

# School *and* Work *and* Life *as* Learning

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Preparing Today's Students for Tomorrow's Jobs

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# OVERALL PROPOSITIONS

- Our biggest challenge in reforming urban education is how to ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed.
- The support of responsible adults and family income are the strongest predictors of a student's success.
- Work-based learning initiatives can help eliminate the boundaries between school, work, and life. It's not "school-*to*-work"; its school *and* work *as* life.

# Is College for Everyone?

- At least 25% of American students do not graduate from high school (Bottoms, 2008)
- Only 40% of those who do enter college graduate in six years or less (Settersen & Ray, 2010)
- Only 23% of New York City students were ready for college or careers in 2009, and of those who entered community college, 75% had to take remedial math or English (Otterman, 2011)

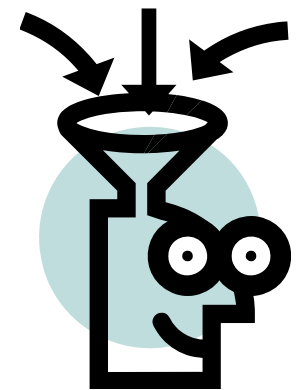


# Ability v. Motivation

When [high performing Blacks and Hispanics] were asked at age 26 why they didn't continue their education, 75% cited academic reasons; 57% indicated negative attitudes toward schooling; and 37% cited financial reasons. (Adelman, 2007)

# Learning as Change

“...the combination of processes whereby the whole person—body and mind—experiences a social situation, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively, or practically and integrated into the person’s individual biography resulting in a changed person” (Jarvis, 2006: 13).



# Work-based Learning

Examples:

- Career education
- Mentoring
- Career academies
- Tech-prep
- School-based enterprises
- Service learning
- Internships

# Research has shown that Work-based Learning

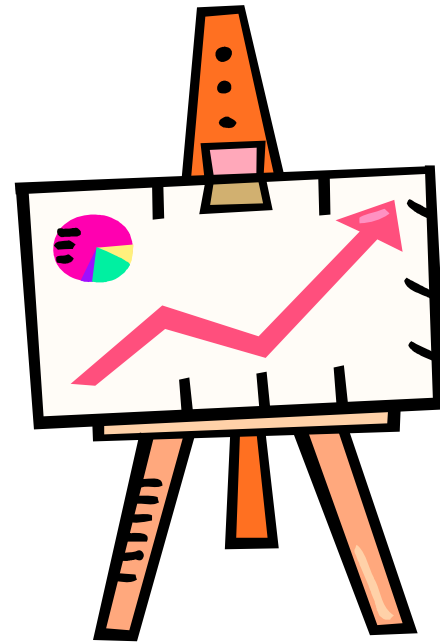
- Improves graduation rates
- Improves academic teaching and learning
- Helps students choose careers
- Ensures workplace readiness.

# What is Success?

## Measurement Issues:

What do we measure?

- Participation Rates
- Student Reactions
- What Was Learned
- Behavior
- Labor Market Outcomes





# Participation

- The U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics
  - Measures how many students enroll in career and technical education
- The U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Vocational Education
  - Offers data describing what works and what doesn't work in vocational education;
  - Includes qualitative case studies, survey data, and state databases

# Reaction



The Million Voice Project has gathered 25,000 students' perception of their school life;

They identified these gaps:

- Students desire to do well in school, but they do not think they will;
- Students think school can be fun and beneficial to their future, and yet they do not feel engaged in school;
- Students believe they have leadership abilities, but they do not believe their school fosters development of this skill.

# Learning

Are year-to-year changes in SAT standardized test scores indicative of learning?

- Comparison among groups difficult
- Validity—exactly what is being measured?

What does workplace-ready look like?

Who can help develop measures?

# Behavior

- Improved attendance, graduation rates, persistence rates
- Work self-efficacy measures and work ethics
  - Doing work assignments, showing up on time, dressing appropriately
  - Problem-solving, being a team member, managing politics, manage oneself in a workplace (Raelin, 2011)

“It’s knowing how to introduce yourself. It’s knowing what’s appropriate for conversation. All of those things are learned. If you don’t have that context, boy, it feels real foreign to go through the security gate at Fidelity and exist in that environment.”

(Chertavian, in Bornstein, 2011: 14<sup>th</sup> paragraph)



# Labor Market Outcomes

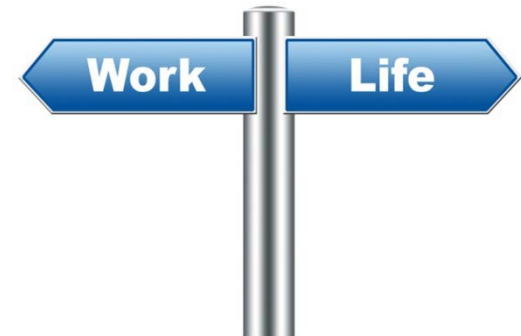
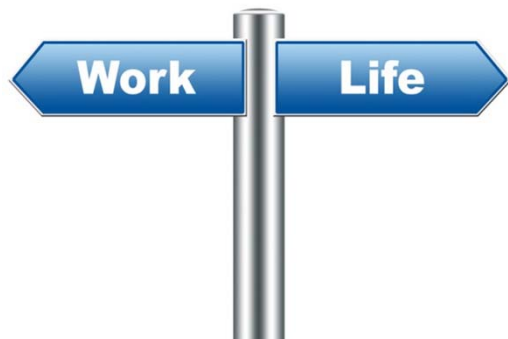
- Students who graduated from a Career Academy
  - Made \$16,704 more than a control group do did not attend (National Career Academy website)
  - Obtained jobs in lucrative fields and earned beyond the national median in wages (Bornstein, 2011)

If the problems are:

- Low graduation rates,
- Low college completion rates
- Motivation and
- The need to earn money....

# What Can We Do?

Give students responsibility for their own learning, scaffolded by responsible adults from all sectors who work with individual students and their teachers in developing goals and learning initiatives, and implementing and evaluating their outcomes.





# School *and* Work *and* Life *as* Learning

- All students should be prepared for the workforce (including the college-bound).
- Teachers can't do it by themselves.
- Need to rethink the roles of the educational sector, as well as parents, other responsible adults, and the public & private sectors.

## Outcomes:

- Engaged students
- Supported, up-to-date teachers
- An engaged community in the life of the school

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- If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten.

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