reading 1: Examples of Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Reading 2: <i>EL</i>—Show &amp; Tell: A Video Column / Leading PD That Works</li> <li>• Video: <i>EL</i>—Show &amp; Tell: A Video Column / Leading PD That Works</li> <li>• Professional Development Resources at ASCD</li> <li>• Knowledge Check</li> <li>• Application: Action Plan</li> <li>• Post-Module Reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 4</b></p>	<p><b>Multiple Measures to Determine Success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Welcome</li> <li>• Reading 1: Four Ways to Use Tests and Assessments</li> <li>• Reading 2: <i>EL</i>—Three Key Questions on Measuring Learning</li> <li>• Reading 3: Multimetric Accountability</li> <li>• Knowledge Check</li> <li>• Application: Holistic Accountability</li> <li>• Post-Module Reflection</li> </ul>

<p><b>Module 5</b></p>	<p><b>Promote High-Quality Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Welcome</li> <li>• Reading 1: <i>EL</i>—Toward a Fair Distribution of Teacher Talent</li> <li>• High Quality Teachers Needed</li> <li>• Focusing on Social, Mental, and Academic School Health</li> <li>• Key Factors</li> <li>• Using Data</li> <li>• Creating Change</li> <li>• Video 1: Changing School Culture</li> <li>• Reading 2: <i>EL</i>—Seven Keys to Restoring the Teacher Pipeline</li> <li>• Video 2: ASCD’s Whole Child Symposium on Poverty and Education</li> <li>• Knowledge Check</li> <li>• Application: Bolstering the Teacher Pipeline</li> <li>• Post-Module Reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 6</b></p>	<p><b>Take Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Welcome</li> <li>• Reading 1: <i>EL</i>—Can Star Teachers Creating Learning Communities?</li> <li>• Video: Teachers as Learners</li> <li>• Reading 2: Parents as Teachers</li> <li>• Reading 3: Policy Perspectives: Universal Preschool Plan</li> <li>• Knowledge Check</li> <li>• Application: Strategies for Success</li> <li>• Post-Module Reflection</li> </ul>

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