



**The Achievement Gap Initiative
At Harvard University**

Content, Pedagogy, Relationships
The Tripod Project

University of New Hampshire, November 17, 2008

***Toward Excellence with Equity:
Improving both Parenting and Schooling,
Not Just One or the Other***

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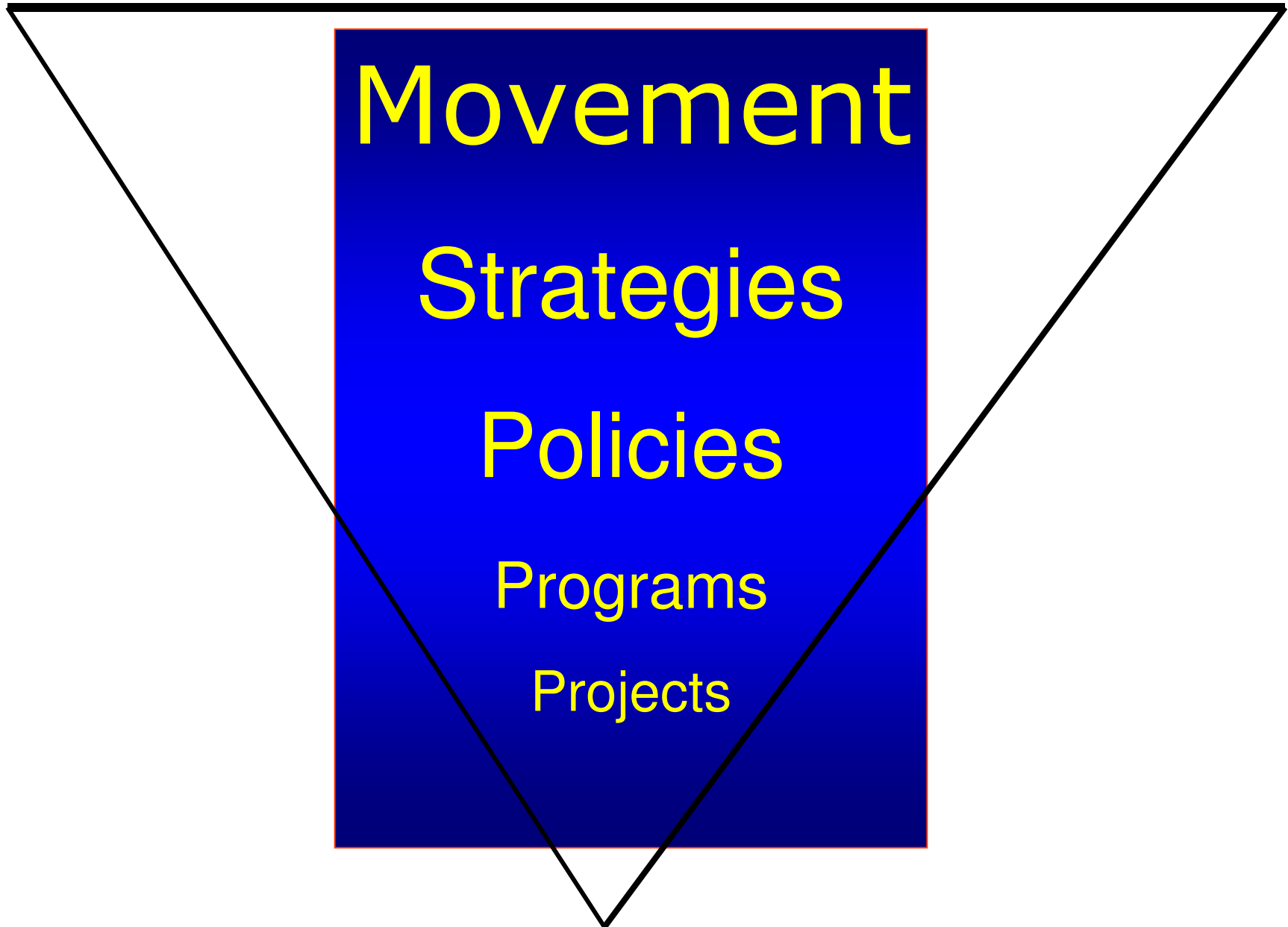
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“Any fool can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.” Rev. Robert Schuller

The bounty of the harvest depends upon the effectiveness of cultivation, and the effectiveness of cultivation depends, over time, on the intensity of the search for effective methods and the dedication of effort to help children reach their full potential.

A Social, Cultural and Political Movement for Excellence with Equity



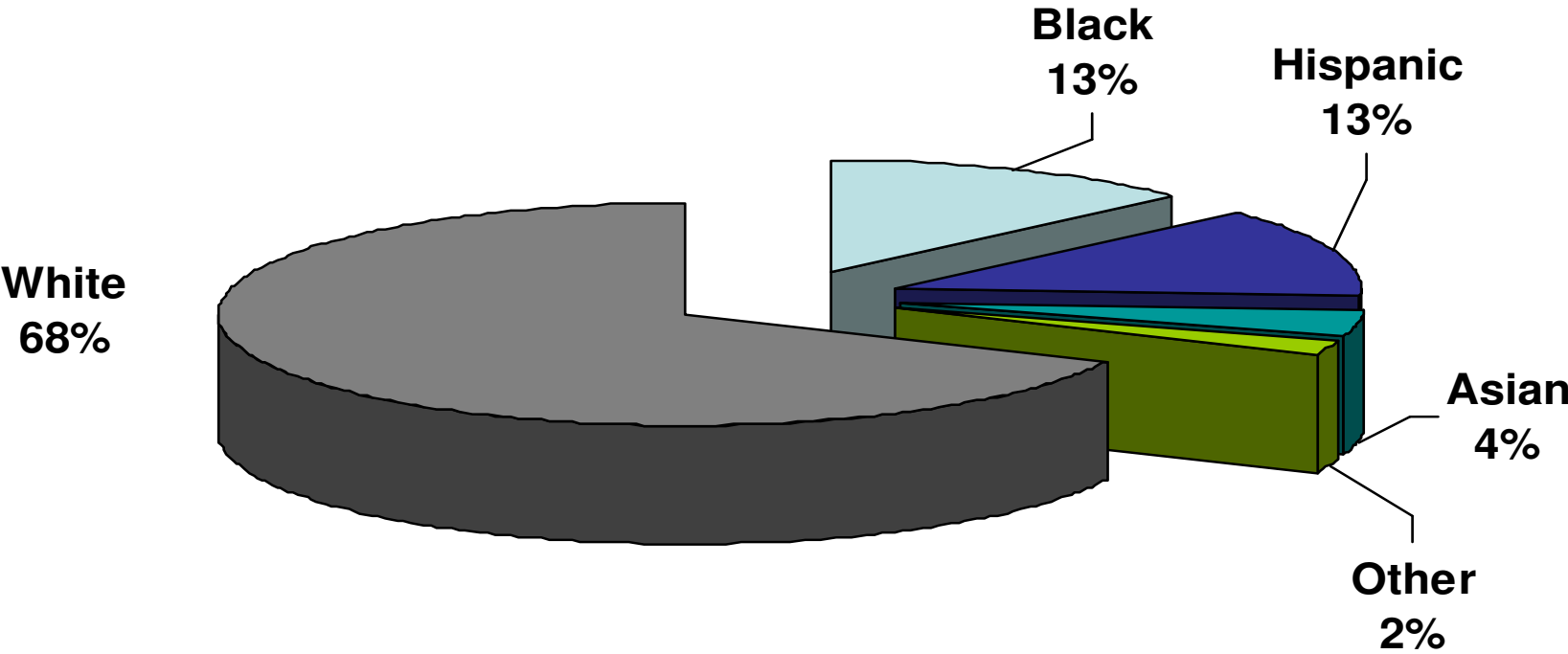
There is an urgent need for:

- **Youth cultures that more consistently support behaviors consistent with academic learning and the pursuit of excellence;**
- **Parenting that nurtures intellectual growth and balances warmth and responsiveness with structure and demandingness;**
- **Teaching that engages and challenges students to achieve at higher levels;**
- **Community supports to supplement parents and teachers;**
- **Leadership to organize, guide and motivate others in a *21st Century Social Movement for Excellence with Equity.***

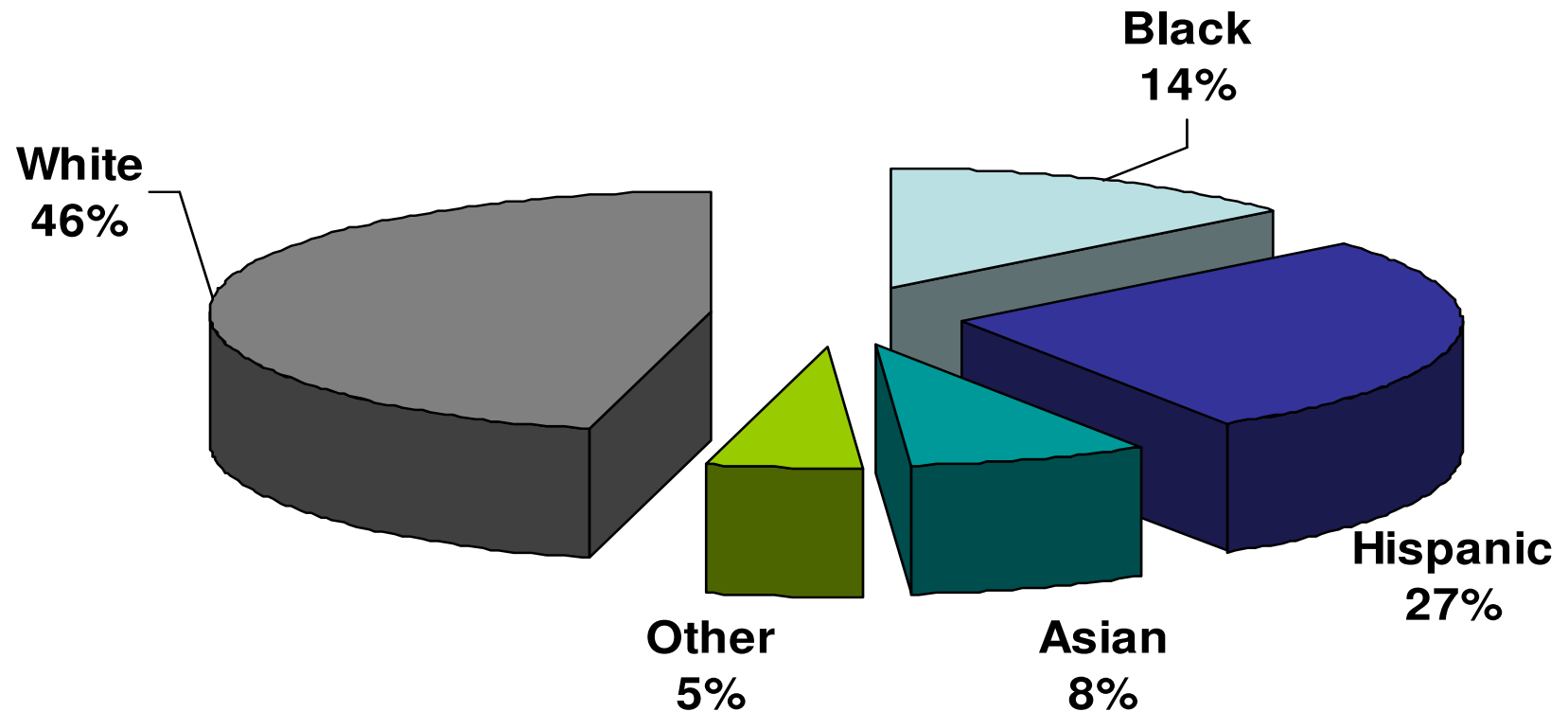
Urgency AND Possibility.

Urgency

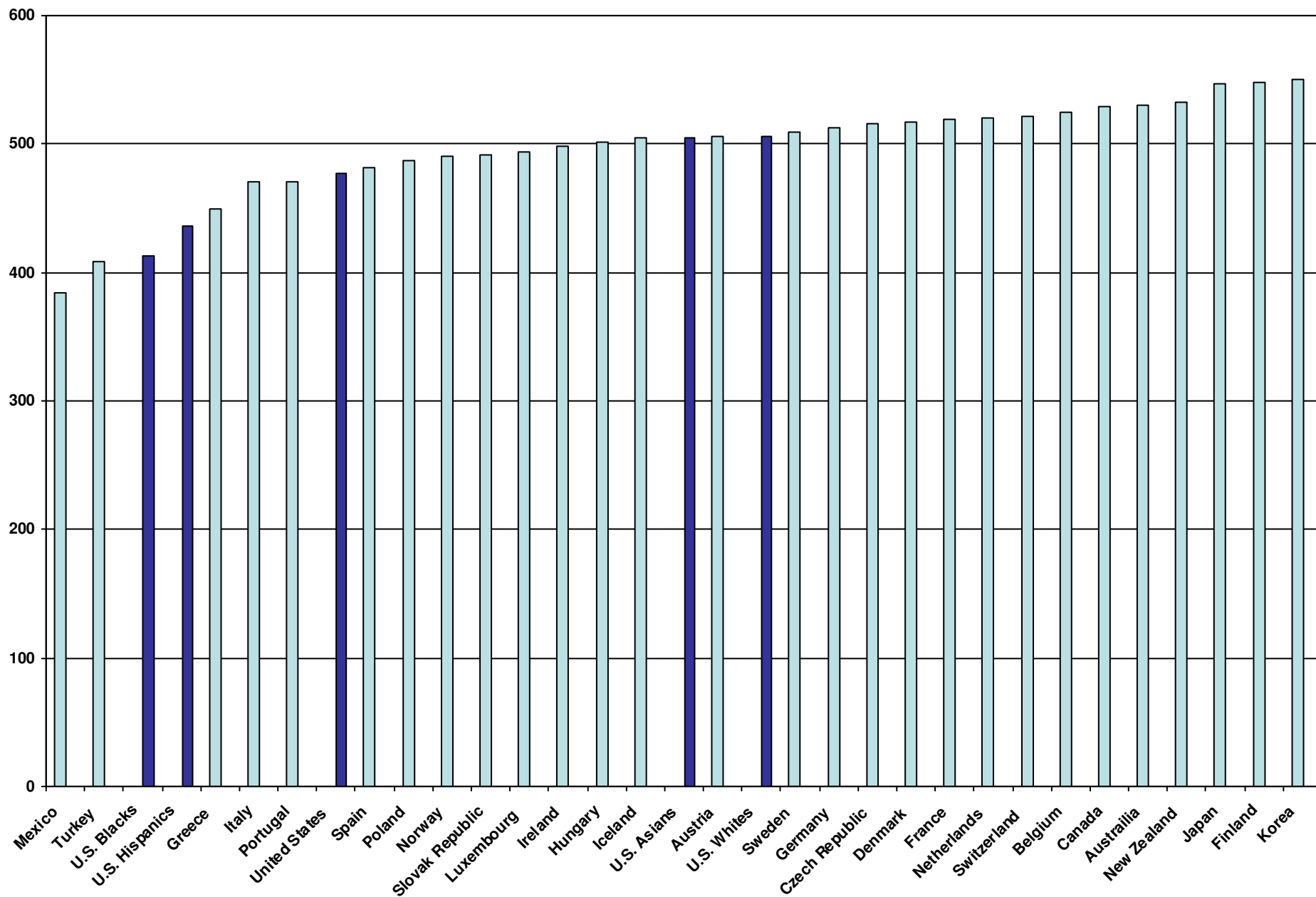
US Population Shares in 2000



US Population Shares Projected for 2050



Program for International Student Assessment, 15-Year Olds, 2003, Math Problem Solving in OECD Nations (Dark Blue = U.S. Students)



The Goal:

With regard to race, ethnicity,
and nationality,
the goal should be *broadly
achieved excellence with
group proportional equality.*

Possibility!

Reasons to be Hopeful that Progress is Possible

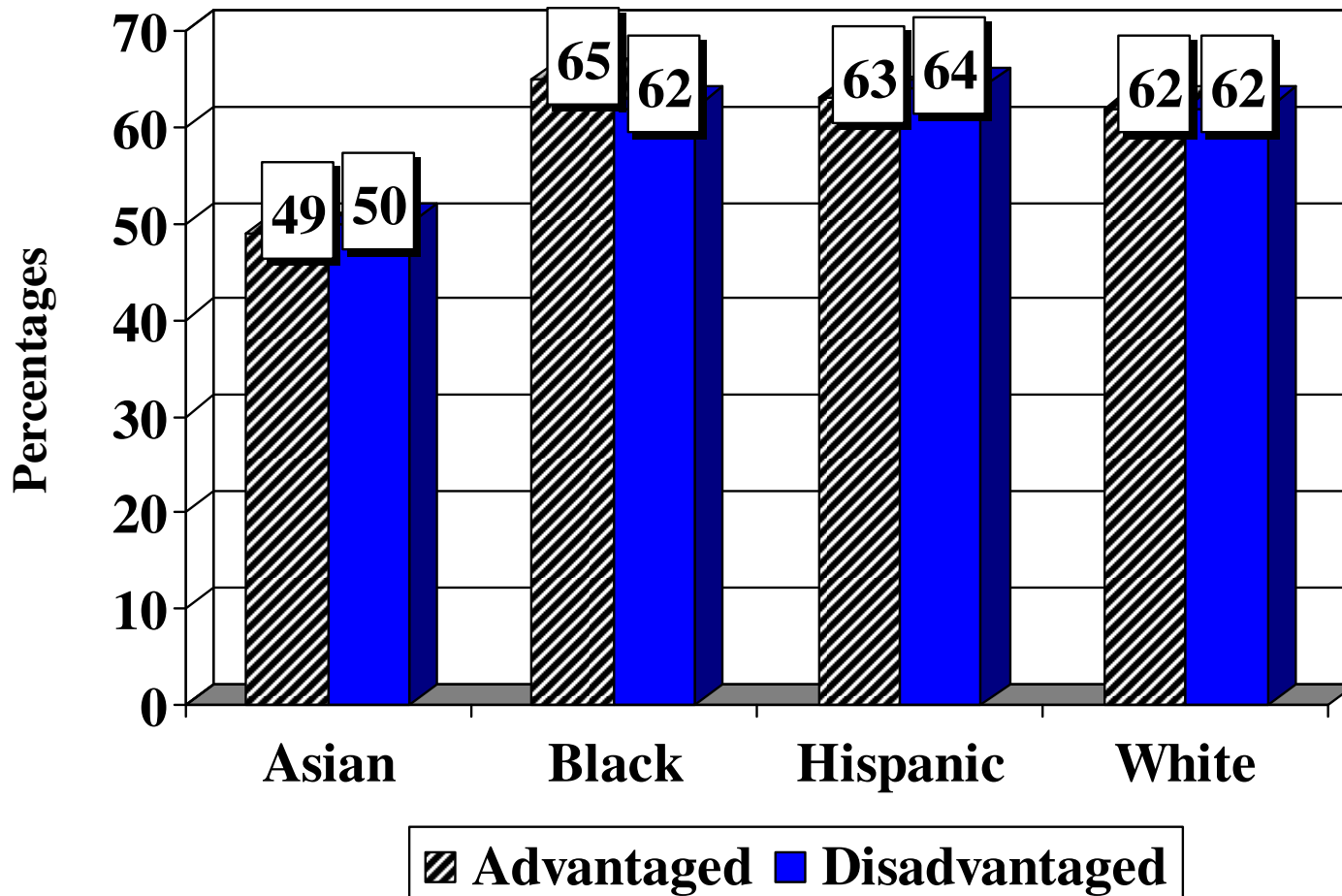
- Minimal between-group differences among infants — it appears we start from the same place.
- Black-White IQ gaps are smaller than in the past.
- NAEP trends showed dramatic gap narrowing between 1970 and 1990, showing that rapid progress is possible.
- Recent NAEP trends for 9-year olds show movement toward group-proportional equality (i.e., all rising but lowest groups rising faster)

Home Learning Conditions

Parenting Practices and Home Life Styles

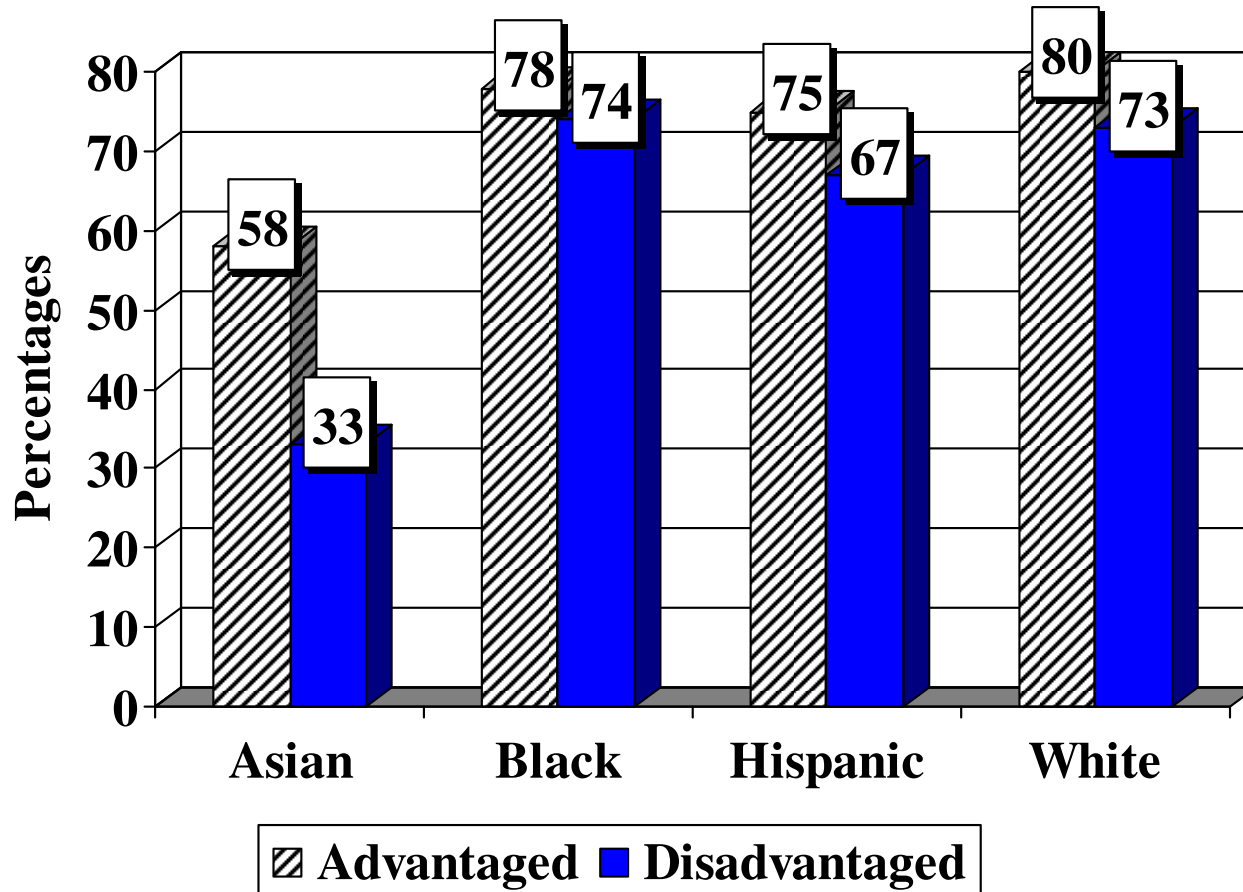
- Mother-child interactions during infancy help predict test scores in early elementary years and help explain achievement gaps.
- Parenting practices (warmth and demandingness) during early school years help predict test scores during early adolescence and help explain achievement gaps.
- Compared to Whites and Asians, Black and Hispanic children in elementary school report less leisure reading at home, fewer books at home, more television watching, more televisions in bedrooms, and get sleepier at school.

My parents want me to tell them what I learned in school.
("Yes," instead of "Maybe" or "No.") (Grades 1-6)



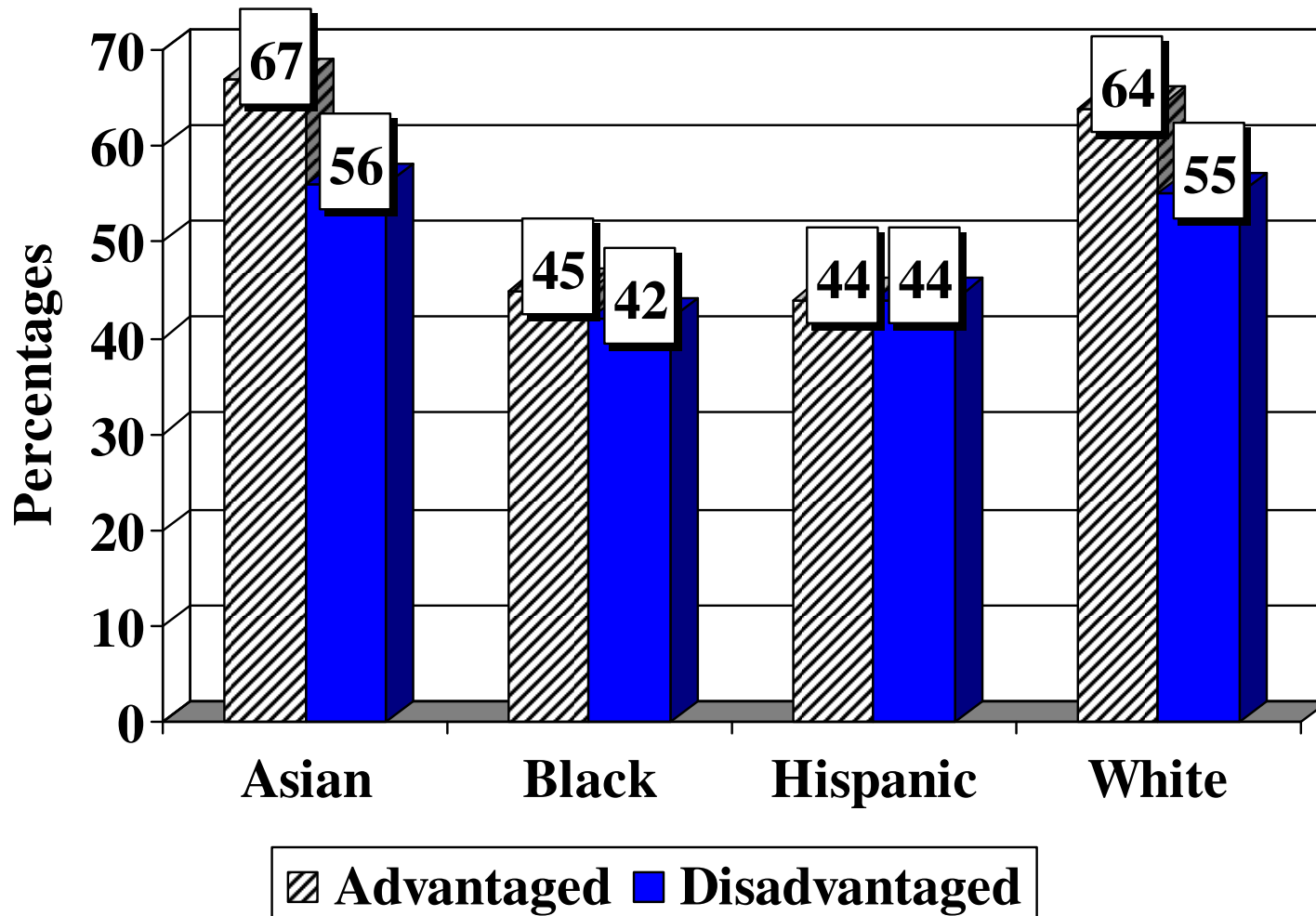
Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 1st to 6th graders collected spring 2005 & '06 from 45 elementary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, IA, MA, MI and CA. "Advantaged" students have (by our definition) *at least one computer in the home AND are not from single parent households*; others are labeled "Disadvantaged." Advantaged: Asian, N=687; Black, N=1355; Hispanic, N=561; White, N=2647. Disadvantaged: Asian, N=100; Black=936; Hispanic=281; White=337.

At home, someone is always there
to help me with my homework if I need it.
("Yes," instead of "Maybe" or "No.") (Grades 1-6)



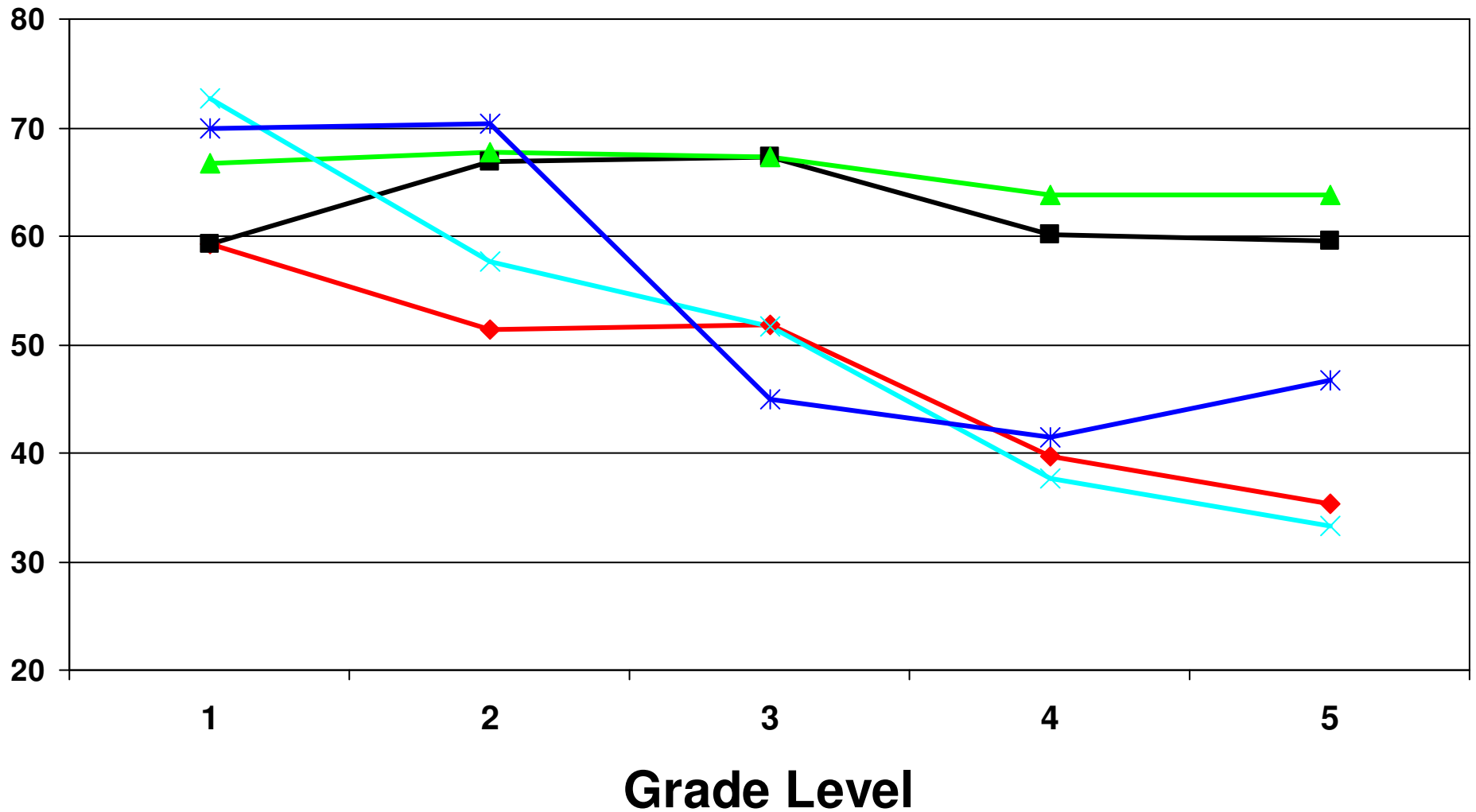
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I read almost everyday at home.
("Yes," instead of "Maybe" or "No.") (Grades 1-6)



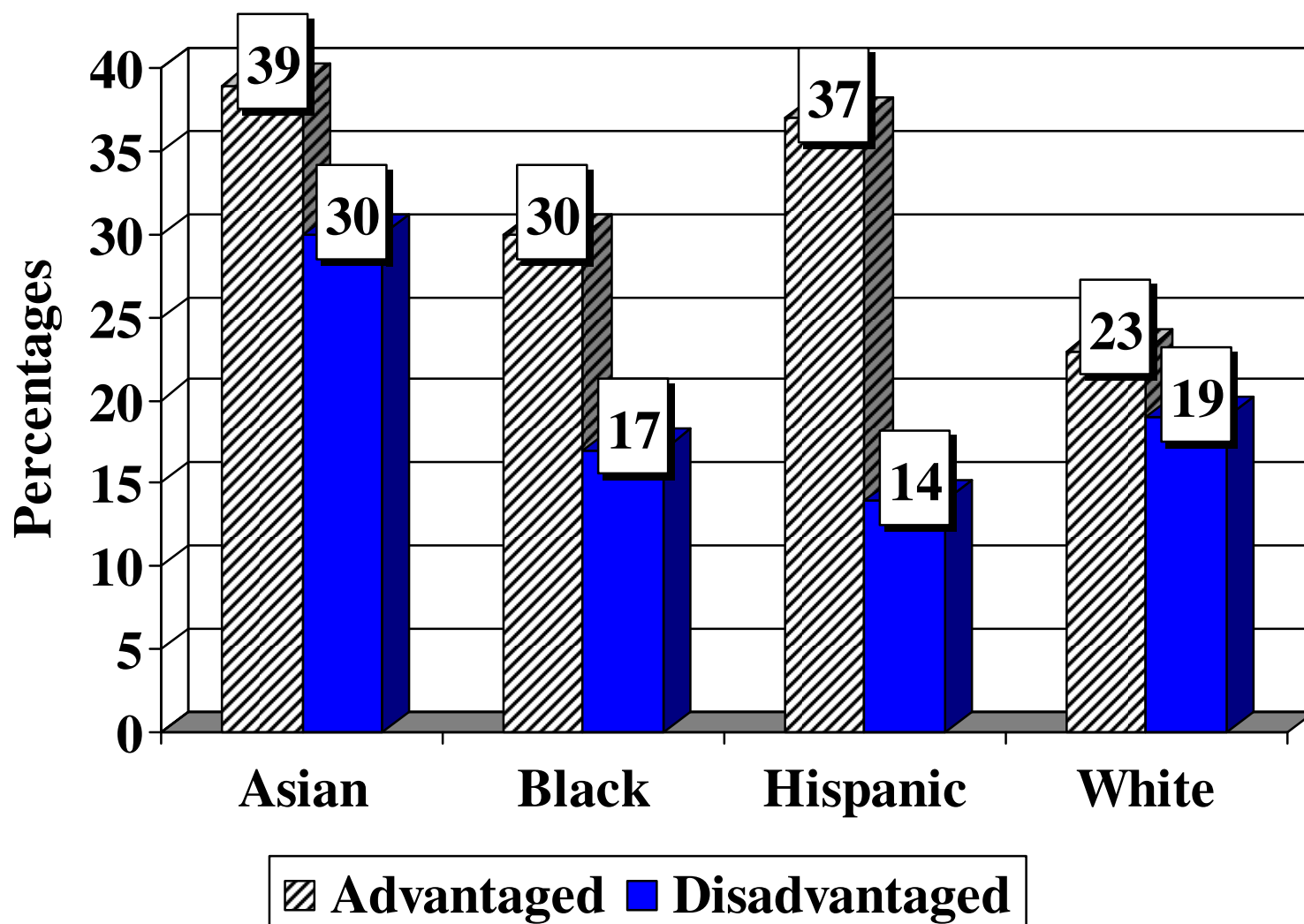
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Percentages responding “Yes” to:
“I read almost everyday at home.”



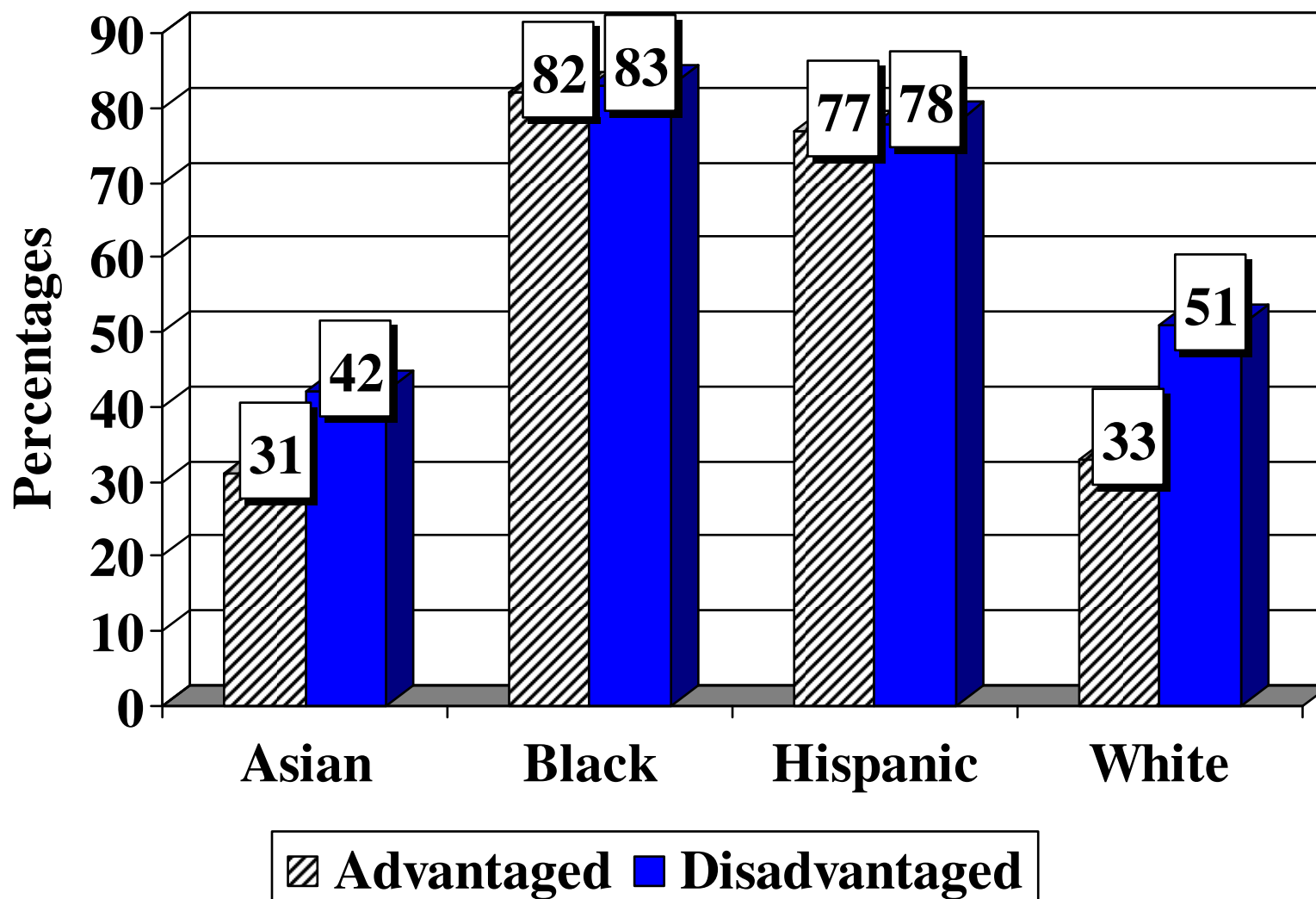
◆ Black ■ White ▲ Asian × Am.Indian * Hispanic

Percentages with computers in their bedrooms. (Grades 1-6)



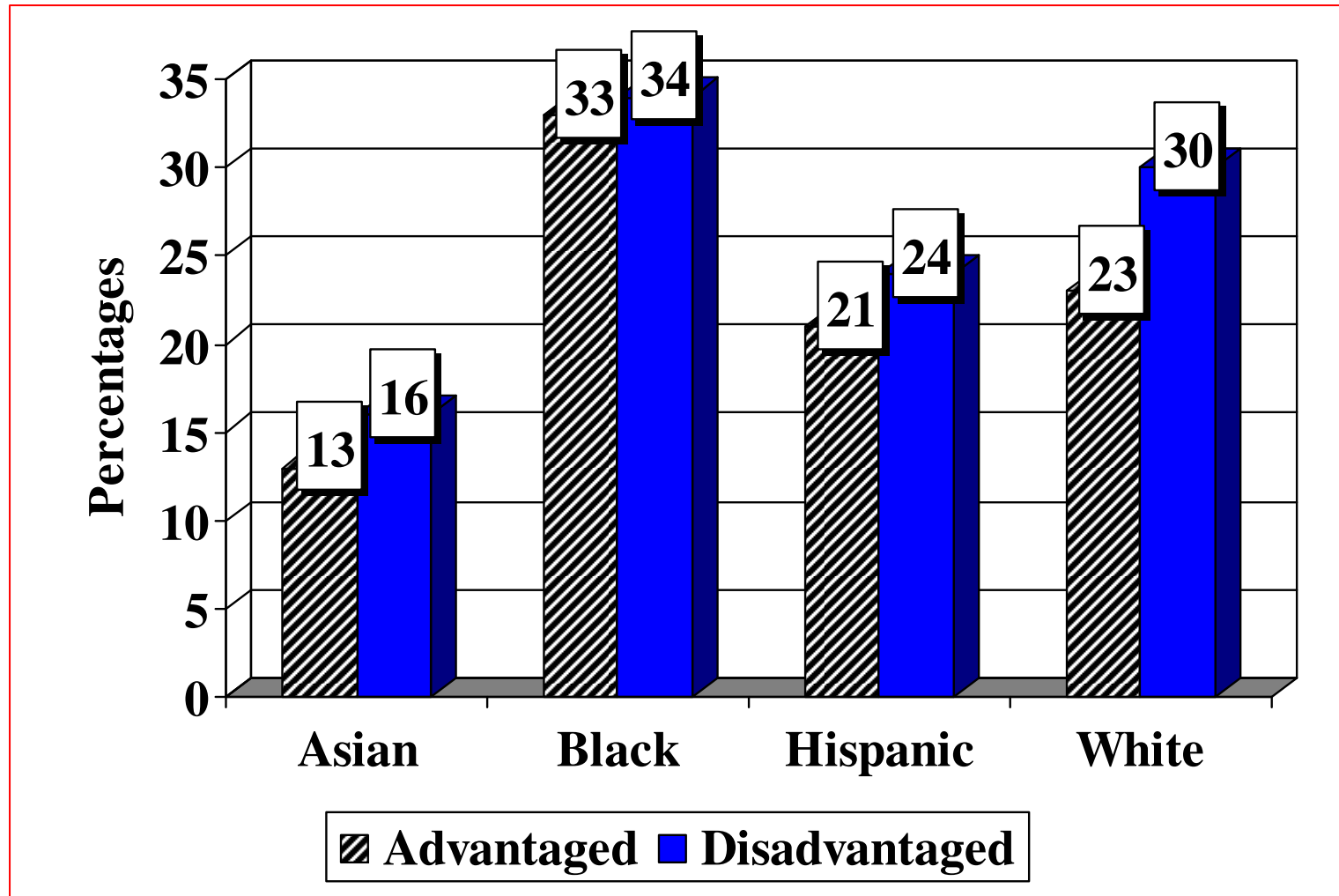
Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 1st to 6th graders collected spring 2005 & '06 from 45 elementary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, IA, MA, MI and MO. **“Advantaged”** students have (by our definition) *at least one computer in the home AND are not from single parent households; others are labeled “Disadvantaged.”* Advantaged: Asian, N=690; Black, N=1362; Hispanic, N=568; White, N=2649. Disadvantaged: Asian, N=103; Black=939; Hispanic=286; White=339.

Percentages with televisions in their bedrooms. (Grades 1-6)



Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 1st to 6th graders collected spring 2005 & '06 from 45 elementary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, IA, MA, MI and CA. **“Advantaged”** students have (by our definition) *at least one computer in the home AND are not from single parent households; others are labeled “Disadvantaged.”* Advantaged: Asian, N=693; Black, N=1364; Hispanic, N=570; White, N=2654. Disadvantaged: Asian, N=105; Black=937; Hispanic=285; White=336.

On many days, I get very sleepy at school.
("Yes," instead of "Maybe" or "No.") (Grades 1-6)



Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 1st to 6th graders collected spring 2005 & '06 from 45 elementary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, IA, MA, MI and CA. "Advantaged" students have (by our definition) *at least one computer in the home AND are not from single parent households; others are labeled "Disadvantaged."* Advantaged: Asian, N=683; Black, N=1341; Hispanic, N=557; White, N=2631. Disadvantaged: Asian, N=103; Black=933; Hispanic=280; White=335.

Engagement in School:
the Tripod Project Framework
And some findings from
Tripod Project Surveys

Academic Success for all Students

Improved student performance depends on strengthening three legs of an instructional tripod:

Content

What should we teach? Does each teacher have deep knowledge of the curriculum?

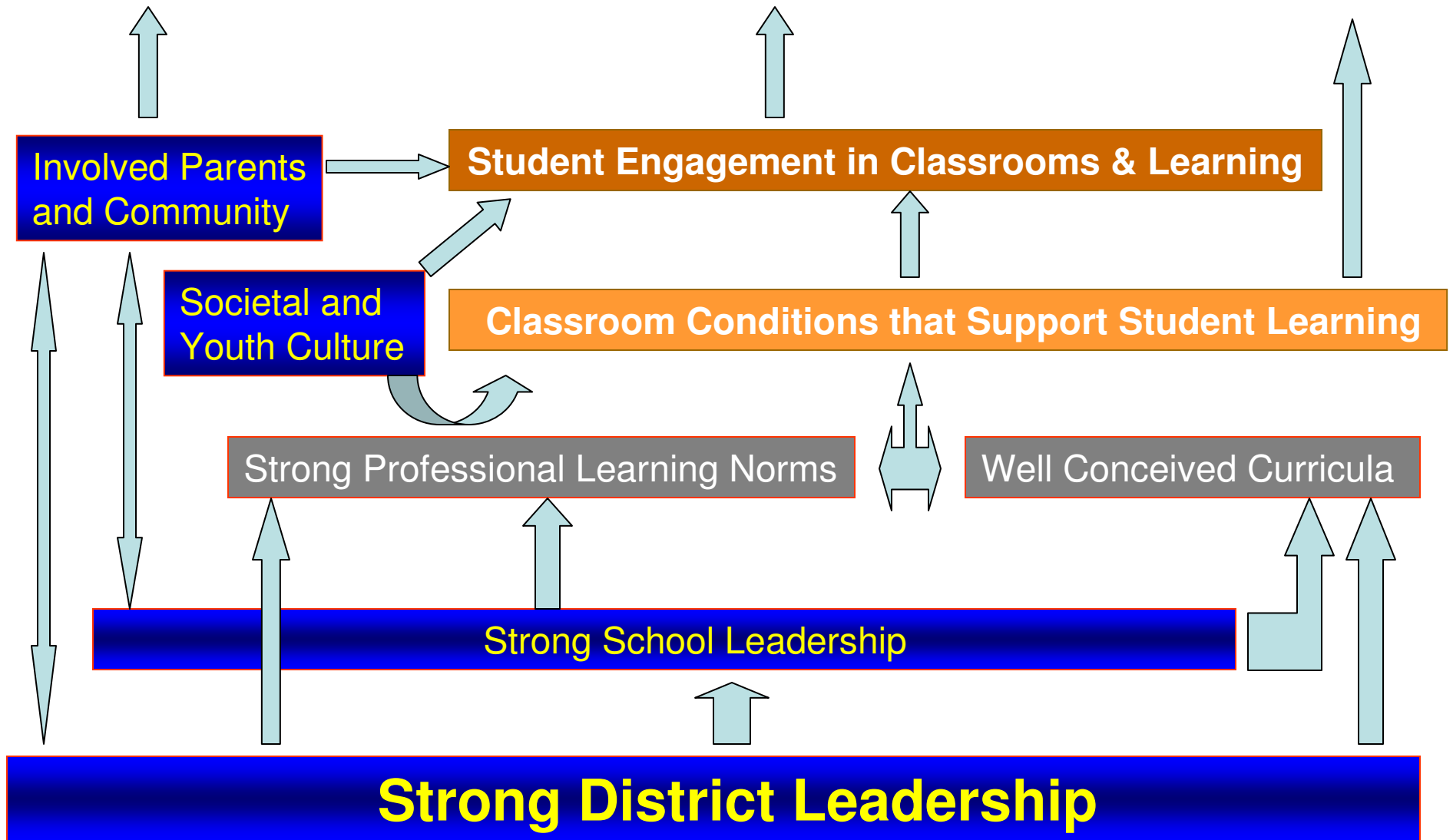
Pedagogy

How should we teach? Does each teacher use effective instructional techniques?

Relationships

Are we a community? Do students and teachers care about, inspire, and motivate each other?

Achievement Gains and Quality of Life



These five targets for student engagement

Trust & Interest

→ **Feel trusting, safe and welcome**

Control & Autonomy

→ **Behave cooperatively**

Ambitiousness
(high goals)

→ **Embrace mastery goals**

Industriousness

→ **Work diligently**

Mastery & consolidation

→ **Achieve satisfaction**

Five Classroom Learning Conditions Help Achieve the Engagement Targets

Students experience classrooms where...

- They believe success is Feasible
- Lessons are Relevant
- The experience is Stimulating/Interesting/Enjoyable
- Teachers provide Support and Press
- There is Peer Support (or at least an absence of distractions)

Five Types of Professional Norms Help Achieve the Classroom Learning Conditions

Classrooms are situated in schools where there is..

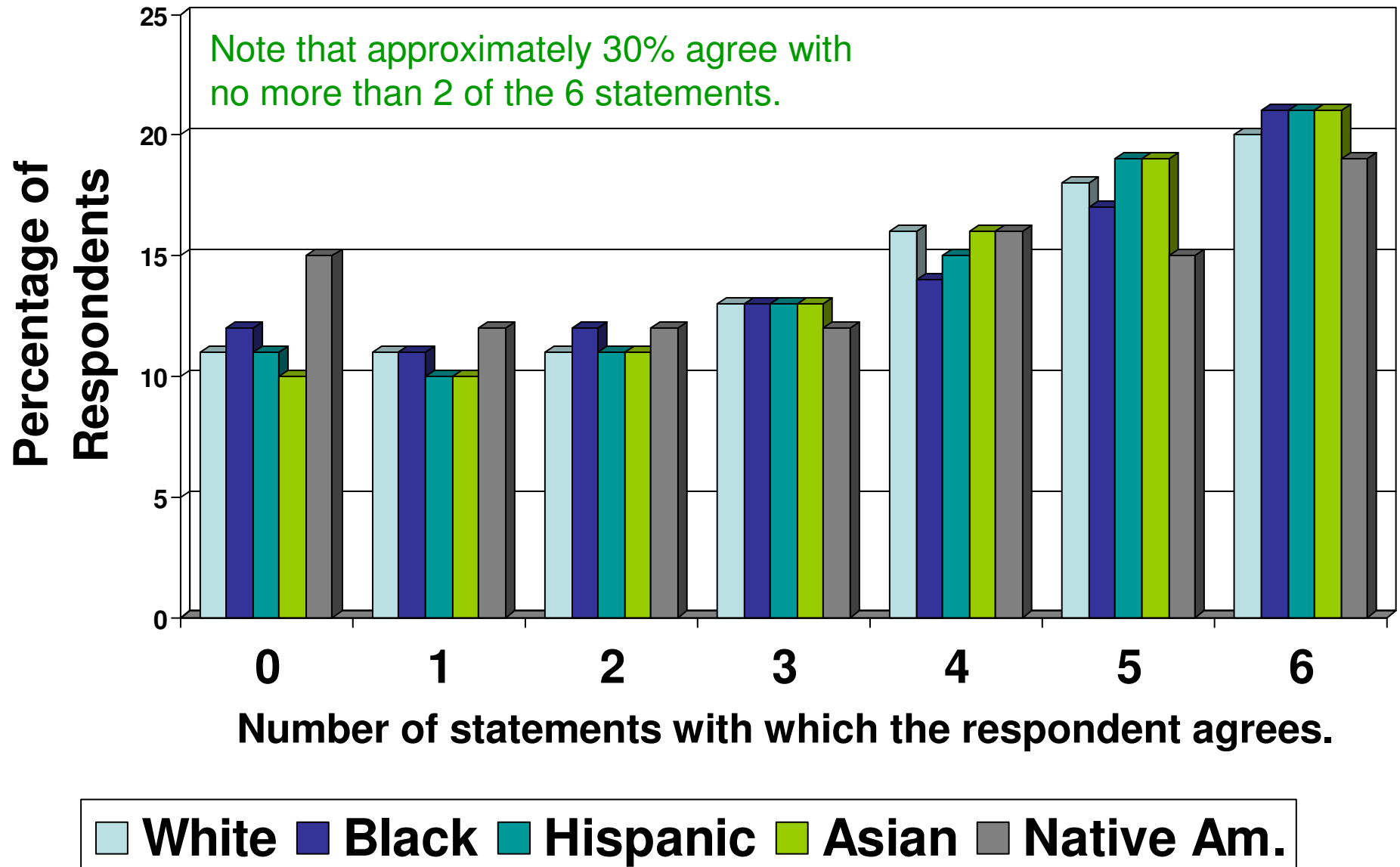
- A healthy climate of support and press for all
- Evidence of distributed leadership
- Focused and aligned curriculum
- Effective instruction
- Assessment for learning

A Classroom Condition Index

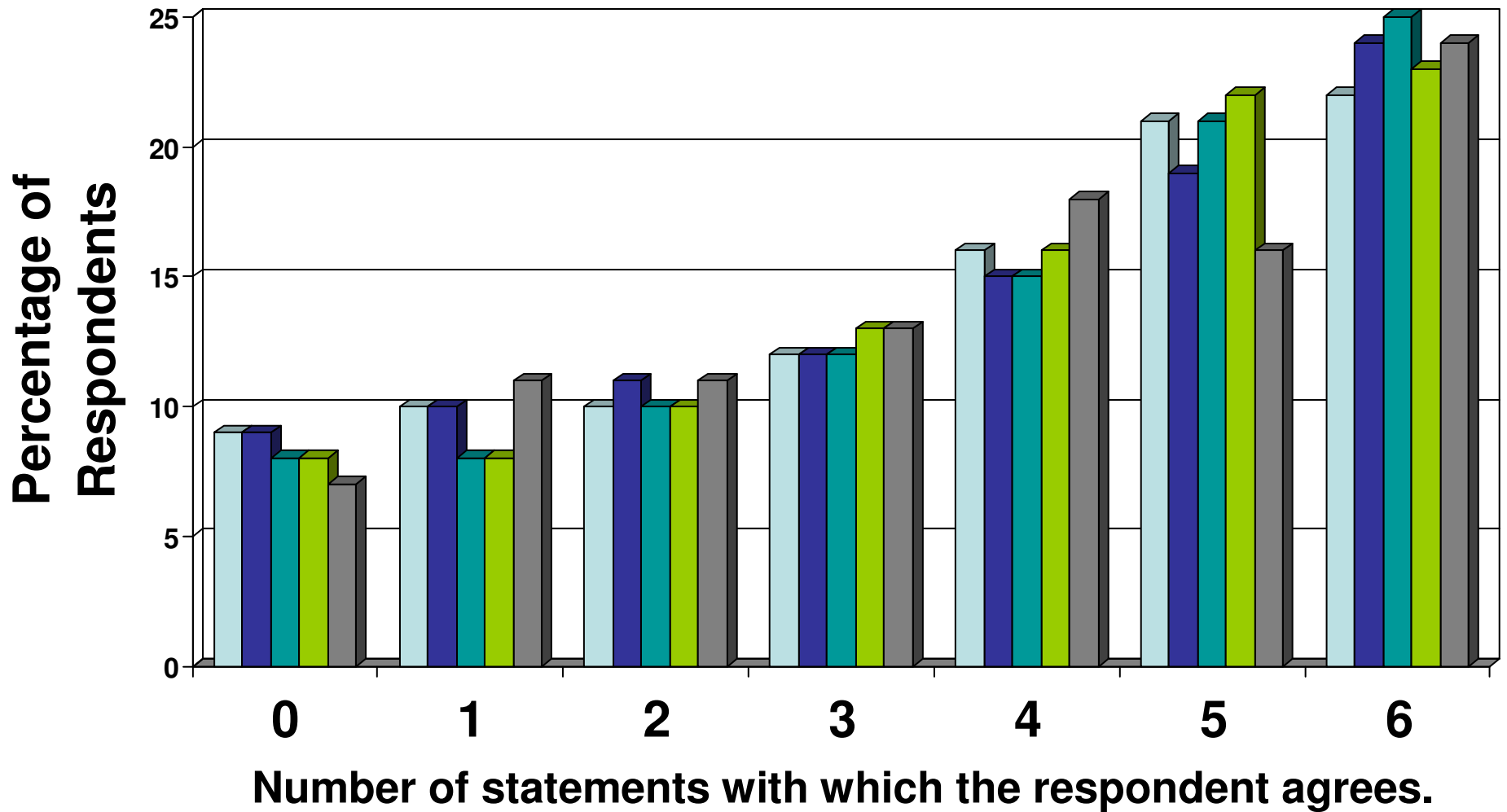
The numbers 1-6 on the horizontal axes of the next several charts represent the number of the following statements with which the student agrees. (Each statement is one among several survey items associated with the particular classroom condition.)

- 1. Feasibility:** If you don't understand something, my teacher *explains it another way*.
- 2. Relevance:** Things I am learning in this class will *help me in my life*.
- 3. Enjoyment:** My teacher makes lessons *interesting*.
- 4. Encouragement/Support:** The teacher in this class *encourages* me to do my best.
- 5. Demand for Effort:** In this class, my teacher *accepts nothing less* than our best effort.
- 6. Demand for Rigor:** My teacher wants us to *use our thinking skills*, not just memorize things.

Percentages of **male** respondents who agree with each listed number of classroom condition statements from the previous slide.



Percentages of **female** respondents who agree with each listed number of classroom condition statements from the previous slide.



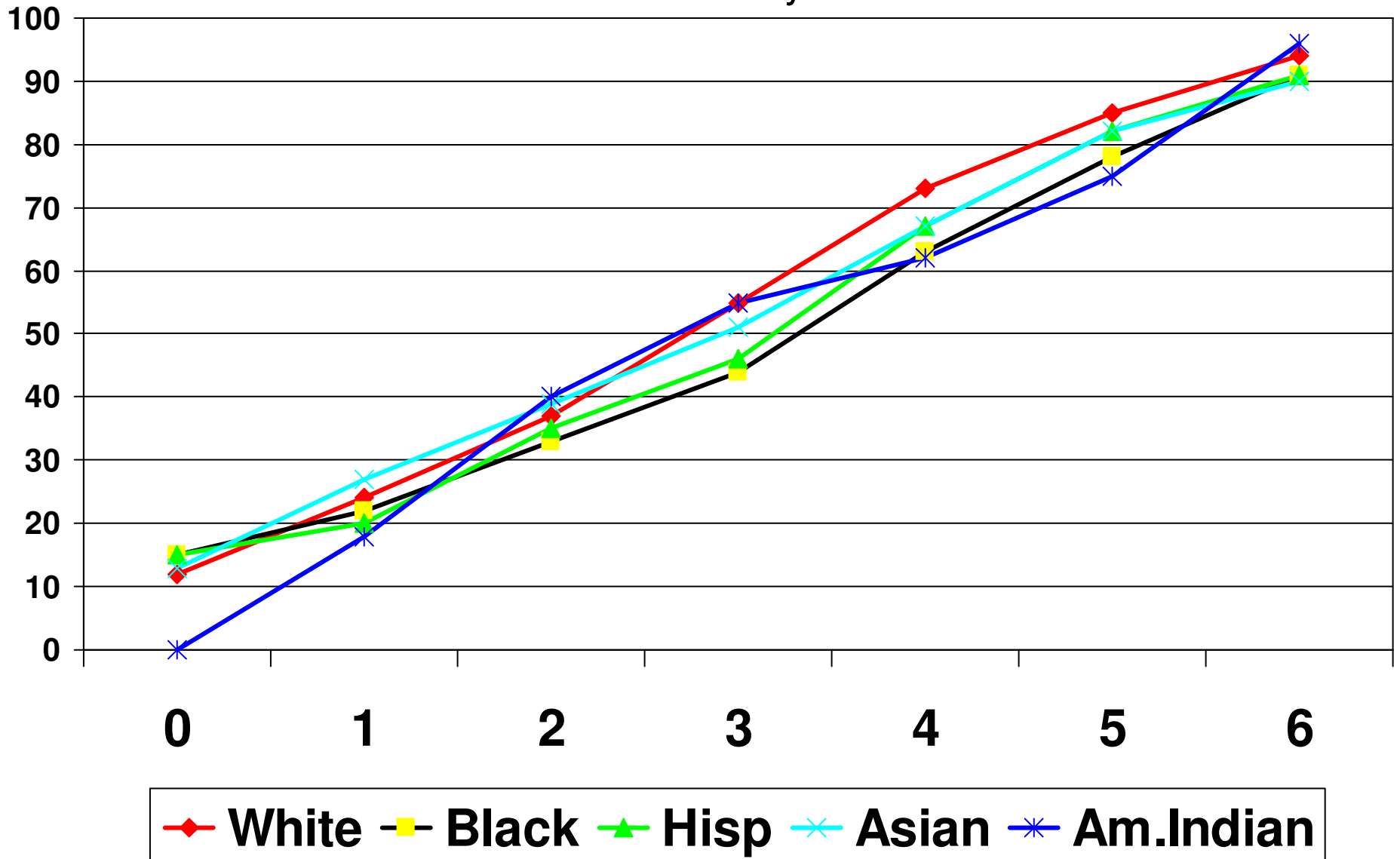
White Black Hispanic Asian Native Am.

~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 1)

“My teacher makes me feel he/she truly cares about me.”

Males in secondary schools.

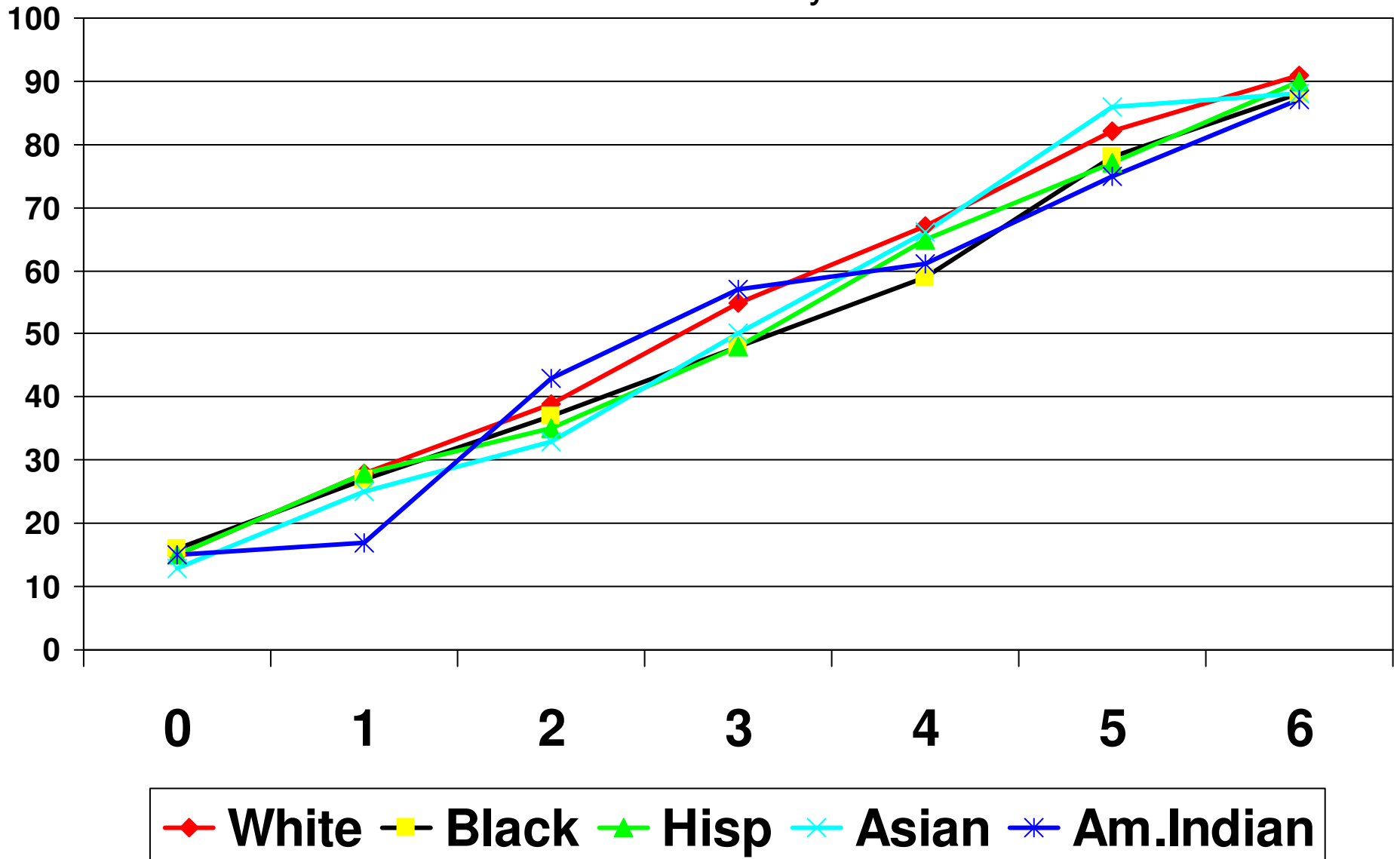


~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 1)

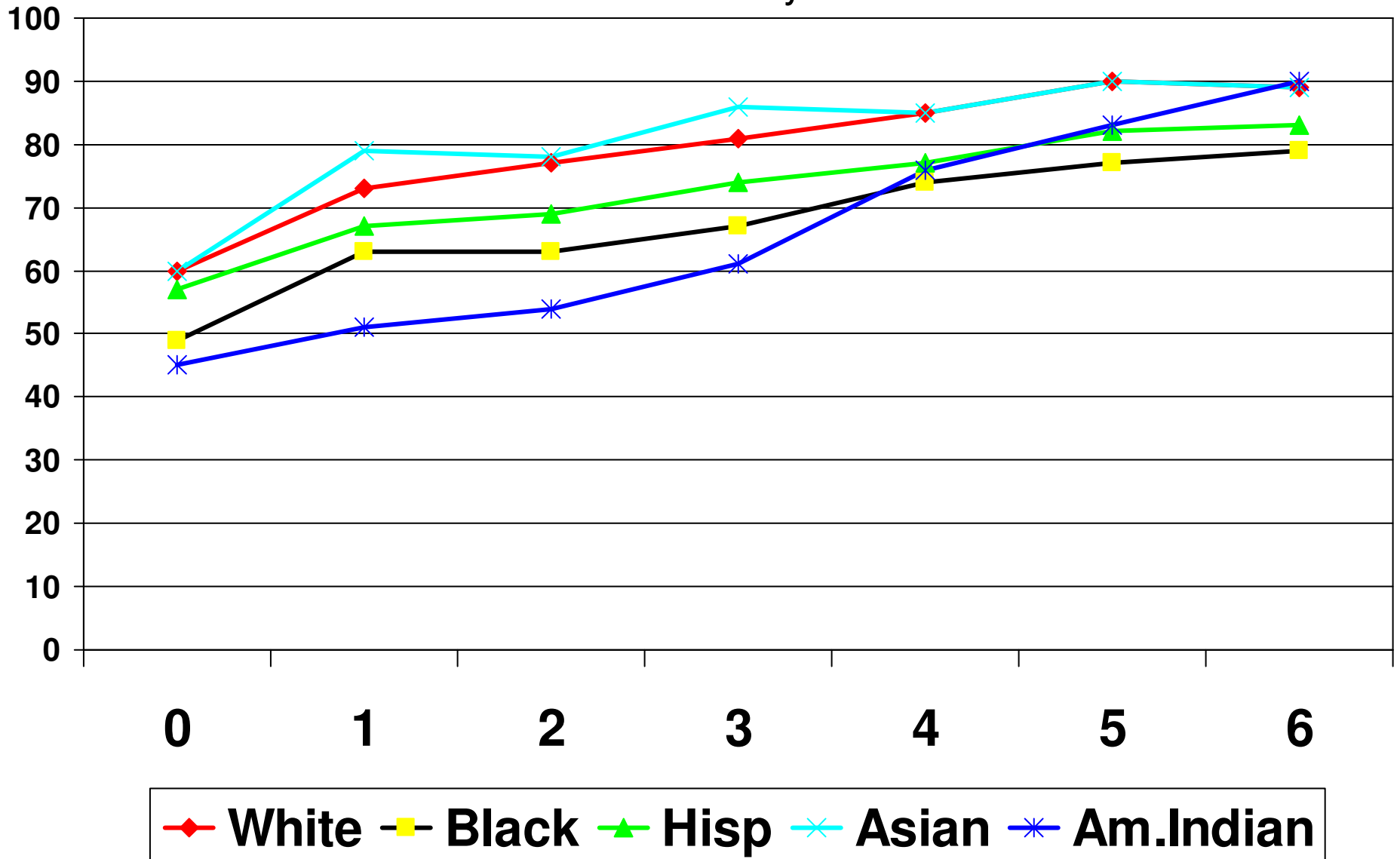
“My teacher makes me feel he/she truly cares about me.”

Females in secondary schools.



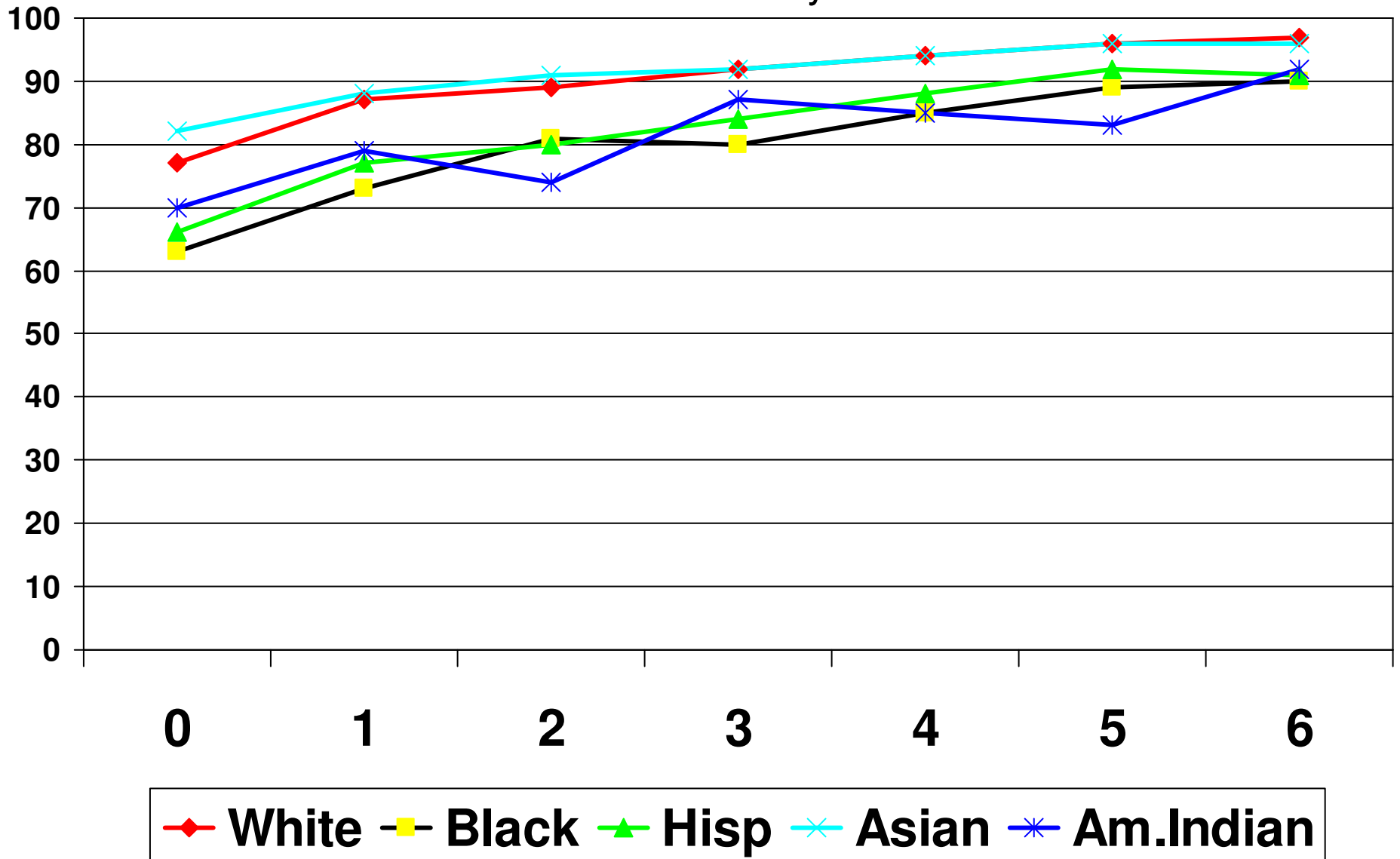
~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 2)
“My behavior is seldom a problem for the teacher in this class.”
Males in secondary schools.



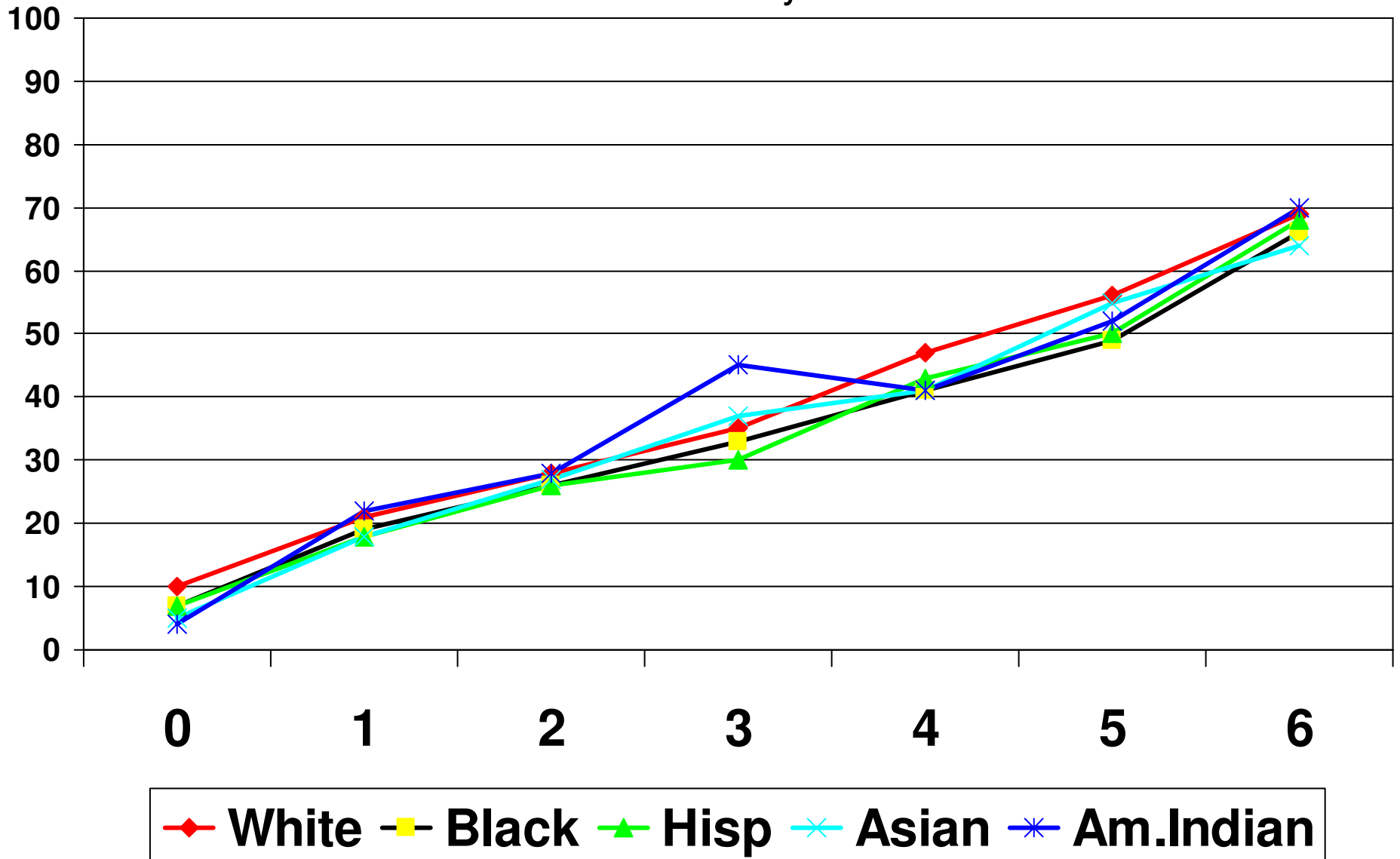
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Females in secondary schools.



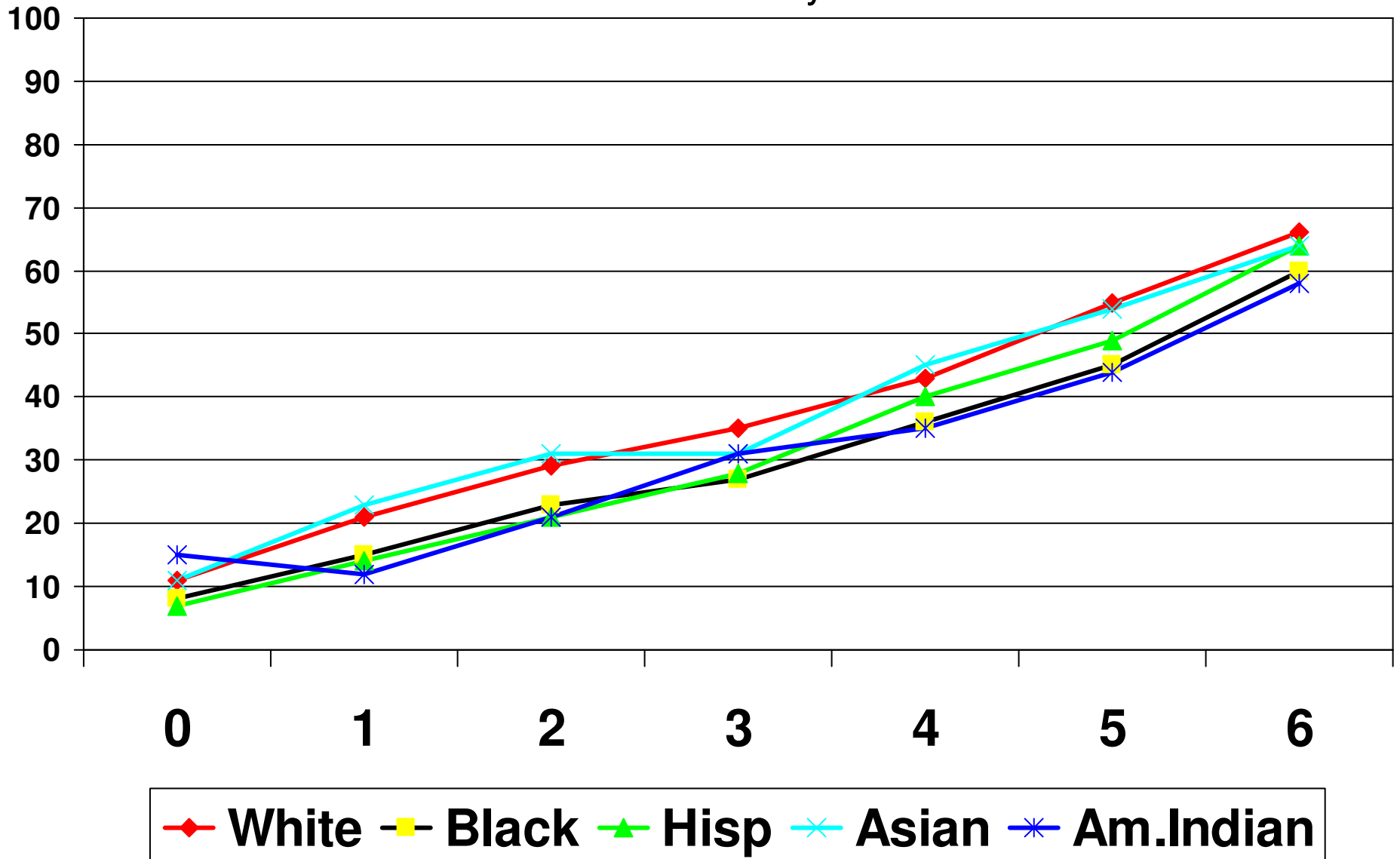
~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 2)
“My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to.”
Males in secondary schools.



~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 2)
“My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to.”
Females in secondary schools.

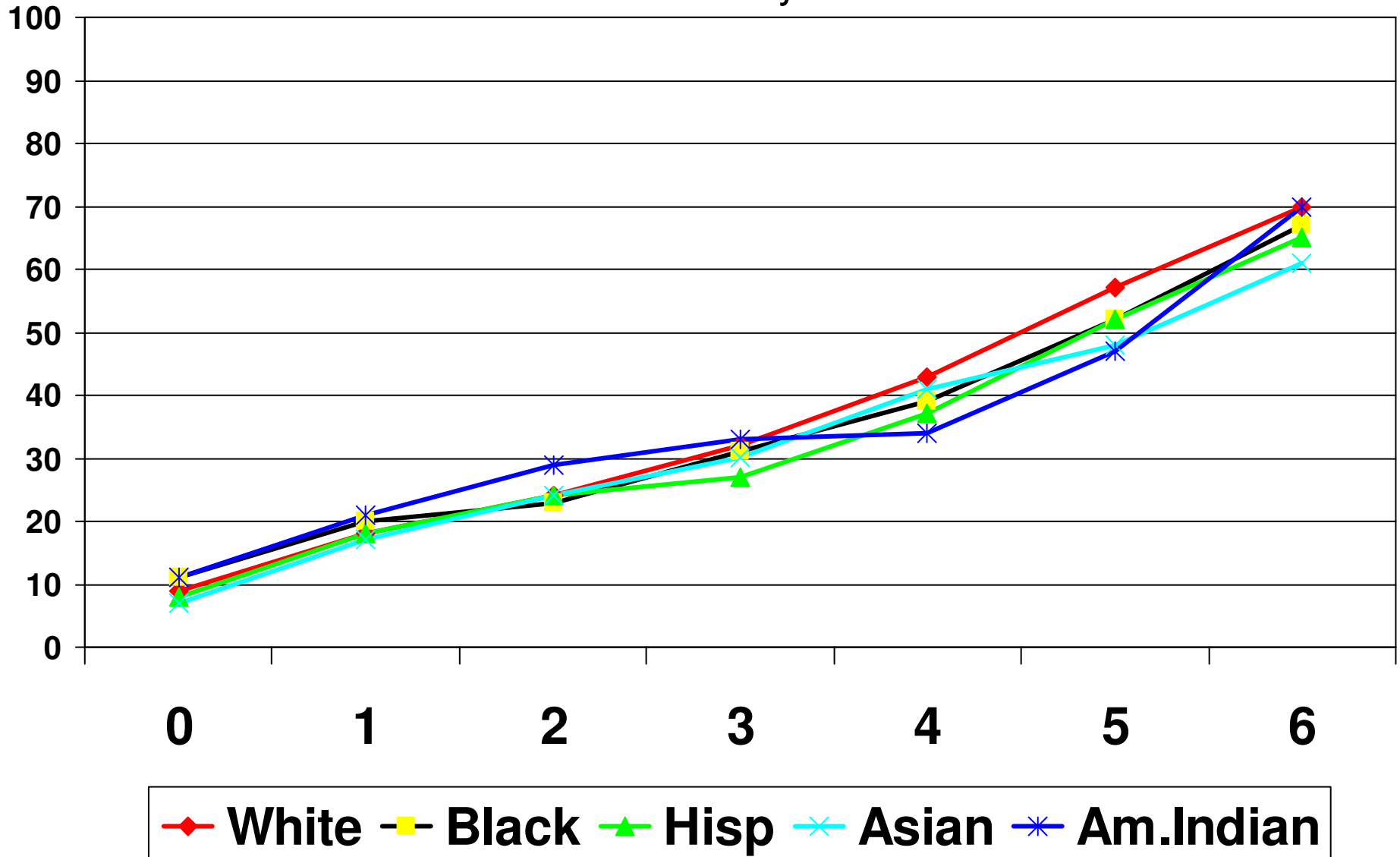


~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 3)

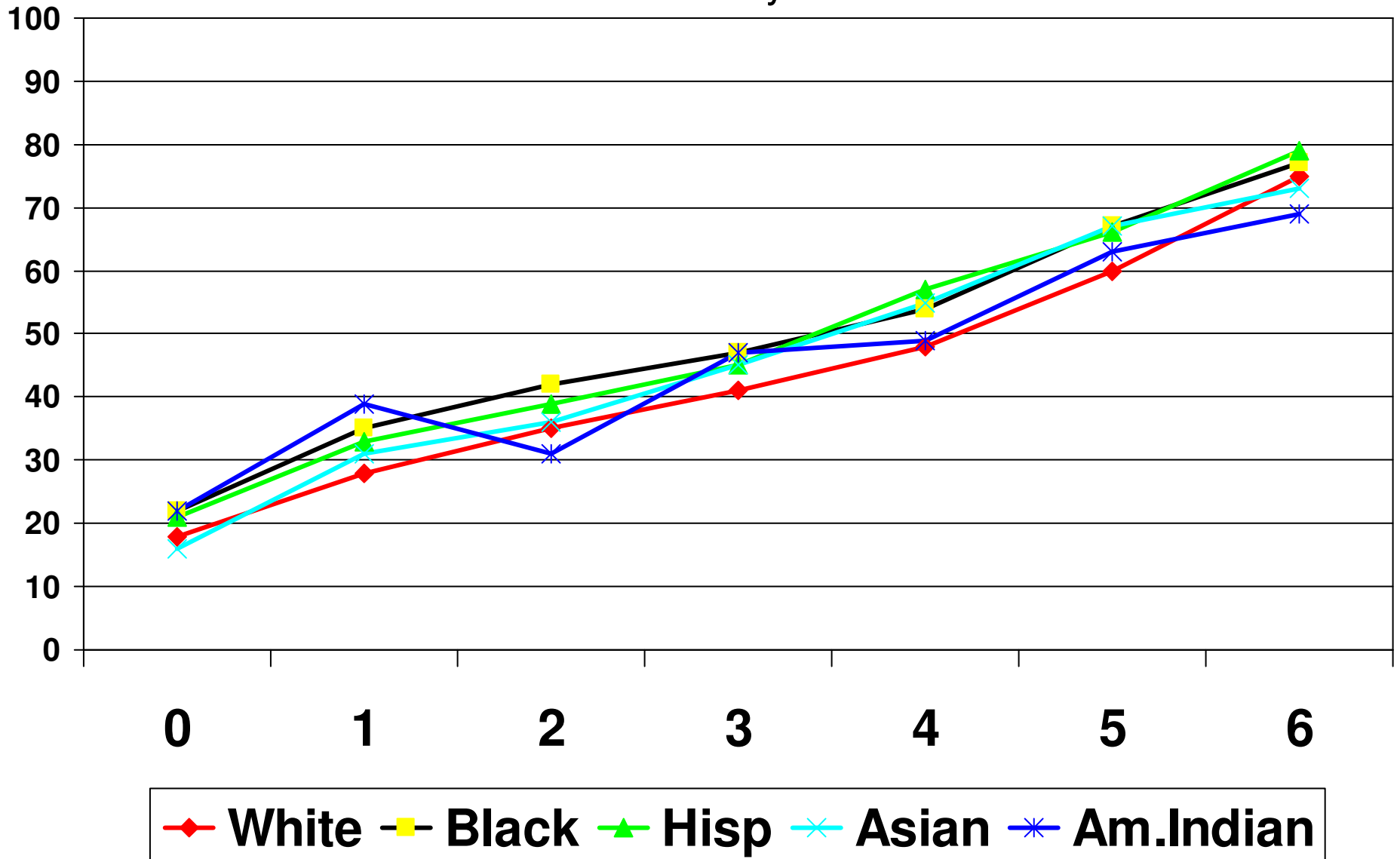
“I care about pleasing my teacher in this class.”

Males in secondary schools.



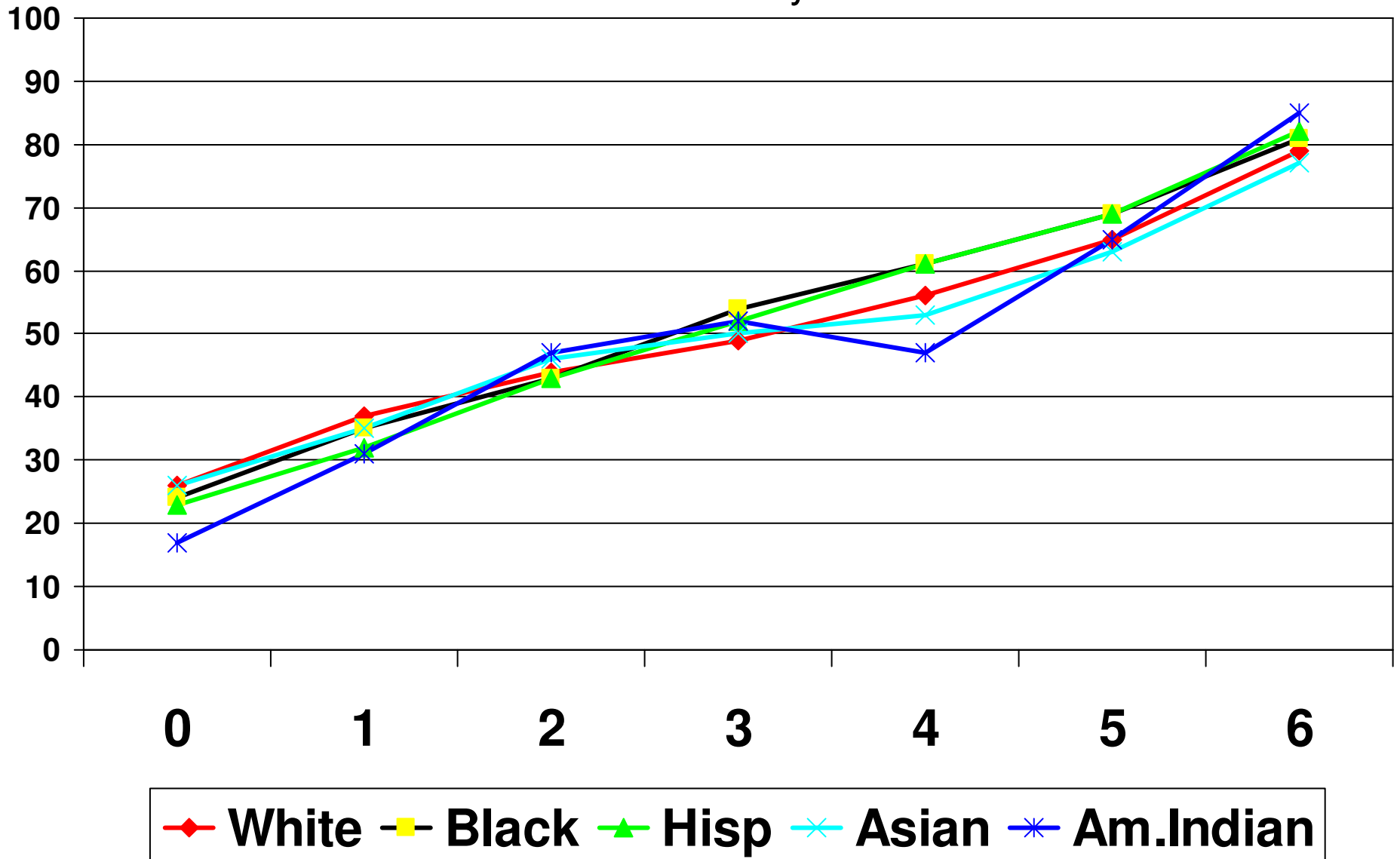
~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 4)
“I have pushed myself hard to completely understand my lessons.”
Males in secondary schools.



~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 4)
“I have pushed myself hard to completely understand my lessons.”
Females in secondary schools.

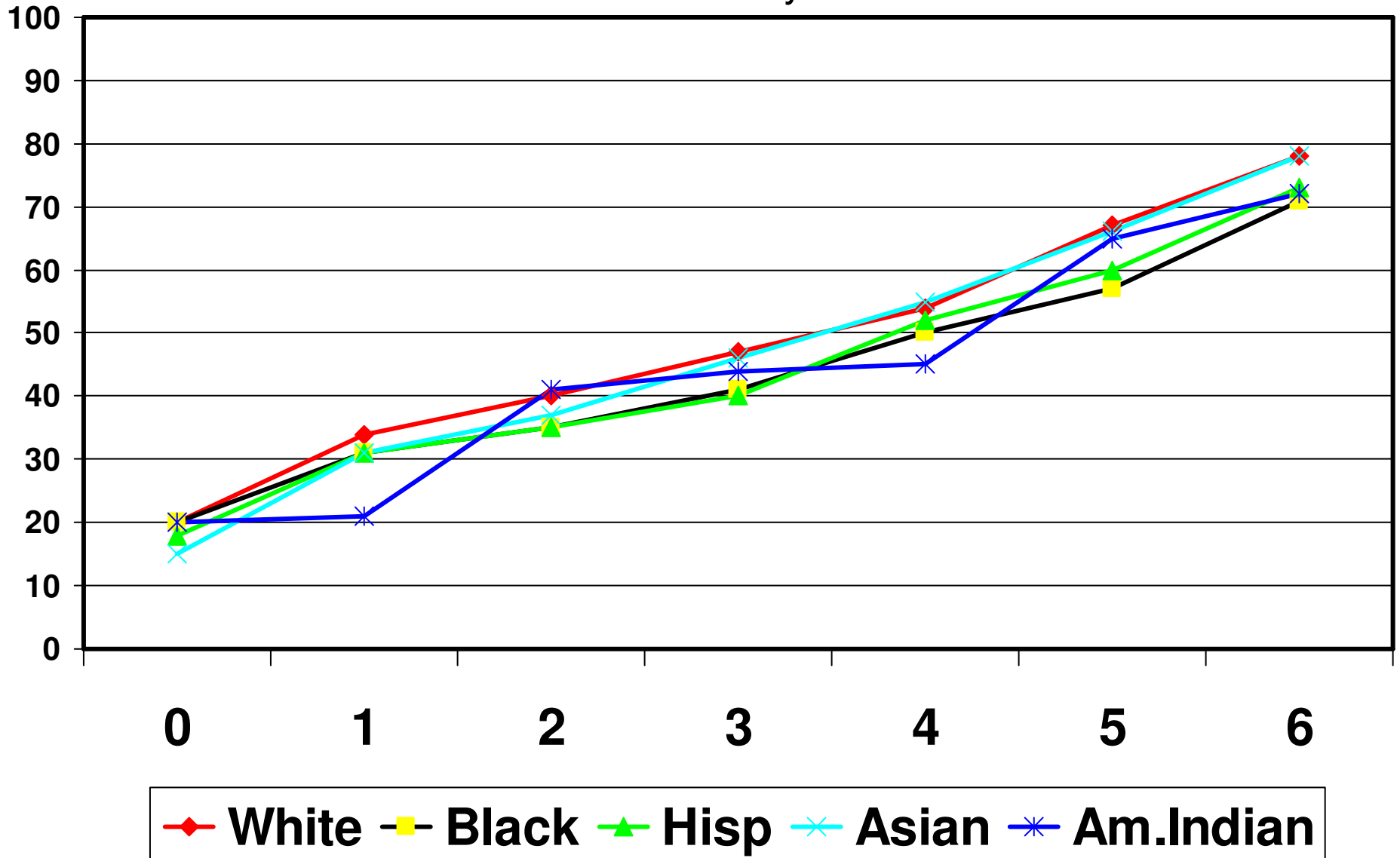


~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 5)

“I have done my best quality work in this class all year long.”

Males in secondary schools.

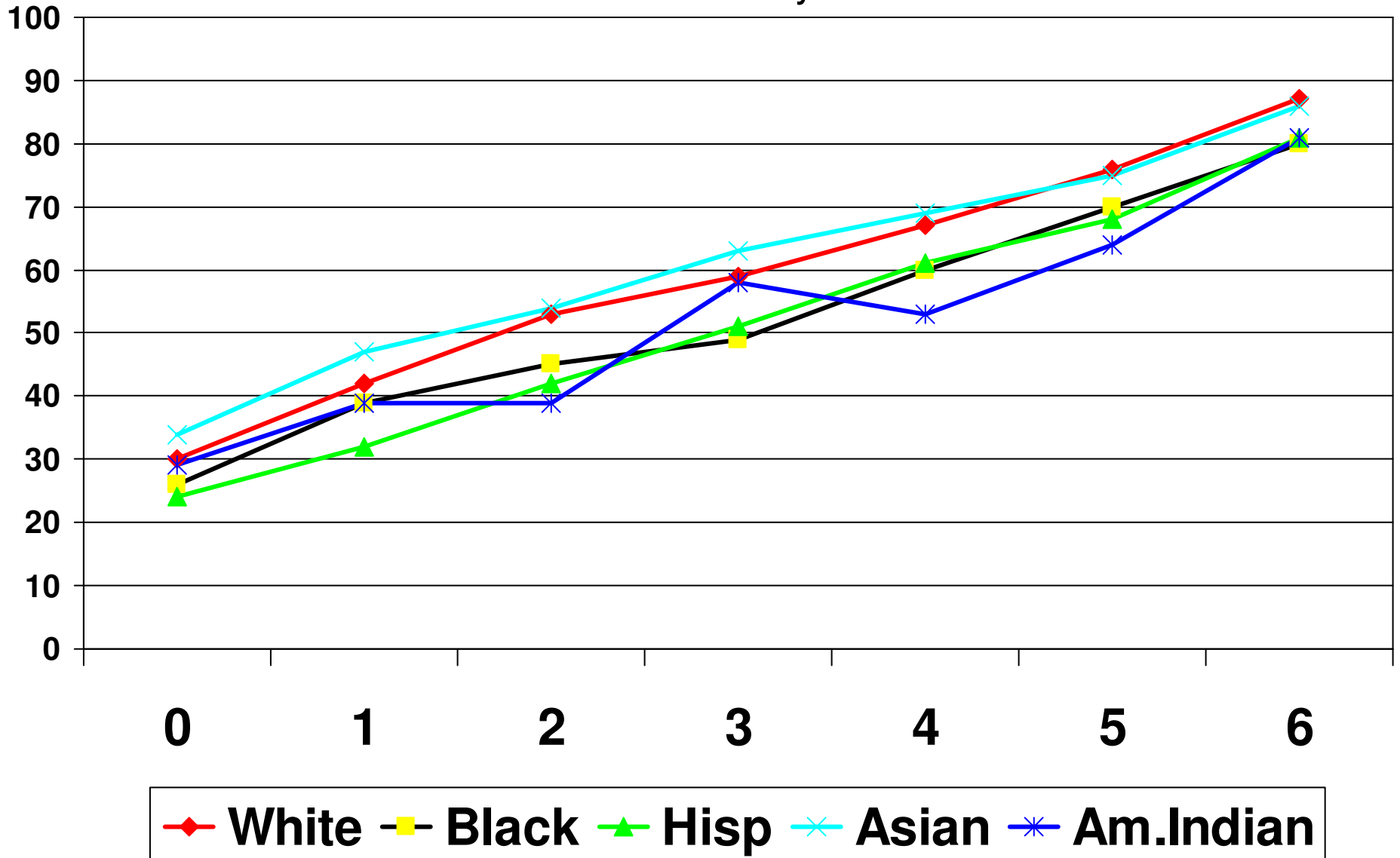


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Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 5)

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Females in secondary schools.

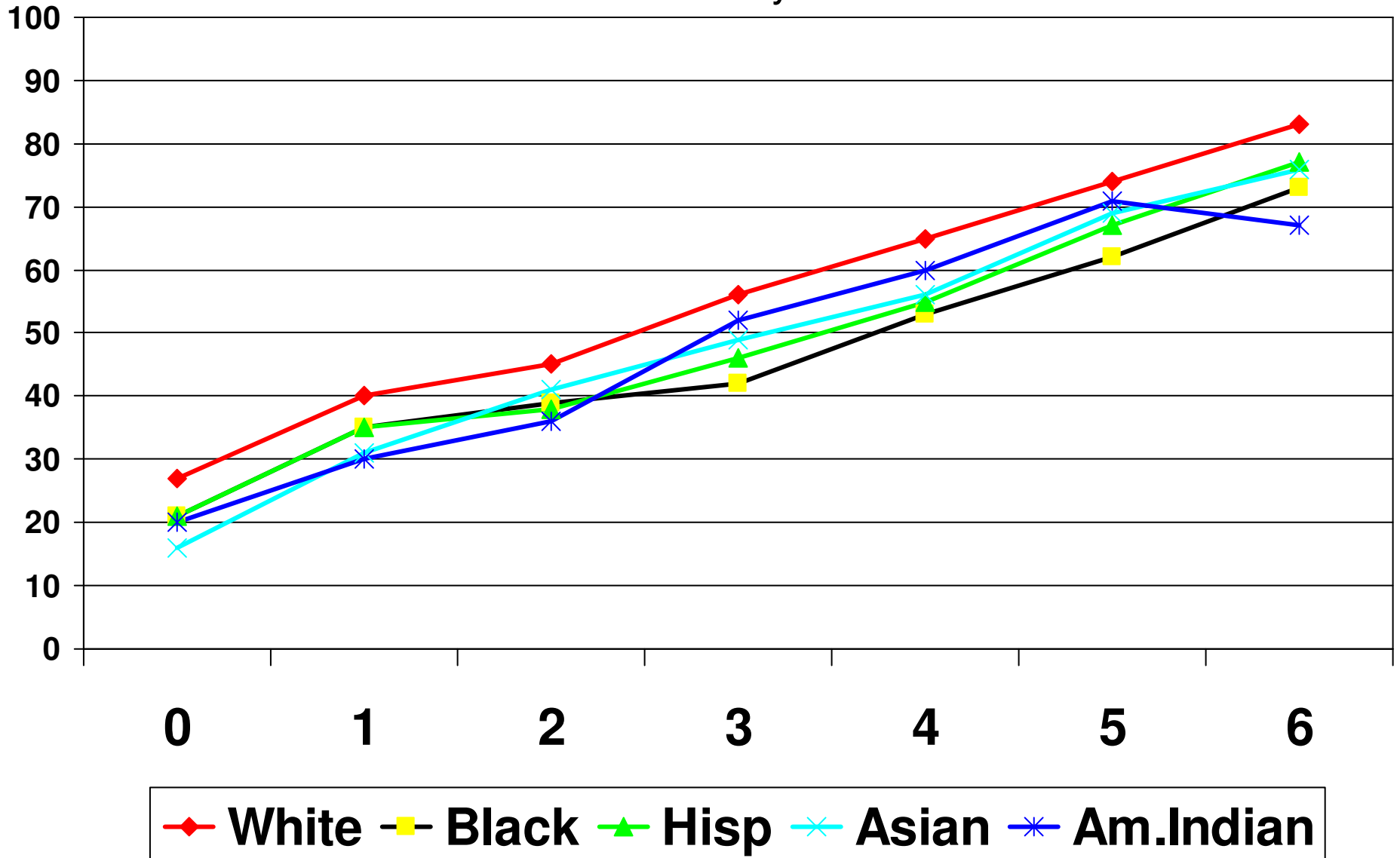


~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 5)

“I am satisfied with what I have achieved in this class.”

Males in secondary schools.

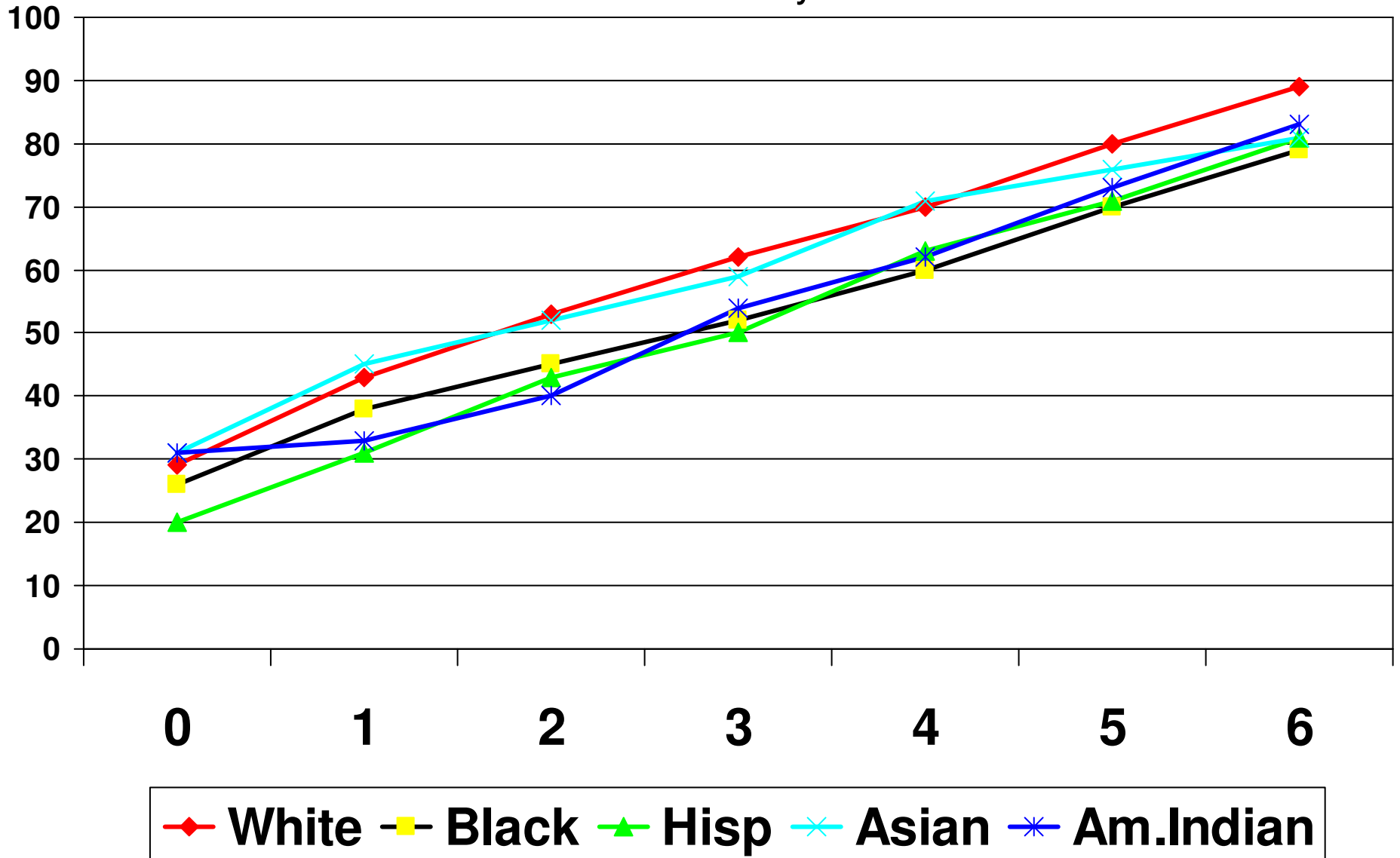


~100,000 RESPONSES FROM 130 SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS 15 STATES

Percentages responding “totally true” or “mostly true” that: (Example of Target 5)

“I am satisfied with what I have achieved in this class.”

Females in secondary schools.



Conditions for Raising Achievement and Narrowing Gaps:

For EVERY student, conditions where:

1. Success seems *feasible*;
2. Lessons seem *relevant*;
3. Learning is *stimulating*;
- 4a. Adult-youth relationships are *supportive*;
- 4b. High effort is *demanded*;
- 4c. Thorough reasoning (rigor) is *demanded*;
5. Peers *support* one another's success.

**Class to class variation
In the quality of instruction**

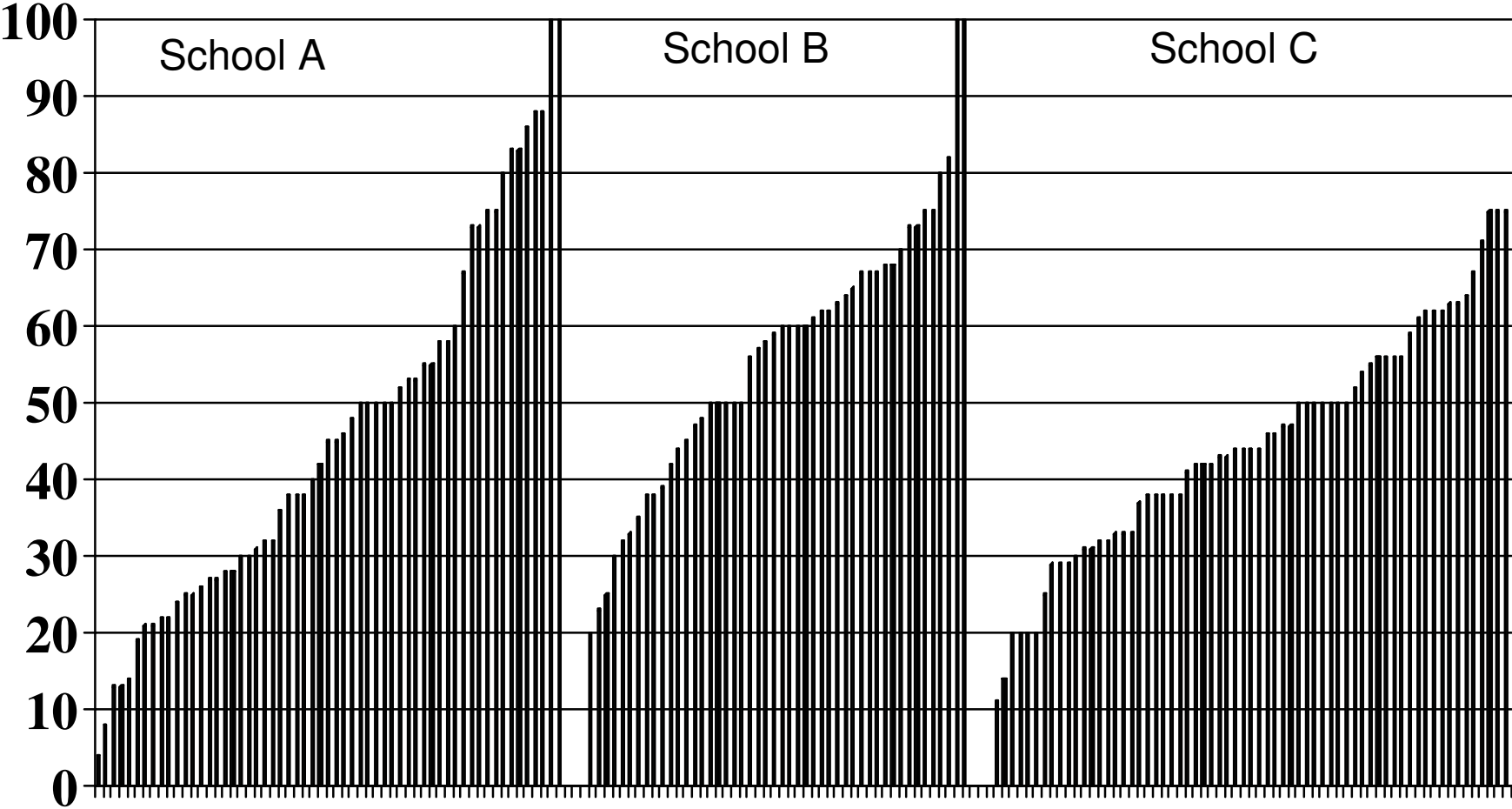
Teachers Use Multiple Explanations

Each vertical bar is percentage agreement in an individual classroom

Measured by:

If you don't understand something, my teacher explains it another way.

My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover.

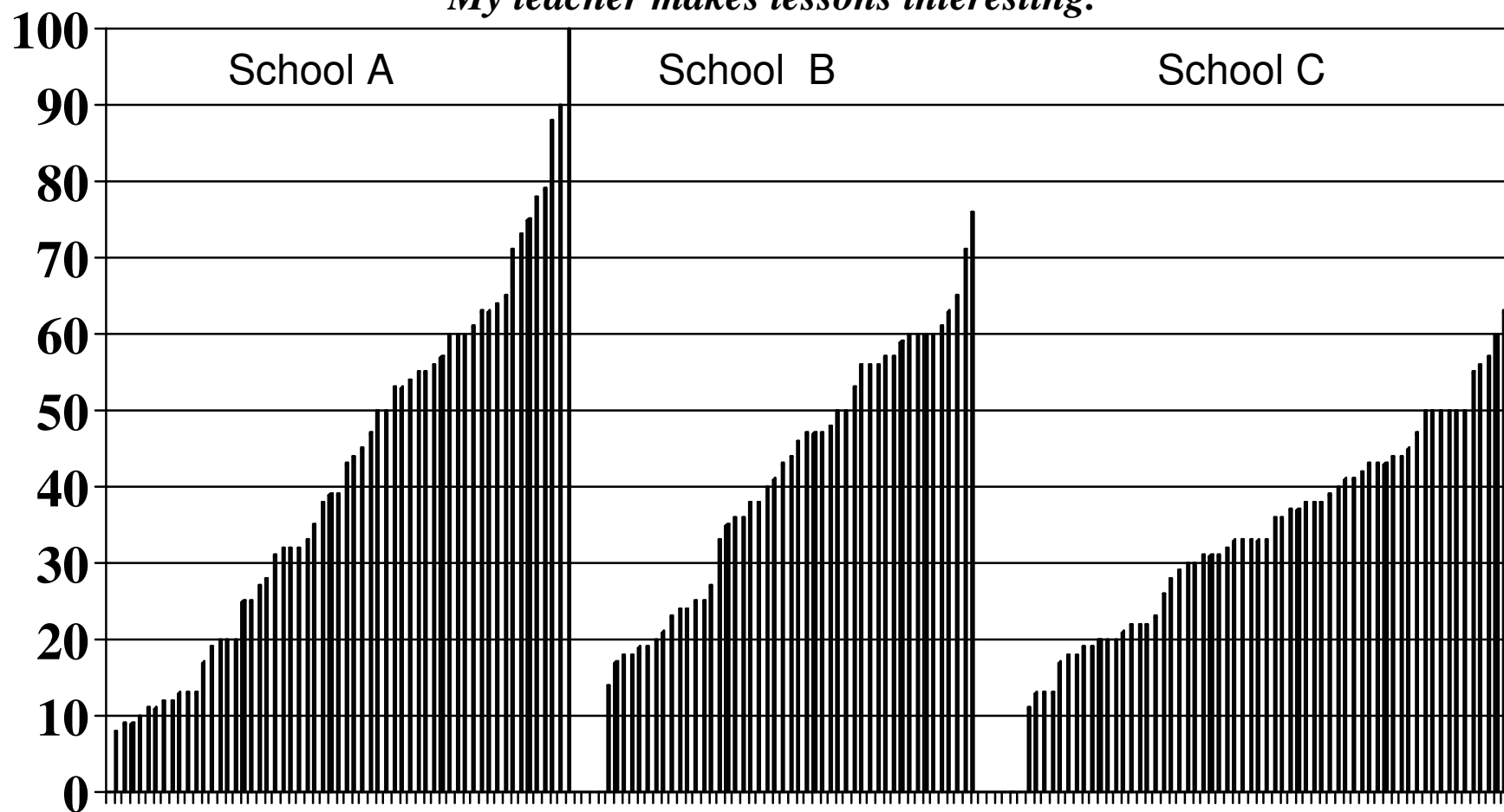


Enjoyment

Measured by:

My teacher makes learning enjoyable.

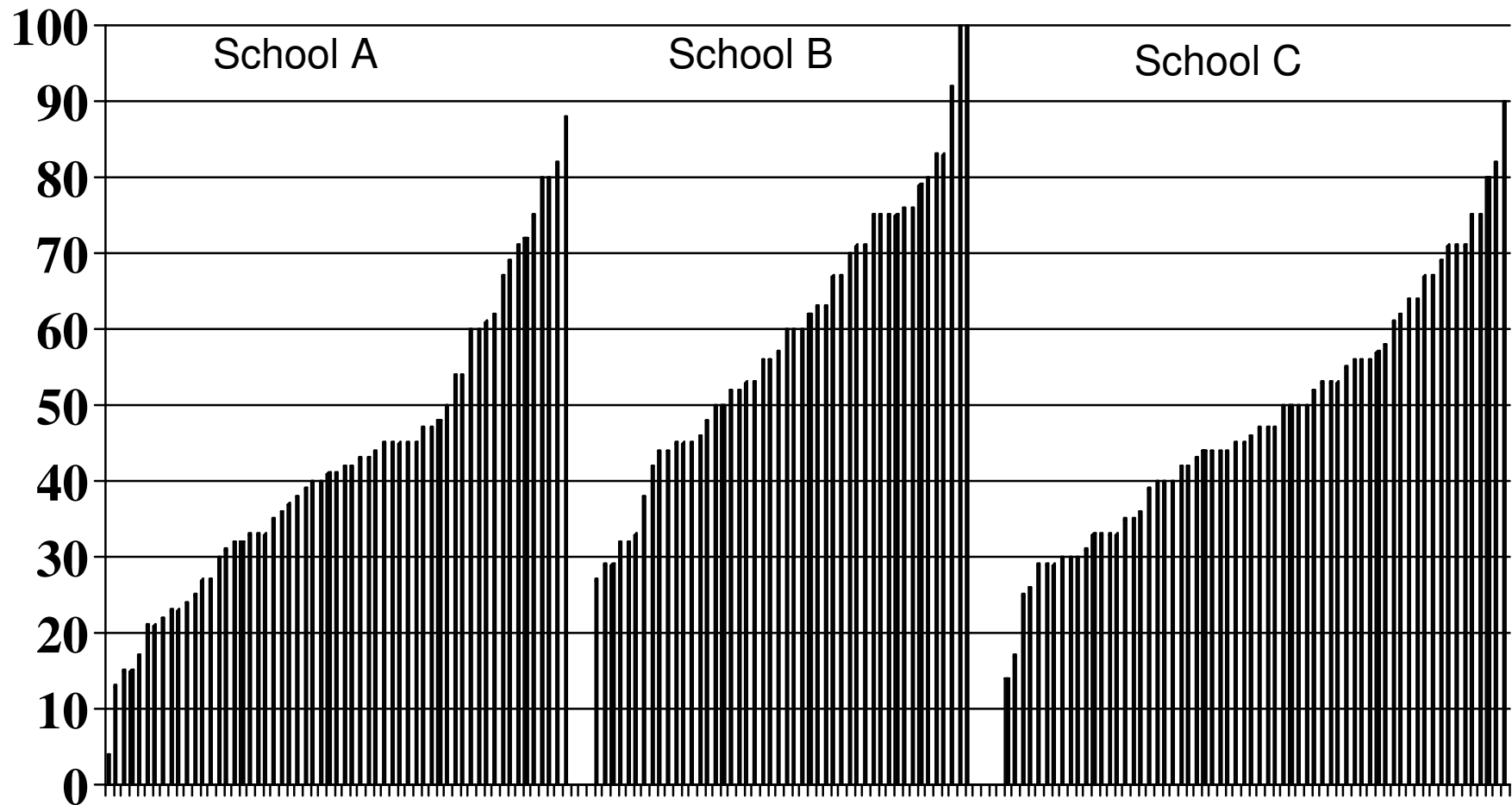
My teacher makes lessons interesting.



Relevance

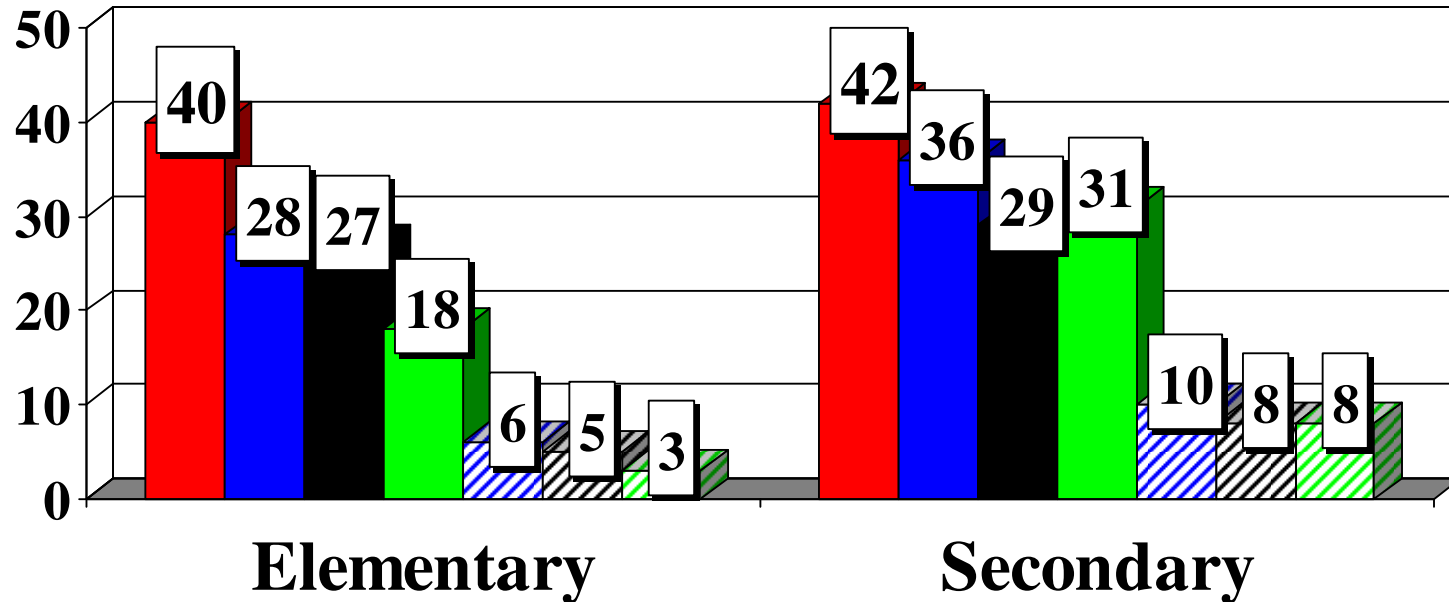
Measured by:

Things I am learning in this class will help me in my life



Leadership and Framing the Work

Percentages of teachers checking each listed statement, concerning “the last professional development program that had little or no effect on teaching or learning” in their classes.



- It was just too much, on top of everything else the school was trying to do.
- There was too little support and training.
- Teachers were not held accountable for doing it.
- The way it was introduced didn't inspire me to try.
- I never thought it could work with my students.
- I really tried to make it work, but it just didn't help my students.
- Doing it well would have been too much work.

IMPLICATIONS

<i>Reason Ineffective:</i>	<i>What leaders can do:</i>
“The way it was introduced didn’t inspire me to try it.”	Introduce ideas in ways geared to foster interest and positive anticipation.
“Teachers were not held accountable for doing it.”	Confirm agreements, including on design & use of monitoring and feedback mechanisms.
“There was too little support and training.”	Offer appropriate training & assistance and organize teams for peer support & sharing.
“It was just too much, on top of everything else the school was trying to do.”	Establish priorities, streamline assignments, foster coherence of systems.

Advice for Parents

RESEARCH-INSPIRED TIPS FOR HIGH-ACHIEVEMENT PARENTING

1. Promote daily leisure reading at home.
2. Try to ensure that your child gets enough sleep not to be sleepy at school. Consult local experts about how much sleep a child needs at your child's age.
3. Make sure your child eats a nutritious breakfast.
4. Express warmth regularly. This means (for example):
 - a. Spend time together
 - b. Listen carefully to what your child has to say
 - c. Respond thoughtfully and sensitively to what they say
 - d. Hug your child
 - e. Tell them you are proud that they are good people
 - f. Tell them you are proud when they try to do their best
 - g. Tell them that you love them
 - h. Allow the child to help set rules, when appropriate

5. Balance warmth (#4, above) with structure and demandingness. This means have clear and firm rules about (for example):
 - a. Doing homework (and seeking help when needed)
 - b. Television watching (not “all the time”)
 - c. Friends (children who respect your values)
 - d. Time to be home
 - e. Chores and responsibilities
 - f. Treatment of siblings
 - g. Respect for adults
 - h. Bedtime on school nights (early enough to avoid being sleepy in school)

6. Discuss reading materials with children in ways that encourage them to enjoy learning
7. During bedtime reading, ask both easy (build confidence) and more difficult (but not stressful) questions about the story (the more difficult questions help with comprehension). Do it lovingly.
8. Have a variety of reading materials for children, especially materials that are related to your child's special interests. (For younger children, the variety is important because it is difficult to have thoughtful bedtime discussions over and over about the same story. There need to be new stories that raise new questions.)
9. Try constantly to reinforce the idea that learning can be enjoyable/fun/stimulating/fascinating.
10. Don't overemphasize getting things correct; emphasize effort and comprehension instead.

11. Seek opportunities at home to discuss and apply what your child is learning at school. For example, having them help with cooking and recipes is a good way to reinforce elementary school math lessons (adding, multiplying, fractions, dividing). Discussion of current events in the newspaper may connect to what your child is doing in social studies. Ask teachers for ideas that you can use in connecting home life to school life.
12. Actively seek out-of-school time opportunities for:
 - a. Tutoring and reinforcing school lessons
 - b. Extra-curricular opportunities with freedom to explore and be creative
 - c. Extra-curricular opportunities to develop special talents

13. Know your child's close friends and try to know their parents.
14. When it seems necessary, be a role model and caring adult for your child's friends.
15. Encourage your child to think about his or her future and to set goals. Help your children develop the habit of planning for both near-term and longer-term goals.
16. Try to limit television watching by substituting other constructive and interesting activities.
17. Build up your child's sense of being a valued person. Avoid using negative nicknames such as "dummy" or "knucklehead" or "lazybones" or "good-for-nothing." Instead, use names like "sweetheart" or "honey" or "my bright boy" or "love of my life."
18. Try to end every reprimand with a positive statement that lets your child know you have separated your disappointment about their behavior from your pride about what a good person they really are.