

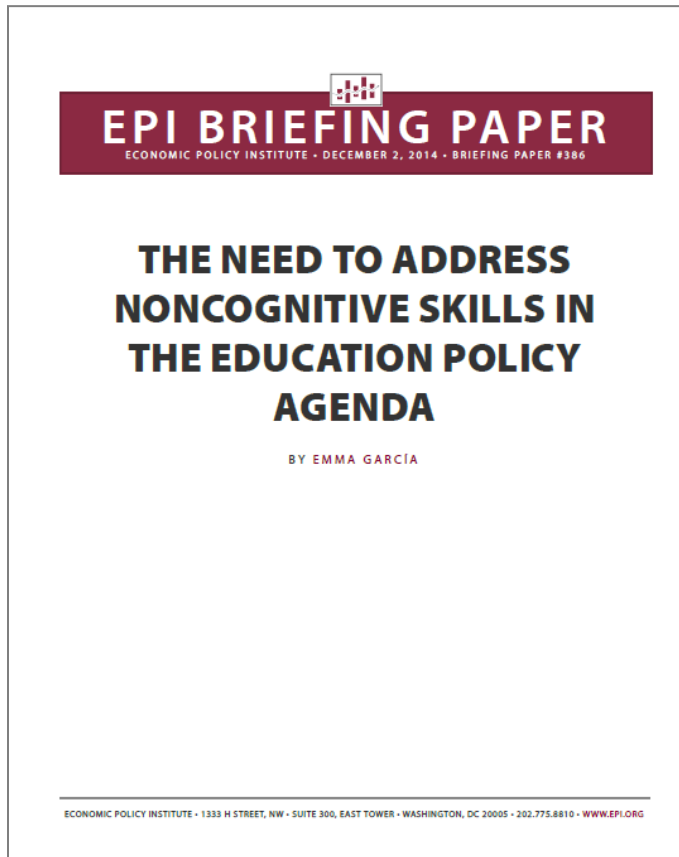
# The Need to Address Noncognitive Skills in the Education Policy Agenda and its Challenges

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*Habilitats socials, emocions i actituds d'aprenentatge:  
com treballar-les i com avaluar-les*

*Fundació Jaume Bofill-Ivàlua, Barcelona 17 novembre 2016*

# Introduction



# Goals

## – Make a case:

- NCS should be an explicit pillar of education policy

## – Building on # arguments supported by research:

- NCSs' direct importance: they matter because they matter
- NCSs' importance in an indirect manner:
  - » Because they correlate with academic performance
  - » Because they correlate with adult outcomes (earnings, mostly)
- NCS are developed in school (and affect CS acquisition)

## – Outline a framework & propose ways to do that

- Policy & Research implications (from theory to action)
  - » Guidelines for action
  - » Learn from the experience
  - » Deal with challenges

# From theory to practice: make *their importance* explicit

- ***“Relevant learning outcomes must be well defined in cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and continually assessed as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Quality education includes the development of those skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions and respond to local and global challenges.”***

UNESCO, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR  
Incheon Declaration for Education 2030

# From theory to practice: *what are noncognitive skills?*

CS	NCS
Definition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal knowledge, the tangible goal of the educational process</li> <li>• Gintis (1971) defines cognitive skills as the individual capacities to “logically combine, analyze, interpret and apply informational symbols”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ingredients that are not (directly) represented by cognitive skills or formal conceptual understanding</li> <li>• Borghans et al. (2008) define personality traits as “patterns of thought, feelings and behavior”</li> </ul>
Operationalization (and measurement)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test scores</li> <li>• Comprehension, reading speed, school attainment and graduation or dropout rates (Hanushek, 1986)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factor analysis techniques that measure underlying or latent factors representing noncognitive skills (Almlund et al., 2011).</li> <li>• Taxonomies of traits: e.g. the “Big Five” constructs of personality: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience</li> </ul>

# From theory to practice: make *them* explicit

## Education policy's list of noncognitive skills

- Critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, emotional health, work ethic, and community responsibility (Rothstein et al 2008)
- Social skills -closeness, affection, and open communication-, self-control, and self-regulation (Pianta and colleagues)
- Persistence, academic confidence, teamwork, organizational skills, creativity, and communication skills

# Policy Implications

- Set the **framework** and provide specific **guidelines for policymaking** on how to achieve improvements around noncognitive skills
- Two main questions:
  - 1. What does education policy have to do?***
  - 2. How to accomplish it?***

# 1. What does education policy have to do?

- A. Broadening **accountability** (and refining it)
  - Curriculum and teaching methods
  - Enhance teacher preparation, evaluation of teachers' performance
- B. Adjust school policies on **disciplinary measures**
- C. Learn from knowledge accumulated in out of mainstream school settings: **early-childhood education, special ed, and after-school activities**
- D. Examples from ongoing policies and broadening existing strategies: **learn from them, help expand them**



## 2. How can education policy achieve these goals?

- A. Define noncognitive skills and **design good metric systems** to measure them (& research's role)
  - Characteristics and thoughts for caution: **Validity, reliability**
  
- B. Use **research** to inform the teaching profession
  - Teacher preparation and support
  - Informing learning and teaching

## 2. How can education policy achieve these goals? (cont)

### C. Translating research into policy

- Using noncognitive skills to improve educational policies: **opening the black box** of the educational processes and interventions

### D. Research, **Policy and Politics**

- An opportunity to reinforce joint work among education institutions and agents

# Next steps

- Better understand “NCS’s” roles in the education process & others
- Challenges-definition and measurement:
  - ““Are these measures valid?” is not just a statistical question. It’s a question of **valid for what purpose**. Are those measures designed to do what you need them to do?” (Duckworth 2015)
  - Skills and corresponding measures “must be **culturally, educationally, age, and gender appropriate**, and be **sensitive enough to measure changes** (among program participants) across regions and sectors of the world” (Lippman et al 2015)
- Research (&data) needed to validate/assess these

# GRÀCIES

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