The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University

Toward Excellence with Equity
A Social Movement for the 21st Century

Ronald F. Ferguson, PhD

July 28, 2013

Harvard University and the Tripod Project for School Improvement
See: www.agi.harvard.edu and www.tripodproject.org

“It’s a Sputnik moment. Communities are going to rise or fall depending upon whether they have a workforce.”

“We need to stop having meetings and have a movement.”

Bill Shore, GlaxoSmithKline
Director of U.S. Community Partnerships
North Carolina Chamber of Commerce Education Summit, July 2011
“Any fool can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.”

Rev. Dr. Robert Schuller

The bounty of the harvest depends upon the *effectiveness of cultivation*, and the effectiveness of cultivation depends, over time, on the *intensity of the search* for effective methods and the *dedication of effort* to help children reach their potential.

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**A Vision Statement for a Movement for Excellence with Equity**

**Our PURPOSE:** We want the people who interact most frequently and intensively with each child or adolescent – specifically, parents, teachers and peers – to interact with and nurture them in ways that contribute maximally to their *self-realization as educated, healthy and fulfilled human beings*.

**Our STRATEGY:** To enlist our colleagues and communities in a social movement to embed *principles and practices of high quality teaching, parenting and peer relations* into the everyday thoughts and routines that govern the frequency, intensity and quality of our interactions with children and youth.

**Our RESOURCES:** In addition to the *financial and other material resources* that we control, our resources include the *individual and collective knowledge* at our disposal and the trust that we have in one another’s motives, capacity for personal growth, commitment to *shared goals and mutual respect*.

**Our REWARDS:** The sense of belonging to something larger than ourselves with people whose values we share, the *satisfaction of knowing that others’ lives may be better* because of our work, and the satisfaction that comes with growing knowledge and awareness with regard to issues that are important to us.

*The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University, July 2010*
Proportional Equality with Excellence

B & H

W
2011 Math NAEP Scores: 8th Grade Black Students

2011 Math NAEP Scores: 8th Grade Hispanic Students
Why Such Urgency?
Percentages that Non-Hispanic Whites Represented in the United States Age Distribution of the 2010 U.S. Census.

Program for International Student Assessment, 15-Year Olds, 2003, Math Problem Solving in OECD Nations (Red = U.S. Students)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php
Urgency at the Individual Level

Time Line

• Training flees
• Training elephants

Learned Helplessness

Skill Type 2

Do you know any type B students? How do you keep their hope alive?

Skill Type 1

B seems behind on every dimension, may be feeling worthless and ready to give up.
But every one of us has our own success destination; for that destination, we're always leading.

Success!

Success!

Success!
BUILDING BLOCKS OF A MOVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY
Parents

1. Authoritative Parenting and Learning-Focused Home Life

2. Home-School Linkages

Community

3. Methods and Routines for Observing and Refining Teaching

4. Methods and Routines for Team-Based Review of Student Work

5. Peer Culture Norms: e.g., “Conspiracy to Succeed”

Employers

6. Cooperative Learning Norms inside and outside of classrooms

7. Orientations to the World of Work and Possible Selves Exposures

8. Jobs for parents and apprenticeships for youth

9. Program Supports for Families, Children and Youth

Teachers

10. Places to Connect and Belong

Parents

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Judging the Quality of Teaching

How do we know how good a job teachers are doing? What types of evidence provide teachers with the most accurate information to use in reflecting on their teaching and planning ways to improve?
Between-Classroom Correlations

When we consider different classrooms taught by the same teachers in the data for Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project on Measures of Effective Teaching, the between-classroom correlations are 0.38 for value added, 0.42 for the Framework for Teaching composite and 0.61 for the Tripod 7Cs composite.

Student perspectives can help guide:

✓ teachers as they work to improve;
✓ leaders as they set professional development priorities for teachers;
✓ coaches and mentors in supporting teachers;
✓ higher education institutions as they develop teacher training programs.
The Tripod Framework

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

The Tripod 7Cs
(What Teachers Do)

Student Engagement
(What Students Do)

Teacher Professional Learning (PLCs)

- Content Knowledge
- The Tripod
- Pedagogic Skill
- Relationship-Building Skills
The Seven C’s
What Teachers Do (What Students Experience)

1. **Caring** about students (Encouragement and Emotional Support)
2. **Captivating** students (Learning seems Interesting and Relevant)
3. **Conferring** with students (Students Sense their Ideas are Respected)
4. **Clarifying** lessons (Success Seems Feasible)
5. **Consolidating** knowledge (Ideas get Connected and Integrated)

6. **Challenging** students (Press for Effort, Perseverance and Rigor)
7. **Controlling** behavior (Culture of Cooperation and Peer Support)

Which is the strongest predictor of value added test score gains?

From the MET middle school math classrooms,
Top 6 Correlations with Value-Added Test Score Gains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>* Students in this class treat the teacher with respect</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>* My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>* Our class stays busy and doesn’t waste time</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>* In this class, we learn a lot every day</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>* In this class, we learn to correct our mistakes</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>* My teacher explains difficult things clearly.</td>
<td>Clarify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Appendix Table 1: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “Learning about Teaching: Initial findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project.” December 2010, p. 34.
Predicted differences in months of learning for classrooms at the 25th versus 75th percentiles of the composite Seven C’s distribution for the MET sample.

(Estimated using surveys from one class and gains from another class, taught by the same teacher.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using student survey responses in one section to predict learning gains in another.</th>
<th>Predicted difference per school year*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On state math tests</td>
<td>4.8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Balanced Assessment in Math</td>
<td>3.7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On state English Language Arts (ELA) tests</td>
<td>2.3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Stanford 9 Open Ended ELA</td>
<td>2.9 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How much do classrooms differ with regard to the 7Cs?
How much disparity exists between classrooms?
Mean favorability percentages for Support and Press, within first, fifth and tenth deciles of the Tripod 7Cs composite distribution.
(National Benchmark Data Set as of spring 2012)

Note: a high percentage of this variation is WITHIN schools.

Classroom average levels of agreement with Seven C's items in four urban middle schools.
(Each dot represents a classroom with between 10 and 50 students.)

School A
Mean=52.6

School B
Mean=49.8

School C
Mean=46.7

School D
Mean=46.0
More on Patterns for K-2

Composite 7Cs Favorability Rates Grades K-2
(n=3382 classrooms of 10 to 35 students)
Composite 7Cs Favorability Rates Grades K-2
(n=3382 classrooms)
- Girls - Total

Composite 7Cs Favorability Rates Grades K-2
(n=3382 classrooms)
- Boys - Total
Composite 7Cs Favorability Rates Grades K-2
(n=3382 classrooms)

Boys  Girls  Total

Kindergarten  First  Second
Do the 7Cs predict student engagement?
For example, an index for *Grit*

- [reversed] Sometimes I pretend to be working hard for this class, when I'm really not.
- In this class, I take it easy and do not try very hard to do my best.
- In this class, I stop trying when the work gets hard.

Effect size coefficients from multiple regression using the 7Cs to predict Grit. (All coefficients are highly significant.)
Student engagement in this district’s secondary schools by deciles of the composite national 7Cs classroom distribution.

Standard deviation units are defined on the national student level distribution for the listed engagement indices.

Using the 7Cs to develop profiles and identify priorities at multiple levels of drill down.
There are multiple embedded levels of possible “drill down” on any given issue, e.g., to address questions about:

1. The district
2. One or more schools or grade levels within the district
3. One or more grade levels within a school
4. One or more classrooms within a grade
5. One or more students within a classroom
6. One or more survey items from among an individual student’s responses

### District: Percent favorable, by school, for each Seven C’s category.
(Each line is one of 48 secondary schools in one urban school district.)
Each row shows the percent favorable responses for a classroom in the **lowest rated high school.** (Class size>9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care</th>
<th>Clarify</th>
<th>Captivate</th>
<th>Confer</th>
<th>Consolidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;= 75%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 74%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 25%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each row shows the percent favorable responses for a classroom in the **highest rated high school.** (Class size>9)

<table>
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<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 25%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Classrooms have stories. For example, compare classes A and B and imagine deliberating on what types of changes each teacher should prioritize. Which do you think might get the highest overall rating from an adult observer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Range of Ratings:</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captivate</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confer</td>
<td>A,B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidate</td>
<td>A,B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combine the information above with responses to the engagement questions:

- Grit in this Class: A, B
- Mastery Orientation in this Class: A, B
- Effort in this Class: A, B
- Happiness in this Class: A, B
- Help Seeking in this Class: A, B
- Sense of Efficacy in this Class: B, A

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**Peers**

5. Peer Culture Norms: e.g., “Conspiracy to Succeed”

6. Cooperative Learning Norms inside and outside of classrooms
A Conspiracy to Succeed
Even if I can’t and you can’t, we can.

Please list some things that students at your school do so that other students will like them.

N=1400 middle and high school students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>others (unspecified categories, vague, hard to say/don’t know, unrelated responses)</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antisocial behavior (fighting, cursing, indifference toward people taking back)</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academically disruptive behavior (acting out, skipping, cheating, stunts, not caring about school/acting like it, showing off)</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related to dress/trends</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copying others, being peer pressured, sucking up (giving money, food), seeking to be friends with certain people</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social behavior (outgoing, nice, friendly)</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drugs/alcohol/smoking</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being involved (sports, clubs)</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not being you (changing yourself, ignoring your friends, doing what you don’t want to do)</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being funny/joking (non-disruptive)</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sex/dating/kissing</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working hard, trying in school, caring about school</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous/illegal things</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partying/go ing out</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being yourself</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you could set the rules for what is considered cool... what behaviors would you make cool?

- Work ethic/trying hard in school/good grades: 26.8
- Social qualities: being nice, respecting others, being fun, caring about friends/family: 15.8
- Respect yourself (being who you want to be), being you, spending time with who you want to, liking people for who they are: 12.8
- Sports/being involved/school spirit: 4.2
- Having a lot of friends, going to parties, being with popular kids, having fun, getting attention from kids for being cool: 3.3
- Looks/clothes: 2.9
- Funny (not disruptive): 2.2
- Being released/just hanging out: 1.2
- Drugs/drinking/smoking: 0.5

What behaviors would you make “not cool”?

- Other/vague: 29.3
- Antisocial qualities: gossiping, being mean/exclusive/not respecting others, cursing/being annoying/lying, telling on others, rude to teacher/others, ugly, ignorant: 19.7
- Academically disruptive: not trying hard in school, not following rules, acting out, skipping: 17.3
- Not being yourself/being peer pressured/being fake: 9.4
- Drinking/drugs/smoking: 1.6
- Getting good grades/being smart/working hard: 1.7
- Sex/babies: 0.9
- Not having sex/dating: 0.4
- Being high strung, Wild, crazy: 0.4
Employers

7. Orientations to the World of Work and Possible Selves Exposures

8. Supports for School-to-Career Transitions

Community

9. Program Supports for Families, Children and Youth

10. Places to Connect and Belong
TEN BUILDING BLOCKS OF A MOVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY

1. Authoritative Parenting and Learning-Focused Home Life
2. Home-School Linkages

Parents

Community

Teachers

Employers

Peers

TEN STRATEGIC THREADS OF AN EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY STRATEGY

1. Leaders who Combine Passion with Competence: People with the skills and dispositions to effectively cultivate not only a sense of urgency but also a sense of possibility.
2. Instigators: Individuals who work, often behind the scenes, to plant seeds of change and to propose and refine the ideas that others may then help to promote and implement.
3. Dedicated Teams of Staffers: Committed and talented people who team up to do the day-to-day work that drives the change process.
4. Clear Central Themes: Compelling facts and ideas concerning the goals of the work and pertaining to the principles and practices to establish and maintain; leaders work to establish these as a “common language” – ever-present themes.
5. Streamlined and Coherent “Curriculum” for the Change Process: Materials that educate stakeholders concerning the central themes (#4) and in ways that support the change process.

Dr. Ronald Ferguson
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Organizational Structures and Personnel that Embody Capacity to Teach and Motivate Adults</strong>: Routines and structures that help people to learn their roles—including but not limited to roles as teachers, trainers and supervisors—and feel motivated to play them effectively. And, institutional mechanisms for coaching, monitoring, and sharing that make it difficult for individuals to avoid the change process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Patient but Tough Accountability</strong>: Tools and routines for monitoring practices and outcomes, targeting assistance where needed, sometimes replacing people or organizations that fail to improve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Institutionalized Gathering and Management of Data</strong>: Mechanisms for gathering and organizing data for tracking progress and monitoring key process and outcome variables.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Data-Driven Decision Making and Transparency</strong>: Specific staffers are assigned to track, analyze and summarize key patterns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. <strong>Community Involvement and Resources</strong>: Leadership teams engage a broad range of stakeholders—including employers, school board members, colleges, other education and training organizations and parents—to contribute ambitiously to preparing young people for adulthood and building and maintaining better <em>pathways to prosperity and healthy human development</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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