



Dr. Reeves is the author of more than 40 books and more than 100 articles on leadership and education. He has twice been named to the Harvard University Distinguished Authors Series and was named the Brock International Laureate for his contributions to education. His career of work in professional learning led to the Contribution to the Field Award from the National Staff Development Council, now Learning Forward.

Doug has worked in 50 states and more than 40 countries. His volunteer activities include FinishTheDissertation.org, providing free and non-commercial support for doctoral students, and *The SNAFU Review*, publishing the essays, poetry, stories, and artwork of disabled veterans. Doug lives in Boston. He Tweets @DouglasReeves, blogs at CreativeLeadership.net, and can be reached at 1.781.710.9633.



**Equity and
Excellence
NOW**

Douglas Reeves
The Equity and Excellence
Institute

A Nonprofit Organization
Douglas.Reeves@CreativeLeadership.net
@DouglasReeves
(781) 710-9633

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Free Resources


- **FinishTheDissertation.org** – free support for doctoral candidates around the world
- **CreativeLeadership.net** – free videos, tools, and research



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Overview

- **Research Update**
- **National Perspective**
- **Case Studies in Equity and Excellence**
- **Core Competencies**
- **Change Leadership**



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2023 Research Update - The Bad News

- Lost two decades of progress in closing equity gaps
- Reading catch up requires 11-22 weeks on average, and in many schools a full year
- Significant doubt about impact of after-school and summer school interventions
- College admissions down, especially for Black and Hispanic students



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2023 Research Update - The Good News

- Local evidence of impact - the “science fair” at the end of every semester
- Reallocation of time breaks the trend in lower math performance
- 80%+ decrease in the high school D/F rate with two changes - ban the average and practice in class



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National Perspective:

- 1) Staff shortages - 53% of teachers would leave if they could. Turnover of teachers and administrators especially bad in high-poverty schools. Money is important, but not sufficient to retain great teachers and leaders



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National Perspective:

2) Behavior - more severe from primary grades through high school. This is strongly associated with higher levels of failure, stress, anxiety, and depression. Teachers are not equipped to be psychologists



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National Perspective:

3) Student leadership - administrators must explicitly teach student leadership skills and dramatically expand extracurricular opportunities for student leadership



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National Perspective:

4) Basic skills - Some 3rd graders don't know letters and numbers or how to hold a pencil. 7th graders who do not know number operations. Teachers need TIME.



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National Perspective:

5) Time, Time, Time - Do you have the same schedule and time allocation in 2023 as you had in the fall of 2019?

- Staff meetings
- Power Standards
- Mini-assessments



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National Perspective:

6) Psychological Safety - “Fearless Schools” - A psychologically safe school is one in which mistakes are the source of learning, not shame, for students and staff members



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National Perspective:

7) Self-Care for teachers and leaders. This includes explicit boundaries on time for staff and families. Turn off audio alarms for texts and e-mails. Share duties to observe school events. Wall of weekends and evenings



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National Perspective:

8) Excessive Failure Rates:

- Step 1: Ban the average – teachers must evaluate students based on proficiency, never the average
- Step 2: Practice in class, not at home – ban failures for missing homework
- Step 3: Require a “name and a need” BEFORE any D or F goes to students and parents



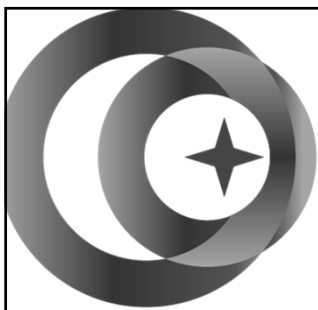
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Equity AND Excellence

- Equity without excellence is perceived as a codeword for low expectations
- Excellence without equity is perceived as a code for exclusion



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Why do people distrust educational research?

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The Five Levels of Evidence

- 1) Beliefs
- 2) Personal experience
- 3) Collective Experience
- 4) Systematic Comparison
- 5) Preponderance of Evidence



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What Does “Level 5” Preponderance of Evidence Mean?

- Multiple methods
- Independent
- Diverse student demographics
- Acknowledgment of limitations and errors



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Case Studies in Equity and Excellence

- Advanced Placement Classes
- Gifted and Talented Programs
- Discipline and Suspensions
- Homework
- Grading



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Equity Case Study #1: AP Classes

- Nationally, students of color account for 8.8% of AP exam takers and 4.3% of students earning a 3 or higher.
- There are self-imposed structural barriers to equity, starting in elementary school



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The K-12 Shared Responsibility for Equity

- What must leaders do at your level to improve opportunities for college credit for every high school student?



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Equity Case Study #2: Gifted and Talented Programs

- Watch the “GATE” Keepers
- Cast a wide net
- Peer (not just parent) referrals
- The myth of precision in selection
- Add random selection



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Equity Case Study #3: Discipline and Suspensions

- What is the most common office referral?
- When do office referrals become suspensions?
- When do suspensions lead to automatic failure and disengagement?




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Equity Case Study #4: Homework

- The #1 cause of D/F grades is “missing work”
- Describe the student who has perfect work completion?
- But students need to do homework because students need



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**What are the elements of effective practice?
Ask a coach!**

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Describe Effective Practice

- **Student Performance**
- **Feedback**
- **RESPECT for feedback**
- **APPLICATION of feedback**
- **Continuous Support**



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The Evidence on Homework

- **Grades k-6 - zero impact**
- **Grades 7-12 - minimal impact**



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Give Parents What They Want - Homework Menu

- **Write a family history**
- **Start a neighborhood newspaper**
- **Read aloud**
- **Prepare meals**
- **Just anything but the odd-numbered problems one through thirty**



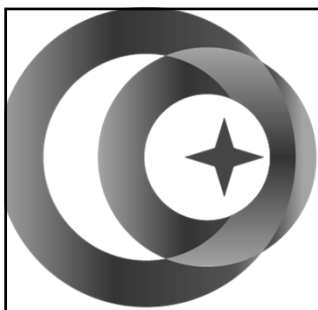
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Equity Case Study #5: Grading Practices

- It's not about "Standards-Based Grading"
- It's not about a new policy or micromanagement of teachers
- It's just about FAIR and ACCURATE grading



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It's not about grading - it's about FEEDBACK.

Describe the characteristics of the most effective feedback you have ever received.

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Great Feedback is FAST

- Fair
- Accurate
- Specific
- Timely



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Fairness is About Consistency

- The same student work receives the same grade
- Collaborative scoring is a core activity of collaborative teams within a Professional Learning Community
- If you disagree with one another, the enemy is not your fellow teachers - the enemy is ambiguity



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How to Test the Fairness of Your Grading Systems

- 1) Ask: *'What's the difference between students who make A's and B's and those who earn D's and F's?'*
- 2) Provide an authentic list of scores on homework, quizzes, formative, and summative assessments and ask teachers to calculate the final grade
- 3) See if the results are consistent



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Peripheral Issues in Grading

- Letters vs. numbers - *It doesn't matter. Don't major in the minors*
- Zero and the minimum fifty - *it's an unnecessary fight if you get rid of the average and evaluate students based on proficiency, not the average*



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Why Grading Reform Fails

- Unnecessary complexity - many standards-based report cards - especially those from electronic systems - are too long, complicated, and filled with jargon
- Parent fears of lack of transcripts for college admission and scholarship applications



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Rule #1 of Change: Be Clear About What Does Not Change

- We will still have A,B,C,D,F letter grades
- We will still have transcripts and GPA's
- We will still have academic honors - though we will make them more accurate and fair
- Teachers still have the authority to grade students - as long as the grades are accurate and fair



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Practical Issues for Immediate Impact

Require early warning for all D/F grades - a "name and a need"

- Ban automatic failures
- Teachers - not technology vendors - determine grades



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What's in it for Teachers?

- **Better discipline**
- **Classroom climate**
- **Honest conversations**
- **More electives**
- **Fewer late arrivals**
- **Improved attendance**



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Case Studies in Equity and Excellence

- **Advanced Placement Classes**
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- **Discipline and Suspensions**
- **Homework**
- **Grading**



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Core Competencies of Equity and Excellence Schools

- **Focus**
- **Feedback**
- **Instruction**
- **Leadership**
- **Efficacy**



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Focus

- Focused Curriculum
- Focused Technology
- Focused Leadership



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Focused Curriculum

- Too many standards, too little time
- Power Standards:
 - Leverage
 - Endurance
 - Essentiality



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Where to Focus? Nonfiction Writing

- Leverage in reading comprehension, math, science, and social studies
- Simple scoring rubrics – just organization and conventions
- Kindergarten through 12th grade



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Where to Focus? Collaborative Scoring

- Saves time and improves accuracy
- Use anonymous student work
- Agree on what “proficiency” means
- The enemy is not each other - the enemy is ambiguity



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Focused Technology

- The hazards of choice
- Focus on one platform
- Focus on one data source
- There are no “free” applications
- 1:1 tech coaches, not workshops



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The Human Toll of Technology

- Fragmented attention and pervasive ADHD (*Hari, Stolen Focus*)
- Cognitive cost (*Newport, A World Without E-mail*)
- Interpersonal disconnection (*Turkle, Reclaiming Conversation*)



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Focused Leadership

- **The Implementation Audit**
- **List every initiative – listen to teachers, because the list is always a longer list than administrators think!**



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Focused Leadership

- **Describe a range of implementation**
- **Assess implementation for every program**



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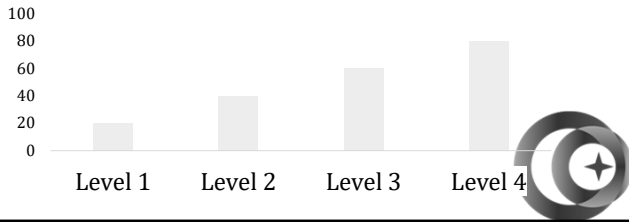
Implementation Audit

- **Level 1 – The boxes were delivered**
- **Level 2 – The teachers were trained**
- **Level 3 – Evidence of use of the training in the classroom**
- **Level 4 – Evidence of impact on student achievement.**



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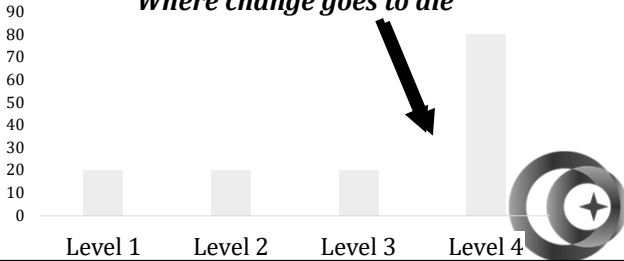
THE LINEAR MODEL OF CHANGE
Deeper Implementation Yields
Greater Results



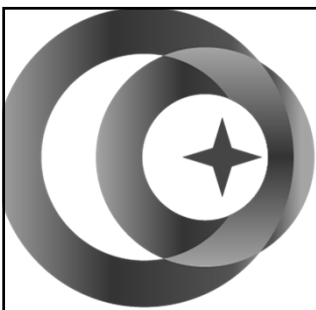
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THE NON-LINEAR REALITY OF
CHANGE

Where change goes to die



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Pervasive myths
about change

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**In order to make
change happen, you
first must have ...**

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The Old Model of Change


- 1) Attitudes and beliefs - must get buy-in before change**
- 2) Tentative changes in practice**
- 3) Evidence of success**



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**The New Model of
Change Leadership**

- 1) Implement practices**
- 2) Gain evidence of impact - "Science Fair"**
- 3) Buy-in is after evidence, not before**



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**The next myth
about change: In
schools, change
will take ...**

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From 5-7 Years to 100 Days


- Accelerate the pace of change with 100-day cycles
- Focus on short-term wins leading to the confidence to pursue long-term goals
- Make mid-course corrections where necessary
- Focus on **NO MORE THAN SIX** priorities



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Critical Messages to Leaders

- Equity is for everyone
- People, not products
- Practices, not programs
- Simple changes with big impacts
- Urgency - 40-year impact of dropouts



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Summary

- Research Update
- National Perspective
- Case Studies in Equity and Excellence
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Final thoughts . . .

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