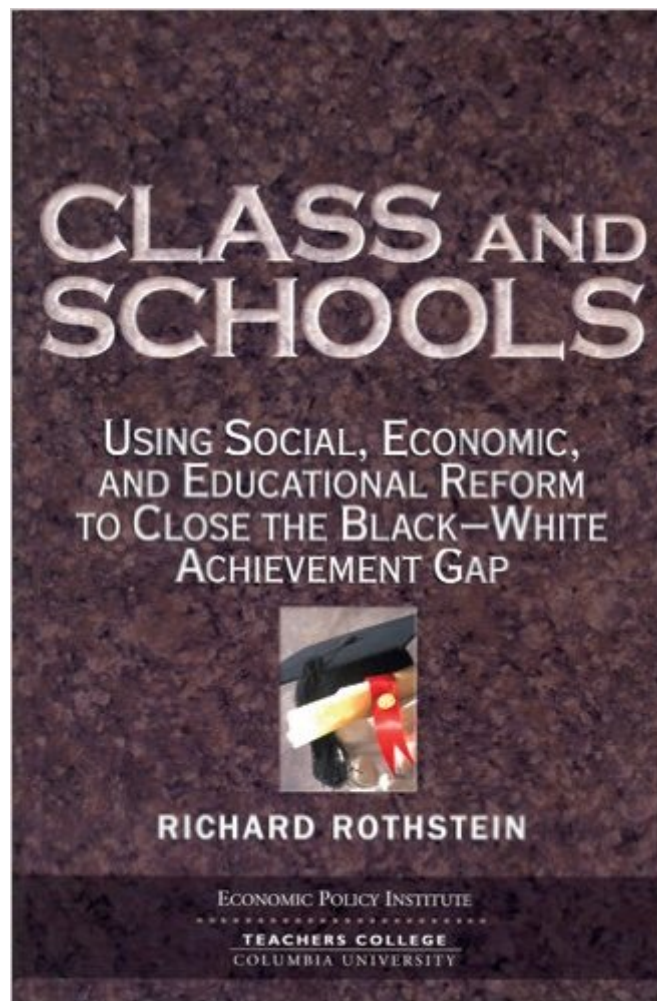


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# Class And Schools: Using Social, Economic, And Educational Reform To Close The Black-White Achievement Gap



## Synopsis

"Rothstein has written a unique and powerful volume that needs to be read by scholars, policymakers, and practitioners who have the capacity to shape tomorrow."--From the Foreword by Arthur Levine, President, Teachers College, Columbia University  
Contemporary public policy assumes that the achievement gap between black and white students could be closed if only schools would do a better job. In this book, Rothstein points the way toward social and economic reforms that would give all children a more equal chance to succeed in school.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Richard Rothstein's *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap* • is a must read for all educators working in our publicly funded schools. Rothstein's book captivates the reader and demands readers to move past melanin and look at other factors that affect school performance and opportunity. Rothstein tackles the obvious questions and definitions attached to such a large conversation. He acknowledges the Coleman Report and brings it into the conversation related to his beliefs about outside factors. He makes may-lay on the term achievement gap and points out the flaws in how the common phrase thrown by policy makers is ambiguous. The book brings to light all that encompasses class. Rothstein takes a point by point look at such factors as genetics, childrearing, health, housing, and many more. He does an excellent job of correlating the effects of these on student learning. Where this gets interesting is when Rothstein analyzes parents of the same social class but different races.

Rothstein contends that the differences between black and white poverty must be dissected carefully otherwise ill-informed conclusions are formed. Rothstein like other scholars hold that in order to have like comparables both black and white students need to be from either generational poverty or situational poverty. Rothstein takes a very poignant look at claims of overcoming the achievement gap. He tackles Dr. William Sanders and value added. Rothstein critically looks at if Dr. Sanders's model is attainable. He presses the fact the Dr. Sanders only used math scores in his value added model. According to Rothstein's beliefs, it is easier to raise math scores of lower-class students than it is for reading.

As the title suggests, Richard Rothstein's "Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap" approaches the topic of persistent educational gaps in achievement for minority and white students from a comprehensive, thorough lens. First, Rothstein presents schools and school models that have been held up as exemplars for closing achievement gaps--and states why there is often more than meets the eye in these examples. He includes discussion of Dr. William Sanders' Tennessee value-added assessment system of evaluating schools and teachers (which fails to acknowledge that the best teachers often choose not to teach at the lowest performing schools, contributing to selection bias). He also discusses the Heritage Foundation's "No Excuses" model which employs a hard-lined approach to student outcomes (poverty is not an excuse for poor results) in typically selective charter schools. Again, Rothstein cautions the issue of selection bias in these results; because children and their parents must apply to attend, the students served in these schools are likely those who would have experienced better outcomes in traditional schools. These are just a few of the examples Rothstein gives to illustrate that, despite appearances, there is no quick fix to the achievement gaps. Rothstein also presents the implications of the increased use of standardized testing in exacerbating racial and SES achievement gaps. Standardized testing creates a somewhat arbitrary definition of proficiency, and cannot measure valuable skills and abilities such as creativity.

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