

# **A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING YOUNG ADULT SUCCESS IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

---

## **WHITE PAPER: DEFINING YOUNG ADULT SUCCESS**

**By Jenny Nagaoka, Camille A. Farrington, and Stacy B. Ehrlich  
with David W. Johnson, Sarah Dickson, Ryan Heath, and Ashley Mayo**

*University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research*  
**Working Paper**  
**February 2014**  
**Revised November 2014**

*This project has been generously funded by the Wallace Foundation. We would like to thank all of the experts who graciously shared their time and knowledge with us to help shape this work. We would also like to thank our colleagues at CCSR who have supported us in this project, David Stevens, Elaine Allensworth, Kathleen Hayes, Emily Krone, Bronwyn McDaniel, and Melissa Roderick.*

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING YOUNG ADULT SUCCESS IN THE 21st CENTURY**

In November 2013, the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) was awarded a competitive grant from the Wallace Foundation to build a conceptual framework that articulates what is needed to guide children and youth into successful young adults. The framework seeks to identify the broad range of factors critical for young adult success and to consolidate current understanding of how these factors can be fostered in schools, communities, and homes from early childhood to young adulthood. While much is known from research and practice about promoting college and career success, the field would benefit tremendously from a coherent and accessible framework for preparing children and youth for young adulthood, one that could bring together the best research and practice knowledge from multiple fields, clarify how critical factors work together across settings to support children’s development, advance efforts to measure those factors, organize the contributions of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners around a common set of objectives, create a shared understanding of the levers of change associated with achieving those objectives, and provide a common language with which to discuss and evaluate contributions and refine approaches over time.

The charge in this ambitious, four-phase project is to analyze and synthesize the best of research evidence, expert opinion, and practice wisdom in the service of developing such a conceptual framework, culminating in a consolidation of our understanding in a final report (see Appendix A for a full description of this project). In addition to a thorough grounding in published research, our work involves talking to experts in research and practice across a range of fields and disciplines. We aim to find the points of agreement across disparate perspectives, raise the points of contention, and leverage the collective wisdom of diverse lines of research to best understand the full scope of factors essential to young adult success. The goal of the project is to build a common language and shared understanding of how to best promote and coordinate the development of these critical factors across the different settings that children and youth inhabit (e.g., home, school, after-school programs, and community) as they mature.

This white paper represents our thinking at the end of the first phase of this project. We’ve grounded our analysis in the literature and our rich discussions with a range of experts (see Appendix B for a list of these experts). We anticipate that the framework and the underlying “story” we present here will evolve as the project progresses. In this white paper, we raise and grapple with many questions that we will continue to explore in the second phase of the project and beyond. In the first section of this paper, we lay out our conceptualization of what preparation for young adulthood might look like in light of economic and societal challenges we face in the 21st century. In the second section, we briefly outline some existing models and frameworks, and introduce “integrated identity” and “agency” as critical concepts of how young adults utilize and shape their internal and external resources toward achieving their goals. In the third and final section, we offer a framework and give a broad overview of factors that we have identified in our review as being key to the development of children and youth so that they may be successful in young adulthood.

## **Section 1: The Challenges of Defining Success in Young Adulthood**

Every society in every age needs to grapple with the question of what outcomes it hopes to produce in raising its young. This seems particularly critical for adults who devote their lives trying to improve children's education and development. What exactly are we trying to accomplish? What vision guides our work? As a nation we make enormous investments in our youth, from early childhood through late adolescence, across a wide variety of institutional and personal contexts. At the start of the 21st century, amid exploding technological change, widening income inequality, and shifting social norms, the specific goals of these investments may be hard to articulate. Children born this year will come of age in 2032, and we have very little idea of the future for which we prepare them. What might we consider the successful culmination of 18 years of investment in education, socialization, and development for the young people we are raising today? What would make them "ready" for young adulthood?

These are critical questions to address, as the present outlook is bleak for a significant percentage of youth on any number of indicators. By the time the class of 2013 graduated from high school, a million of their classmates, nationally, had already dropped out (Swanson & Lloyd, 2013). Though high school completion rates are rising for all racial/ethnic groups, still only three out of four American students graduate in four years. For Latinos and African Americans, the rates are 68 percent and 62 percent, respectively (EPE Research Center, 2013). Even many high school graduates have grim prospects for future success. Every year, K-12 school systems produce large pools of young people with neither the academic qualifications to succeed in college nor the education or skills to compete for jobs that would give them financial independence. After high school, these kids have nowhere to go. In Chicago, almost half of all 2012 high school graduates fell into this category (Roderick, Coca, Moeller, & Kelley-Kemple, 2013). In fall of the same year, the national unemployment rate for recent high school graduates who were not enrolled in college was 34 percent. For recent high school dropouts, the unemployment rate was 50 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Without post-secondary education or training, these young people will earn significantly less in their lifetimes and are more likely to be underemployed or out of work than their more educated peers (Pew Research Center, 2014). The economic displacement of non-college-bound youth is compounded by an overall delayed entrance into the social institutions that have traditionally demarcated adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Where previous generations in their late teens and early twenties were getting married and starting families or careers, today's post-high school youth dwell in an amorphous space with few institutional ties.

This has not always been the case. In 1900, fewer than 5 percent of adolescents attended high school in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). As the high school enrollment rate grew throughout the 20th century, educational attainment and economic growth raised the standard of living of each new generation above that of their parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). For much of the last century, even students who did not complete high school were able to enter manufacturing jobs and earn family-supporting wages. In the past three decades, however, as employment opportunities have declined for workers without a college education, so too have most paths to the middle class.

Despite rising numbers of high school graduates and their rising aspirations to go to college, the growth in college degree completion has remained stubbornly elusive.

## Identifying Key Factors for “Success”

Given the harsh economic prospects facing youth with limited education, what do adolescents need to be prepared for young adulthood? School reformers and policymakers have argued that it is not enough for American students to earn a high school diploma; they must be prepared to continue their education to and through college (Achieve, Inc., 2012; Education Trust, 2012). This level of preparation is an imperative not just for individuals, but for the country as a whole. In the context of waning American advantage in a competitive global marketplace, the education policy narrative is often framed in terms of developing workers for 21st century jobs. In President Obama’s words: “America cannot lead in the 21st century unless we have the best educated, most competitive workforce in the world” (Remarks on Higher Education, April 24, 2009), setting a goal that “By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world” (Address to Joint Session of Congress February 24, 2009).

“College and career readiness” has thus become the mantra of the education world, where making students “college ready” means building their content knowledge and academic skills. Raising graduation requirements and academic standards and ratcheting up test-based accountability have been the primary strategies for achieving college readiness. The broad adoption of the Common Core State Standards is a testament to how widespread this view is; forty-three states and the District of Columbia have signed on to replace their previous state standards with the new Common Core to better prepare students for college. Students are increasingly encouraged—and in some districts required—to take Advanced Placement courses and upper-level science and math classes to prepare them for further studies and jobs in high-growth fields. The prevailing narrative is one of “gaps” between what students know—particularly what low-income youth of color know—and what they need to know in the new economy. Within this narrative, preparing adolescents for young adulthood depends on broadening access to advanced coursework and implementing rigorous academic standards to ensure that all students graduate ready for college.

Because content knowledge and skills are seen as the pathway to a college degree and productive work, test scores have become the primary measure by which children’s education is assessed. Teachers are increasingly evaluated on their ability to produce high test scores, a marker that has become synonymous with “effectiveness.” Even out-of-school programs are pressured to prove their worth by demonstrating impact on school achievement tests. Test scores have become the measure against which almost all educational interventions, pedagogical approaches, and curricular programs are currently judged. This reflects a deep belief in the importance of content knowledge for future success.

Clearly, knowledge development is a good thing—and few people disagree that knowledge is one of the essential foundations of success. But recently we are seeing a backlash against the overly narrow focus on academic content knowledge and skills—and the standardized achievement tests used to measure them—that have dominated educational policy for the past two decades. Parents, teachers, and others

are now arguing that, by focusing so narrowly on *what* and *how much* students have learned, we have lost sight of the personal qualities or characteristics that drive young people to engage in learning and work hard in school. Increasingly, we hear about the importance of grit, perseverance, self-control, and other “noncognitive” traits that differentiate motivated and focused students from those who seem to show little interest or determination in their school careers (e.g., Tough, 2012). According to this alternative narrative, what makes a successful young adult is a combination of inner drive, interpersonal competencies, the ability to regulate one’s focus and behavior, and resilience or “stick-to-it-ness” when times are tough. In UChicago CCSR’s critical review of the research on these noncognitive factors (so called to distinguish them from content knowledge as measured by cognitive tests), we found strong and conclusive evidence that students’ academic mindsets, learning strategies, perseverance, and behaviors were clearly and significantly related to their performance in school (Farrington et al., 2012). If we want to prepare adolescents for college and career, we must also attend to these motivational competencies that are so critically important for their engagement in school—and that will be equally important for their engagement in work and life as young adults.

We can broaden our understanding of preparation for college and career to include both content knowledge and the attitudes and behaviors that support learning and school performance, but these still don’t encompass the whole of our hopes for our children. In the face of formidable environmental and humanitarian crises at the dawn of the 21st century, we also need to prepare young people to be facile thinkers, inventors, and problem solvers with not only deep content knowledge, but the creativity and flexibility to apply their knowledge to novel situations (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2013). We need young people who can address global challenges and alleviate human suffering (Wagner, 2012). So too do we want to develop thoughtful and informed citizens who can continue to pursue the ideals of democracy that have led our country for almost 250 years. From this perspective, preparing adolescents for adulthood means cultivating young people’s critical thinking skills, building their knowledge of democratic institutions and processes, and instilling in them a sense of service to their communities and engagement in the political process (Gould, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Beyond the preparation young people need to engage in college, work, and civic activity, they also need other kinds of competencies to be connected and well-rounded young adults. One of the most notable transitions for youth, beginning in early adolescence, is the increased orientation toward peers and away from parents and family (Larson & Richards, 1994; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). With this development comes a heightened need for social-emotional competence. As adolescents move toward taking on new social roles—including romantic partnerships and eventually long-term commitments—interpersonal awareness and responsible decision-making can help youth take better care of themselves and build more satisfying relationships.

If we think of youth development from the perspective of a parent, we would want our children to be happy and confident in their own unique selves and to have whatever preparation they need to become caring adults with work they love, people who love them, and a meaningful place in the world. This individual development perspective is often shared by counselors, afterschool providers, coaches, ministers, scout leaders, arts educators, and other youth workers. People in these professions generally

value the unique gifts that youth bring to the world and want to help children and teenagers realize their own potential. We heard this from many of the experts we talked to for this project:

“What we really are shooting for is this pivot point to move them from trying to avoid failure to moving towards—I’d like to feel they’re pushing the frontier for themselves, and also doing the very measurable sort of things that we all agree are good: getting employed, getting raises, getting promotions, upward mobility. But the civic engagement piece is a very strong theme from [our program participants]. They are incredibly interested and passionate about lots of different things. So this kind of gets to self-actualization and what is my larger purpose. ‘What does it all mean?’” (Paige Ponder, CEO of One Million Degrees)

“Our ultimate goal for the students we serve is simple. By age 25, we expect [them] to be capable of making real choices to pursue the life and career they want to lead. In other words, the end goal is agency. It's what I—as a parent—want for my daughter. We want the same exact thing for the students we work with today. We don't care if our alumni chose to be doctors, or teachers, or politicians—but we do intend to ensure they have the capacity to do what they independently want to do.” (Jeff Nelson, CEO of OneGoal)

While these providers recognize that getting an education and a job are critically important outcomes for youth, they generally have a much broader conception of the goals of their work—and what the measures of success ought to be. Regardless of the specific mission of the organization in which they work, these adults often see their larger role as helping young people develop an awareness of themselves and of the wide range of options before them, some competencies to pursue those options, and the ability to make good future choices for their lives and be engaged citizens in the world. To fulfill this broader definition of success, the question is not what courses students should take in school or what facts or formulas they need to know, but what young people need to experience, feel, think, and be able to do in order to meet both the inward looking goals of creating a meaningful life and the more outward facing goals such as contributing to solving the monumental challenges of our time.

Across these varying perspectives, there is one basic commonality: they all depict “success” in young adulthood as depending on knowledge, skills, abilities, and characteristics embedded within the individual through the process of education. The job of schooling and youth development is to build and support the individual competencies and characteristics most strongly associated with adult success. But this picture of young people as self-actualized masters of destiny is complicated by persuasive research on the role of *context* in shaping youth outcomes. In *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, we noted that students could exhibit very different behaviors and degrees of perseverance from one classroom to the next, depending on the context of the classroom and the attitudes and beliefs (mindsets) each classroom fostered (Farrington et al., 2012). How important is context in determining the course of one’s life?

## **The Role of Context in Individual Success**

Thus far, we have considered different potential ingredients to young adult success, where these ingredients are seen as something embedded within the individual. This framing of success is captured

most clearly in the call to make adolescents “college ready” by the time they leave high school (i.e., equipped with the components required to succeed on a college campus). But overlapping bodies of research call into question the concept of college “readiness” altogether. Vincent Tinto (1993) has argued persuasively that students’ success in post-secondary education is highly dependent on institutional characteristics of the college they attend, including the extent to which institutions provide formal and informal supports to incorporate students into the intellectual and social life of the campus. Tinto is particularly critical of colleges and universities that admit students and subsequently show little or no institutional commitment to their education and welfare, leaving them to sink or swim on their own.

Ongoing work by our colleagues at the University of Chicago, led by Melissa Roderick, provides disturbing evidence that even when students emerge from high school with comparable sets of skills, those skills can leverage lesser opportunities for some students than for others. Their recent analyses of college outcomes among successive cohorts of Chicago Public School (CPS) graduates indicate that the same sets of grades and test scores produced systematic differences in college persistence depending on the institutional graduation rates of the colleges students attended (Roderick, Holsapple, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson, & Moeller, forthcoming). This confirmed their earlier findings that showed that a CPS graduate with a 3.5 GPA had between a roughly 20 percent chance of earning a college degree to an over 90 percent chance, depending on which college he or she attended among the 20 colleges most attended by CPS graduates (Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, & Moeller, 2008). Often colleges with the same level of selectivity (hence serving roughly similar students) have large differences in institutional graduation rates, rates that go as low as 4 percent. Roderick asks what it could mean for a young person to be “ready” for a college that only graduates 4 percent of its students. Part of being prepared for young adulthood may include being able to understand how to navigate multiple, complex contexts and advocate for oneself within potentially hostile or indifferent institutions. However, clearly, college success cannot simply be a matter of the individual preparedness of the student.

Young adult success, whether in college, the workplace, or other settings, depends on a complex interaction between individual factors and competencies and the characteristics of a given setting and larger aspects of society and institutions. The larger contextual factors of society, the economy, and institutions play a central role in the opportunities afforded to young people, their ability to take advantage of those opportunities, and the constraints and facilitating factors context differentially pose to young adults. The obstacles to following successful path to adulthood and the opportunities available to young adults vary greatly by the context they inhabit; these limitations are a critical part of the story. However, in this white paper, we focus on identifying the factors that matter. In later phases of this project, we will turn to issues around how adults can promote the development of these factors in young people and the role of context in this endeavor.

## **Do All Youth Need the Same Kinds of Preparation?**

Once we start asking about which sets of skills and competencies young people will need to succeed, we also have to confront the question of whether everyone needs the same sets of things, or whether



different children need different sets of skills to reach their potential. Children's experiences vary drastically across race and class, as do our expectations as a society for their success. Poverty is, perhaps, the single most important determinant. As of 2012, one out of five children ages 5-17 in the United States was living in poverty. Roughly one-third of all African American, Latino, and Native American children grow up in poor households (Aud et al., 2012). Poverty clearly matters for children's future prospects: Kids from poor families are much less likely than their wealthier peers to finish high school or attend college (Rouse & Barrow, 2006), to vote (Junn, 2005), or to enjoy good health in adulthood (Wenzlow, Mullahy, Robert, & Wolfe, 2004). Educational and other outcomes also vary significantly by gender, with young men being much more likely to drop out of school, earn poor grades, be incarcerated, and be victims of violent crime. Young men *of color* are at especially high risk for these outcomes.

Children and adolescents in the United States are also afforded very different access to experiences and opportunities outside of school, depending in large part on family resources. The availability of quality early childhood programs, after-school activities, libraries, music and arts education, sports and recreational activities, and museums and other cultural institutions all vary widely. Differences by income in parental investment in children's informal education—for example, through sports clubs, summer camp, travel, and computers and books in the home—show evidence of contributing to gaps in academic achievement that are observed upon entry to formal schooling and widen as students progress through school (Kaushal, Magnuson, & Waldfogel, 2011).

Many youth face other significant challenges to healthy development. One-quarter of all American children lacks regular access to health care (Redlener, Brito, Johnson, & Grant, 2007). Almost half of youth 17 and younger (47 percent) report being assaulted in the prior year, with 10 percent of youth reporting five or more direct victimizations in the previous 12 months (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby, & Kracke, 2009). The U.S. also incarcerates more of its youth than any other country in the industrialized world, with roughly 70,000 children under age 21 confined to a criminal justice facility on a given day (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). These statistics, combined with the effects of economic inequality, disadvantaged neighborhoods, unstable labor markets, and troubled K-12 schools, mean that a large percentage of youth—particularly those in low-income and racial/ethnic minority communities—face a future with starkly diminished economic opportunities (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). Do these young people need the same “ingredients” as more advantaged children in order to make their way in the world?

We also sometimes hold different expectations what youth should be deriving from their experiences. For example, taking time in high school and college to develop one's intellectual interests or pursue one's artistic passions is sometimes a luxury reserved for economically advantaged adolescents. In contrast, we tend to narrowly define success for low-income or racial/ethnic minority youth as the ability to get a job. Because gainful employment has increasingly necessitated some post-secondary education or training, our success definition for low-income students has correspondingly included college—but college is often sold to them as the means to make a living rather than to fulfill their unique potential, nurture their intellectual passions, or solve the world's problems (Simmons, 2014).



Educators are prone to depict a college education as the ticket for low-income students to escape a poor community, rather than as a way for them to develop their minds or artistic talents or to change the conditions for their communities (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012). While we, by no means, want to underestimate the economic imperative of going to college and securing stable employment, particularly for students with no other access to well-paying work, neither do we want to reserve personal fulfillment and meaningful work as a goal for only the wealthy.

## **Defining Success in Young Adulthood**

In this white paper, we acknowledge the importance of educational attainment and employment and place them as the core, measurable outcomes of the endeavors of raising, developing, and schooling children and youth. However, college degrees and employment are only part of the story of young adult success; the investments we make in raising and educating children are also driven by our desire to prepare them to set out their own life course and meet their full potential in the range of arenas they will encounter as adults. We also consider how the values and purpose children learn over time shape the ways they contribute to their family, community, and society as they become young adults. In this white paper, we define success in young adulthood as being poised to work toward and achieve the goals a person sets for herself. These goals emerge from her values and purpose and the success of achieving them comes from the agency one has to propel forward towards those goals, all of which are a part of having a sense of integrated identity.

Conceptualizing success in this broader way may move us forward by aligning more closely with the more holistic set of goals we have for our children, but this broader definition poses a host of challenges. We arrive at a much more ambiguous definition of success that does not lend itself to being easily measured. Real tensions emerge as we try to sort out what educational institutions, youth development organizations, neighborhoods, and families ought to be doing to better prepare young people for the transition out of adolescence/K-12 schooling and into young adulthood. Is success driven by the characteristics of individuals or the contexts in which they learn or work? Are poor school and work outcomes driven by a lack of student skills and knowledge, or by a lack of grit? Do low-income kids need more self-direction, or more outside guidance? Do they suffer from limited internal drive, or limited access to opportunity? Should we be trying to address character flaws in individual students, or fix dysfunctional educational institutions?

The large tensions raised thus far will be themes throughout our work on this project, especially as we move into our next phase of work. However, to organize the development of our framework, we ask two central questions: What kinds of outcomes in young adulthood are we trying to produce when we invest in the schooling and upbringing of our children? What would we consider appropriate preparation for young adulthood? While external markers such as attaining a post-secondary degree as a means to being able to support oneself in the future are central to any definition of success, we use a conceptualization of young adult success that is much broader and holds potentially different meanings for different individuals, depending on the goals they set and the values they hold. We have come to conceptualize a well-prepared young adult as one who has a sense of integrated identity, and the

agency and motivation to utilize their knowledge and strategies toward their desired ends. While we recognize the central role that context plays in whether a young adult is able to harness their talents and reach their goals, in this white paper, we focus on the individual contributors to success, rather than the constraints and facilitating factors that context poses.

Raising and developing children so that they have an “integrated identity” means that the task for educators, parents, youth workers, and anyone working with children or youth is not only to prepare them for college and work, but to guide them toward developing the agency to be successful according to their own definition and being able to navigate multiple contexts. A key part of this task is articulating what knowledge, skills, mindsets, strategies, and awareness individuals need in order to manage the complex challenges of adulthood. This work involves helping children internalize and make meaning of these factors as they develop over time. This means that the role of teaching, raising, and developing children is not just about increasing their content knowledge and skills, but engaging them in their present life in ways that will help them to pursue the life they want to lead in the future. We discuss the questions listed above and how they are incorporated into the idea of an “integrated identity” in greater detail in Section 2 of this paper.

This broader perspective of preparation for young adulthood expands what is meant by success beyond the measurable terms of economic need. It allows for us to use the lens of youth experiences in the multiple settings they cross on a daily basis—whether in school, at home, in the community, with friends, or in organized programs—and think about what kinds of experiences and opportunities develop the factors that allow them to develop an integrated identity. By recognizing the many settings and larger contextual factors that affect young people’s development in the course of every day, we hope to develop a common language and promote a broader understanding so that the adults who work with children and youth can coordinate their efforts to develop young adults poised for success.

In this white paper, we take a combined approach to defining necessary preparation for young adulthood. To illuminate the picture of young adult success, we begin by identifying what key factors matter—knowledge, skills, mindsets, strategies, or behaviors. Equally important are young people’s social-emotional competencies, decision-making abilities, and interests and passions. We explore broad, multidisciplinary evidence from research and practice about the underlying constructs that support a successful transition into the myriad challenges of young adulthood, with the lens of considering whether the components would equip young people from under-resourced communities to navigate complex institutional environments and confront structural inequalities. Ultimately, the question of the 21st century is how we can develop young people who are not just “ready” for college and career, but who are equipped to shape their futures and change the world.

In Section 2, we review existing models of college and career readiness, 21st century skills, and other noncognitive or social-emotional factors that contribute to healthy and effective adolescents and young adults. We then more fully describe the “outcome” we are using to guide this project: The accomplishment in young adulthood of an “integrated identity” that draws upon the lessons of past experience to strategically guide future direction. In Section 3, we will look more closely at the

component parts that contribute to the achievement of this integrated identity. In Phase 2 of this project, we will investigate what is known in research and practice about how these constituent parts develop over time.

## Section 2: Existing Models and Our Proposed Framework

In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of models that seek to better articulate key components that contribute to positive student outcomes. Many of these models extend beyond academic knowledge and skills to incorporate what our earlier report termed “noncognitive factors” —sets of behaviors, skills, attitudes, and strategies that are not measured by cognitive tests (Farrington et al., 2012). The framework we present in this white paper is an initial attempt at conveying the factors that can best support success as a young adult. In formulating this initial framework, we reviewed over 20 existing models and frameworks, developed by researchers and practitioners, that focus on “noncognitive” factors, inter- and intra-personal competencies, social-emotional skills, as well as knowledge domains and cognitive competencies in adolescence and young adulthood. In this section, we highlight some of these existing models and describe how our framework expands on them.

One influential framework that aims to describe the skills needed to engage in a post-industrial service economy focuses on what has been termed “21st century skills” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). 21st century skills are meant to reflect the broader set of flexible skills needed to accommodate the higher levels of human interaction and to adapt to changing needs and tasks. In addition to core academic skills, the 21st century skills framework includes: The 4 Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation); media, information, and technology skills; and life and career skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility).

MHA Labs has further refined 21st century skills into a system of six “building blocks” of factors that are critical to “equip today’s youth with the foundational tools for success” by “targeting social, emotional and cognitive competencies critical to human achievement,” broadening the focus beyond just college and career (MHA Labs, 2014). Their six building blocks include: Personal mindset, collaboration, verbal communication, planning for success, social awareness, and problem-solving. These six skill domains are then comprised of 35 core skills.

The National Research Council (NRC) convened a committee to identify and summarize what is known about the competencies needed for success in education, work, and other areas of adult responsibility (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2013). In particular, they aimed to identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for “deeper learning” in order for young adults to transfer their knowledge across multiple contexts. Drawing from a broad research base across cognitive, developmental, educational, organizational, and social psychology and economics, the committee developed a classification scheme with three domains: The cognitive domain (cognitive processes and strategies, creativity, and knowledge); the intrapersonal domain (intellectual openness, work ethic and conscientiousness, and positive core self-evaluation); and the interpersonal domain (teamwork and collaboration and leadership).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five interrelated sets of core social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies that are critical to being a good student,

citizen, and worker. The competencies include: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The SEL core competencies cut across different cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains with the goal of helping young people “acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013, p. 9).

David Conley (2012) has also developed an influential model to “identify, organize, and link a comprehensive set of actionable variables associated with college and career readiness” and “create a common vocabulary.” Conley’s model focuses on four keys to college and career readiness, with an emphasis on supporting academic achievement. The four keys are: (1) key cognitive strategies (problem formation, research, interpretation, communication, and precision and accuracy); (2) key content knowledge (structure of knowledge, attitudes toward learning content, and technical knowledge and skills); (3) key learning skills and techniques (ownership of learning, learning techniques); and (4) key transition knowledge and skills (contextual, procedural, financial, and cultural).

These models, along with others that focus on the skills, behaviors, and dispositions necessary for success beyond high school, provide deep insight into what young adults need to be able to do in order to be successful in college and career, and to participate in civic life. They highlight the competencies, mindsets, strategies, and behaviors that are necessary to be successful within institutions that students traditionally enter into following their K-12 career, and focus on both the academic and social components for success. The existing models do much to identify areas of coherence across disciplines and key factors for promoting positive student outcomes.

## **Why a New Framework for Young Adult Success?**

Like other models, the framework that constitutes the core task of this project seeks to build upon the existing body of work and identify and articulate the relationships among critical factors that help young adults set out their own life course and meet their full potential in a range of arenas. With the large number of models in existence, what can yet another framework do to enlighten, rather than contribute to the noise of competing points of view?

First, we aim to bridge what others (and we) have proposed previously, and expand the focus from academic and career success to a broader definition of success in young adulthood that includes being able to shape one’s future and live a meaningful life. By incorporating a definition of success that reflects how young people experience the world as well as how policymakers think about problems, our framework will provide a different and important lens for thinking about the task of raising and educating children and youth, even as it poses challenges for measurement and adds a level of ambiguity to the work. In Phase 1 of our work, we suggest some key factors—knowledge and skills, awareness, mindsets, strategies, and behaviors and habits—and the relationships among these factors which appear to be important contributors that equip young adults for success.

Second, while we propose a definition of success that rests on traditional external markers of young adulthood (e.g., graduating from college, building a career in one's chosen field, starting a family), our framework focuses on an intermediary step. Central to the task of guiding, raising, and educating young people is helping them make sense of and internalize the knowledge, strategies, mindsets, and awareness they have learned. We refer to this on-going internalization process as developing an integrated identity, which gives young people the agency and motivation to utilize and shape their internal and external resources toward achieving their own goals (Erickson, 1980). It is through this on-going process of making meaning and internalizing experiences and interactions that children and youth learn and develop. Our framework highlights that it is not enough to teach children the sets of knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and career; it is also essential that adults are ensuring that they have the mindsets and awareness that allow them to bring all of these ingredients together, make meaning of them, and harness them toward reaching their goals and living their lives in ways that help them engage in and contribute to the larger world.

Third, we take a developmental approach to thinking about what teachers, parents, neighbors, after-school providers, and other adults might need to consider as they interact and nurture children and youth in different environments. In Phase 2 of this project, to give greater clarity about developmental supports for children and youth over time, we will examine how different developmental stages affect the formation of the key factors we've identified in our framework. In Phase 3, we will also highlight what components of the range of settings children encounter across their daily lives facilitate the development of these factors and the role of the experiences and social interactions in each setting in developing children toward their potential.

In identifying key factors for young adult success, we hope to provide guidance to practitioners and policymakers so that there is better alignment between what students are taught in the classroom and what their experiences are outside of school. Indeed, one of our interviewees recently articulated this need by the field:

"One of the things that I feel is limiting educators right now is they don't feel empowered to go beyond the schoolhouse. So many teachers and principals and deans are struggling with connecting with the home and connecting with the community, to have the space to actually see the human side of the student. Not that educators don't see it; I think we do. But a lot of people are just overwhelmed with the day-to-day tasks of the classroom, and lesson plans, and Common Core, and this test and that test, that by the end of the day you forget that at home there's something else greater going on that's really shaping that kid. So, that being said, I feel like we need some tools and strategies around 'How do I get out of the classroom and to look at the other things that impact students and make those connections?'" (Joyce Debrah Sheppard, Partnership Development Director at Umoja Student Development Corporation)

Bridging the multiple worlds that youth live in will better prepare them for "success" in young adulthood by helping them to integrate key factors and competencies into their sense of themselves. Being poised for success means that young adults are prepared for life after high school in multiple domains and have

the agency to define and find their own success in multiple ways. Our framework is meant to be a first step in this direction.

## Poised for Success: Building an Integrated Identity

In this white paper, we have conceptualized the goal of educating and raising children and youth for success in young adulthood in a way that acknowledges and embraces the multi-faceted ways individuals seek to find meaning in life and engage with and contribute to the world. While recognizing the economic imperative of going to college, particularly for students with no other access to well-paying work, we set out a broader definition that organizes the task of development around giving young people an awareness of themselves and of the wide range of options before them, some competencies to pursue those options, and the ability to make good future choices for their lives. Underlying all of this is the goal of helping youth develop a sense of identity as they transition into young adulthood and the role that adults play in promoting youth's development toward having an integrated identity.

Historically, adolescents transitioned almost immediately into adulthood; the early twenties consisted of assuming adult roles, such as parent, that had always been heavily influenced by religion or social class. However, more recent changes in Western industrialized societies have delayed young people's entrance into adulthood. The literature on emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2007) focuses on the phase of life that extends from the late teens into the twenties, and has argued that this delay into adulthood has led to greater role ambiguity and a greater emphasis on individuality in identity development (Arnett, 2000; Mayseless & Keren, 2014). Emerging adulthood theory builds on Erickson's (1968) conceptualization of identity in young adulthood as exploration and then commitment to an identity. In the absence of clear adult roles and social guidelines, making choices and commitments and finding one's pathway through life are now viewed as individual decisions rather than normative progressions into defined adult roles. Moving from adolescence to adulthood is often associated with particular markers such as assuming greater responsibilities, building lasting relationships, participating in civic life, and becoming financially independent. Our concept of being poised for success can also encompass these markers of adulthood.

A person-centered view of young adult success assesses accomplishments against individuals' values and goals. At its core, whether young adults are able to succeed depends on whether they are able to shape the course of their life, a concept often referred to as **agency** (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (2006) defined agency as having four parts: (1) Intentionality that includes having an action plan and strategies for realizing it; (2) forethought to set goals and anticipate likely outcomes in order to guide and motivate actions; (3) self-reactiveness so that one has the self-regulation and competence to carry out a course of action; and (4) self-reflectiveness so that individuals are able to reflect on their personal efficacy, examine the effectiveness and meaning of their course of action, and make adjustments if necessary. Bandura also emphasized the interplay between environment, behaviors, and outcomes. Agency means taking an active role in shaping and managing one's chosen path rather than being at the mercy of



external forces that happen *to* them, referred to as having an internal versus an external locus of control (Rotter, 1990).

In our framework, we suggest that the foundation for agency in directing one's life in young adulthood rests on key factors that come together in an **integrated identity**. These factors allow young adults to have a sense of purpose and place in the world, know what they value, make choices, and follow through on actions to serve that purpose and reflect what they value. A young person with an integrated identity is engaged in complex internal processes as she makes her way in the world. She engages in processes of strategy use, self-regulation, and goal-setting to harness the building blocks of knowledge, mindsets, and awareness toward directed action. These processes direct behaviors in both the interpersonal and intrapersonal domains. Integrated identity draws on the experiences and opportunities a young adult has had to incorporate them into memory to shape future behavior patterns and self-concept (Bandura, 1977). It brings together different types of group membership (e.g., race/ethnicity, culture, gender, religion) and attempts to make sense of them. It helps build relationships and fosters deep social networks. It means individuals have the awareness to know what is important to them and are able to shape the course of their lives accordingly. In part based on Bandura's (2006) conceptualization of agency, we've generated a series of questions that guide us through thinking about what it means for a young adult to have an integrated identity that gives them the agency to set and steer their own life course:

- Who am I and what do I value?
- What is my purpose and what are my goals and do I know what I need to do to accomplish them?
- Do I believe I can accomplish them?
- Am I capable of accomplishing them?
- Who are my allies and how can they help me?

Our focus on an integrated identity is meant to create a larger collective vision of helping children and youth develop in ways that help them have greater clarity of who they are and what is important to them ("who am I and what do I value?"). The other four questions help guide how different parts of our framework can come together in young adulthood in ways that poise individuals for multi-faceted ways of finding success. Children cross many settings in the course of their days; it would be helpful if all the people who participate in raising, educating, and supporting children saw their role not just as fulfilling the task within their own setting but as helping children integrate that part of their experience into a larger cohesive whole. Working with children in a specific setting provides a particular lens and set of developmental goals, but raising children into successful young adults asks that we also consider how the different components of children's lives and the contexts in which they grow come together in the development of their identity. It also means providing the opportunities and experiences for children and young adults that motivate them to find relevance in their current situation and understand who they might become in the future. Helping young people make meaning in the many environments in which they dwell allows them to have greater control over their life course and remain motivated and engaged despite challenges that come their way.

## Who am I and what do I value?

Figuring out who one is and developing one's identity is a process of internally integrating different aspects of self (e.g., beliefs, mindsets, goals, roles, experiences) that allows for a sense of continuity with what one has experienced in the past and future possibilities for potential change and growth.

Northwestern University psychology professor Dan McAdams refers to this process as building a narrative identity—construing one's life as a story that reconstructs the past, interprets the present, and imagines the future (McAdams & Adler, 2010). This **narrative identity** or **authorship** allows young adults to create a sense of internal consistency of who they are across time, providing a framework for making sense of how their future choices and actions are related to their past and current selves and experiences. Authorship is the temporal integration of different components of identity so that the change brought by choices and new experiences is linked to a stable sense of self. Being able to create a narrative thread of self through past, present, and future becomes particularly important as young adults navigate new contexts of college, work, and community and make meaning out of new roles and challenges.

A related concept of linking the present to the future is the term “**possible selves**” (Markus & Nurius, 1986), referring to how individuals envision elements of their self-concept; what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming. Experiences and interactions, particularly during adolescence, shape how individuals perceive their current selves and who they could be in the future. Possible selves can also guide the strategies people choose and can serve as motivational resources for regulating behaviors (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). However, having a sense of possible selves is not enough for individuals to be able to self-regulate; connecting possible selves to concrete strategies for attaining them is an essential precursor to displaying positive behaviors (Oyserman & James, 2011). Oyserman and colleagues have also stressed that in addition to having concrete strategies aligned with possible selves, students' perceptions of their social group norms also shapes their behaviors and whether they enact strategies.

Identity development is the process of exploring and understanding who one is as an individual and as a member of a group and integrating these different dimensions to make sense of past, present, and future experiences, as well as managing different contexts. Another process of identity development that is critical in adolescence and young adulthood is **role-taking**, or trying on possible selves; that is, exploring different roles, identities, and behaviors and seeing how well they fit and are accepted by peers, family, and others. It also means understanding that one can take on different roles and identities in different contexts without it necessarily undermining one's sense of self. As one of the experts we interviewed who works with youth described:

“I think one important part of building out an identity is that you practice and play around in things and think about who you want to be in them. And you try on different roles. Think about all the different personalities you can take on when you're babysitting, or you're working at the movie theater with kids you don't go to school with or you're doing whatever. Kids need time and room to do that and to figure out: How do I see myself? Can I still be true to myself and talk differently in different situations? It's practicing code switching; not because somebody told it to

you, but because you really experienced it.” (Lila Leff, Founder of Umoja Student Development Corporation)

The center of developing an integrated identity is answering the question “what do I value?” to guide the commitments one makes to roles, beliefs, and relationships as one tries to find a place in the world. Through the process of exploration and experimentation, young people can make sense of their experiences and develop a clearer sense of who they are, what they are good at, how they fit into the larger context of society and institutions, and what they want from the future. The next four questions help set up how the different key factors of our framework come together in an integrated identity and help young adults find and act on what they want from life.

### **What is my purpose and what are my goals and do I know what I need to do to accomplish them?**

Being able to enact the answer to the questions “who am I” and “what do I value” into how one lives one’s life is aided by going through a process of **goal-setting**, that is, “the process of establishing clear and usable targets, or objectives” (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). It is also about determining how to translate who one is and what one values into a larger sense of purpose and the goals that support that purpose. Purpose can reflect both what is valued for the self (e.g., having a prestigious career) or what is valued in relationship with others (e.g., raising a family or making an impact on the community). A part of identity development is articulating goals, developing plans, and making long-term commitments. Clear, specific, and challenging goals have been linked to higher task performance than simple encouragement, as long as the individual is committed to the goals, has the competence to meet the goals, and is not encumbered by conflicting goals (Locke & Latham, 2006).

### **Do I believe I can accomplish my goals?**

Putting forward the effort and displaying the behaviors needed to accomplish one’s goals is related to one’s beliefs about the possibility of accomplishing the goals. As described later in this white paper, mindsets such as self-efficacy are associated with greater engagement in tasks. Having self-efficacy shapes the enactment of coping behaviors, the amount of effort expended, and the extent to which perseverant behaviors are displayed (Bandura, 1977). Positive mindsets coupled with self-awareness allows for a realistic assessment of what is possible. High self-efficacy has also been linked to greater commitment to goals, use of more effective strategies, and a better response to negative feedback (Locke & Latham, 2002).

### **Am I capable of accomplishing my goals?**

It is not enough to have goals and a sense of efficacy; it is also necessary to have the underlying **competence** to accomplish a specific goal (Le Deist & Winterton, 2006). We define competence as strategies appropriately applied in a context, informed by the interactions of knowledge, awareness, and mindsets. One develops an integrated identity and sense of competence over time by making sense of one’s experience (what happened when I applied that strategy in this situation?). Eventually, with repeated cycles of experience and reflection, one internalizes a sense of oneself as a competent person. A developing sense of competence gives a young person the ability to harness his or her mindsets,

knowledge, and awareness, and to employ selected strategies to more effectively adapt to tasks posed in different contexts in service of his or her goals.

### **Who are my allies and how can they help me?**

Accomplishing goals is often more than an individual endeavor; having the support of others facilitates the likelihood of young adults having the motivation and resources to accomplish their goals (Bandura, 2000). Having strong and healthy relationships can also be the goal, and not just a means of facilitating the attainment of goals. We define “allies” broadly as connected others, whether family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, or members of extended social or professional networks. Allies, particularly if they include diverse individuals and groups, can bring additional information, perspectives, sources of support, and strategies to bear on a problem and reinforce positive mindsets to make goals more possible. The process of building a social network of allies relies on utilizing interpersonal strategies and social awareness to build healthy and lasting relationships.

In Section 2 we have focused on the “outcome” of a young adult with an integrated identity, poised for success as he or she moves forward in the world. We have proposed a set of key questions that describe the central “tasks” of creating an integrated identity, and we have briefly described the process whereby a young adult with an integrated identity draws upon the building blocks of knowledge, awareness, and mindsets to direct their behavior toward meeting their goals. In Section 3, we go into much more depth on this framework, highlighting the key factors we have identified from the literature and from our interviews with experts as most critical for enabling young adults to achieve success in their chosen endeavors. This is our initial attempt to pull a variety of literatures and perspectives together. In this first phase of the project, we have generated a broad definition of each area and have noted specific examples that emerged from our scan.

### Section 3: Key Ingredients for Young Adult Success

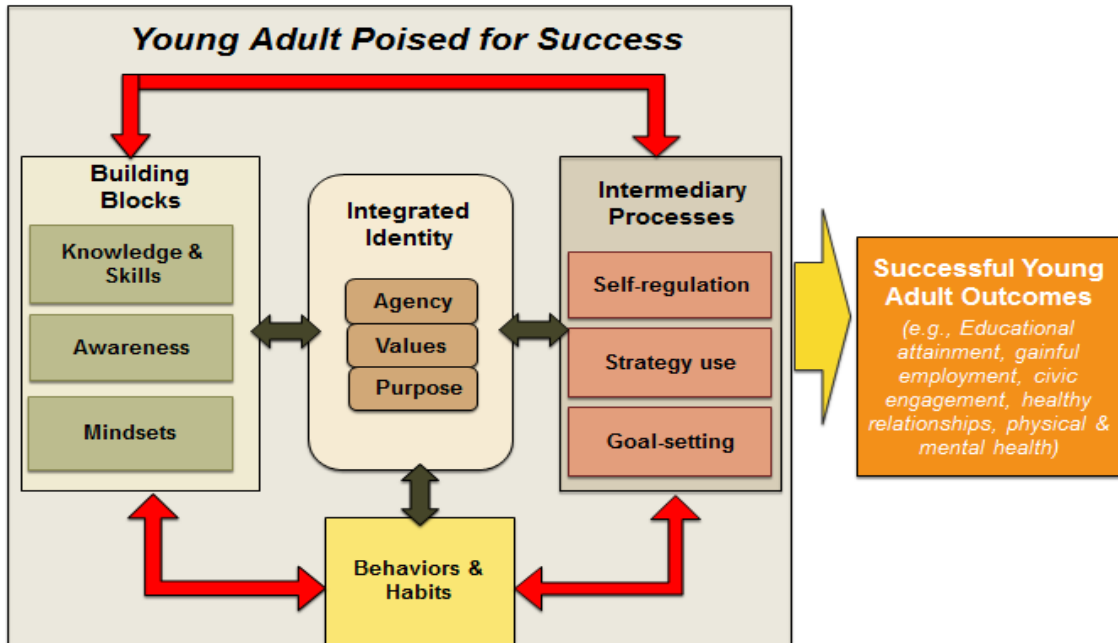


Figure 1: A Proposed Framework for a Young Adult Poised for Success

The ultimate outcome of interest is for a young adult to be poised for success, that is, being able to achieve goals that one sets for him or herself. If the goal is college completion, then the attainment of a degree is success; if being able to financially support your family is the goal, then getting a job that pays well and allows for advancement is success; if the goal is to feel fulfilled, then connecting with the right fields of study or work or raising children may be considered success. Underlying all of these, however, is the need for young adults to develop a sense of themselves and their values and purpose, to be clear about the goals they have that are related to their values and purpose, understand how to achieve those goals, believe that they can, and be able to direct all of these pieces toward attaining their goals. This is what we call having an “integrated identity” which poises a young adult for success in their endeavors.

While success is often defined by traditional external markers of young adulthood such as college and career, our framework of a young adult poised for success (see Figure 1) focuses on the intermediary step of developing an integrated identity that allows a young adult to navigate across contexts. Building an integrated identity positions young adults for success and supports the utilization of their knowledge and abilities towards their tangible goals. Young adults are always situated in the broader context of institutions, systems, structures, and relationships, which we do not explicitly portray in the figure. The process of developing an integrated identity happens over time, from birth to adulthood, and happens in and is shaped by both the multiple immediate contexts of particular experiences, interactions, and opportunities, as well as the broader societal context. One’s developing identity is based on three core

building blocks: Mindsets, awareness, and knowledge and skills. Intermediary processes (strategy use, self-regulation, and goal-setting) help move youth from having these building blocks to engaging in effective and persistent behaviors. Strategies help to utilize these building blocks for self-regulation and to determine a direction for oneself. As individuals move through different contexts of experiences, opportunities, and interactions, these intermediary processes lead to sets of behaviors, which over time and repetition can evolve into being effective and perseverant habits. Feedback (both internal and external) helps youth make sense of their behaviors in various contexts and further develop the knowledge, skills, awareness, mindsets, and strategies that shape their future behaviors. This process of sense-making is how experiences are integrated into identity and how the three building blocks, intermediary processes, and behaviors and habits are developed and refined. At the center of these building blocks, intermediary processes, and behavior and habits is the developing integrated identity, which both informs and is shaped by these other factors. In this white paper, we only include factors that are malleable, that is, areas that experiences and the efforts and interactions with other people are capable of changing, in both positive and negative ways.

## The Building Blocks of the Framework

Our framework posits that there are three building blocks that underlie, at a very basic level, the use of effective behaviors toward a goal, and ultimately, the development of an integrated identity as a young adult who is poised to achieve the goals he or she sets. Below, we define these three building blocks—mindsets, awareness, and knowledge and skills. In the following subsections, we will see how strategy use, self-regulation, and goal-setting help one integrate these building blocks into an instantiation of goal-directed behaviors. This paper simply lays out the definitions of each of these constructs; future phases of our work will expand on how these constructs develop over the course of early life and in different settings, and more closely examine the evidence base.

### I. Mindsets

Our framework recognizes that the right set of mindsets is one of the foundational building blocks for young adult success. Mindsets are the psycho-social beliefs and attitudes toward oneself, the external world, and the interaction between the two. Our framework posits that mindsets will be mutually reinforced by one's knowledge and awareness, as well as the self-regulation that guides one's use of strategies to enact behaviors. Specifically, we suggest six mindsets that are crucial for young adult success: Self-efficacy, openness, relevance, optimism, growth, and belonging.

**Self-efficacy** is the belief that one is able to succeed in a given situation (Bandura, 1986). Individuals are more likely to engage in tasks they feel they can succeed at (Bandura, 1986), and the belief that an individual will succeed at a task is associated with persisting on a task and overcoming challenges (Pajares, 1996). **Openness** is receptiveness to or desire for new experiences—be they social, emotional, cultural, or intellectual (McCrae, 1994). Openness might allow for a greater flexibility and adaptability in academic, occupational, and other social environments, as well as a greater appreciation for diversity, new ideas, and learning. **Relevance** reflects the degree to which one believes that tasks have value to oneself or one's future. The lack of relevance seems to play a large role in students' disengagement from

school, even as young as the middle grades, and may be a significant contributor to leaving formal schooling. **Optimism** has been conceptualized as either positive expectations for the future, or as an adaptive attribution style to explain past events; in either case, optimism is associated with a variety of effective coping behaviors and psychological well-being (Seligman, 2006; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001), which might have larger impacts across the life course. A **growth mindset** consists of the attitude and belief that competency and skill will increase in response to effort. Growth mindsets have been found to be influential for academic success (Cury, Elliott, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006; Dweck & Leggett, 1988), and one might expect that belief in one’s ability to improve would affect performance across contexts. Finally, **belonging** is the belief that one is recognized and valued as a member in a social context, and it is key to engaging and succeeding in that context. Belonging has been associated with success in secondary school (Osterman, 2000), while feeling unwelcome or threatened has been associated with poorer performance, as seen in the literature on stereotype threat (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Mindsets are inextricably related to the other foundational pieces of the framework—knowledge and awareness, along with self-regulation, the use of strategies, and setting goals for oneself. The extent to which individuals are aware of themselves, others, and their thoughts may be closely associated with how they view themselves and the world, and their knowledge about self and others will affect their beliefs and attitudes. Likewise, we expect mindsets to be recursively influenced by the other aspects of the framework. For example, the ability to engage in effective behaviors or self-regulation may affect one’s sense of self-efficacy, optimism, and ability to grow.

## II. Knowledge and skills

In addition to examining the role of “noncognitive” factors for success in young adulthood, we include **knowledge and skills** in our framework because of the crucial role they play in achieving one’s goals and because the division between cognitive and noncognitive is extremely fluid. Broadly speaking, a person has knowledge when he or she is in possession of a certain set of facts, information, or understanding. Skills can be defined as having the learned ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results or goals, which can be general or domain-specific.

According to Conley, **content knowledge and skills** are knowledge and skills gained within school and includes “reading and writing skills, and core academic subject area knowledge and skills” (Conley, 2012). This type of knowledge can be thought of as the knowledge of information within a content domain, as well as an understanding of how those pieces fit together in an overall structure. **Technical knowledge and skills** refers to specialized information about how to do a specific task at hand, using the skills and tools necessary to complete the task. Technical knowledge is often thought about as occupation-specific information, including “work-related knowledge, skills, and tasks in addition to the machines, equipment, tools, software, and information technology workers may use in their workplace” (National Center for O\*NET Development, 2014).

**Cultural knowledge and skills** refer to the awareness and understanding of people from other races, ethnicities, or cultures, and the ability to navigate and move within other cultural contexts (Antonio,



2001). Cultural knowledge includes awareness of behavioral norms, traditions, and the modes of interaction that allow one to successfully navigate and effectively participate with a cultural space.

**Institutional knowledge and skills** refer to the knowledge of how institutions—universities, workplaces, communities—function, and the ability to successfully overcome obstacles and accomplish goals within those institutions (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). This is especially important when a person is required to “code-switch” their behaviors from what’s expected in one institution (e.g., family) to another (e.g., college classroom). Without this form of knowledge, however, youth may not know what to attend to or how to assess whether their behaviors are appropriate for settings that differ from the ones they are used to functioning in.

**Professional knowledge and skills** include knowing the proper behaviors one is expected to display in the workplace, including the rules around workplace etiquette and the expectations that govern professional behavior (The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2006). Professional knowledge and skills influence one’s ability to attach to the labor force and succeed in a job. People without the relevant cultural, institutional, or professional knowledge and skills are at a severe disadvantage when attempting to function in a given context; without this information, they have no fundamental idea of what “appropriate” behavior is or how to enact it, and therefore cannot work toward managing themselves toward those behaviors. These knowledge bases allow one to navigate specific spaces and to maintain “appropriate” behavior within a setting.

### III. Awareness

The third building block that underlies the ability to achieve success in young adulthood is **awareness**. Awareness can be directed toward different objects, resulting in a greater understanding of oneself, ones’ interactions with others, and one’s environment. Awareness is the first step in the ability to self-regulate; to conduct appropriate, positive, and productive behaviors; and, ultimately, to help bridge the gap between identity building and goal completion. In this white paper, we first define subcomponents of awareness, and then speak to how they lay the groundwork for higher-level skills and behaviors necessary to achieve success.

Awareness is the focusing of attention. We can focus our attention on ourselves (self-awareness), how others feel and think (perspective-taking), the interactions between the self and others (interpersonal awareness), and the notion of time as we engage in activities (temporal awareness). Each kind of awareness is a basic building block for the type of higher-level cognition that facilitates success in young adulthood. Not only does awareness require that we focus our attention on some aspect of either ourselves or our environment, but it also requires *reflecting* on what we are attending to. The absence of reflection results in lost opportunities to understand one’s experiences and integrate them into a larger (meta) understanding of oneself in multiple contexts.

#### Self-Awareness

Self-awareness may be the first type of awareness to develop. Duval and Wicklund (1972) define **self-awareness** as the ability to become the object of one's own attention. This is in contrast to the concept of consciousness, or focusing attention outward toward the environment (Mead, 1934). Self-awareness involves the cognitive processes of identifying, processing, and storing information about the self. In other words, self-awareness involves reflection, or introspection, on the "experience of perceiving and processing stimuli" (Morin, 2011). Self-awareness can be focused on many aspects of oneself, including one's emotions, beliefs, personality traits, perceptions, goals, preferences, et cetera. Self-awareness supports a more realistic understanding and description of oneself; being able to accurately assess one's own behaviors, reactions, and beliefs positions oneself to accurately understand oneself, including one's strengths and weaknesses, comforts and discomforts, and personal tendencies.

One type of self-awareness that seems to be particularly critical for academic success is metacognition. **Metacognition** consists of the ability to be aware of or control one's thinking and understanding (Flavell, 1979; Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser, 2009). Metacognition requires a level of knowledge of the self and of others as cognitive organisms. Through experiences observing one's own thinking, one can develop strategies to direct thinking toward appropriate goals (Flavell, 1979). When coupled with motivation, metacognition enhances self-regulation, and thus has been associated with the use of learning strategies that lead to comprehension (Hacker et al., 2009; Zimmerman, 1990).

### **Interpersonal Awareness**

While self-awareness is important for developing a sense of identity and achieving the goals one sets, interpersonal awareness is necessary for successfully integrating oneself into various contexts. The first step in being able to interact appropriately with others in one's surroundings is to have the ability to take other people's perspectives into account. This includes having a theory of mind (ToM) —or the ability "to infer the full range of mental states (beliefs, desires, intentions, imagination, emotions, etc.) that cause action" (Baron-Cohen, 2001).

It is also imperative that attention be geared toward the interactions *between* people. Called **interpersonal awareness**, this includes being aware of how others interact, being aware of one's own interactions with others, as well as being able to take the perspective of others. Having this awareness supports the ability to better understand how social groups develop, and how one's actions can have an impact on other people. A person who is aware of his or her social surroundings will attend to the myriad social cues that guide interactions between people, and assist in the development of effective communication strategies and collaboration skills.

### **Cultural Awareness**

**Cultural awareness** is the recognition that there are different cultures, other than one's own, that have their own sets of norms and expectations (National Research Council, 2008). Being aware of these differences across people, environments, and institutions is the first step in being able to navigate the world, particularly the multicultural world of the 21st century. Cultural awareness facilitates understanding that people grow up with different sets of cultural norms, or recognizing that transitions

into new environments (including college, a new job, or moving to a new town) may require adjustments in how to interpret one's own actions or the actions of others.

### **Temporal Awareness**

A still higher level of awareness exists that allows for the integration of the self, interpersonal relationships, and relationships with broader contexts as they play out over time. In its purest form, **temporal awareness** is the ability to recognize and judge distance and time. As it applies to the development of an independent, successful adult, temporal awareness allows for the development of a picture of oneself over time, including relations between the self and one's context. The ability to reflect on one's thoughts, feelings, goals, and experiences in the past, present, and future—and recognize that there is the same “self” over that time—is the building block to being able to create a narrative of oneself and one's journey to young adulthood. Temporal awareness is also the key to understanding that actions at one point in time have consequences at another point in time; being aware that decisions may have implication for the future can help guide choices and alter behavior while working toward a larger goal.

Overall, awareness of these various kinds plays an important role in young people's identity development, in part because it incorporates such a diverse array of information and experience from multiple sources, all of which helps a person make sense of the self in relation to the world over time. However, awareness is also key to identity development among young people because it forms a critical link between thinking about oneself and one's goals and preferences, thinking about one's interaction with others, seeking out and reflecting on feedback, and making choices about one's current and future behavior.

### **The Role these Building Blocks Play in the Larger Process of Identity Development**

The three building blocks in our framework—mindsets, knowledge, and awareness—all work together and inform each other. For example, holding positive beliefs about oneself and one's abilities (a mindset of self-efficacy) requires some measure of self-reflection. Likewise, mindsets can influence the way a person assesses himself, a crucial component of self-awareness (“What is the expected version of me given my self-beliefs?”). The awareness that cultures have different norms of behavior can prompt a person to seek out knowledge about the norms of an unfamiliar culture with which he will interact.

These building blocks that underlie the ability to succeed in young adulthood exist within an ongoing process of interpretation and sense-making, in which individuals work to integrate a complex array of their own ideas, experiences, and feedback from others into an emerging sense of their own identity in a way that shapes and supports their personal goals. This emergent identity is plastic and under constant revision. Young people use feedback and self-reflection to further the development of their mindsets, the growth and revision of their knowledge, and the emergence of their awareness of themselves, others, and the broader social milieu in which they live and move.

## Intermediary Processes: Strategy Use, Self-regulation, Goal-setting

All three of the building blocks in our framework play distinct and important roles in shaping young people's emerging identities. However, there are several processes that must also be in place in order for young adults to navigate their environments and achieve their goals. Self-regulation and goal-setting play particularly central roles in linking our three building blocks with the larger process of developing a self-identity and enacting effective behaviors that lead to goal completion.

### I. Self-regulation

The process of thinking about and managing one's own behavior—its aims or goals, its form or direction, and its ultimate effectiveness—are all part of a broader process of self-regulation. In our earlier monograph, *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, we noted that self-regulated learners “monitor the process of their learning, ascertain how effectively they are addressing a given learning task, and adjust their efforts accordingly” (Farrington et al., 2012, p. 39). Self-regulated learning is a goal-oriented process that focuses awareness on their learning and selects strategies and environments that promote their own learning (Zimmerman, 2001).

This process can be expanded to think about how self-regulation supports the management, not just of learning, but also of one's emotions and interpersonal behaviors. Self-regulation, as a process, links young people's awareness of themselves, of others, and of cultural context together with their thinking about their own behavior, helping to shape and guide them in how they understand particular challenges or tasks, the goals they set for themselves, the strategies they ultimately use to meet those goals, and the evaluative gloss they give to the feedback they receive on the effectiveness of those strategies.

### II. Strategy Use

Self-regulation requires the use of strategies. We define strategies as methods, approaches, or techniques by which somebody is able to achieve a goal. Having and using effective strategies is critically important to the success of young people's goal-directed behavior; the use of strategies represents an important avenue for improving the effectiveness of behavioral and emotional regulation, and therefore maximizing the likelihood of success in a given task or domain and across a range of contexts. For example, learning strategies are empirically associated with both high school as well as college achievement (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Astin, 1993; Farrington et al., 2012; Farkas, 2011). Strategies can be consciously controlled by the individual, but if implemented regularly can become automatic responses or habits. Strategies are often cognitive in nature, and help to control other cognitive process (e.g., learning) or social-emotional reactions. Specific examples of strategies can include learning strategies, such as those aimed at improving recall of particular information, those aimed at enhancing one's ability to monitor one's own learning and understanding, and/or those aimed at using monitoring to correct misunderstandings or errors quickly.

Strategies allow people to work toward their goals. But there is also a reciprocal relationship between the use of strategies and the ongoing development of the building blocks described earlier; mindsets,

knowledge, and awareness. As one example, positive mindsets—such as efficacy (“*I can do this*”) and relevance (“*This task/domain has meaning for me*”) —appear to drive strategy use and, in turn, the effective use of strategies to enhance the success of particular behaviors reinforces positive mindsets.

Strategies and self-regulation may be particularly important for low-income, minority youth because of their vulnerability to negative effects of stereotypes about their intellectual or academic ability (Oyserman et al., 2004). That vulnerability, often described in the literature as stereotype threat (Steele, 1997), can make access to concrete strategies especially important as a component of self-regulation, as those strategies may form a critical buffer against the often imperceptible operation of stereotypes on low-income, minority students’ academic mindsets.

### **III. Goal-setting**

A fundamental component of being poised to achieve goals as a young adult is the process of actually determining what one’s goals are. Setting goals is a prerequisite for determining which behaviors one should engage in. Setting goals helps guide people toward choosing the behaviors that facilitate the achievement of their goals, while also knowing their impact on others. Goal-setting falls in between the building blocks and behaviors in our proposed framework because the types of goals one sets for herself can be heavily influenced by the mindsets she holds. For example, if someone has a strong growth mindset, she attributes success to the effort she puts forth and therefore may set more challenging goals for herself (e.g. Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Molden & Dweck, 2006). In turn, goals drive the behaviors that people engage in, much in line with Bandura’s social-cognitive theory (1986). Then, the interpretation of success or failure of those goals loops back to inform the mindsets one possesses (self-efficacy, growth mindset, etc.). This theory has been explicitly applied to how academic and career interests develop, how goals and choices are made within these interests, and how people aim to achieve those goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

For adolescents who are preparing for the transition into adulthood, it is important that the goals being set are intrinsic, or driven from within (Ryan & Deci, 1990). Savtiz-Romer and Bouffard (2012) make the argument that youth are more likely to succeed in their transition into and through college when they are part of the goal-setting process, rather than being told what their goals should be (which can lead to either external motivation or resistance, as youth are attempting to set their own identity). They describe how one’s social context can influence the types of goals one sets; with more support for setting goals that are of interest to the youth and with encouragement that as youth work harder they will achieve more, adolescents are more likely to set and work hard toward more challenging goals for their future.

### **Behaviors and Habits as the Instantiation of Building Blocks and Intermediary Factors**

Our framework posits that setting goals and using strategies for self-regulation, combined with a foundation of awareness, mindsets, and knowledge, will be associated with an individual’s ability to engage in the persistent and effective behaviors required to attain goals. When young adults are “ready,

willing, and able” (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012), they engage in the effective and persistent behaviors that allow them to take on the challenges encountered in the transition to young adulthood. In our framework, we formulate perseverance (i.e., tenacity, persistence, grit), as being a characteristic of behaviors rather than as an independent factor or trait. Over time these behaviors can evolve into habits that are enacted unconsciously. In UChicago CCSR’s critical review of the research on “noncognitive” factors, we describe perseverance as being the product of a student having the academic mindsets and effective learning strategies that allows him/her to display perseverant behaviors (Farrington et al., 2012). In this section, we describe some of the behaviors and habits that have surfaced in our review of existing models and the literature, and in our discussions with experts.

Overall, in our review we find that the sets of behaviors and habits identified as necessary for early adult success are similar across educational and professional settings, although some behaviors and habits are more or less valued in particular settings. Some of these common behaviors and habits do not require social interactions with others; these include behaviors and habits such as showing up to where you agreed to be, preparing work you were expected to prepare, and producing results (e.g., completing a school project or a report for work). Other behaviors and habits are interpersonal and may require a different set of factors such as social awareness, cultural knowledge, and interpersonal strategies.

Many behaviors and habits have been identified as crucial as adolescents transition into their young adult lives. Some of these include the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with others and work flexibly (e.g., The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems, 2013; Conley, 2012; Hewlett Foundation, 2013; MHA Labs, 2014; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Being able to interact with others in a productive manner requires having the interpersonal awareness and perspective-taking to read and interpret social cues, having strategies to communicate appropriately with others, and being able to self-regulate in order to collaborate despite possibly disagreeing with others’ viewpoints. Interpersonal skills have been associated with academic and developmental outcomes, as seen in the literature on high school engagement (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Hinton & Pellegrino, 2012), and on cooperative studying and student integration in college (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1997). Behaviors such as collaboration and positive communication are also highly valued in the workplace, as employers consistently state that communication is one of the most valued traits in workers (Pritchard, 2013; International Youth Foundation, 2013; The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2006). Other types of behaviors, such as help seeking, taking initiative, and being involved, can also play crucial roles in supporting youth’s attainment of their goals (Conley, 2012).

Behaviors and habits are the most proximal factor to young adult success. Unless knowledge, mindsets, and awareness, combined with strategy use, goal-setting, and self-regulation, are expressed through behaviors, they are not visible and do not have meaning to others. Behaviors are how children, youth, and adults are assessed, how they interact with the world, and how they get feedback about who they are and make meaning of their surroundings. Behaviors are the instantiation of the other factors as young adults set out their own life course and move toward their goals.

## The Role of Context

In this section, we have highlighted the factors we identified from the literature and our interviews with experts as being the most critical areas for young adults to find success: Being able to define who they want to be and make choices about the behaviors they will engage in to make that vision a reality. In the previous section, we conceptualized the capacity to bring together these building blocks and intermediary processes, as well as external resources, then harness them into directed action as having an “integrated identity.” Thus far, our discussion of the framework has centered on an individual’s capacity to navigate different contexts and attain goals. We now turn to a discussion of the role of immediate settings (e.g., classroom or out-of-school time program) and broader institutional, societal, and economic contexts in the development of key factors and an integrated identity, and how this broader context, in turn, shapes an individual’s immediate context. We will be exploring the role of contexts in greater detail in later phases of this project.

While it is not an explicit part of our framework, we want to acknowledge how context, particularly the experience of being in a diverse set of contexts, plays a key role in the development of the building blocks and intermediary processes. A part of the experience of being a young person is engaging in different behaviors and trying on different identities. Whether it is through being a member of the basketball team or exploring one’s cultural identity through music, having different experiences in different settings allows youth to select and enact different mindsets, awareness, knowledge, and strategies when they experiment with different behaviors. They can then begin to interpret and synthesize the reactions and feedback about those behaviors and the context in which they occurred so that they become integrated into their awareness, knowledge, and mindsets. This evolving set of building blocks then affects future behaviors. This iterative process includes the determination of how new information should be included in an individual’s body of knowledge, how one perceives oneself and one’s place in the world, and how one feels about potential roles. The role of feedback becomes particularly salient for minority students as they interpret a given interaction and context against broader societal messages about their worth and capabilities (Steele, 1997).

As we noted in Section 1, many young people face significant challenges to healthy development from a range of factors, from exposure to violence to lacking access to healthcare. These challenges are coupled with the same young people attending under-resourced schools and having limited access to the experiences and opportunities outside of school that allow them to explore, learn, and try on different roles and identities. Further, an emphasis on teaching content knowledge and skills often supplants time spent on informal opportunities to learn and develop through activities such as sports, music, or art. As adults, the lack of a social safety net and limited opportunities pose external constraints for many young adults as they seek to attain their goals and define what it would mean to be successful.

In our first review of the literature (Farrington et al., 2012), we framed “noncognitive” factors (e.g., mindsets, perseverance, learning strategies, social skills, and academic behaviors) as being the product of students and their interaction with the educational setting, rather than being predetermined, fixed characteristics. We framed the task of teaching adolescents to become learners as creating the



conditions that support students in having positive mindsets and effective learning strategies to engage them in perseverant and effective academic behaviors. However, as youth move into young adulthood, they leave behind the relatively structured environment of high school and are faced with the task of navigating new sets of institutional contexts, societal expectations, and unknown challenges.

For young adults to be able to effectively manage a new round of tasks and commitments and figure out their place in the world, they need to be able to effectively manage and interact across contexts. All the mindsets, knowledge, skills, awareness, and strategies that they have developed and internalized through experience must now be applied to new and uncertain environments and tasks. They will have to harness their internal and external resources and be flexible with the unwelcome obstacles they may face. They will need to be able to assess a situation and use strategies to self-regulate and manage social interactions. They will have to use their relationships with family, friends, peers, mentors, ministers, teachers—all of their allies to help them get through the challenges that adult life may pose so that they can define who they want to be and eventually find their place in the world.

## Conclusion

We end by returning to the question posed at the beginning of this white paper: What might we consider the successful culmination of 18 years of investment in education, socialization, and development for the young people we are raising today? The outcomes that most parents, practitioners, and other adults who work with youth care about are much broader than the measureable outcomes that have traditionally been used to define success in research and the policy world—mainly the attainment of a college degree and gainful employment. The investments we make in raising and educating children are also driven by our desire to prepare them to set out their own life course and meet their full potential in the range of arenas they will encounter as adults. In trying to articulate these broader outcomes, we have come to conceptualize a young adult who is poised for success as someone who is developing an integrated identity, and who, through that identity, has a sense of agency and motivation to utilize their internal and external resources to navigate the constraints posed by complex institutional environments and structural inequalities. The economic imperative of going to college to gain access to well-paying work may drive many policy efforts, however, it is not enough to teach children the sets of knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and career; it is also essential that they have the mindsets and awareness that allow them to bring all of these ingredients together, make meaning of them, and harness them toward reaching their goals and living their lives in ways that help them engage in and contribute to the larger world.

## References

- Achieve, Inc. (2012, November). *Transforming public reporting to ensure college and career readiness for ALL* [Policy Brief]. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc. and The American Diploma Project.
- Allensworth, E.M., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Almlund, M., Duckworth, A., Heckman, J.J., & Kautz, T. (2011). *Personality psychology and economics* (Working Paper w16822). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). *Kids Count Data Snapshot: Reducing youth incarceration in the United States*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DataSnapshotYouthIncarceration-2013.pdf>
- Antonio, A.L. (2001). The role of interracial interaction in the development of leadership skills and cultural knowledge and understanding. *Research in Higher Education*, 42(5), 593-617.
- Arnett, J.J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480.
- Arnett, J.J. (2007). Emerging adulthood: What is it, and what is it good for? *Child Development Perspectives*, 1(2): 68–73. doi: 10.1111/j.1750-8606.2007.00016.x
- Astin, A.W. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Aud, S., Hussar, W., Johnson, F., Kena, G., Roth, E., Manning, E., Wang, X., & Zhang, J. (2012). *The condition of education 2012* (NCES 2012-045). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012045>
- Autor, D.H., Levy, F., & Murnane, R.J. (2003). The skill content of recent technological change: An empirical exploration. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 118(4), 1279-1333.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: a social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9(3), 75-78.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2), 164-180.

- Baron-Cohen, S. (2000). Theory of the mind and autism: A review. *International Review of Research in Mental Retardation*, 23, 169-184.
- Barrick, M.R., Mount, M.K. & Judge, T.A. (2001). Personality and performance at the beginning of the new millennium: What do we know and where do we go next? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 9: 9–30. doi: 10.1111/1468-2389.00160
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013, April 17). *Economic news release: College enrollment and work activity of 2012 high school graduates* (USD-13-0670). Washington, DC. Retrieved from [www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgsec.nr0.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgsec.nr0.htm)
- The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems. (2013). *CBASS Measurement System*. New York, NY: Author.
- The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, & Society for Human Resource Management. (2006). *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century US workforce*. Retrieved from [http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL\\_REPORT\\_PDF09-29-06.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf)
- Conley, D. (2012). *A complete definition of college and career readiness*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Retrieved from <https://www.epiconline.org/publications/document-detail.dot?id=3fc88e78-e33d-42e8-9f36-8a3da5eb0548>
- Cooper, H., Robinson, J.C., & Patall, E.A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1-62. doi: 10.3102/00346543076001001
- Cury, F., Elliot, A.J., Fonseca, D.D., & Moller, A.C. (2006). The social-cognitive model of achievement motivation and the 2 × 2 achievement goal framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(4), 666-679.
- Duncan, G.J., & Magnuson, K. (2011). The nature and impact of early achievement skills, attention skills, and behavior problems. In G. J. Duncan and R. Murnane (Eds.), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 47-70). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Duncan, G.J., & Murnane, R.J. (Eds.). (2011). *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Duval, S. & Wicklund, R. (1972). *A theory of objective self awareness*. Oxford, England: Academic Press.
- Dweck, C.S., & Leggett, E.L. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, 95(2), 256-273.
- Education Trust. (2012). *Advancing to completion: Increasing degree attainment by improving graduation rates and closing gaps for African-American students*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. Retrieved from <http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/advancing-to-completion-increasing-degree-attainment-by-improving-graduation-rates-a-0>

- EPE Research Center. (2013). *Diplomas count 2013. Second chances: Turning dropouts into graduates*. Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E.H. (1980). *Identity and life cycle*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Farkas, G. (2011). Middle and high school skills, behaviors, attitudes, and curriculum enrollment, and their consequences. In G. J. Duncan and R. Murnane (Eds.), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 71-90). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Farrington, C.A. (2014). *Failing at school: Lessons for redesigning urban high schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E.M., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., Ormrod, R., Hamby, S., & Kracke, K. (2009, October). Children's exposure to violence: A comprehensive national survey. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (NCJ 227744). Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Flavell, J.H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906-911. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906
- Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of educational research*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Goldin, C., & Katz, L.F. (2008). *The race between education and technology*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Goldin, C., & Katz, L.F. (2009, Third Quarter). The future of inequality: The other reason education matters so much. *Milken Institute Review*, 26–33.
- Gould, T. (Ed.). (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools*. Philadelphia, PA: The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.
- Hacker, D.J., Dunlosky, J., & Graesser, A.C. (2009). *Handbook of metacognition in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Heckman, J., Stixrud, J., & Urzua, S. (2006). The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 24(3), 411-482.
- Hewlett Foundation. (2013). *Deeper learning competencies*. Retrieved from [http://www.hewlett.org/uploads/documents/Deeper\\_Learning\\_Defined\\_April\\_2013.pdf](http://www.hewlett.org/uploads/documents/Deeper_Learning_Defined_April_2013.pdf)

- International Youth Foundation. (2013). *Getting youth in the door: Defining soft skills requirements for entry-level service sector jobs*. Baltimore, MD: International Youth Foundation.
- Junn, J. (2005, October). The political costs of unequal education. Paper prepared for the symposium on the Social Costs of Inadequate Education. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved from [http://devweb.tc.columbia.edu/manager/symposium/Files/73\\_junn\\_paper.ed.pdf](http://devweb.tc.columbia.edu/manager/symposium/Files/73_junn_paper.ed.pdf).
- Kaushal, N., Magnuson, K., & Waldfogel, J. (2011). How is family income related to investments in children's learning? . In G. J. Duncan and R. Murnane (Eds.), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 187-207). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation
- Keith, T.Z. (1982). Time spent on homework and high school grades: A large-sample path analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*(2), 248-253.
- Larson, R., & Richards, M.H. (1994). *Divergent realities: The emotional lives of mothers, fathers, and adolescents*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Le Deist, F.D., & Winterton, J. (2005). What is competence? *Human Resource Development International, 8*(1), 27-46.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S.D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79-122.
- Locke, E.A., & Latham, G.P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist, 57*(9), 705-717.
- Locke, E.A., & Latham, G.P. (2006). New directions in goal-setting theory. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*(5), 265-268.
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954.
- Mayseless O., & Keren E. (2014). Finding a meaningful life as a developmental task in emerging adulthood: The domains of love and work across cultures. *Emerging Adulthood, 2*(1), 63-73.
- McAdams, D.P., & Adler, J.M. (2010). Autobiographical memory and the construction of a narrative identity: Theory, research, and clinical implications. In J.E. Maddux and J. Tangney (Eds.) *Social psychological foundations of clinical psychology* (pp. 36-50). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- McCrae, R.R. (1994). Openness to experience: Expanding the boundaries of Factor V. *European Journal of Personality, 8*(4), 251-272. doi: 10.1002/per.2410080404
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviourist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- MHA Labs (2014). *MHA Building Blocks*. Retrieved from <http://mhalabs.org/blog/2013/06/18/mha-building-blocks/>
- Moeller, A.J., Theiler, J.M., & Wu, C. (2012). Goal setting and student achievement: A longitudinal

study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96(2), 153-169.

Molden, D.C., & Dweck, C.S. (2006). Finding "meaning" in psychology: A lay theories approach to self-regulation, social perception, and social development. *American Psychologist*, 61(3), 192-203. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.61.3.192

Morin, A. (2011). Self-awareness part 1: Definition, measures, effects, functions, and antecedents. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(10), 807–823. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00387.x

National Center for Education Statistics. (2008). Digest of Education Statistics, 2008. Chapter 2, Table 32, Historical summary of public elementary and secondary school statistics: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2005-06. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009020.pdf>.

National Research Council. (2008). *Human behavior in military contexts*. Committee on Opportunities in Basic Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences for the U.S. Military. In J.J. Blascovich and C.R. Hartel (Eds.), Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

OECD. (2012). *OECD employment outlook 2012*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/empl\\_outlook-2012-graph5-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/empl_outlook-2012-graph5-en)

OECD. (2013). *Education indicators in focus*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

The O\*Net Resource Center (2014). *The O\*Net Content Model*. Retrieved from <http://www.onetcenter.org/content.html>

Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 323-367.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible selves as roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 38(2), 130–149.

Oyserman, D., & James, L. (2011). Possible identities: Possible selves, subjective experience, and self-regulation. In S. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, and V. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp.117-145). New York, NY: Springer Science+Business Media, LLC.

Oyserman, D., & Markus, H. (1990). Possible selves in balance: Implications for delinquency. *Journal of Social Issues*, 46(2), 141-157.

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4), 543-578.

Pellegrino, J.W., & Hilton, M.L. (2013). *Education for life and work: Developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21st century*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

- Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2009). *P21 framework definitions*. Retrieved from [http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21\\_Framework\\_Definitions.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf)
- Pew Research Center. (2014, February 11). The rising cost of not going to college. *Pew Research Social & Demographic Trends*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Poropat, A.E. (2009). A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(2), 322-338.
- Pritchard, J. (2013). *The importance of soft skills in entry-level employment and postsecondary success: Perspectives from employers and community colleges*. Seattle, OR: Seattle Jobs Initiative. Retrieved from [http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/SJI\\_SoftSkillsReport\\_vFINAL\\_1.17.13.pdf](http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/SJI_SoftSkillsReport_vFINAL_1.17.13.pdf)
- Redlener, I., Briot, A., Johnson, D., & Grant, R. (2007). *The growing health care access crisis for American children: One in four at risk*. New York, NY: The Children's Health Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.childrenshealthfund.org/sites/default/files/WhitePaper-May2007-FINAL.pdf>
- Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., & Moeller, E. (2008). *From high school to the future: Potholes on the road to college*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Roderick, M., Coca, V., Moeller, E., & Kelley-Kemple, T. (2013). *From high school to the future: The challenge of senior year in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Roderick, M., Holsapple, M., Kelley-Kemple, T., Johnson, D. W., & Moeller, E. (forthcoming). *From high school to the future: College readiness and getting to graduation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Rotter, J.B. (1990). Internal versus external control of reinforcement: A case history of a variable. *American Psychologist*, 45(4), 489-493.
- Rouse, C.E., & Barrow, L. (2006). U.S. elementary and secondary schools: Equalizing opportunity or replicating the status quo? *The Future of Children*, 16(2), 99-123.
- Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.
- Savitz-Romer, M., & Bouffard, S. (2012). *Ready, willing, and able: A developmental approach to college access and success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Scheier, M., Carver, C.S., & Bridges, M.W. (2001). Optimism, pessimism, and psychological well-being. In E.C. Chang (Ed.), *Optimism and pessimism: Implications for theory, research, and practice* (pp.189-216). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi: [10.1037/10385-009](https://doi.org/10.1037/10385-009)
- Seligman, M. E. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.



- Simmons, A. (2014, January 16). The danger of telling poor kids that college is the key to social mobility. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/01/the-danger-of-telling-poor-kids-that-college-is-the-key-to-social-mobility/283120/>
- Stanton-Salazar, R.D. (2011). A social capital framework for the study of institutional agents and their role in the empowerment of low-status students and youth. *Youth & Society*, 43(3), 1066-1109.
- Steele, C.M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5), 797-811.
- Steele, C.M. (1997). A threat in the air: how stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629. doi: [10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.613](https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.613)
- Steinberg, L., & Morris, A.S. (2001). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 83-110.
- Swanson, C.B., & Lloyd, S.C. (2013, June). Graduation rate approaching milestone. *Diplomas Count*, 32(34), 22-23.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.) Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (1997). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(2), 167-177.
- Tough, P. (2012). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (1999). Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1999. Section 31: 20th century statistics. No. 1427 Money income of families—Median income in current and constant (1997) dollars, by race and type of family: 1947-1997. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/99statab/sec31.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012). *Advancing civic learning and engagement in democracy: A road map and call to action*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2013). Education and training: History and timeline. Washington, DC. Retrieved from [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/history.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/history.asp)
- Wagner, T., & Compton, R.A. (2012). *Creating innovators: the making of young people who will change the world*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Weinert, F.E. (2001). Concept of competence: A conceptual clarification. In D.S. Rychen and L.H. Salganik (Eds.), *Defining and selecting key competencies* (pp. 45-65). Ashland, OH: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.
- Weissberg, R.P., & Cascarino, J. (2013). Academic learning + social-emotional learning = national priority.

*Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(2), 8-13.

Wenzlow, A.T., Mullahy, J., Robert, S.A., & Wolfe, B.L. (2004). An empirical investigation of the relationship between wealth and health using the survey of consumer finances. Discussion Paper no. 1287-04. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

Zimmerman, B. (1990). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: An overview. *Educational Psychologist*, 25(1), 3-7. doi: 10.1207/s15326985ep2501\_2

## Appendix A: Description of Project

In November 2013, the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) was awarded a competitive grant from the Wallace Foundation to build a conceptual framework that articulates what is needed to guide children and youth into successful young adult. The framework seeks to identify the broad range of factors critical for young adult success and to consolidate current understanding of how these factors can be fostered in schools, communities, and homes from early childhood to young adulthood. While much is known from research and practice about promoting college and career success, the field would benefit tremendously from a coherent and accessible framework for preparing children and youth for young adulthood that could bring together the best research and practice knowledge from multiple fields; clarify how critical factors work together across settings to support children’s development; advance efforts to measure those factors; organize the contributions of researchers, policy makers, and practitioners around a common set of objectives; create a shared understanding of the levers of change associated with achieving those objectives; and provide a common language with which to discuss and evaluate contributions and refine approaches over time.

The charge in this ambitious, four-phase project is to analyze and synthesize the best of research evidence, expert opinion, and practice wisdom in the service of developing such a conceptual framework, culminating in a consolidation of our understanding in a final report. In addition to a thorough grounding in published research, our work involves talking to experts in research *and* practice across a range of fields and disciplines. We aim to find the points of agreement across disparate perspectives, raise the points of contention, and leverage the collective wisdom of diverse lines of research to best understand the full scope of factors essential to young adult success. The goal of the project is to build a common language and shared understanding of how to best promote and coordinate the development of these critical factors across the different settings that children and youth inhabit (e.g., home, school, after-school programs, and community) as they mature.

### Our Current Work

Our project consists of four phases. In Phase 1—the phase during which this document was written—we focused on identifying the factors that are critical for success in young adulthood, particularly in college and at the beginning of a career. In order to capture this, we first had to articulate what the definition of “success” was; thus, a large focus of this paper addresses how we have come to think about success for young adults. Our search to understand what success is and what knowledge, skills, and dispositions are needed for young adults to succeed in the transition into college, their career, and early adulthood writ large began with information-gathering from a range of sources. We reviewed literature to identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are needed for young adults to succeed in college and the workplace; what skills are being expected of college students and young employees; and how those skills relate to the development of a sense of identity and agency for young adults. We also reviewed over 15 existing models and frameworks that focus on “noncognitive” factors, inter- and intra-personal competencies, and social-emotional skills in adolescence and young adulthood. These reviews were

supplemented with interviews of more than 30 researchers and practitioners who have studied, worked with, designed programs, or influenced policy for young adults and adolescents in transition (see Appendix B). These experts include researchers from different fields and disciplines (e.g., psychology, business, education, sociology, economics) as well as policymakers and practitioners from a range of organizations (e.g., college access programs, college admissions and student support offices in institutes of higher education, workforce development, chambers of commerce). Through reviewing literature and interviewing experts on college and career success, we sought to answer several foundational questions: (1) What does a successful young adult look like?; (2) What characteristics, attitudes, skills, and behaviors help people succeed in these settings?; and (3) What institutional, societal, and economic forces should we be considering as we develop our framework for the key factors needed to promote young adult success?

Simultaneously, through a series of youth profiles, we tried to capture in narrative form some slices of the lives of individual people to gain a realistic understanding of the struggles youth encounter as they transition into young adulthood, and what helps them overcome those hurdles. These profiles provide detailed, concrete portraits of the developmental and institutional challenges facing students in their transition into college or the workplace. We hope the specific problems of practice addressed in the youth profiles enable others to recognize the malleability of these key developmental factors and the importance of institutional context in their activation. The youth profiles may further provide policymakers and practitioners with a way to think not only about how different factors may influence the transition into young adulthood, but how the factors themselves are shaped by the quality of the institutional contexts and supports youth experience.

As a follow-up to this white paper, UChicago CCSR held a convening of a group of experts on March 10, 2014 to discuss the ideas put forth here. Our goal was to bring together professionals from a broad range of areas to help us better understand the constructs of identity and agency as they relate to early adulthood success, identify potential gaps in the factors that emerged from our knowledge collection phase, and look for areas of consensus and disagreement about the ways these factors shape success. We hoped this convening would provide an opportunity to encourage conversation across experts with different backgrounds and disciplinary lenses, leading to a clearer articulation of the problems youth are currently facing.

## **Phases of Work Following this White Paper**

Following the completion of our first convening, having established a set of critical factors necessary for success in young adulthood, our next phase of work (Phase 2) looked backward at the process of how these key factors develop over the life course. Ultimately, we aimed to understand how each of these factors develops over the course of early life, from the preschool years through young adulthood, and identify leverage points for best supporting children's holistic development. This resulted in a memo that identified critical periods for development, calling attention to promising points of leverage. The knowledge collection in Phase 2, again, was based on a scan of the empirical and practical literature and

reaching out to informants to seek guidance on the role different life stages play in developing the key factors identified in this paper.

In Phase 3 of this project, in which the team is currently engaged (as of November 2014), we are seeking to understand how to align practice with the intended goals of adults who interact with youth. We are considering the multiple settings in which children experience life and are drafting a new framework for how adults—practitioners, mentors, caregivers—can better support the range of developmental factors that are key in preparing youth for the transition into young adulthood. We have identified key setting components and laid out how the intentionality behind those components, and the enactment of practices, lead to a set of experiences that youth have. Understanding youth interpretation of those experiences can help adults better design their own practices in ways that intentionally support development. As in our first phase of work, we used an iterative process of drawing from the literature and our informant interviews to write a second white paper which is focused on the alignment of practices with the development of factors for young adult success. This phase also included a convening of experts in October 2014, focusing more on practitioners or research-to-practice experts who represented different stages of development for youth—from early childhood through adolescence. Again, we grounded theory and practice wisdom in profiles of youth in various developmental stages and settings.

In our final phase of work—Phase 4—we will synthesize the lessons of the previous phases into a coherent conceptual framework and final report. We will also highlight which strategies (if any) already exist to develop particular factors in schools, in community organizations or other youth settings, and/or in homes, and what evidence we have of their effectiveness. The final product will be designed as an actionable document that can organize and guide the strategic direction and daily work of practitioners and policymakers.

## **What We Hope to Accomplish at the End of this Project**

In many ways, the goals of our final report will be to combine knowledge from existing literature and practices with illustrative youth profiles to engage a reader—researcher, parent, practitioner, funder—in better understanding what is known about a complex set of questions. Our final report and conceptual framework will provide a clearer picture of: (1) What factors are critical ingredients to young adult success; (2) how critical factors develop at each stage of life across various settings; and (3) the process by which different settings (e.g., home, school, after school) play a role in the development of these factors. We will specifically attend to what the evidence suggests are the right moments and settings for implementing strategies of support or interventions to best develop children with various backgrounds into successful adults.

We will identify where the evidence is strong, and where we are making hypotheses based on the combined thinking of top experts across multiple fields. As with our prior work conducted by UChicago CCSR, our final report will paint a picture of how our conceptual model plays out in the lives of various children and young adults by embedding cases throughout the report. UChicago CCSR has received over 6,000 requests of *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners* (Farrington et al., 2012) from teachers,

community organizations, parents, researchers, and philanthropists, providing evidence that we not only produced high-quality, meaningful work, but did so in a format that resonates with a broad audience. We hope the same of our final report for this project.

## Appendix 2: List of Experts

### Experts Interviewed for Phase 1

Name		Organization	Title
Harry	Berman	Illinois Board of Higher Education	Executive Director
Daniela	Boykin	ASAP program in NYC	ASAP Deputy Director
Jessica	Besser-Rosenberg	One Million Degrees	Director, Research and Communications
Chris	Broughton	Cristo Rey Network	Senior Director of College Initiatives
Amanda	Cage	Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy
Joyce	Debrah-Sheppard	Umoja Student Development Corporation	Partnership Development Director
Aarti	Dhupelia	Chicago Public Schools	Chief Officer, College and Career Success
Susan	Farrugia	University of Illinois-Chicago	Director of the Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success
Ellen	Galinsky	Families and Work Institute	Director of Undergraduate Programs
Marcia	Hanlon	Associated Colleges of Illinois	Director, College Readiness & Completion
Lori	Hill	University of Michigan	Assistant Professor
Harry	Holzer	Georgetown University	Professor Public Policy
Jennifer	Lansing	Chapin Hall	Researcher
Lori	Littleton	63rd St Corridor Center for Working Families, Metropolitan Family Services Calumet	Program Supervisor
Amy	Lloyd	Jobs for the Future	Program Director, Pathways to Prosperity Network
Michael	McPherson	The Spencer Foundation	President
Beth	Miller	Nellie Mae Foundation	Director of Research and Evaluation
Patrick	Milton	Chicago Public Schools	Senior Manager, GEAR UP
Fernando	Moreno	BUILD, Inc.	Special Projects Manager
Jeff	Nelson	OneGoal	Chief Executive Officer
Jeannie	Oakes	Ford Foundation	Executive Director
Elizabeth	Partoyan	Forum for Youth Investment	Senior Fellow
Paige	Ponder	One Million Degrees	Chief Executive Officer
John	Rico	Rico Enterprises	Founder, President, and CEO
Robert	Sherman	Consultant (formerly of Novo Foundation)	
Brian	Spittle	DePaul University	Assistant Vice President for Access and Attainment
Kathleen	St. Louis Caliento	Spark Program	Executive Director



Wendy	Stack	Chicago GEAR UP	Director
Vincent	Tinto	Syracuse University	Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Alexandria	Walton Radford	RTI International	Associate Program Director, Postsecondary Education
Phoebe	Williams	Year Up Chicago	Outreach, Admissions, and Student Services Director
Alicia	Wilson-Ahlstrom	Forum for Youth Investment	Senior Program Manager, Research and Development

### Participants in Cambridge, Massachusetts Meeting February 21, 2014

Name		Organization	Title
Dana	Ansel		Research and Evaluation Consultant
Larry	Dieringer	Engaging Schools	Executive Director
Stephanie	Jones	Harvard University Graduate School of Education	Associate Professor
Frank	Levy	MIT/Harvard Medical School	Rose Professor Emeritus/Lecturer, Department of Health Care Policy
Alex	Molina	Providence After School Alliance (PASA)	Deputy Director
Richard	Murnane	Harvard Graduate School of Education	Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society
Gil	Noam	Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR) at Harvard University	Director
Jan	Phlegar	West Ed	Former Executive Director of Learning Innovations/Education Consultant
Mandy	Savitz-Romer	Harvard Graduate School of Education	Senior Lecturer on Education; Director, Prevention Science and Practice Program
Chris	Smith	Boston Afterschool and Beyond	President and Executive Director

### Participants in Chicago, Illinois Convening March 10, 2014

Name		Organization	Title
Leslie	Beller	Chicago Public Schools; MHA Labs	Manager, Career Services (CPS); Director and Founder (MHA)
Suzanne	Bouffard	Harvard Graduate School of Education	Researcher
Betsy	Brand	American Youth Policy Forum	Executive Director

David	Conley	University of Oregon, College of Education	Professor; Director, Center for Educational Policy Research
James	Coté	University of Western Ontario	Professor, Department of Sociology
Greg	Darnieder	U.S. Department of Education	Senior Advisor
Regina	Deil-Amen	University of Arizona	Associate Professor, Center for the Study of Higher Education
Ron	Ferguson	Harvard Graduate School of Education	Senior Lecturer in Education and Public Policy
Connie	Flanagan	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Professor, School of Human Ecology
Nilda	Flores-Gonzalez	University of Illinois at Chicago	Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
Leeandra	Khan	Bronzeville Scholastic Institute	Principal
Lila	Leff	UMOJA Student Development Corporation	Founder
Dan	McAdams	Northwestern University	Professor of Psychology; Department Chair
Daphna	Oyserman	University of Southern California	Dean's Professor, Department of Psychology; Professor of Education and of Communications
Jim	Pellegrino	University of Illinois at Chicago	Co-Director, Learning Sciences Research Institute
James R.	Stone III	University of Louisville	Professor and Director, National Research Center for Career and Technical Education

## **University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR)**

The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) produces groundbreaking research on Chicago Public Schools that drives school improvement in Chicago and nationwide.

### **Capacity-building Research**

UChicago CCSR focuses on building schools' capacity to address their most pressing issues and challenges. Its research provides insight into what works, what doesn't, and why, giving policymakers and educators information to develop their own solutions to the problems they face. Primary capacity-building activities include:

- Seeking answers to core questions about what it takes to improve school and student performance.
- Identifying key indicators for improvement and tracking district-wide progress on these indicators over time.
- Evaluating the theory of action behind new districtwide policies and how these new policies fare in practice.
- Engaging a wide range of stakeholders in research findings through public convenings and presentations; individualized data reports; and accessible, actionable publications.

### **A Focus on One District**

UChicago CCSR researchers combine expertise on a range of topics with deep knowledge of the Chicago Public Schools. This concentration has allowed UChicago CCSR to remain focused on issues that matter to practitioners on the ground, build a cumulative knowledge base, apply findings to policies and practice, and respond quickly to emerging questions and policy changes. UChicago CCSR considers itself a critical friend to Chicago Public Schools—independent, candid, and deeply committed to improvement.

### **A Distinctive Model for Applied Research**

A number of features distinguish UChicago CCSR from more typical research organizations: a focus on one place—Chicago, involvement with a diverse group of stakeholders as part of the research process, a wide range of methods and disciplinary perspectives, and a deep commitment to engaging with policymakers and practitioners around research findings. UChicago CCSR is now contributing to the incubation of applied research centers in 20 major urban centers across the country. New York City, Los Angeles, Newark, Kansas City, San Diego, and Baltimore have already established research consortia based on UChicago CCSR's model.