National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

NAPE

Solving the Education Equation: A New Model for Improving Diverse Student Outcomes through Academic Equity

Executive Summary

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The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity ("NAPE") is a consortium of state and local agencies, corporations, and national organizations committed to the advancement of equity and diversity in classrooms and workplaces. NAPE was chartered in 1990 but has roots back to 1979 when a group of dedicated state sex equity coordinators formed a committee to sponsor an annual national sex equity conference. In 1993**,** NAPE became independent and began the process of incorporating and obtaining its nonprofit status as a 510(c)(6).

NAPE's membership is comprised of member states as well as local and community organizations through an affiliate membership status. NAPE's efforts since 1990 have focused on gathering and disseminating information, developing equity resource materials, sponsoring professional development, partnering with other organizations, and influencing public policy.

The NAPE Education Foundation, Inc. ("the Foundation") was established in 2002 in response to requests for assistance with program improvement efforts by education and workforce agencies across the nation. The Foundation shares NAPE's commitment to the advancement of equity and diversity in classrooms and workplaces. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Watch for the release of the full report on NAPE's website (www.napequity.org) on June 9, 2014.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thirty-five years ago the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) launched its first Professional Development Institute (PDI) dedicated to providing the best knowledge, tools, and resources to educators to improve access and equity in education for all students, particularly females, to increase their representation in high-tech, high-wage careers. Although great gains have been made to benefit women, their families, underrepresented groups, and persons with disabilities, they too often remain clustered in low-wage jobs that hinder economic prosperity for themselves and their communities. The greatest income challenges often fall on the shoulders of women of color and women with disabilities, highlighting the importance of addressing the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, class, and poverty.

In 2008 NAPE launched a strategy to revisit the question, "Given the time, energy, commitment, and resources dedicated to addressing the underrepresentation of students in nontraditional fields, why has the nation not made more progress?" Funding from the National Science Foundation (HRD 0734056) allowed NAPE's Chief Operations Officer, Claudia Morrell, along with leading educational researcher, Carolyn Parker, Ph.D., from The Johns Hopkins University School of Education, to conduct research and host meetings with leading scholars, scientists, and practitioners across multiple disciplines to address this question.

The results are as follows:

1. **Educators, researchers, and policy makers need to focus on both sides of the education equation.** By focusing on equal academic outcomes (what we want students to achieve as measured by standardized assessments), we may fail to acknowledge what students bring to the classroom. With increasing economic, cultural, racial, and gender diversity, teachers are struggling to meet the unique needs of every student.

2. **Our historical efforts have focused on gender without understanding the intersections of race, gender, and disability.** Our shared efforts to address gender, race, and disability differences may inadvertently be reinforcing the very stereotypes we are trying to address. Too often our phrasing in legislation and reporting (women and minorities) has highlighted single points of impact, such as the gender pay gap of 77%, often overlooking the intersections of multiple demographic elements. For example, compared to White males, White females make 80.5%, Black males 74.5%, Black females 69.6%, Hispanic males 65.9%, and Hispanic females 59.8%.[1]

3. **Efforts focusing on students rather than the adults in their lives will have limited success.** Educators and parents have the greatest ability to impact the lives of a student. Too often, we put the onus for change on the shoulders of the students. Essentially we have given responsibility for culture change to those with the least amount of power to change the classroom and workplace culture they are attempting to enter.

[1] U.S. Current Population Survey and the National Committee on Pay Equity; also Bureau of Labor Statistics, Weekly and Hourly Earnings Data from the Current Population Survey.

4. **We must broaden our education focus to include improved culturally sensitive communication among those who care for our students, including faculty and teachers.** The power of social media has elevated our awareness of the importance of communication in shaping world events one person at a time. NAPE's years of work have led to a new model of understanding of how cultural biases enter the classroom through our small and often subtle, yet powerful messages (micromessages) that are either negative (inequitable) or positive (affirming) and can impact student self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resulting behavior. Evidence now strongly indicates that improving classroom equity using culturally sensitive communication that conveys genuine caring can directly impact student outcomes.

5. **Improving processes can transform the classroom.** By treating educators as the *scientists in their own classrooms*, NAPE proposes that developing each educator's own unique knowledge, skills, and abilities will lead to improved academic outcomes for every student. Expecting that the highest standards of achievement be met by every student can only be realized by creating an equitable classroom experience for every child. Until teachers are provided the knowledge, tools, resources, time, and processes for their own continuous improvement, they will never be fully equipped to ensure that every child has what they need to be successful in college and in a career.

6. **NAPE has identified the point of interruption for behavior change.** Working with a large community of experts from across the country, NAPE has developed a new model for understanding and impacting academic outcomes in the classroom. Called the NAPE Culture Wheel, the model highlights the power of our small micromessages as both a point of positive and negative impact on student self-efficacy. Supporting students' ability to inoculate against micro-inequities and receive micro-affirmations, educators can interrupt the cycle of culturally based implicit biases and positively impact student self-efficacy to enter into high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand fields.

7. **The evidence for changing the model is in.** ***Micromessaging to Reach and Teach Every Student*™** (*Micromessaging*) is a research-based professional development program for educators designed to increase the success of students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with an emphasis on the intersections among underrepresented populations. Teachers learn how to become "scientists in their classrooms," to identify barriers to student learning, and to use the power of micromessages to improve classroom instructional strategies and increase the *participation, performance, and persistence* of students in STEM. *Micromessaging* includes seven units totaling 28 hours of training. The training is spread over a school year to meet the needs of the district.

   A program evaluation completed in 2014 showed that students of NAPE-trained teachers, compared to similar students of teachers who had not received training, performed better on district-wide End-of-Course exams in chemistry and physics. In another district, after NAPE trained all physics and chemistry teachers, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) tests passed for college credit (score of 3, 4, or 5) increased significantly for both boys and girls. For girls, the number of AP tests passed in chemistry increased by greater than 50% and in physics the number of tests passed more than doubled. (Source: M. Dryden, Ph.D., Independent Evaluator)