The Global Achievement Gap

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“The formulation of the problem is often more essential than the solution.” Einstein

What is the “crisis” in the American education really all about—what’s the “problem”?

If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!

Their schools are the problem, not ours!

School reform is just another fad.

Incremental change is the only way to go.
The New Educational Challenges: “The Rock & The Hard Place”

- The Rock: NEW SKILLS for Work, Continuous Learning & Citizenship in a “knowledge society” for ALL STUDENTS
  - Convergence of skills needed for careers, college, citizenship
  - Students lacking skills relegated to marginal employment & citizenship
- The Hard Place: The “Net Generation” is differently motivated to learn
- Re-Framing the Problem: Reform vs. Reinvention
  - We do not know how to teach ALL students NEW skills. This is a new education challenge that requires development of new accountability structures, different ways of teaching and testing, and new ways of working together and with our students.
The Seven Survival Skills for Careers, College, and Citizenship

1. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
3. Agility and Adaptability
4. Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Accessing and Analyzing Information
7. Curiosity and Imagination

What is The “Global Achievement Gap”? The Global Achievement Gap is the gap between what even our best schools are teaching and testing Versus The skills all students will need for careers, college, and citizenship in the 21st century
What Motivates The “Net” Generation?

- Accustomed to instant gratification and “always-on” connection
- Use the web for 1) extending friendships, 2) interest-driven, self-directed learning, and 3) as a tool for self-expression
- Constantly connected, creating, and multitasking in a multimedia world—everywhere except in school
- Less fear and respect for authority—accustomed to learning from peers; want coaching, but only from adults who don’t “talk down” to them
- Want to make a difference and do interesting/worthwhile work
So What Does 21c Learning & Teaching Look Like?

• What skills are students learning in this video?
• How are they being motivated to learn?
• What is the teachers’ role?
• How are they held accountable?
The Three Cornerstones of “Re-Invention”

1. Holding Ourselves Accountable for What Matters Most
   - “AYP” versus Attainment—track % of students graduating, attending and persisting with post-secondary (National Student Clearinghouse)
   - Use The College and Work Readiness Assessment to assess analytic reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and writing
   - video focus groups with recent grads

2. Doing the New Work: teaching & testing the skills that matter most
   - Start with the 3 C’s: Critical Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration—in every class and at all grade levels
   - Require all students to do internships and group service projects

3. Doing the New Work in New Ways
   - Every student has an adult advocate for his/her success
   - Encourage teachers to form R & D teams to learn new approaches: Isolation is the enemy of improvement
Rigor in Adult Meetings
5 “Habits of Mind” for Change Leaders

1. What’s the problem you’re trying to solve?
   - What does it have to do with improving teaching and learning?
   - What data (qualitative & quantitative) have you used to understand the problem?

2. What is your strategy for solving this problem?
   - Why did you choose this strategy? What others did you consider?
   - Can you clearly explain your “theory of action” i.e. how you think this strategy will solve the problem you’ve identified?

3. Who (teachers, parents, community) needs to know what to “own” the problem and support the change work?

4. Who is accountable for what to solve this problem?
   - What do they need to get the job done?

5. What data will you track to tell you whether you’re making progress in solving this problem?
For more information:

www.schoolchange.org
For Still More Information . . .

THE GLOBAL ACHIEVEMENT GAP
Why Even Our Best Schools Don’t Teach
the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—
and What We Can Do about It

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