

# Shaping a New Generation

The advantage technology brings to education and how to stay ahead of the curve

## GENERATION Z

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



**Dr. Ronald Ferguson**

*Faculty Co-Chair and Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative  
at Harvard University*

**Nothing is more important...**

than having a great teacher in a classroom, and making sure that they have the knowledge, support and professional development they need to provide innovative education.



The contents presented here are portions of a larger summit and specific keynotes originally delivered on September 30, 2016 during an educational summit convened by AVID—Advancement Via Individual Determination.

[www.avid.org](http://www.avid.org)



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Dr. Ferguson actively works with school departments and agencies at all levels of government on efforts to raise achievement levels and close achievement gaps. His research and work in the field culminated in publishing a book used in graduate-level policy courses titled *Toward Excellence with Equity: An Emerging Vision for Closing the Achievement Gap*. His latest book is *Aiming Higher Together, Strategizing Better Educational Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*.

### The peer success mindset.

Dr. Ferguson postulates that effective communities expand the range of options that are available for students and give students support in selecting goals from among available options. For any given option that a student finds attractive and wants to pursue as a goal, they need strategies. For any given strategy, they need resources. While they're learning what the strategies are, they're also learning how to use the available resources, and they become attached to particular goals. Students that become attached to goals have a sense of agency which is the ability and the propensity to take purposeful action.

Students need to believe that the rewards of making the effort are worth it. The most important rewards are on basic human-motive dimensions. They are the need for belonging, the need for a sense of competence, and the need for a sense of influence.

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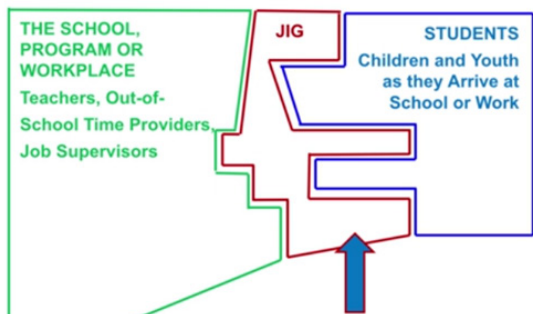
**Institutions need to find ways to make learning experiences rewarding, so that kids come into school and feel a sense of belonging, a sense of confidence, and a sense of influence.**

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### Building Jigs

In carpentry, there's the notion of a jig. A jig is something that you build between two things that don't fit together. It's tailored to fit on either side so that both pieces can fit together and be one piece.

### Issues of fit between young people and the schools and workplaces that need to prepare them for life.



- Professional Development
- Placement Intermediaries
- New Social Network Ties

It is like the missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle. A lot of the work that needs to be done to address the needs of diverse students is like building a jig.

The question is, what forms do the jigs take? A jig can be professional development for educators, or intermediary organizations that focus on cultural competence, helping people from different cultural constructs understand one another better.

### K-12 Preparation

We need educators that know how to manage the classes that they are assigned to teach, which does not mean just keeping the kids orderly, but engaging the students intellectually. Educators need to know how to express caring, how to confer, how to captivate their students. They need to be able to teach their students how to clarify what they need to have clarified, how to consolidate by linking things with their lives and making things coherent, and how to challenge them in a way that strikes just the right balance to have them on task, tuned in and learning in the classroom.

K-12 organizational preparation has to help put together the professional development that's going to help teachers learn how to work with the kids that they have. We can find ways to make experiences in institutions rewarding, so kids come in and feel a sense of belonging, confidence, and influence—which is a lot of what AVID is focused on providing for kids. At the same time they're learning the strategies, they're learning how to use these resources, and they're attached to particular goals. Then, we've got a lot more kids with a sense of agency who have the ability and the propensity to take purposeful action.

And finally, community preparation is about developing an elective sense of responsibility for kids in a community and helping everybody in the community find ways that they can contribute to this.

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