

## Background about Cambridge Education and the Tripod Project

Cambridge Education was founded in 1983 in the UK and works in over 45 countries around the world. Cambridge Education has been working in the US since 2002 and has since partnered with local school districts, national and regional foundations, state departments of education and other reform support providers. Cambridge Education is part of the Mott MacDonald Group, which employs over 14,000 staff and is wholly owned by its employees. The firm's school improvement services include offerings that focus on the performance management of teachers and school leaders. Tripod survey assessments are one example of these services.

Tripod survey assessments capture key dimensions of classroom life and teaching practice as students experience them. Using the Tripod survey assessments, educators have the ability to measure student perceptions in the following areas:

1. **Teaching Effectiveness:** Measures tied to each teacher are quality assured and benchmarked against national norms.
2. **Student Engagement:** Data concerning effort and motivation indicate for each classroom how students judge their own attitudes, behaviors and effort.
3. **Student Satisfaction:** Data indicate whether each classroom, building and district is a place where students feel safe, welcome and satisfied with their progress.
4. **Whole-school Climate:** Data from individual classrooms can be aggregated up to measures of whole school climate. In addition, surveys include questions that pertain to the school as a whole.

### Tripod Project Teacher Surveys

The Tripod Project teacher survey is designed to measuring the quality of the school as a professional environment for the cultivation of high quality teaching. Teacher respondents rate the quality of instructional leadership, professional development, collaboration norms, press for excellence, evaluation regimes, and other aspects of school operation that affect the quality of teaching and learning.

Survey results are available at the classroom, school and district levels and can help ensure education investments produce positive results by **focusing priorities and tracking progress**.

## Exhibit 1: Overview of the Tripod 7Cs

The 7C's are the central constructs in the Tripod Project framework for measuring teaching practices. Each construct is supported by research in peer reviewed publications that have appeared in education books and journals over the past several decades.

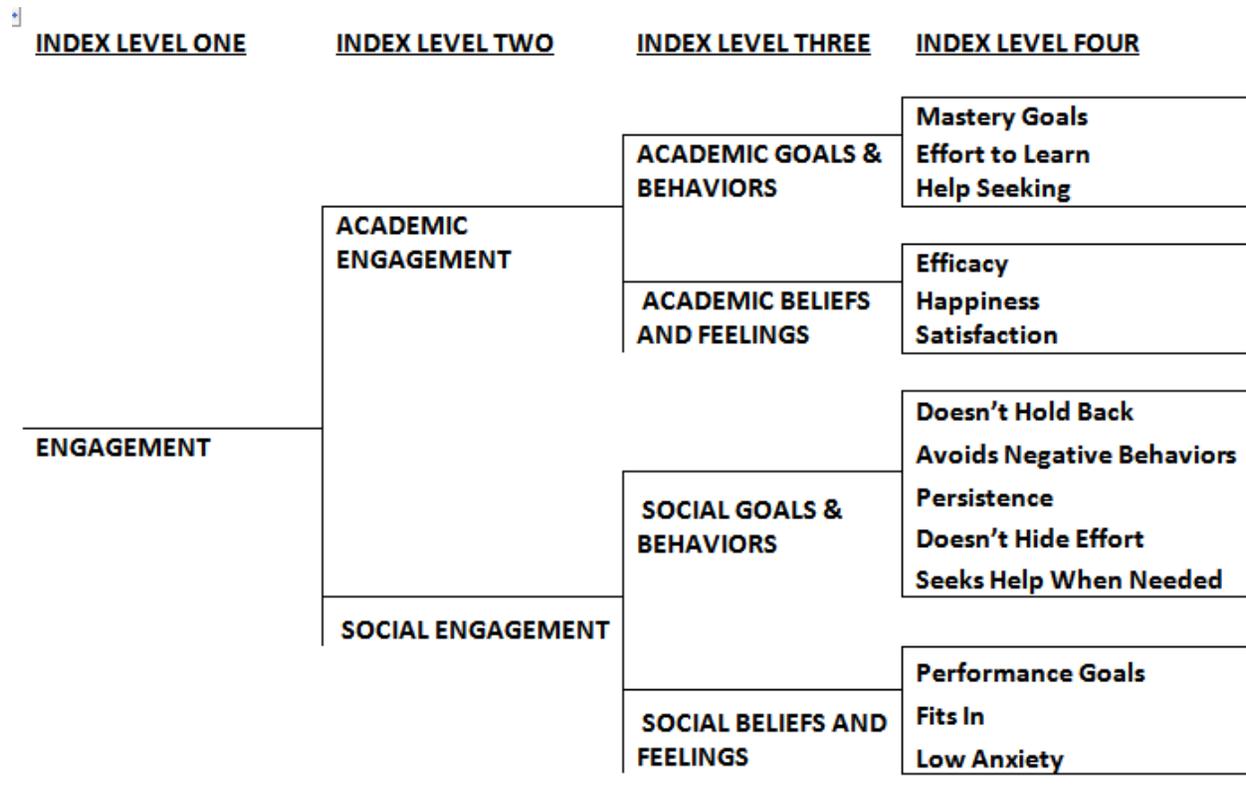
1. *Care* pertains to teacher behaviors that help students to feel emotionally safe and to rely on the teacher to be a dependable ally in the classroom. Caring reduces anxiety and provides a sense of positive affiliation and belonging. Caring goes beyond "niceness"; caring teachers work hard, and they go out of their way to help. They signal to their students, "I want you to be happy and successful, and I will work hard to serve your best interest; your success is an important source of my personal satisfaction." An example of a Tripod survey item measuring Care is: *"My teacher really tries to understand how students feel about things."*

2. *Control* pertains to classroom management. Teachers need skills to manage student propensities towards off-task or out-of-order behaviors, in order to foster conditions in the classroom that allow for effective communication and focus. Effective control helps to maintain order and supplements caring in making the classroom calm and emotionally safe from such things as negative peer pressures. An example of a Tripod survey item measuring Control is: *“Our class stays busy and doesn’t waste time.”*
3. *Clarify* concerns teacher behaviors that promote understanding. Interactions that clear up confusion and help students persevere are especially important. Each student comes with particular gaps in understanding and with both correct and incorrect interpretations of the world around them. To be most effective, teachers should be able to diagnose students’ skills and knowledge, and they need multiple ways of explaining ideas that are likely to be difficult for students to grasp. Teachers also must judge how much information students can absorb at any one time, and they should differentiate instruction according to individual maturity and interest. An example of a Tripod survey item measuring Clarify is: *“My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover in this class.”*
4. *Challenge* concerns both effort and rigor -- pressing students to work hard and to think hard. Challenging teachers tend to monitor student effort and to confront students if their effort is unsatisfactory. Students who do not devote enough time to their work or who give up too easily in the face of difficulty are pushed to do more. Similarly, students who do not think deeply or to reason their way through challenging questions are both supported and pushed. The teacher may ask a series of follow-up questions intended to elicit deeper, more thorough reasoning. An example of a Tripod survey question measuring Challenge for effort is: *“In this class, my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort.”* A question measuring Challenge for rigorous thinking is: *“My teacher wants us to use our thinking skills, not just memorize things.”*
5. *Captivate* concerns teacher behaviors that make instruction stimulating, instead of boring. Captivating teachers make the material interesting, often by making it seem relevant to things about which students already care. Brain research establishes clearly that stimulating learning experiences and relevant material make lessons easier to remember than when the experience is boring and the material seems irrelevant. Examples of questions concerning stimulation and relevance are: *“My teacher makes lessons interesting,”* and *“[negatively worded] I often feel like this class has nothing to do with real life outside school.”*
6. *Confer* concerns seeking students’ points of view by asking them questions and inviting them to express themselves. When students expect that the teacher might call on them to speak in class, they have an incentive to stay alert. In

addition, believing that the teacher values their points of view provides positive reinforcement for the effort that it takes to formulate a perspective in the first place. Further, if students are asked to respond not only to the teacher, but to one another as well, a learning community may develop in the classroom, with all of the attended social reinforcements. An example of a question concerning Confer is: *“My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.”*

7. Consolidate is the seventh C. Consolidation concerns how teachers help students to organize material for more effective encoding in memory and for more efficient reasoning. These practices include reviewing and summarizing material at the end of classes and connecting ideas to material covered in previous lessons. Teachers who excel at consolidation talk about the relationships between ideas and help students to see patterns. There is a large body of evidence supporting the hypothesis that these types of instructional activities enhance retention by building multiple brain pathways for retrieving knowledge and for combining disparate bits of knowledge in effective reasoning. An example of a question concerning Consolidation is: *“My teacher takes the time to summarize what we learn each day.”*

## EXHIBIT 2: Student Engagement Model



### Exhibit 3: School Level Survey Items, Examples

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>Survey Question</b>
Personal beliefs, habits and disposition	<i>self-sabotage</i>	I start my homework too late to be able to finish it.
Personal beliefs, habits and disposition	<i>attitude toward adults</i>	I would quiet down if someone said I was talking too loudly in the hallway.
Personal beliefs, habits and disposition	<i>attitude toward adults</i>	I treat the adults at this school with respect, even if I don't know them.
Personal beliefs, habits and disposition	<i>trusting friends and strangers</i>	I trust other students at this school, even if I don't know them.
Vulnerability	<i>get bullied</i>	I get bullied at school.
Vulnerability	<i>peer pressure</i>	I do things I don't want to do because of pressure from other students.
Vulnerability	<i>perceptions of school safety</i>	This school feels like a safe place to me.
Vulnerability	<i>accused of being too serious</i>	People like me get accused of being too serious about school.
Perceptions of school culture	<i>friends get bullied</i>	Some of my friends get bullied at school.
Perceptions of school culture	<i>ready to fight to protect yourself</i>	At this school, I must be ready to fight to defend myself.

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