

The Global Achievement Gap - Tony's new book is now available in bookstores and online!

A bold new plan to teach and test the competencies that matter most for the 21st Century--and to motivate the "net" generation to excellence

The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach The New Survival Skills Our Children Need--and What We Can Do About It

Despite the best efforts of educators, our nation's schools are dangerously obsolete. Instead of teaching students to be critical thinkers and problem-solvers, we are asking them to memorize facts for multiple choice tests. This problem isn't limited to low-income school districts: even our top schools aren't teaching or testing the skills that matter most in the global knowledge economy. Our teens leave school equipped to work only in the kinds of jobs that are fast disappearing from the American economy. Meanwhile, young adults in India and China are competing with our students for the most sought-after careers around the world.

Education expert Tony Wagner has conducted scores of interviews with business leaders and observed hundreds of classes in some of the nation's most highly regarded public schools. He discovered a profound disconnect between what potential employers are looking for in young people today (critical thinking skills, creativity, and effective communication) and what our schools are providing (passive learning environments and uninspired lesson plans that focus on test preparation and reward memorization).

He explains how every American can work to overhaul our education system, and he shows us examples of dramatically different schools that teach all students new skills. In addition, through interviews with college graduates and people who work with them, Wagner discovers how teachers, parents, and employers can motivate the "net" generation to excellence.

An education manifesto for the twenty-first century, The Global Achievement Gap is provocative and inspiring. It is essential reading for parents, educators, policymakers, business leaders, and anyone interested in seeing our young people succeed as employees and citizens.

[Click here to see the Table of Contents and read the Introduction to The Global Achievement Gap.](#) [Click here if you would like to listen to a podcast interview with Tony about his new book.](#) Or read on to see a list of the Seven Survival Skills, as well as what the early reviewers are saying about this important book.

The Seven Survival Skills for Careers, College, & Citizenship in the 21st Century

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

"The idea that a company's senior leaders have all the answers and can solve problems by themselves has gone completely by the wayside...The person who's close to the work has to have strong analytic skills. You have to be rigorous: test your assumptions, don't take things at face value, don't go in with preconceived ideas that you're trying to prove." - Ellen Kumata, consultant to Fortune 200 companies

2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence

"The biggest problem we have in the company as a whole is finding people capable of exerting leadership across the board...Our mantra is that you lead by influence, rather than authority." - Mark Chandler, Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Cisco

3. Agility and Adaptability

"I've been here four years, and we've done fundamental reorganization every year because of changes in the business...I can guarantee the job I hire someone to do will change or may not exist in the future, so this is why adaptability and learning skills are more important than technical skills." - Clay Parker, President of Chemical Management Division of BOC Edwards

4. Initiative and Entrepreneurship

"For our production and crafts staff, the hourly workers, we need self-directed people...who can find creative solutions to some very tough, challenging problems." - Mark Maddox, Human Resources Manager at Unilever Foods North America

5. Effective Oral and Written Communication

"The biggest skill people are missing is the ability to communicate: both written and oral presentations. It's a huge problem for us." - Annmarie Neal, Vice President for Talent Management at Cisco Systems

6. Accessing and Analyzing Information

"There is so much information available that it is almost too much, and if people aren't prepared to process the information effectively, it almost freezes them in their steps." - Mike Summers, Vice President for Global Talent Management at Dell

7. Curiosity and Imagination

"Our old idea is that work is defined by employers and that employees have to do whatever the employer wants...but actually, you would like him to come up with an interpretation that you like-he's adding something personal-a creative element." -Michael Jung, Senior Consultant at McKinsey and Company

Advance Praise for The Global Achievement Gap

"The Global Achievement Gap is thoughtful and inspirational. It describes how, in these changing times, schools too must change if the US is to remain a strong economic and intellectual leader in the world, and it offers creative solutions and examples of success. This book will capture your head, your heart and, I hope, your future actions. This is a VERY important book for anyone who cares about preparing young people for success in a rapidly changing global society. Every school board member, administrator, teacher and parent in the nation should read this book."-Anne L. Bryant, Executive Director, National School Boards Association

"Tony Wagner argues persuasively that old ways of teaching are completely unsuited to new ways of working. The Global Achievement Gap should be grabbed by business leaders to guide a much-needed conversation with educators."-Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business School Professor and author of *America the Principled and Confidence*

"Tony Wagner takes us deep inside the black box of school curriculum in a way few authors have done. What do we mean by rigor? By 21st century skills? Wagner shows us concretely what thinking skills really are, how current approaches to 'raising standards' cannot get us there, and what will. Everyone concerned with American education should read this book." -Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University

"The Global Achievement Gap is a 'must' read for all policymakers as the Congress continues its debate on how best to reform the 'No Child Left Behind' law with a measure of flexibility, and where the thin line between 'performing' and 'failing' must be more about competing in this global world than simply about passing a standardized test. It's time to stop harping on what's wrong with our schools, and instead provide them with the tools - as author Tony Wagner eloquently lays out - that they need to produce competitive, connective, technologically proficient, hopeful young men and women ready to take on the challenges of a global economy and succeed." U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye

"School as we know it all too often does not engage students, teachers or leaders in the learning process and as a result we have a generation of students learning to 'do school' rather than learning the skills they really need to succeed. Tony Wagner makes a strong case for rethinking our entire approach to education, and his argument is persuasive."-Larry Stupski, Chairman, Stupski Foundation

"Tony Wagner is not just talking about our schools here--he is talking about the future our nation. The Global Achievement Gap cuts through the complexity and partisan posing so often associated with this genre. It is a powerful call to action, and a roadmap of how to fundamentally rethink the education of our children. If we ignore it, we do so at great peril." -Keith R. McFarland, Author of #1 Wall Street Journal and New York Times Bestseller, *The Breakthrough Company: How Everyday Companies Become Extraordinary Performers*

"Kudos to Tony Wagner for threading the K-12 education maze. Many people have been cursing the darkness, but by parsing the many dilemmas that students, teachers and parents face as well as examining different approaches that have been successful, he has lit a candle for those who want to help, but don't know where to start. Whether we become Rome or transition these exciting and perilous times successfully will depend upon the culture we leave our young. Tony has provided a map."-John Abele, Founding Chairman, Boston Scientific

The Global Achievement Gap is a lucid - and scary - book. It chronicles how policies whose intent is to improve our schools are actually shutting down their abilities to help students learn how to think. Parent, teachers, administrators and policy makers urgently need to understand what Wagner is telling us.-Clayton Christensen, Professor, Harvard Business School, Author of Disrupting Class

"This insightful book calls for a much needed dialogue between educators, business leaders and policy makers on the future of American education. By using many real-life examples, the book is a very readable starting point for that discussion."-Charles Fadel, Global Lead for Education, Cisco Systems

"In The Global Achievement Gap, Tony Wagner offers a thoughtful analysis of where we are in American public education (behind the times), and what we need to do to adapt to the future that is upon us. Drawing upon years of accumulated wisdom as a teacher, principal, trainer, and well-traveled observer of schools, Wagner builds a persuasive case for change in the way we approach schooling, grounded in the question, what does it mean to be an educated person in the 21st century?"-Dr. Richard C. Atkinson, President Emeritus, University of California

"The Global Achievement Gap offers a simple, readable, intelligent and compelling analysis of the needs of our schools and the ways to address them."-Dr. Arthur E. Levine, President, The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

"This important book is a wake-up call for America. Wagner shows that even the best schools are failing to teach the necessary skills for the 21st century. Students memorize academic content, and get high scores on standardized tests, but they never learn how to think, solve problems, or be creative. The stories about the few remarkable schools that are transforming classroom instruction and pointing the way to the future are compelling. Every parent, teacher, politician, and executive should read this book."-Keith Sawyer, author of Group Genius

"In this persuasive book, Tony Wagner delineates what skills are needed in a globalized era, why most American schools can't nurture them, and how today's schools could be transformed to cultivate tomorrow's skills."-Howard Gardner, author of Five Minds for the Future

"Tony Wagner has managed to penetrate the jargon and over-simplified responses to the pervasive underachievement that exists among our students. He has charted an important new direction and given us a way to get there. This book deserves to be powerfully influential."-Mel Levine MD, author of A Mind At a Time and The Myth of Laziness

"It's always an occasion for delight when Tony Wagner writes a new book. He's done it again by provoking us to think about the reasons behind the current furor over school achievement."-Deborah Meier, author of The Power of Their Ideas