



16th Annual
Hawker Brownlow
**Thinking &
Learning**
Conference

the teacher's conference

ANTHONY MUHAMMAD

SUNDAY 19 MAY

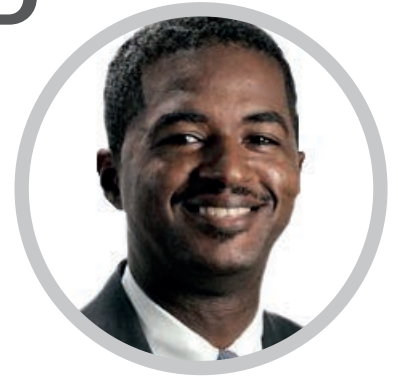
Session 1

**Mindset and Achievement:
Addressing Systemic Bias and Discrimination**

MELBOURNE

ANTHONY MUHAMMAD

Dr Anthony Muhammad is a much sought-after educational consultant, having served as principal for a middle and high school and as a middle school teacher and assistant principal. His tenure as a practitioner has earned him several awards as both a teacher and a principal. As a researcher, Anthony has published multiple books and articles, and he regularly gives seminars on the subject of transforming school culture. Anthony's most notable accomplishment came as principal of Levey Middle School in Michigan, a National School of Excellence, where student proficiency on state assessments more than doubled in five years.



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Mindset and Achievement:
Addressing Systemic Bias and
Discrimination

Anthony S. Muhammad, Ph.D.

1

My Motivation

- The conference call
- The doctor's visit
- The editorial

2

Why Are You Here?

- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What is the current state of fairness and equity in your school and district?
- What would a perfect session look like for you?

3



Workshop Disclaimer–Warning ☺

- We will examine personal, social, and professional mindsets, and the workshop material is designed to be provocative and force discomfort and cognitive dissonance.
- This workshop will be difficult for people who are “offensive” (overly sensitive and easily offended).

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Public School Purpose

- All children have the **right** to have their gifts and talents cultivated through the process of education.
- All children **can** learn and become educated.

(Cuban & Tyack, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*, 1995)

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What Has History Taught Us?

All students have not benefited equally from access to educational institutions.

6

The Achievement Gap

Achievement gap refers to the observed and persistent disparity on a number of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by **gender, race or ethnicity, language, disability, and socioeconomic status.**

The achievement gap can be observed on a variety of measures, including standardized test scores, grade point average, dropout rates, and college enrollment and completion rates.

(The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University, <http://www.agi.harvard.edu/projects/thegap.php>)

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American Context 2018

- One in three schools with a majority African American or Latino student population offer a single chemistry course. One in four offer a course beyond Algebra II.
- African American and Latino students make up over 40% of American public school students but less than 25% of gifted and talented program enrollees.
- African American students are suspended at a rate three times higher than other public school students.
- African American, Latino, and impoverished students attend schools with the highest concentration of first year and nontenured teachers.

(U.S. Department of Education, "2013–2014 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look," 2016)

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Australian Context 2018

*"Educational inequality has cost the **Australian economy** more than \$20bn, as well as contributing to the widening gap between rich and poor, new research has found.*

The report from the Public Education Foundation found that students at the bottom of Australia's schooling system were falling further behind, despite increased spending on education, with their socioeconomic status and parents' education remaining key factors."

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/apr/03/educational-inequality-widening-australias-rich-poor-gap-report-finds>

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Major Risk Factors/Predictors for Australian Achievement Gap

- Race (Aboriginal)
- Low Income
- Parent Education Level
- Immigration Status

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/apr/03/educational-inequality-widening-australias-rich-poor-gap-report-finds>

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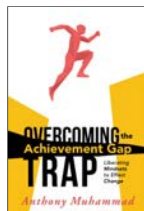


“The world’s problems begin with the belief that some human lives are more valuable than others.”

—Nelson Mandela

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The Problem



“Our society tends to embrace the idea of equality as dogma, but society has not embraced the idea of equity in service and environment in order to achieve the equality that we claim that we desire” (p. 3).

This is a problem.

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Pause to Think!

- Review your data and fill out the Equity Inventory.
- Is there a sense of urgency to address their needs in your school and district?
- Share your information with a neighboring table.

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Levey Middle School



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Levey Middle School:
A Case Study

- 97% African-American; student population of 800+
- Schoolwide Title 1 eligible
- 80+% of students from single female-headed households
- Achievement scores well below state averages
- 25–40% annual student mobility rate

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Levey Middle School:
A Case Study

- 65% of staff in first, second, or third year
- 2000–2001 school year
 - Students received 3,000+ disciplinary suspensions.
 - 150+ students failed two or more classes and were required to attend summer school.
 - Three parents were arrested for disorderly conduct on campus.
 - I was the third principal in three years.

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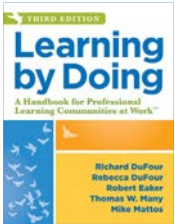
Guiding Coalition

- Establish a coalition of people who will guide your PLC journey
- Ensure that membership represents a diverse cross-section of staff members
- Levey Guiding Coalition (Administrators, Guidance Counselors, and Department Chairpersons)
- This team met twice every summer (full days) and two times per month (two hours) throughout the school year

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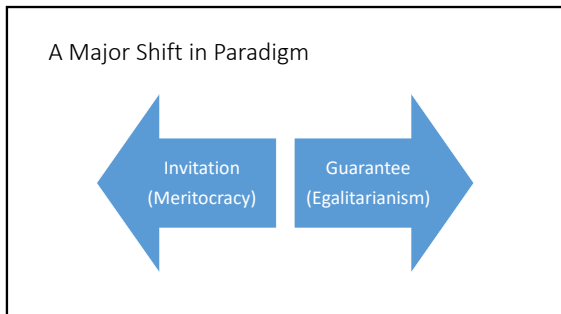
Call to Arms

“When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for *all* students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it.”



—DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (2010), p. 11

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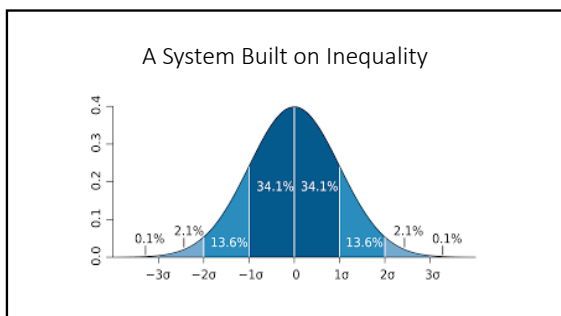
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Meritocracy

A system in which the talented are *chosen* and *moved* ahead on the basis of their achievement

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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Meritocracy Is the Foundation for ...

- Grading practices
- Academic tracking
- Norm-referenced testing
- School accountability ratings
- Merit pay and evaluation

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Meritocracy Makes Sense in ...

- Sales
- Commerce
- Athletics
- Talent competitions

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Toxic School Culture
(Meritocracy)

“Educators believe that student success is based on students’ level of concern, attentiveness, prior knowledge, and willingness to comply with the demands of the school, and they articulate that belief in overt and covert ways.

“Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the impossibility of universal achievement.”

—Peterson in Cromwell, “Is Your School Culture Toxic or Positive?” *Education World* (2002)

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Pause to Think!

- Take your policy and procedure documents and complete the Meritocracy Inventory.
- Do you anticipate other staff members protesting the deconstruction of some of these policies? If so, what might they argue?
- Share your findings with a neighboring table.

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Egalitarianism

1. A belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs
2. A social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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"Excellence in education is when we do everything that we can to make sure they become everything that they can."

-Carol Ann Tomlinson

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Criterion Reference
vs.
Norm Reference

Criterion-referenced tests and [assessments](#) are designed to measure student performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or [learning standards](#)—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education.

The Glossary of Educational Reform
<https://www.edglossary.org/criterion-referenced-test/>

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4. Regardless of aptitude, every kid deserves to be treated as though they were gifted.

The study's focus is specifically on kids within a certain range of intellectual ability, but Lubinski is careful to note that many of its findings can and should be applied to all students.

For example, the kids in the study who were given an opportunity to take more challenging courses that aligned with their skills and interests ultimately went on to accomplish more than the students who were not afforded the same opportunity.

(2013) Benbow, Kell, and Lubinski, Who Rises to the Top?, *Psychological Science*, 24(5)

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Healthy School Culture (Egalitarian)

“Educators have an unwavering belief in the ability of all of their students to achieve success, and they pass that belief on to others in overt and covert ways. Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the ability of every student.”

—Peterson in Cromwell, “Is Your School Culture Toxic or Positive?” *Education World* (2002)

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Pause to Think!

- Take your policy and practice documents and complete the Egalitarian Inventory.
- Do some staff members at your school oppose these policies? What are some of their arguments?
- Share your findings with a neighboring table.

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Learning Activities?

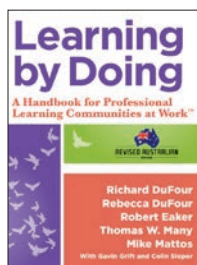
An analysis of research conducted over a 35-year period demonstrates that schools that are highly effective produce results that almost entirely overcome the effects of student backgrounds.

(Marzano, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research Into Action*, 2003)

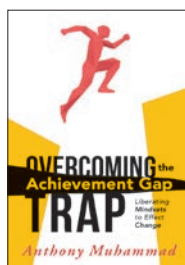
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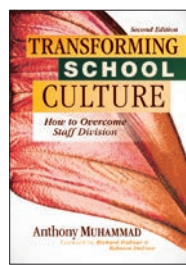
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	SOT5473	Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work, Revised Third Edition	\$55.00
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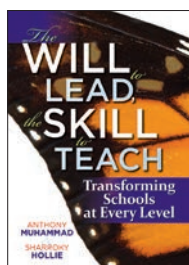
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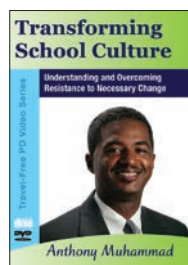
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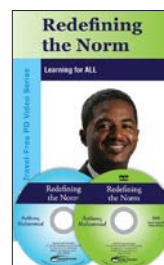
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