



## “Overcoming Global Achievement Gap to Fulfil the Global Educational Requirements”

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### ABSTRACT

*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. The Global achievement gap remains invisible to most of us - in part, because it is fueled by fundamental economic, social, political and technological changes that have taken place so rapidly over the last two decades that they seem more like static in people's lives than like tangible forces that are shaping our future. Therefore some measures required to be adopted to overcome global achievement gap are clear and public standards for what students should learn, challenging and interesting curriculum to be aligned with the standards and giving teachers and principals the preparation they need to become effective in the classroom.*

### KEYWORDS :

#### Introduction

Achievement refers to “The act of achieving something: the state or condition of having achieved or accomplished something” according to the dictionary. Improving the quality of education provided in schools has been a goal pursued for the last 10-15 years in India. Student-classroom ratio has improved from 48 in 2002-03 to 41 in 2005-06 at primary level and from 36 to 33 at the upper primary level during the same years (DISE, NUPEA, New Delhi, 2007). In this context, measurement of learning levels of school going children has come to occupy a place of central importance within and outside the public education system. What is even more disturbing is that several states in India which have been doing well in enrolment and participation lag behind when it comes to quality of learning and achievement.

In spite of the national curriculum framework's success in guiding through the different aspects of education and development of relevant text books, there has been a lag in the achievement of students. It does not bother much because of low academic achievement but even those students who are good in their academic achievement lacked life skills and vocational skills. This has created a big gap in the achievement leaving the outgoing students of high schools and of higher education unskilled to take up vocation. Not only is there a gap in achievement of skills but there is also an achievement gap amongst the different groups of students.

#### What is The “Global Achievement Gap”?

First let us understand Achievement gap. The achievement gap refers to the observed, persistent disparity of educational measures between the performances of groups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity and gender.

Generally speaking, achievement gap refers to outputs—the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results and benefits—while opportunity gap refers to inputs—the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Learning gap refers to relative performance of individual students—i.e., the disparity between what students have actually learned and what they were expected to learn at a particular age or grade level.

While particular achievement gaps may vary significantly in degree

or severity from group to group or place to place, achievement gaps are defined by their consistency and persistence—i.e., achievement gaps are not typically isolated or passing events, but observable and predictable trends that remain relatively stable and enduring over time. While it is possible that some educators may use achievement gap in reference to individual student achievement, it is more likely that a term such as learning gap will be used: achievement gap nearly always refers to disparities of achievement between or among student groups.

For example, the most commonly discussed achievement gap in the United States is the persistent disparity in national standardized-test scores between white and Asian-American students, two groups that score higher on average, and African-American and Hispanic students, two groups that score lower on average. Another achievement gap that has received considerable attention in recent years is the lagging performance of American students on international tests in comparison to students from other developed countries. Although disparities in test scores tend to be the most discussed, scrutinized, and reported achievement gaps, educational performance and attainment disparities may appear in a wide variety of data sets, including graduation rates, college - enrolment rates, college-completion rates, course grades, dropout rates, absenteeism rates, and disciplinary infractions, among many other possible categories of student-achievement data tracked by government agencies, districts, and schools.

The following list provides a representative sample of the major student subgroups that tend to exhibit achievement gaps:

- General and minority students
- Male and female students
- Students from higher-income and lower-income households and communities
- English-speaking students and students who are learning English or who cannot speak English, including recently arrived immigrant or refugee students
- Non-disabled students and students with physical or learning disabilities
- Students whose parents have earned a college degree and students whose parents have not earned a college degree (these students are often called first-generation if they decide to enroll in college)

The following list, however, is a representative selection of a few underlying causes identified by educators and researchers:

Poverty, income inequality, and lower socioeconomic status contributing to reduced access to educational opportunities, familial support, good nutrition, healthcare, and other factors that tend contribute to stronger educational achievement.

Minority status giving rise to racism, prejudice, stereotyping, ethnic bias, and institutionalized predispositions—such as the tendency in schools to lower academic expectations for minorities or enroll them in less-challenging courses—that may negatively affect educational achievement. For a related discussion, see stereotype threat.

Lower-quality schools, ineffective teaching, student overcrowding, dilapidated school facilities, and inferior educational resources, programs, and opportunities in economically disadvantaged schools and communities.

The disproportionate representation of minority and lower-income students in the lowest-achieving schools, lower-level academic classes, and courses taught by the least experienced or effective teachers.

Parent and family factors such as low educational attainment, unemployment, or familial instability contributing to reduced academic motivation, disrupted education, or lower educational and career aspirations.

Little or no English-language understanding, fluency, or literacy contributing to educational underperformance, decreased academic motivation, or higher dropout rates.

Flawed testing and assessment designs that may inadvertently skew scores for certain groups of students over others, such as computer-based tests administered to students with low technological literacy or tests that are written with a “cultural bias” and use terms, concepts, and situations that may be less understandable to certain groups of students, such as urban minorities or the children of immigrant families.

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.

Increasingly today in India and in other countries, as well—there are two achievement gaps in our education systems. The first of these are the well-documented, widely discussed, and the focus of education reform efforts for the past decade or so, is the gap between the quality of schooling that most middle-class kids get in India and the quality of schooling available for most poor and minority children and the consequent disparity in results.

The second one is the global achievement gap, as we have come to call it, is the gap between what even our best suburban, urban, and rural public schools are teaching and testing versus what all students will need to succeed as learners, workers, and citizens in today's global knowledge economy.

#### **Some facts about global achievement gap:**

Only about a third of all high students graduate ready for college in the world today, and the rates are much lower for poor and minority students. More than a third of all students who enter college must take remedial courses. While no hard data is readily available, it is estimated that 1 out of 2 students who start college never complete any kind of postsecondary degree.

Sixty-five percent of college professors report that what is taught in high school does not prepare students for college. One major reason is that the tests students must take in high school for state accountability purposes usually measure ninth- or tenth-grade level

knowledge and skills. Being mostly multiple-choice assessments, they rarely ask students to explain their reasoning or to apply knowledge to new situations—skills that are critical for success in college—and so neither teachers nor students receive useful feedback about college readiness.

In order to earn a decent wage in today's economy, most students will need at least some postsecondary education. An estimated 85 percent of current jobs and almost 90 percent of the fastest-growing and best-paying jobs now require postsecondary education. Even most of today's manufacturing jobs now require postsecondary training and skills. According to the authors of “America's Perfect Storm,” “Over the next 25 years or so, nearly half of the projected job growth (in jobs) will be concentrated in occupations associated with higher education and skill levels. This means that tens of millions more of our students and adults will be less able to qualify for higher paying jobs. Instead, they will be competing not only with each other and millions of newly arrived immigrants but also with equally (or better) skilled workers in lower-wage economies around the world.”

Students are graduating from both high school and college unprepared for the world of work. Less than a quarter of the more than 400 employers recently surveyed for a major study of work readiness report that new employees with four-year college degrees have “excellent” basic knowledge and applied skills. Among those who employ young people right out of high school, nearly 50 percent said that their overall preparation was “deficient.”

The U.S. high school graduation rate—which is about 70 percent of the age cohort—is now well behind countries like Denmark (96 percent) and Japan (93 percent)—and even Poland (92 percent) and Italy (79 percent).

#### **Overcoming The Global achievement Gap**

What are these new skills, and why they have become so important? Why do our schools—even the best ones—not teach and test them? How do we need to differently prepare and support educators to meet these new challenges, and what are the best ways to hold our schools accountable? How do we motivate today's students to want to excel in this new world, and what do good schools look like that are meeting these challenges and getting dramatically better results? What we can and must we do as citizens about this growing global achievement gap? These are some of the questions that arise when we look at the facts. Hence the following are measures that can be adopted to overcome the global achievement gap.

#### **The Basics**

The Education points to these four proven solutions for reducing achievement gaps:

**Standards:** Clear and public standards for what students should learn, at benchmark grade levels, is essential.

**Curriculum:** Challenging and interesting curriculum must be aligned with the standards.

**Extra help:** Additional instruction, time, and support may be needed for some students.

**Teachers:** Good teaching matters more than anything else.

#### **Some Common Steps**

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

### Engage the Business Community

The business community is taking an active role in education. Rather than just donating money to school causes, more and more business groups want to lend a hand in the classroom, in curriculum, through leadership and mentoring, and in policy. To make these types of partnerships work, business people who want to be active must let their local schools know, and schools must create a welcoming atmosphere that engages their entire community.

### Teacher and Principal Preparation

Giving teachers and principals the preparation they need to be effective in the classroom and the community is essential to school success. Increasing calls for teacher and school accountability go hand-in-hand with educator preparation. Some reformers recommend changes in our state and nation's colleges of education. Increased professional mentoring and professional development are also common strategies.

### Essential skills to be imparted

- Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding
- Culture and Belief
- Empirical Reasoning
- Ethical Reasoning
- Science of Living Systems
- Science of the Physical Universe
- Societies of the World

In addition, the faculty should be urged to pursue hands-on, activity-based learning and increase class discussions vs. lectures.

### Considering Culture

Most educators agree young people are excited about school when it is made relevant to them. Some culturally based strategies for achieving that goal include:

- Curriculum based on traditional culture
- Culturally sensitive, activity-based, outdoor curriculum (shown effective for Native Americans)
- Culturally based motivation through role models, teachers, and parents

### Rigor in the classroom

- Weighing Evidence
- Awareness of Varying Viewpoints
- Seeing Connections/Cause & Effect
- Speculating on Possibilities/Conjecture
- Assessing Values

### Conclusion

As a country, we've been striving to close the first achievement gap by bringing our poorest schools up to the standards of our middle-class schools—mainly through increased testing and greater accountability for progress, as measured by the tests. However, it has become increasingly clear that even in these "good" schools, students are simply not learning the skills that matter most for the twenty-first century. Our system of public education—our curricula, teaching methods, and the tests we require students to take—were created in a different century for the needs of another era. They are hopelessly outdated.

The global achievement gap remains invisible to most of us—in part, because it is fueled by fundamental economic, social, political, and technological changes that have taken place so rapidly over the last two decades that they seem more like static in people's lives than like tangible forces that are shaping our future. But these changes are powerful, and until we understand them and rethink

what young people need to know in the twenty-first century and how they are best taught, our future as a country remains uncertain. In this "newly flattened world," to borrow a phrase from Thomas Friedman, the universe in which our children must compete and succeed has been rapidly transformed by groundbreaking and rapidly evolving technologies, as well as by the stunning economic growth of countries such as China, India, Thailand, the Philippines, and many more.

To deal with these challenges and others that will inevitably emerge, we need to ensure that students are differently educated for the future. If we were "a nation at risk" in 1983—a phrase that comprised the title of a famous education report released that year decrying the "rising tide of mediocrity" in our public education system—we are today far more seriously at risk than most people realize. And while No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was well intended, its implementation is, in fact, putting all of our children further behind in acquiring the new survival skills for learning, work, and citizenship.

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