The Institutionalization of Minority Students in Education

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   This article covers the impacts that micro-aggressions have on minority students in college. One would think that at the college level racism would be a factor in students’ lives, but the authors point out that it is a very crucial problem. They focus on the impact that micro-aggressions have on students and how students feel humiliated by the negative stereotypes that are placed upon them. They use the Critical Race Theory that was found in the 1980’s to explain how race and racism have a role in America today.


   This article focuses on how stereotypes and micro-aggressions impact most minority students mentally. The authors focus on the concept of collective threat which explains how group members’ behavior may be influenced by the stereotypes that they hear and threatened with. Most minority students that encounter such negative remarks suffer from a lower self-esteem and end up performing worse academically. The authors explain the impact that negative stereotypes have on students and how this huge factor that prevents many minority students from being successful.


   This textbook covers the context and theories that explain the social problems that are taking place in today’s society. Chapter three focuses exclusively on the problems and the inequalities most students of color face in education. They go over the several factors that are evident in the unequal education minority students’ face such as attending low-income schools and being tacked in high school. Coleman and Kerbo focus on the theories that explain the reasoning behind the educational inequality.


   The author of this article goes over the statistics of colored students enrolled in college and explains that this is still a problem. Although high school graduation rates are increasing amongst African-American and Hispanics students, many of them do not attend college afterwards. The author of this article goes over the improvement that has been made to increase the number of minority students graduating from high school and explains that more works need to be done. There needs to be more money invested in the resources and educational guidance to
help minority students attend college. In doing so many more students of color will be enrolled in colleges and the graduation rates will increase.


The central concept of this article focuses on the diagnostic of ADHD in ethnic minority students. This disorder is diagnosed with a serious of tests, however, the authors’ found that in many cases minority students are labeled as having these disorders automatically. In the school setting, many teachers have assessed their Africa-American Students as having ADHD more than White students or Hispanics. Although African-American suffer more from ADHD, most teachers take this information and apply it to their students without asking the administration or family if their students have the disorder. The authors point out that more research needs to be made on the socioeconomic status and location of residence of students; that may play a role of the diagnostic of ADHD.


This article explores on how white supremacy came to be and how it impacted the creation of many laws, especially during the civil rights movement. The concept of White supremacy took action during the 19th and 20th century in the United States and in Europe. The author focuses on how white supremacy transformed into white problem in politics which led to segregation laws against people of color. Although segregation was later abolished, there were many groups that still took upon this idea of white power and believed they were better than other ethnic groups.


The authors’ of this article presented the problem of how stereotypes affect the tests results of African-American students. They found that there is not much research done at the high school level and because of this they implemented a case study on African-American students. Based on this experiment, they found that many colored students do not perform well in their test because they suffer from anxiety and have low-perceptions of ability. These low test scores are a factor caused by the negative stereotypes that African American hear and later on apply to their own lives, leading them to have much lower scores than their fellow white peers. Overall, the authors go over and explain that stereotype threat (applying negative stereotypes to one self) causes many African-American Students to have lower test scores, especially in college entrance exams.

This textbook goes over the social stratification and inequality that is present in today’s society. Social stratification is based on who gets what and why which focuses on the different social relationships and classes. When looking at the different classes, Kerbo explains that there is a gap between income, education, health services, and many more factors. Focusing in the education system, the social stratification points out that the students that are most successful are white privileged students compared to most minority students who come from low-income families. Kerbo also goes over the social and economic inequalities among social classes that bring forth disparities. Overall he focuses on the growth of social inequality and how that affects stratification on who gets what and why.


This is an article from the American Psychological Association and it focuses on the different education that most white privileged white students receive compared to minority students. In this article, the authors’ found that most white privileged students attend private schools where they have access to more resources and are encouraged to go to college after completing high school. However, in the case for most minority students who attend public high schools in the most part, they found that they receive fewer resources and are not as encouraged to attend a college because they are directed to work in a blue-collar job. There is a difference in the education that white privileged students receive and minority students receive which determines their success in the future.


In this article, Lleras explored the level of education African-American students receive compared to White students. In her articles she discusses that despite the fact that segregated schools were abolished by law, a form of segregation exists today because most African-Americans attend schools that are low founded and
have fewer resources. For these reasons, many African-Americans are learning less than most white privileged students and are have greater disadvantages.


This short article focuses on the mental health of people of color and explores how discrimination places great harm on them. The authors go over the distress and depression that most minority people suffer from; when they are racially discriminated. This of course brings a huge advantage to those white people in power because they don’t suffer from such mental problems. All in which allows them to further advance while people of color suffer from such conditions and stay in the bottom institutionally.


In this article, the author studies stigma consciousness and focuses the impact that it has on African-American females. Through her research she found that African-American students have a lower academic performance when they are presented with negative racial remarks. When they encounter racial discriminations and stereotypes, African-Americans are more likely to have a lower self-esteem. Most of these students will be more conscious of how they will perform and think that they will perform in the same range as the members in their racial group. This concept is known as stigma conscious where they think they are not smart and doubt their intelligence based on the remarks they hear about their ethnic group. These students would have better test scores and higher GPAs if they did not have to encounter any negative insults.


The authors of this article explore the concept of micro-aggressions which are racial slights and insults that take place intentionally or unintentionally. They go overt the civil rights movement and discuss how this changed racial interactions to some extent, but many inequalities and discriminations still take place today. Based on their findings, they concluded that racism still exists and affects
minorities. They also found that micro-aggressions are imbedded in our culture, and many times most White people are unaware of the inequalities that people go through.


In this article, the authors explore the misidentification theory and explain that many minority students place less important to their education due to stereotype threat. They define stereotype threat as the event where students place the stereotypes of their ethnic groups as being self-relevant. Many minority students believe that they are not meant to do well academically and start believing such negative remarks. They think that they are not smart enough and do not place much importance or effort in their education. Overall, stereotypes have a correlation with the academic performance of minority students and lead many of them to do get low grades and work in low-paying jobs.


The author of this article goes over the conflict theory and applies it to the inequality of education. He points out that those in the top of the social ladder which are predominantly white privileged people work hard to keep the power they have. This theory applies to education, because most white privileged students are encouraged to go to school and get a good job, while most minority students are directed to work right after high school. The differences in classes and power keep minority students in the bottom, creating bigger obstacles for them. This makes it harder to minority students to succeed while the white privileged students have more of an advantage and greater opportunities.
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Research Proposal

This paper focuses on the inequalities of education in our society and goes over the specific disadvantages minority students face. I intend to prove with my research that the majority of minority students encounter more educational inequalities compared to most white privileged students. I intend to prove this by doing face-to-face interviews with minority students at Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo and using case studies done by social scientists. I will use sociology articles that cover the inequalities of education and disadvantages minorities face. This research paper will also cover sociological theories that explain the reasoning of such educational inequalities and disparities that deprive most minority students from being successful. Overall this paper will focus on the gap between privileged white students and minority students, that is structured to keep minority students in the bottom of the social ladder. I propose that in order to decrease this level of inequality, we need start providing minority students with more educational resources and opportunities for them succeed. In this manner all students can have an equal education.
Intro to the Institutionalization of Minority Students in Education

Orlando Jimenez is a Mexican-American student and is the first person in his family to go to college. He is a hard-working student and was accepted to one of the best architecture schools in California, known as the Southern Institute of Architecture in Los Angeles. From the moment he received his acceptance letter he jumped with excitement because all his hard work had finally paid off. This accomplishment meant the world to him because not only was he a step closer in becoming an architect, but he was also the first one in his family to take a step no one had ever taken before. This was the beginning of a new change for him and his family members. He moved from the Bay Area to Los Angeles with many goals in mind to fulfill in his college journey. But like many things in life, his euphoria and enthusiasm soon came into an end when his joy turned into sadness, filled with disappointments.

By the end of his first semester, Orlando realized that he was short on money and had a tight budget. The cost of the tuition per year was around $29,423 with room and board plus the cost of all the material he needed for his projects (“Southern,” 2012). Orlando thought that with loans and scholarships the cost would not be a problem, but later he recognized he could no longer afford his tuition. Not only was he stressed out about his midterms, papers, projects, and presentations but he was also worried about how he would pay for everything. He began to compare himself to many of his peers who would always talk about how much money their families had, and showed no sign of worry about their college tuition. Orlando’s stress and anxiety about money eventually became a problem with his mental health and after seeing a counselor it was determined that he was depressed. He managed to finish his first year as architecture undergraduate but dropped out his second year because he could no longer afford to pay the tuition cost.
Orlando is among one of the millions of first-year college students who drop out, due to the high cost of college tuition (Wistrom, 2012). Today students are facing the most expensive post-secondary education in the history of the U.S., which is hurting numerous minority students like Orlando (Wistrom, 2012). According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education from the 19% of students that drop out from college, 38% is due to financial pressure (Chiang, 2007). The financial pressure that Orlando faced affected his mental health and eventually led him to drop out of college and move back to the Bay Area with his family. According to the New York Times’ article on Why Students Drop out of College it was recognized that, “financial aid and student psychological factors go hand in hand” among most students that come from disadvantage backgrounds (Brooks, 2009). Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds face such financial circumstances and have no other choice but to drop out. The majority of minority students cannot even ask their families for help, unlike numerous privileged white students; demonstrating that family finances have an important effect on educational achievement (Coleman, 2009).

In Orlando’s case he was not able to pursue his college career due to the financial reasons and was pulled back into the social cycle that was made for him. This social cycle is designed and structured to keep low-income individuals at the bottom of the social ladder while those with higher incomes remain at the top. This reflects the type of society we live in which is controlled by money with those in power, and is used for their advantage. Unfortunately, Orlando’s academic goals could no longer be accomplished and his college journey came to an end. For these reasons he was forced to drop out not by choice but institutionally.
The Inequality of Education in Our Society

Based on the case of Orlando Jimenez it is obvious that not everyone has an equal access to success, especially in the education system. In this system, obtaining equal achievement is not the same for all students and is largely determined by their race. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), these disparities influence the number of students attending college which is broken down by race. The NCES estimated that the highest numbers of students enrolled in college are white at 64% in comparison to only 13.1% Black, 11.4% Hispanic, 6.7% Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). These statistics show that white students are more likely to succeed because they have opportunities that lead them to achievement, while the rest of students are guided to a greater path of disappointments.

The educational inequalities outline the path most minority students will take not by choice, but by the social cycle that traps them into not succeeding. This vicious cycle only benefits and allows the majority of white students to succeed but traps most minority students to stay at the bottom of the social ladder, especially if those students of color are low-income. In short, the school system is designed to reproduce inequality. The disparities most minorities receive are based upon several factors including: the social construction and stratification, racial micro-aggression, and socioeconomic status. The conditions and reasons behind these factors that have led to such outcomes will be explained with the conflict theory and social cycle theory. Before going into depth with the major components of these inequalities it is important to take a look back at history in order to trace the root how it all began— discrimination.
The History of White Supremacy and Segregation

The formation of discrimination can be traced before the Civil War where the dominance of White Supremacy took place. Those who had lighter-skinned were given the power and dominance to rule over those who were darker because they were identified as superior. White people were seen as the chosen ones according to many Christian priests and theologies who believed that God supported racial segregation (Pilgrim, 2012). Racial discrimination was rooted with the belief of ethnocentrism where white people felt that their race was superior to others (Pilgrim, 2012). The ideology of white supremacy spread quickly and greatly influenced social policies where it was taken for granted by political leaders in the United States (Jenkins, 2012). As a result many laws were created that only benefited whites and deteriorated those who were from non-white races. This led to the segregation against minorities where laws were made to separate them from gaining the same benefits and sources as white people.

Many of these laws were written during the Jim Crow period which took place between 1876 and 1965 across numerous states. These laws focused on being *separate but equal* but were not abiding in providing African-American equal justice; only to white people. Some of these laws were critical, such as the law that was passed in 1880 that made it illegal for white people to marry a black person or mulatto (“Jim,” 2012). White people believed that interracial marriages would give some power to black people and that was not permitted under any circumstances. Segregation took place in every dimension in society during this period and extended to the treatment in mental hospitals where white people and African Americas could not be placed together (“Jim,” 2012). Another example of the Jim Crow laws, took place in 187, where the Public Accommodations stated that, white people and black people could not sit with each other in public transportation such as: busses, trains, steamboats, or restaurants (“Jim,” 2012). These unfair laws made it harder for black people to get equal treatment in society and led them to live
a life that was unfair. Although these laws were based in the separate but equal act, African-Americans were not given or provided with equal treatment. The unequal treatment continued taken place until the Plessy v. Ferguson case that was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Plessy versus Ferguson Case of 1896**

Homer Plessy lived in Louisiana and was biracial (seven-eighths Caucasian and one-eighth African) but under law he was considered black (Pilgrim, 2012). In 1896 Louisiana passed a Separate Car Act which forced white people to sit together in one section of the car and blacks on another section. Plessy had purchased a first class ticket and boarded on the whites only section in the East Louisiana Railroad in New Orleans, where he was immediately asked to sit in the black section. He refused to sit in the back where all the African Americans had to sit down and because he refused he was arrested (Pilgrim, 2012). For these reasons, he had to attend a court trial known as the Plessy vs. The State of Louisiana where he argued that he was denied his rights under the 13th and 14th amendment in the U.S constitution (Pilgrim, 2012). The 13th amendment was based on the abolition of slavery and the 14th amendment was based on civil rights, where states were forbidden from denying any person from their jurisdiction to equal protection (Pilgrim, 2012). The judge Ferguson did not accept his plea and Plessy was convicted to pay a 25 dollar fine. Plessy was angry and frustrated because he felt that his trial was not fair and he was not given due process—fundamental fairness under law (Pilgrim, 2012).

He took his case to the Supreme Court in order to make an appeal against the judge Ferguson’s ruling, but it was turned down. Judge Ferguson was noted as doing the right thing because under the social policy at the time, both races had to be separated and there were no violations of the 13th and 14th amendments as Plessy had argued. Therefore Plessy in January 1897 pleaded guilty and had to pay his fine. Plessy along with the rest of the African-American
community at the time were not treated equally because they were given harsher sentences and not treated fairly despite the having amendments 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} which were meant to protect them. Most of the white people in the Supreme Court argued that Blacks were being treated equal and that their rulings had nothing to do with race (Pilgrim, 2012). However, if they were being treated equal, there would not have been any laws based on being separate or any division based on race. Clearly, the separation and division was rooted in discrimination and goes to show that even insanity can be justified. Although this case kept the separate but equal act as a standard under law, it was not until African-Americans protested against the inequality of education that ended segregation by law. The case that made this happen is known as the Brown vs. the Board of Education case.

**Brown vs. the Board of Education Case of 1954**

Segregation laws prevented minorities from obtaining access to many things and deeply affected them in the education level. During the Jim Crow period several states, “had laws that established separate schools for white students and others for black students” (Jenkins, 2012). This created a gap between the type of education whites and blacks received, because white students were provided with a higher education and blacks were not. School segregation eventually went to the Supreme Court in the Brown vs. the Board of Education in 1954 where the case overturned the educational discrimination (Jenkins, 2011). This was based on taking away the separate but equal act and amended African-American students to attend schools with white students. The Supreme Court made the decision to no longer have segregated schools because they realized that, “separate educational facilities were inherently unequal” (Jenkins, 2011 ). They became aware that students were receiving an unequal education and made the decision of having integrated schools—where all students could learn together collectively.
Although schools were no longer segregated, minority students still faced discrimination and received an unequal education. Many African American students continued attending racially segregated schools due to the location where they lived, which were mostly in urban areas (Lleras, 2008). This meant that they had fewer resources and less accredited teachers, which explains why most African-American students were more illiterate in the 1950s at 11.0% compared to white students at 1.8% (Alexander, 1993). In the 1960s these inequalities continued to show and while 51% of white students finished high school only 27% of African-American finished (Alexander, 1993). African-Americans were less likely to finish school and were academically disadvantaged because they were not as encouraged to stay in school as white students. Recent studies show that since the 1980s and still today, African American students are still learning less compared to white students and are scoring lower in achievement tests (Lleras, 2008). Discrimination and racism is the root of the educational inequalities that takes place in society along with other social factors, which impact their overall academic success.

**Overview of Current Education Inequalities**

Over 50 years has passed since the Brown vs. The Board of Education case and yet educational inequalities are still a problem. These inequalities are embedded to socioeconomic status, racial and geographic reasons that keep minority students from receiving a higher education and academic success. At the University of Dalhousie, they define the term minority as a group that lacks power and has a restricted access to economic, social, political, and educational structures (Dalhousie, 2012). This is why African-American, Latinos, Native-American, Indian individuals are referred as minorities. Many minority students live in low income communities and attend schools in underprivileged districts where they face with larger budget cuts because they attend public schools, compared to numerous white students that attend
private schools. At the high school level, for instance, the Harvard Graduate School of Education statistics show that nationally 12% of white students are enrolled in private schools compared to only 5% of black and 6% of Latino students (Reardon, 2002). In the urban districts most students are minorities and attend public high schools; research shows that there are less white students in these districts (Reardon, 2002). This shows that there is academic discrimination taking place between the private and public high school systems—where more academic opportunities are found in private schools. Although schools are no longer segregated, there is some form of racial gap where most white students attend the higher quality private schools while most minorities attend receive a lower level education in the public school system. Actually schools are still segregated, almost as much before Brown vs. Board of Education. This form of racial gap also brings forth opportunity gaps, and an example of such disparity can be seen at the high school level.

Opportunity Gaps at the High School Level

The opportunity gaps that take place in the educational system determine the academic achievements; which are a disparity between the rich and the poor. Most rich people are white people and most poor people are minorities, and the household median net worth for Whites in 2009 was $113,149 compared to Hispanics at $6,325, and Blacks at $5,677 (Fry, 2009). The socioeconomic gap that exists between both brings forth opportunity and achievement gaps. Those that are in the lower end of the gap have more obstacles and several sociologists have found that, “being raised in a low-income family often means having fewer educational resources” (Riordan, 1997). Not only do low-income students have fewer resources but many of them are placed in the less successful educational path from the start, as seen in high school tracking.
In high school students are at the age where they have to decide what career they will pursue. The difference between higher funded schools (private) and less funded schools (public) are the support and resources that are provided in their career selection for students. Those students that attend higher funding schools are directed towards the college path while students with the less funding are steered towards vocational jobs. Most of the low-income public high schools offer more vocational classes, preparing students for the labor force, and less advance placement classes (Riordan, 1997). Most minority students are directed to take job training classes such as: automobile technology, medical assistance, construction labor, culinary, or floral design (Coleman, 2009). These students are invisibly forced to take such classes in order to prepare them to work right after high school in low-paying jobs. The conflict theory explains that this is a social conflict where minority students remain in bottom of the social ladder, while white students remain at the top.

The opportunity gap benefits most white students who stay at the top because they are given to the resources to excel academically and socially. Numerous White students attend “private schools where teachers, parents, and students share the same values about education” (Kerbo, 2009). In this academic environment students are encouraged to do well in school and take advanced placement classes, where they receive college credits. They are encouraged to do their best in high school by participating in sports, learning to play instruments, receiving tutoring, and much more in order to prepare them to attend elite universities. These opportunity gaps reflect the inequalities that take place in the education system and society. The invisible social cycle drifts most minority students from getting prepared to attend a college and instead guides them to work in a vocational job.
Opportunity gaps contribute to the outcomes of all students and their success in life. The government plays a huge role in this disparity in where they determine and track the pathways students will take. Researcher Cornelius Riordan, investigated tracking in education and found that, “Tracking is a governmental action that classifies and separates students and thereby determines the amount, the quality that students receive” (Riordan, 1997). He found that the tracking in education underlies the inequality that students receive because some are directed to get the best level of education while others receive only the basics. This is a concept that applies to the conflict theory because there are different tracks in high school, and yet the most promising (white) are placed in college-preparatory courses while the rest (students of color) go into vocational classes or basic classes (Coleman, 2009). The tracking that all students are placed into affects how they will perform academically in high school and have an influence in their future. The tracking is also determined upon the socioeconomic status their families have, which explains how, “Middle-class students are more likely to be found in a college preparatory curriculum whereas working and lower class students are more likely to complete a vocational program” (Riordan, 1997). Those who are in the college bound tracking will most likely go to college while those on the vocational tracking will start working in low-paying jobs.

Schools are institutional supports of discriminatory attitudes where numerous teachers have less expectations of minority students and teach them material that is far below basic. Such institutions that provide remedial classes tend to be under resourced schools where ethnic discrimination occurs and cause negative stereotypes (Kenny, 2007). Numerous educators tend to believe that these students are not smart enough or have the necessary skills to succeed, which reflects why, “African American and Hispanic students are disproportionately diagnosed and placed into categories of special education in the United States” (DuPaul, 2008). Statistics show
“African American children are identified one and a half to four times the rate of white in the disability children to be mentally retarded and be emotional disturbed,” (“Disparities in Education, 2012). In high school, students that receive low test scores on their math and English placement tests are placed in remedial classes. However, it is evident that some staff members place students in these classes based on the ethnicity of each student. Language also plays a role and the perception among officials that speaking another language other than English is a liability, when, in fact, it is a gift. Conflict theories would argue that schools are organized to keep minority students in basic classes in order to prevent them from competing with most white students (Coleman, 2009). The placement not only directs which classes students have to take but also defines the type of future they will have.

Not only do most White students attend college right after high school, but some of them attend the top ten elite universities in the nation. Although some white students do work hard to get accepted into the ivy leagues schools, a handful of them have been accepted because they had family members in those schools. They are granted admissions, “for that fact that these institutions have opened their doors to commoners” (Marklein, 2006). The college bound pathway lines up the majority of White students to attend such schools and have a guaranteed admission. At Harvard University, for instance, there are 6,678 undergraduate students in where: 2,916 are White, 1,126 Asian, 522 African-American, 442 Hispanic, 42 American Indian, and the rest are not specified (National Center for Education, 2012). In comparison, most minority students are not in the college bound tracks and have to reach out for help to find the way to attend a university. They are not guaranteed an admission and in most cases when they are trying to apply to a university they don’t receive much support—instead they are directed to take the vocational path.
Personal High School Tracking Experience—Jewel Flores

The future career of each student is outlined on the education they receive and their experience. In the case of a close friend, Jewel Flores, she was placed in the vocational tracking by her high school counselor. She is a young Latina who was persuaded to go to a vocational school close to her house in order to train as a medical assistant. Her counselor assured her that it would be to her benefit to do it because she could immediately start working after high school. Jewel decided to take the classes and was convinced it was a great benefit for her too, because she could start helping her parents pay the bills. Her counselor did a great job of oppressing her to take vocational classes and never once did she talk about the opportunities of going to college. Jewel was victimized invisibly to take a path that benefits the dominant white class because she was guided to go into the work field instead of going to college.

Jewel Flores is now a medical assistant in the Bay Area and is having a hard time finding work due to the high number of medical assistants that are in the same position as her in that area. She is currently receiving an unemployment check and is living on a paycheck to paycheck lifestyle which is extremely difficult (Flores, 2012). Similar to Jewel, there are other minority students that are being victimized by the high school tracking placement, and under the conflict theory this is seen as a form of oppression. Many students are oppressed to stay at the bottom of the social ladder while the educational system favors the most powerful to achieve greater careers that are higher paying—white collar jobs (Coleman, 2009). In order to further understand the opportunity gaps let’s take a look at the outcomes after high school for students.

Outcomes after High School for White and Minority Students

Education teaches students new perspectives and materials that allow them to become knowledgeable and intellectual people. However, not all students receive the privilege of
becoming educated (at least formally) and not because they don’t want to but because of the inequality that takes place. As mentioned above, the education in this nation is not equally provided for all students and this determines the outcomes that students will perform, based on the education they receive. The value that students place on their education is based upon their culture, environment, and social factors. Most white parents have high expectations for their children in school and motivate them to excel academically in order to prepare them to attend elite schools (Kerbo, 2009). Coming from a family that places a great value in education motivates White students to do well in school and graduate at a higher rate than minority students. According to the U. S Bureau of Census, in 2006 85% of white students graduated from high school in comparison to 75% of African American and 57% of Latino students (Coleman, 2009).

Minority students are more likely to drop out of school, with the exception of Asian-Americans, because of the micro-aggressions they face and their socioeconomic status. Breaking down the high school dropout rates by race, in 2009 the National Center for Education statistics found that 9.3% of Black students, 17.6% of Hispanics, and 13.2% American Indian dropped out in comparison to only 5.2% of White students (“National,” 2011). The drop-out rates display the inequalities in education that continually take place with most minorities students. Conflict theorists would also argue that most minority students have to drop out of high school because they have to start working at a young age to help out their low-income families in the bottom of the social ladder. Although there are numerous obstacles that are found in the journey of minority students there are several of them that make it out and work hard to go to college. Though they manage to perform exceptionally well in high school and work against the social cycle designed for them, many minority students find themselves in similar discriminating
circumstances at the college level. Before going into the experiences of students at the college level, I will first go into social construction and stratification because these are the factors that have kept the inequalities of education in taking place.

**Social Construction and Stratification against Minorities**

Social Stratification is defined as “a system of social relationships that determines who gets what, and why,” based on many levels of race and ethnicity (Kerbo, 2009). Stratification brings inequality in many areas, and when focusing in the education system we can see that minority students have less of a social mobility in becoming successful. When looking at the description of social stratification again we can break it down in examining on who gets what, and why. The who are minority students, the what is unequal education, and why is because of the inequality that has been set up to keep white students at the top and minorities at the bottom. In order to fully grasp an understanding of this let’s apply the definition of social stratification to the scores of college entrance exams.

Going to college ensures students of receiving a higher education which secures them in having a job and being financially stable once they graduate. Hopefully, attending a higher level institution is competitive and there are many requirements students need to fulfill in order to apply and get accepted. Although it sounds simple the reality is that it’s not and many minority students have a hard time applying to colleges when they are in high school. One of the major requirements is taking the standardized exams known as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and American College testing (ACT) which tests how students will perform academically. These tests are rather rigorous and though everyone takes the same tests, statistics show that most students of color score lower, with the exception of Asian Americans. The College Entrance
Examination Board made an analysis of racial differences of the SAT scores and found that in 1976 African-American students scored about 20 percent lower than the score of white students ("Journal," 2012). In 2005 the College Entrance Examination Board made another analysis and found roughly the same score gap, where African-American scored 864 on the test and white students received an average of 1068 points ("Journal," 2012).

The college placement exams scores show that African-Americans tend very low compared to those of white students. The College Entrance Examination Board has found this to be a true for other major racially ethnic groups too ("Journal," 2012). The standardized test overall scores shows white students as having higher test scores while minority students (except some groups of Asian American students) score lower (Kellow, 2005). This goes back to the social stratification because the unequal education that minority students receive affects their test scores, which determine their eligibility of getting accepted to college. Most minorities have low-test scores due to their socioeconomic status and stereotype threat. At the University of Michigan, Dr. Claude Steele and Dr. Joshua Aronson have found that stereotypes have negative impacts for minority students, which affects their negative impacts and motivation (Aronson, 2004). The school environments that students attend influence the way they will perform and if they are motivated they will perform exceptionally well.

Most public high schools are not designed or financially funded to provide most students with everything they need to succeed. Most minority students attend public high schools on average where there are 33% are African American and 53% are Latino (Reardon, 2002). The majority of white students attend private schools at a rate of 63%, a difference of 30 percentage points and only a few attend public schools (Reardon, 2002). Focusing selectively in public schools, the structure is designed to stratify minority students to be discriminated from being
able to academically achieve based on the stereotypes they face that lead them to stereotype-threat. Both Dr. Steele and Dr. Aronson agree that the impact of negative stereotype threat is harmful and deeply affect the performance of minority students. Being in school and not being motivated to do well because of negative stereotypes and campus climate delicately harm students’ self-efficacy to perform to the best to their ability—seen in stereotype threat.

**Stereotype Threat**

Stereotypes are negative generalizations and misjudgments made about various ethnic groups. Most stereotypes are insulting towards African-American and Latino cultures. Some of the stereotypes that African-American people hear include being dishonest, drug dealers, lazy, unintelligent, and the list goes on (“Editor,” 2003). Latinos also have numerous stereotypes that follow them around and are portrayed as being lazy, unintelligent, violence-prone, and so forth (“Editor,” 2003). Being labeled with negative remarks affects the way minorities see themselves because they are more impacted by the bad things that are said about them rather than the positive remarks (which are a few). This is harmful especially in the education system because overtime many minority students start believing that these negative remarks are true and adapt to them; a concept known as stereotype threat.

**Stereotype Threat at the Elementary School Level**

Stereotypes negatively influence many minority students to become what they are labeled as and develop a self-identity. In a study done by Ann Arnett Ferguson she wrote a book called *Bad Boys*, about the negative harm that labeling did to a group of African-American students. She conducted research at the Rosa Parks elementary school in Berkeley, California where she found that most African-American students were sent to the punishing room (suspension rooms) compared to the rest of the students. This minority group of students was identified by the staff
members as the “bound for jail type” and placed the words “jail cell” right next to their names, because they were sure they would end up in jail (Gunn, 2002). Ferguson demonstrates in her research how youth constructed a sense of self with the circumstances they faced in the school environment and misidentify themselves in the process of pushing away from the nature of school (Gunn, 2002). She explains the structure of public schools through the Radical schooling theory, where they are school system is created by the dominant group and designed to provide inequalities for minorities. She also applies this to Foucault’s theory of disciplinary power where students are classified, ranked, and sorted in order to maintain racial order and racial hierarchy (Gunn, 2002). In her study, Ferguson realized public schools are designed to fail African American boys due to how they are labeled and treated which harms the identification of students (Gunn, 2002). This shows how minority students are unconsciously following the invisible school curriculum set up by the dominant group, where they are set up to fail and become what they are negatively expected to be through stereotype-threat.

**Stereotype Threat at the College level**

Stereotype threat is the “event of a negative stereotype of one’s group being perceived as self-relevant and potentially harming performance” (Sears, 2005). This is the main reason why many minority students have a hard time in school because they give into these remarks. Not only do minority students face a hard time dealing with negative stereotypes, but in many cases they go to schools that have less funding and are not given much support (this will be discussed more in page 35). In a study done by Daniel Solórzano, a professor from University of California Los Angeles, he focused on the affect that *micro-aggressions* and campus racial climate had on African American college students. He concentrated on the experiences that the African American students went through and noted on how negative stereotypes had affected
their academic performance in many levels such as: dropping classes, changing their major, or even leaving the university (Ceja, 2000). Based on this study, we can see that even in higher institutions the education disparity is still present and affects the way minority students feel and affects their performance. Although students from different ethnic backgrounds are smart and have worked hard to go to a college, many of them feel inferior because of the judgments they receive based on their race. For the most part, minority students start believing that the stereotypes are true and start questioning whether or not college is really for them.

The Impact of Stereotypes on Minority Students in College

Despite the racial micro-aggressions and disparities that marginalize minority students, a significant amount are able to work pass them and attend a university. However, the number of white students in a college environment still outweighs the attendance of minority students, but progress is slowly growing. The National Center for Education statistics released data on this which showed that, “White high school graduates are more likely than black or Hispanic peers to enroll in college” and reported “47.3% of white high school graduates ages 18 to 24 attend college, versus 41.1% of black and 35.2% of Hispanic high school graduates” (Marklein, 2006).

Completing high school and going to a four-year university is a great accomplishment for many minority students. For those that make it to college, the vast majority are first-generation students who have worked past the social construction and have been admitted. Although these students have worked hard to get accepted, most of them will still find numerous hardships at the institution they attend. Many students doubt their academic success in college due to the stereotypes they face, but also due to the lack of faculty of color and a lack of relevant curriculum that accounts for their cultural experiences. This is seen in numerous colleges where the curriculum is structured by the dominant white group and fails to include cultural classes,
activities, or events that could help them feel more included. For example, at Cal Poly State University San Luis Obispo, the school does not adapt to a diverse student population. Instead, students of color are expected to adapt to a white culture which is a hard process to come across for students. The following are personal stories from minority students at Cal Poly State University San Luis Obispo.

**Personal Story-- Mary Johnson African American Student**

Mary Johnson is a first generation African-American student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and is a Parks and Recreation major. After receiving her acceptance letter she was happy because her dream of attending college came true and after a couple months moved to San Luis Obispo. Moving from Los Angeles to the central coast was a cultural shock for Mary because most of the students at Cal Poly are White. In this university the student population consists of: 66.6% White and only 12% Asian, 14% Hispanic, .8% Black, .6% Native American (“CSU Mentor,” 2012). Mary was among the .8% of the Black population and felt underrepresented since most of the students are White and there was no instant connection to any of them. She said that most of the time she tried to avoid going to her dorm room as much as possible because the majority of the girls had already formed a bond and the majority were White. There were many times where she had even considered dropping out of Cal Poly because she felt like an outcast. At one point she thought, “I don’t belong here because there are not many black students…it must be for a reason” (Johnson, 2012). Based on her emotional distress and the new social climate around her, Mary’s grades were affected and she got on Academic Probation on her first quarter.
While her first quarter was tough, she managed to handle it and get past it by joining clubs that provided support to her. She joined Cal Poly’s “Driven towards Sisterhood” which is an African-American female club where members provide a home away from home comfort by doing step shows, studying together, and supporting each other. Joining this club helped Mary feel like she was not alone because she could relate in many ways to the members and felt a sense of comfort. This club “made me realized that I can’t hate myself for who I am… I have to work on being more open minded to others because in doing this maybe my White peers will understand me more” (Johnson, 2012). Mary is optimistic about herself now and is working on having more White friends with whom she can open up to study with them. Although she seemed to find a way to deal with her emotional distress and intellectual self-doubt, she still stresses out about her college tuition.

The tuition of Cal Poly has increased from $160 per academic quarter and will continue to increase over a three year period up to $260 in fall 2014 (Adams, 2012). Since tuition is expensive, Mary works two different jobs where she works over forty hours and is still a full time student, she says “I am not lucky enough to have Grandparents like most privileged White Students who pay for their education…I have to pay for my own” (Jimenez, 2012). She feels upset for the fact that many white students have their tuition covered by family members who can actually afford it while her family is barely meeting their own needs. There is a struggle with finding a balance with school and work because she is always busy and stressing out about financial costs. Though she continues to overcome many challenges overall she is determined to graduate in the next four years.
Personal Story —Katy Martinez Mexican-American Student

In the case of Katy Martinez a Mexican-American student at Cal Poly, she had a difficult time adapting to the campus climate. She felt isolated because most students in the school were white and she could not assimilate in any level with them. By the end of her first quarter, Katy left back home to Los Angeles and never returned back to Cal Poly because the pressure of school and campus climate was extremely overwhelming (Martinez, 2012). She explained not liking how she felt in school and said, “I felt that I did not belong in this school and felt uncomfortable staying in an environment where I was looked down upon” (Martinez, 2012). Katy felt that there was no cultural awareness at Cal Poly and did not make many friends because there was an invisible barrier of dominance. Another example of experiencing negative stereotypes at Cal Poly is the case of Michelle Gutierrez.

Personal Story- Michelle Gutierrez Mexican-American Student

Similar to Katy, Michelle is also a Mexican-American and first generation student. The first day she set a foot on campus was the same day she decided she wanted to leave. Michelle Gutierrez clearly remembers the first words she heard as she entered her dorm room hall (Gutierrez, 2012). She went to her dorm room when a random white guy called her attention and told her that she did not belong in this school. Michelle was speechless and never said anything to that guy, she said “at that moment I got emotional and called my family to pick me up but my dad convinced me to stay in order to prove that guy wrong” (Gutierrez, 2012 ). Although Michelle stayed at Cal Poly, she could not help but think that maybe most white students thought the same thing as the guy who had made that negative remark. She felt powerless but managed to stay in school and focus on her psychology major.
Katy and Michelle are just a few examples that illustrate what minority students go through in a college that is dominated by white students. In such cases, it is clear to see that higher institutions are adapted to accommodate the white students because they don’t experience much racism or discrimination. Not only do minority student study hard to have a good academic standing but they also have to negotiate with conflicts from harmful perceptions of them and their ethnic group (Ceja, 2000). This is a major problem because minority students develop the concept of doubting their ability and performance. Consequently, the sense of discouragement from negative racial insults has left many students feel like they could not perform well (Ceja, 2000). Having such thoughts makes minority students in universities feel insecure and vulnerable of their educational performance.

Students from different backgrounds have the capability and intelligence of performing well but stereotypes create a barrier. Most minorities are the victims to these barriers that are brought upon them on a daily basis. They feel insecure and inferior because they are fighting the cycle that works against them socially and mentally. All of which affects their academic performance because emotional distress takes over them and causes them to do poorly. Not only are these students affected by the structure of the institution system but are also challenged by peers and teachers of the dominant group.

**Racial Micro-Aggressions in Education**

Is it a coincidence that the people who seem to deny and are oblivious to educational inequalities happen to be white? The truth is that many white people have been accustomed to being superior to others and don’t realize or really consider the inequalities that others face since it doesn’t affect them. The inequalities that take place are known as micro-aggressions, which are a “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities…that
communicate hostile…or negative racial insults toward people of color” (Sue, 2007). This definition explains the various forms of racial micro-aggressions that take place to benefit those with power. Unfortunately, these racial discriminations are nearly invisible because they are ingrained in the American society and keep taking place consistently (Sue, 2007). Most White students are, “unaware of the advantages they enjoy in this society and of how their attitudes and actions” affect minorities (Sue, 2007). They are not fully aware of how the inequality runs in their favor and brings them many opportunities to succeed. Unlike minority students most white students do not have to deal with stereotypes or micro-aggressions that affects their performance academically. They often deal with the positive stereotypes.

Minority students are often forced by professors to become spokesperson for their race in classes which makes them feel uncomfortable and affects their performance. Professors rely on these students to share their experiences without having their consent which forces them to speak up. At Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Josephine Perez felt stereotyped by her professor when her professor had called on her to talk about the Catholic Religion. Her professor stereotyped Josephine as being Catholic because she is a Latina student and she felt forced to talk about it (despite the fact that she does not practice the Catholic religion). On another occasion, that same professor called on Josephine to talk about her experience of growing up in a low-income community and how it felt to be a minority on campus (Perez, 2012). Josephine didn’t like talking about such personal experiences in her classroom but felt pressured to do so when she was called out. This is harmful for many students because they are asked to speak about their personal experiences in an environment where they feel uncomfortable (Perez, 2012). In such cases most white students are never called out or asked to share their experiences, which doesn’t impact their performance unlike their peers who are forced to speak. Such types of micro-
aggressions take place in educational institutions where minority students are pressured to speak up when those of the dominant group remain quiet.

The impact of micro-aggressions prevents many minorities from becoming scholars because society pushes them away from becoming successful. Most minorities want to become professionals in life but racism goes against them, pushing them further away down to the very bottom of the social ladder. They are pushed down in order to become insecure and doubt their intelligence to get discouraged from wanting to reach the top. Unfortunately, many minority students are not given the opportunity to succeed, which leads to “the cumulative burden of a lifetime of micro-aggressions that can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality…and flattened confidence” (Ceja, 2000). Micro-aggressions impact many minorities psychologically because they start to question their own capability of succeeding which causes their self-esteem and confidence to decrease.

**Poor Academic Performance due to Stereotypes and Micro-Aggressions at the College level**

Stereotypes and micro-aggressions have an intense impact on most minority students’ mental health and academic achievement. Those who encounter negative stereotypes will most likely perform poorly because of the low expectations that are required of them. Research finds that students from, “Black and Latino descent (who) face stereotypes about the intellectual inferiority of their race” usually end up “performing worse academically than their none stereotyped peers” (Cohen, 2005). The negative judgments that minority students face cause them to be more self-conscious about being different and to fit in with the stereotypes of their racial groups. This brings forth stigma consciousness where students expect to be victimized by discrimination and believe that they will perform at the level that most of the members of their
racial group perform (Mosley, 2012). Being self-conscious causes these students to suffer from anxiety and evaluation apprehension, “because they will be apprehensive about failing and confirming a negative stereotype about their group” (Mosley, 2006). Many African American students suffer from anxiety problems in thinking that they are not meant to succeed because of the lack of academic success among blacks (Mosley, 2006). Having high levels of stigma consciousness leads many students of color to have a low self-esteem, and even suffer from cognitive disruptive thinking.

Dealing with discriminatory comments leads numerous minority students to feel doubtful and comparing this to the mental health of white students; most of them do not have to deal with this intensity of racism. In society, the interpersonal discrimination has severe health consequences that are associated with hypertension, depression, anxiety, and stress (McKenzie, 2003). The obstacles that these students face are tough because “research finds that minority members feel threatened by negative stereotypes of their group” and leads many of them to suffer from mental health problems (Cohen, 2005). Feelings of fear interact with students’ feelings of self-doubt, and even affecting feels of inferiority. Again, cognitive thinking is disrupted by the stereotypes that a minority individual may encounter, which affects their educational experience. Negative stereotypes and racial micro-aggressions reproduce inequality in ways that prevent the upward bound mobility of minorities.

The conflict theory takes place in such disparities where minority students are not only pushed down the social ladder, but are also harmed mentally which can deteriorate them from thinking clearly. The diagnostic of these matters demonstrates how minority students suffer in several areas for the benefit of keeping them at the bottom, while those at the top remain firm and stable. Inclusively, minority students feel incapable of becoming successful not only
because of the obstacles they face but due to the resources they lack too. Many of them come from low-income backgrounds which prevents them from going to private schools, receiving tutoring, or simply having access to the resources they need to complete a project. Their socio-economic status affects their living style, education, and future career.

**Socioeconomic Status and Educational Structure**

When it comes to providing the best education for children, the majority of parents work hard to make sure they can make this happen. Though most parents want their children to attend the best schools and receive a high quality education, the reality is that it’s very expensive. Most White individuals have the funds to send their children to private or boarding schools because they can afford them. Comparing this to minority parents, most of them cannot afford to send their children to such schools and are not aware of the benefits of receiving a college level education. On an average the Pew Research Center in Washington D.C, collected the data on the household median net worth and found that the median worth for Whites in 2009 was $113,149 compared to Hispanics at $6,325, and Blacks at $5,677 (Fry, 2012). Ultimately, the role that social class plays in a student’s life has an effect on their academic achievement and job attainment (Coleman, 2009).

Socioeconomic status has a huge role in the educational structure and the opportunities students receive. School funding is a major source of property taxes and most students that come from upper class families receive a better education than those from lower class families. Dr. Kerbo and Dr. Coleman from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo did research on this and found that “school districts with expensive homes and other valuable real estate often receive much more revenue than poor school districts (Coleman, 2009). Students coming from expensive homes have more funding going into their schools which means that they have more access to classes,
computers, books, sports, and after school programs. An example of such disparity can be seen in 2003, where children in families with an income of $20,000 had less access to a computer at home, in comparison to children from a family income of $75,000 who had a ninety percent access (Coleman, 2009). Not only do students in low-income households have fewer resources at home but most of their schools districts face higher lack of funds due to budget cuts.

Budget cuts have a destructive impact in school districts because they cut down on many components. In most cases, teachers are laid off, after-school programs are cut, and classroom sizes get bigger. For the most part, these budget cuts take place in the low-income districts where most minority students reside. Looking at this problem through the conflict theory, we can see that minority students do not have an equal access in receiving a fair education because they receive less funding which means fewer opportunities. Also most teachers in these low-income districts get paid less, and when a higher paying job offers them a position somewhere else they take it; creating an inconsistent environment for students.

An example of such inconsistencies took place in 2008 when the East Bay school districts in California were facing major budget cuts. The school districts were facing hard times because they were located in low-income neighborhoods where the majority of students were minorities. In the Hayward School district (located in the East Bay) they had an $18 million deficit and teachers were facing major budget cuts on their salaries (Asimov, 2007). This took place in 2008 and the budget cuts affected the classroom sizes to get bigger, going from 20 students to 34 students per class (Asimov, 2007). After several weeks of going through such budget cuts, the majority of Hayward teachers went on strike and protested to get an 8.08 percent raise (Asimov, 2007). The strike lasted over 2 weeks and affected all the students because they had no one to teach them at that time. Most students did not go to school during
the 2 weeks and for those that did, they were sent to the cafeteria to do remedial work (Asimov, 2007). Although, the end of the strike was a huge success and teachers did receive a raise; the downfall was that students fell behind and some teachers were laid off (Asimov, 2007). The students that were most affected were high school seniors because they felt less prepared for the advanced placement exams that were given out two weeks after the strike. Today, most of the classrooms in this district are crowded and teachers are still getting laid off because there is not enough money (Asimov, 2007).

A problem like this would not be likely to occur in higher income communities where there is more funding and consistency for students to be protected. In such case, we can see how the conflict theory affects the educational system in that most minority students are likely to face budget cuts while most whit students are not. There are more problems that take place in the bottom of the social ladder based which impact their future careers—which can be further explained through the opportunity gaps. The social factors of social construction and structure, micro-aggressions and stereotypes, and socio-economic status can be further illustrated in the conflict theory and social cycle theory.

**The Conflict Theory on Education**

The sociological perspective on problems of education is suited to the conflict theory that sees the education system as maintaining social inequality and protecting the power of the dominant (Wiley, 2012). Conflict theory is based on the idea that society is held together by the power of the dominant group who oppresses others for their own benefit. The *bourgeoisie* are in power and have the authority to do anything that is in their favor while the *proletariat* groups have to abide to their regulations. In the education system, Conflict theorists argue that “schools
are organized to keep the members of the subordinate groups in their place and prevent them from competing with members of more privileged classes” (Coleman, 2009). Most students in power are White who tend to take advantage of the school systems that runs in their favor, while many minorities follow the system, unknowingly that it is controlled by those in power. The education system is dominated by those in power who monitor the steps minority students take in order to track their future career and prevent them from climbing up the socio-economic ladder. In reality, the education system does not provide social benefits or opportunities because it works as “a means of maintaining power structures and creating a work force for capitalism” (Wiley, 2012).

The inequality of education in our society serves to keep minorities oppressed in the bottom of the social ladder and prevents many of them from getting good careers. They are driven to take another direction. It is not a coincidence that this form of discrimination works against preparing minority students educationally, because when potential employers require certain educational credentials they do not have them (Crossman, 2012). All in which leads most minority students to work in low paying and remain in the bottom of the social ladder while the majority of the White students remain at the top. The social system in our society favors the powerful that control the social cycle in keeping them at the top and the poor in the bottom.

### Social Cycle Theory on Education

Cycles are a set of stages that take place over and over without much alterations or improvement. The social cycle theory argues that the stages of society and history are repeating themselves in cycles without much social progress (“Rapid Intelligence,” 2007). Applying this theory to the education system we can see that there has not been much progress in the education for minority students. They are in a loop where they are controlled in all the stages they go
through from elementary school to high school and even college. The social cycle theory argues that there is not much social progress that has been done to break it and therefore keeps repeating itself. In the education system we can see how the social cycle has kept minorities from progressing in receiving an equal education as most white students do.

In history when there were segregated schools and even in today’s current system we can see that the powerful have organized a school system that “serves to keep oppressed minorities in the bottom of the social heap (Coleman, 2009). The social cycle detains minorities from easily breaking it and keeps them in the bottom, because those with power are afraid that minorities will take over them. It is clear that, “providing an equal education and encouraging upward mobility for the poor have never been goals of our educational system” (Coleman, 2009). This indicates that not much has been done to help the minorities because the social cycle is designed to not work with them and retain them from progressing. Although it is clear that there is no equal education in our society, there are many ways in where we can make more social progress and help minorities break the social cycle.

**Social Progress and Prosperity**

Social progress entitles our society to work together in order to bring more justice and equality for everyone. Not only do we have to work in bringing change to our society but actually applying it to all the inequalities that exist—starting with education. As mentioned, education has many deficits that are rooted in discrimination in order to benefit one group more than another. We have explored on the different ways that White students receive more benefits that minority students, but what can there be done to make such inequality decrease? There are
various links in which changes need to be implemented and one of them is by providing more college-bound programs for minorities like upward bound or Avid programs.

College bound programs are designed to help minority students that come from low-income households with the necessary skills and motivation they need to succeed in education beyond high school. Such programs in California include: The Upward Bound Program, Puente Project, Avid, Aim High, and many more which target the success of minority students. For instance, the aim high program is a college-bound program in the Bay Area that tracks low-income minority students in middle school. They provide summer school and counseling during the academic year in order to teach students about the importance of attending college. The Aim High program also requires parents to participate in order to educate them as well and have them work with their students together to make sure they succeed (“Aim High,” 2012). The students who attend this program are 99% students of color in where 97% complete high school and 95% attend college after which shows how successful it is (“Aim High,” 2012). Having more programs that aim on the social mobility of minority students is social progress and our society needs to focus on having funds that invests in these students.

Minority students also need to work together in building an education system that benefits them and helps them to take college-tracking classes. Making such demands and fighting for a more equal education can help minority student’s progress into attaining a brighter future. Students need to become aware of the power that is controlling them and work against them by breaking the social cycle that is detaining them. Education is the key to success and everyone deserves an equal chance of obtaining it without having to encounter any obstacles or discriminations.
At the college level academics are more rigorous and the expectations are set much higher. Having after school programs and tutors can also benefit minority students because having such skills will allow them to feel more prepared in college. In most cases, minorities feel overwhelmed when they attend college as a first-generation student and “far less prepared than their fellow students” (Sander, 2012). The education they received in previous years failed to prepare them which often has led many minority students to drop out or be kicked out of their college. In order to prevent such problems, there needs to be more regulations on school districts on what classes are being offered and make sure they have credited teachers. Being more prepared will help them succeed in the college and also by joining college programs that support minority students on campus. Making these changes would be a start to the social progress education needs, in order to become more fair and balanced—benefiting everyone.

**Analysis Conclusion**

America is the land of opportunity that is supposed to provide opportunities and benefits for all, but not everyone receives them. Unfortunately, the education system in our society does not provide students with the same access and resources because of the social construction that exist. This inequality has been created to benefit most white students and has deprived minority students. The racial micro-aggressions and stereotypes discriminate minority students, causing them to self-doubt their own intelligence and aspirations. Minority students face many obstacles due to social stratification, racial micro-aggression, and socioeconomic status in this unequal society. However, there can be changes made that can decrease the inequalities by increasing the number of college bound programs available; that motivate students to attend college in every level. In reality, inequality will never end, but with small steps there eventually will be more
social progress that can help minority students climb the social ladder more easily. Minority students may not have the wealth power as most White students have, but they have the power to make changes that can help the future generations attain a college degree. Making changes such as in the high school tracking, providing more college bound programs, and scholarships can certainly ensure minority students to have a successful future. Having more resources and support for minority students will allow them to have a more rewarding and brighter future—allowing them to climb the social ladder with not many obstacles in between.


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Number One Reason Students Drop Out of University.

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