Educational Justice and College for All
New Reforms, An Old Dilemma, and An “Obvious” Solution
College for all? College-readiness for all!
Questioning the Wisdom of “College for All”
Critiques of the American High School

• Standards are too low
• Simply boring
• Dropout factories
• Graduates are not prepared for either college or career
The Reaction

“Every single time we create multiple tracks, we always send disproportionate numbers of poor kids and kids of color down the lesser one.”

Kati Haycock
The Education Trust

“To say we’ve tried this and it failed seems a bit premature, like snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.”

Michael Cohen
Achieve
An Old Dilemma: What to do about diversity?

“Until very recently *the schools* have offered equal opportunity for all to receive *one kind* of education, but what will make them democratic is to provide opportunity for all to receive education as will fit them *equally well* for their particular life work.”

Superintendent, Boston Schools, 1908

“Our city schools will soon be forced to give up the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal, and our society devoid of classes . . . and to begin a specialization of educational effort among many lines in an attempt to adapt the school to the needs of these many classes . . .”

Elwood Cubberly, 1909
An Old Resolution:
What to do about diversity?

Linking the school’s need for a differentiated curriculum with industry’s needs for trained workers.
Not everyone agreed:

“I am utterly opposed to giving the power of social predestination, by means of narrow trade-training, to any group of fallible men no matter how well-intentioned they may be.”

John Dewey, 1915
Evidence-based practice

“Their dullness seems to be racial . . . Children of this group should be segregated in special classes . . . . They cannot master abstractions, but they can often be made efficient workers.”

Lewis Terman, 1923
The Result?
Exactly what was designed

Differentiated High School Curricula → Unequal Opportunity & Outcomes → Race and Social Class Stratification
College prep for all was a huge victory
An Alternative Approach to preparing ALL for BOTH college AND career
Features of Linked Learning

- 4 core components
  - College preparatory academics
  - Challenging professional/technical/applied studies
  - Rigorous field-based experiences that contextualize learning
  - Flexible time and support to accommodate differences in academic readiness
Propositions Underlying Linked Learning:

• Learning *both* academic and technical knowledge is enhanced when the two are integrated and contextualized in authentic situations

• Connecting academics to real-world contexts promotes student interest and engagement

• Students who gain both college and career preparation stand the best chance of leaving high school with a solid start toward a middle-class life
Example: San Diego City Schools

Kearny High Educational Complex

Comprehensive high school reconstituted as 4 magnet schools

Stanley E. Foster ConstructionTech Academy
California leads the nation

in ideas at least . . . .
Challenges

There’s just not enough time . . .
An “Obvious” Solution

Provide more and better learning time in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty
Impact of school and out-of-school factors on student achievement
5 Small Schools

- East Los Angeles Performing Arts Academy
- Engineering and Technology Academy
- Humanitas Academy of Art and Technology
- Renaissance Academy
- Social Justice Leadership Academy
The Desired Result

Differentiated High School Curricula

Unequal Opportunity & Outcomes

Race and Social Class Stratification
Do we have the will?