

MLK – Wednesday 1/16/2013

For today, I chose to watch the speech/discussion with Geoffrey Canada about his foundation, the Harlem Children's Zone, which is dedicated to ending cycles of poverty in the neighborhood by helping children develop into successful adults. His message reminded me a lot of the Frontline piece that I watched on Michelle Rhee because they both have philosophies that if a teacher or mentor cannot produce results, they will be fired, and that there are no excuses for failing the kids, even though they may come from incredibly difficult home situations. I think that it's important to hold the teachers, social workers, and mentors accountable if they're taking money from foundations to help these kids. I liked that he said that you have to run this place like a business and take responsibility for your failures without excuses.

I was inspired to hear that of the kids enrolled at the Harlem Children's Zone, 90% will be going to college next year and that the standardized test scores are on par with white students across the state. I think that it's important to give kids every opportunity to succeed, and I'm glad that people like Geoffrey Canada are recognizing that even if kids are given opportunity, they have to be trained and pushed to take these opportunities over remaining the same. It's easy for a kid to grow up in a rough community and end up in a jail because nothing more is expected of them. When you push people to succeed, rarely will they fail you.

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