

# Education *Matters*

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## How to Improve Reading First

By G. Reid Lyon

The House Education and Labor Committee continues to consider the future of the much-discussed Reading First program, a key component of NCLB. It is concerned about the alleged “mismanagement and conflicts of interest” within the program. However, members of Congress would be better advised to concentrate on the future of federal policy in the domain of primary reading.

### The Reading Problem

To consider the future, we should start with a bit of history. Where did Reading First come from? It came, above all, from mounting concern with the educational plight of far too many of our children. Despite honorable intentions, for years our governments, educators, media, and scientists have been letting down children, particularly poor children and their families. When over 50 percent of underprivileged children keep failing in school and dropping out, something is not working.

Any effort to address that problem must begin with reading. An enormous propor-

tion of young Americans cannot read well enough to learn about history, math, or science. Most such children come from disadvantaged environments and many of their parents cannot read, either. Yet when it comes to educating these children, we continue to engage in practices and programs that have had no discernible effect on improving their reading capabilities.

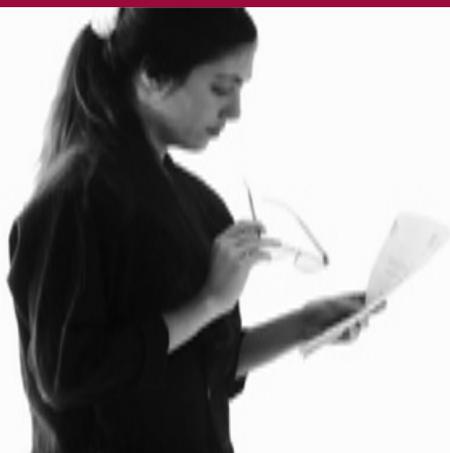
For far too many years, the mainstays of instructional practices were superstition, tradition, and untested assumptions about how children learn to read. Scientific research has rarely been applied to identifying effective instructional practices despite the fact that making responsible decisions about what is effective in classrooms and good for students requires scientific evidence. Until very recently, the practice of education resembled the practice of medicine a century ago—virtually any treatment that could be thought up was tried.

Although pioneering experts such as the late Jeanne Chall were addressing the issue by the mid-1960s, it was not until

the mid-1990s that the nation’s leaders actually began to consider looking at different ways of addressing reading failure. When President Clinton included the rates of such failure in his 1996 State of the Union Address, it was the first time that reading instruction was recognized as a major issue by the federal government. That mention provided the context for the development of the Reading Excellence Act, the antecedent of Reading First.

### Delivering Shocking News

In 1997, I received a call from the office of the chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Work Force—the very same committee that is reevaluating the program. Chairman Bill Goodling had learned that the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) was conducting research on reading development, difficulties, and instruction, and had been doing so for years. He asked me to brief him on the findings. Goodling was surprised that NICHD had studied and supported research involving



Rather than moving backwards to the days when federal dollars flowed to any program under the sun, regardless of effectiveness, we need to continue moving forward to the day when education is truly a research-based enterprise. The future of millions of children depends on it.

over 44,000 children and adults, many for more than twenty years, and that the findings of that research were validated and published in peer-reviewed journals. He was shocked by the amount of evidence I showed him.

I explained that the phonics-versus-whole language debate was largely a waste of time, that reading was far too complex to place into such a binary straight jacket. In fact, I noted, reading requires the development of a number of complex skills that have to be integrated and practiced constantly.

After that meeting, the Reading Excellence Act was drafted and for the first time the phrase Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) was introduced into law. Unfortunately, the 1998 Act provided little professional development or technical assistance and no systematic monitoring. Many states and local school districts received funds and spent them on whatever methods of reading instruction they were already using, scientific or not.

### The Birth of Reading First

That federal funding should be contingent on evidence of effectiveness of a reading program or instructional strategy was not considered until 2001. It was then that my colleague Bob Sweet and I recommended such a framework to the new Bush administration. The idea caught on, and Reading First was born.

Unfortunately, as the program made its way through Congress, it was watered down. Rather than funding only programs with demonstrated effectiveness, Congress opted for the much broader and looser category of programs “based on scientific research.” There are many possible reasons for this change including the fact that only a handful of programs had

been proven effective. It’s possible that implementing Reading First with so few programs would not have been practical. However, we also knew that developers of non-proven programs who did not want to be excluded heavily lobbied members of Congress. Many were lured by the promise of federal dollars.

This dilution by Congress has had significant negative consequences. For example, some vendors of reading programs simply changed the language in their promotional materials to create the impression that they are “based on scientific research”—without making any real changes.

Even with its flaws, Reading First remains incredibly important. It encourages reading instruction that is comprehensive, based on scientific research, and taught using direct and systematic instructional principles.

### Making It Better

How should it be made better? Congress should make two key changes. First, federal funds should only be used for those programs and instructional models that have been found to be effective using experimental research designs that can determine their causal impact on student achievement in reading. “Scientifically based” programs should be replaced with “scientifically proven” ones.

Second, Congress should stop dancing around the “local control” issue and simply ask a federal agency to vet the reading research and to determine, on a regular basis, which reading programs make the scientifically proven cut. In other words, Congress should create for reading (and perhaps other subjects where scientific research can be done) the equivalent of an FDA for education to ensure that states

and school districts only spend their Reading First funds on interventions that have been conclusively shown to work. (The “What Works Clearinghouse” might serve as a model.)

Five years after Reading First became law, evidence is beginning to show that it is starting to move publishing companies and diagnostic assessment creators towards a higher standard. Moreover, the intent and the language of Reading First are now contained in discussions about reading in state departments of education, school districts, and individual schools. Additionally, Reading First and its promise that all schools should provide students with research-based instruction has energized the educational community. It is difficult to visit any school and not hear administrators and teachers discussing whether particular instructional programs and strategies have sufficient evidence of effectiveness. Several publishing companies and program developers have now invested in research initiatives to test the effectiveness of their own programs. Five years ago, few programs had done anything of the sort.

### Snake Oil or Solid Programs?

It would be irresponsible to allow medical practitioners to revert to superstition, anecdote, and snake oil in the twenty-first century. Why would we have teachers do that? Rather than moving backwards to the days when federal dollars flowed to any program under the sun, regardless of effectiveness, we need to continue moving forward to the day when education is truly a research-based enterprise. The future of millions of children depends on it. ■



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*National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.*

# Drop Out Prevention Saves Money

U.S. could save \$127,000 per new graduate, researchers claim, but would require more government intervention.

U.S. taxpayers could reap \$45 billion annually if the number of high school dropouts is cut in half, according to a new study conducted by a group of the nation's leading researchers in education and economics.

The savings would be achieved via extra tax revenues, reduced costs of public health, reduced crime, and decreased welfare payments. Even a one-fifth reduction would result in an annual \$18 billion public savings, claims the study, whose figures do not include the private benefits of improved economic well-being that would accrue to the new graduates themselves.

## The Five Interventions

The study identifies five cost-effective educational strategies already shown to boost high school graduation rates, and estimates that the country could save a net of \$127,000 per each new graduate added through "successful implementation of the median" of these five interventions:

1. *Perry Pre-School*, the oft-chronicled pre-K program in Ypsilanti, Michigan, involves home visits.
2. *Class-size reduction* from 25 to 15 students in kindergarten through third grade.
3. *First Things First*, a comprehensive school reform of small learning communities which includes dedicated teachers, family advocates, and instructional improvement.
4. *Chicago Child-Parent Center Program* is a preschool program with health/nutrition services based in public schools.

5. *Teacher salary* increase of ten percent for all years K-12.

"Educational investments to raise the high school graduation rate appear to be doubly beneficial," the study's authors write. "The quest for greater equity for all young adults would also produce greater efficiency in the use of public resources."

The study is entitled "The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for America's Children." It was conducted by a team of economists: Henry Levin, William Heard Kilpatrick, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig, and Cecilia Rouse. Support for the study was provided to Teachers College by Lilo and Gerry Leeds.

## Calculations

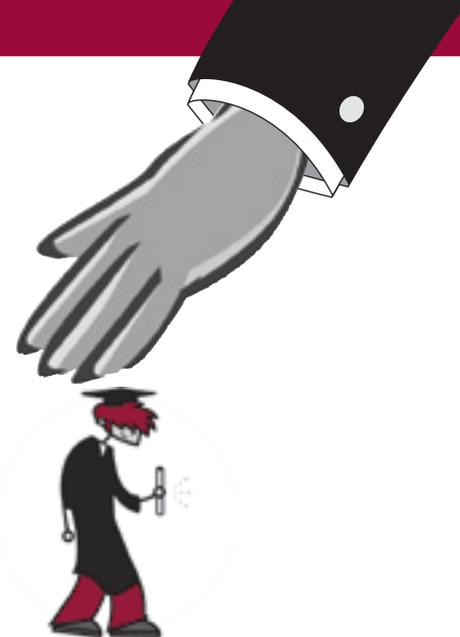
To arrive at their estimates, the researchers calculated the public benefit generated by each intervention and subtracted the investment required to implement. The \$127,000 figure reflects the mean for both genders and all ethnic groups. The public savings for each new graduate added among black males—the group most at risk for dropping out—is estimated at \$186,500.

The new findings build on data presented in October 2005 by the same team and other researchers that estimated that the U.S. loses hundreds of billions of dollars each year when young people fail to graduate from high school.

"What makes this study so powerful is that it has been conducted by economists of the first rank, using sophisticated approaches that, if anything, understate the potential value of investing up front in education," said former West Virginia Governor Bob Wise, who heads the Alliance for Excellent Education, based in Washington, D.C.

The approach used by the researchers does not include some of the benefits of graduation such as reductions in juvenile crime and teenage pregnancy that cannot be accurately quantified. In addition, national data tend to underestimate the numbers of high school dropouts, suggesting that the actual savings from increasing dropouts might be higher than those presented in the study. Among the study's other findings:

- The average lifetime benefit in terms of additional taxes paid per expected high school graduate is \$139,100.



- The average lifetime public health savings per expected high school graduate (achieved through reduction in Medicare and Medicaid costs) is \$40,500. For black females, the highest users of these programs, the figure is \$62,700.
- The average lifetime crime-related cost reduction per expected high school graduate is \$26,600.
- Being a high school graduate is associated with a 40 percent lower probability of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); a 1 percent lower probability of receiving housing assistance; and a 19 percent lower probability of receiving food stamps. For college graduates, the probability reductions are 62 percent, 35 percent, and 54 percent.

Of the five successful interventions identified by the researchers, two take place in preschool, one in elementary school, one in high school, and one throughout the K-12 years. In general, the study's authors identify several features that characterize effective school interventions: small-size schools; personalization; high academic expectations; strong counseling; parental engagement; extended time; and competent and appropriate personnel.

To view the full text of the study, visit [www.cbse.org](http://www.cbse.org), the Web site of The Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education (CBCSE), based at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education (CBCSE) conducts research alternative educational policies and interventions. ■

## AAE Launches New Affiliate in Colorado

AAE is proud to announce that this summer its newest affiliate, Professional Association of Colorado Educators (PACE), launched in Colorado. Dr. Kris Enright, the executive director of PACE, brings a wealth of experience to the organization. He previously has had experience as a teacher, principal, university professor, and as the executive director of an online school that he was instrumental in starting.

PACE is committed to helping teachers in Colorado receive the respect, recognition, and reward they deserve for their dedication to education. To help

teachers achieve the highest level of excellence in education, some of the services that PACE will provide will focus on professional development, networking opportunities, and minigrants and scholarships. Like other AAE

affiliates, PACE will also offer quality legal protection.

PACE seeks to be an association of excellent teachers a place where teachers can learn from one another and be supported in their endeavors to improve education. PACE is thrilled at the opportunity to begin working with the education community in Colorado.

If you are an AAE mem-

ber working in Colorado, you will be receiving more information by mail about PACE. If you know of an educator who lives in Colorado, be sure to pass along the good news!



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## Charter School Growth Impressive

It has been 15 years since the first charter school opened in Minnesota, and the movement continues to grow in size and popularity. Since last year, charter schools enjoyed double-digit growth, with 3,940 schools now serving 1.16 million students in 40 states and the District of Columbia. They continue to offer innovative curricula to a predominantly at-risk and poor student population. Want to know more about our nation's charter schools? Visit the Center for Education Reform's website at [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com) for its *2007 Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools*.

## Union Leaders Among Richest Americans

“They are more worried about how their stocks are doing and where they’re going to park their boat than how to win stronger contracts or organize new members.” There are plenty of places you might expect to see a quote like that, but you probably didn’t think of the February issue of *Labor Notes*, a quintessential pro-union publication.

In a front-page story, Mark Brenner details the salaries of union officers and staff, and blames them for many of labor’s organizing and activism woes.

“For example,” Brenner writes, “the number of individuals earning over \$100,000 a year more than doubled between 2000 and 2004 – the latest year with complete data. Over the same period, the number of officers and staff earning more than \$150,000 increased 84 percent. Meanwhile, private sector union density has fallen below 8 percent, its lowest point in over 100 years.”

Brenner then hammers home his point by mentioning that “any official or staffer earning over \$157,000 in 2004 found themselves among the richest five percent of American households.”

## Diplomas Count

A new study, *Diplomas Count 2007: Ready for What? Preparing Students for College Careers, and Life After High School*, was recently released with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

It examines jobs nationally and in each state while looking specifically at the education and pay levels of the different jobs.

More education is associated with higher pay, but it is still unclear what academic and nonacademic skills best prepare students to be successful in college and the work-force. Therefore, policymakers and educators are faced with tough questions about how high schools should be designed.

To download the report, visit [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org).



# Fighting Words

## Relational Aggression Poses Risk to Students

By Amanda H. Davis



While it may be common for educators to be concerned about students being bullied, many overlook a common form of bullying called relational aggression that poses a significant risk to students.

Relational aggression, unlike physical aggression, is the act of using relationships to hurt another individual. This form of aggression is much more difficult to identify than students who use physical violence to hurt each other. However, relational aggression can be more emotionally and psychologically damaging, leading to declining student achievement and other more serious risks. Studies have shown that relational aggression, or RA, can lead to frequent school absences, depression, low self-esteem, risky behavior, sexual promiscuity, drug use, and even suicide. Educators have in recent years given more attention to this form of bullying, yet the problem proliferates, with many classroom teachers uninformed as to how to recognize or reduce this problem among students.

Relational aggression involves:

- Malicious gossip
- Exclusion
- Name calling and taunting
- Covert physical aggression
- Cyberbullying, or the use of the Internet to harm others. Websites such as MySpace and Instant Messaging are com-

mon places where RA can take place.

- Any social relationship designed to hurt a peer

Some educators and parents may assert that relational aggression, like other forms of bullying, is simply a rite of passage and therefore an essential part of growing up as an adolescent. However, if one looks at

**Relational aggression, unlike physical aggression, is the act of using relationships to hurt another individual.**

the effects of RA, it is clear that the social climate of adolescents can be quite harmful and must be changed.

A recent survey by the Ophelia Project revealed that 27 percent of students surveyed claimed that they did not feel emotionally safe in their schools. Furthermore, a study by the U.S. Secret Service showed that nearly two-thirds of the students involved in school shootings did what they did because they felt persecuted by their fellow students. RA can affect any student, regardless of age or gender, but it seems to be more prevalent among girls in middle and high school.

It can be quite discouraging for educators to see students clearly suffering from relational aggression, especially when it is seemingly impossible at times to discipline the perpetrators and help the victims deal with their situations. However, there are some practical measures that educators can take to help prevent and/or stop RA in their schools:

- Model healthy communication and conflict management in the classroom

- Educate students about RA and how to walk away from conflicts that result in relational aggression
- Investigate the reasons that a student may be missing school or acting out in violence—it may be the result of relational aggression
- Be armed with information about RA by reading books, articles, and websites devoted to the subject
- Encourage administration to adopt policies about bullying that include RA
- Recognize what RA can entail to stop it happening in the classroom

Many states are adopting legislation to fight against bullying, and lawmakers are including relational aggression in the definition of bullying. In fact, Florida Legislature is proposing a bill called “Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act” that prohibits bullying and harassment during education programs and activities, including on buses or through the use of computers on education campuses. The hope is that this bill will be broad enough to cover all types of harassment for all students. Educators need not wait until this proposal becomes law. They can make it the law in their own classrooms and schools.

There are many resources available for educators to become informed and effective opponents of RA, including workshops and seminars on the subject. ■

*Amanda H. Davis, M.Ed., school counselor at Providence School of Jacksonville, FL. Printed with permission.*

## RESOURCES

**Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence** by Rosalind Wiseman

**Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls** by Rachel Simmons

**Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls** by Mary Pipher

**The Ophelia Project:** [www.opheliaproject.org](http://www.opheliaproject.org)

**Relational Aggression Web Site:** [www.relationalaggression.com](http://www.relationalaggression.com)

**Relational Aggression National Conference:** [www.meangirlsconf.com](http://www.meangirlsconf.com)



## The End of the Employee Free Choice Act in 2007

On June 26, the debate on the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) ended in the U.S. Senate. A cloture vote was taken to end debate on the bill and bring it to the floor for a vote. With a vote of 51-48, supporters of the bill failed to attain the 60 votes needed to end the debate. Therefore, the bill will not be considered in the Senate again this year.

The fight, however, is not over. If there is a union friendly president in the White House, the Employee Free Choice Act will be first and foremost on big labor's legislative agenda for 2009. John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, stated that he "is confident that the bill would fare better if a Democrat won the White House next year."

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) remarked, "We will keep coming back year after year after year."

The way in which lawmakers voted on this bill will also not be forgotten. Many business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, were grading the way in which Senators voted. "This will be one of the issues that helps decide who we support in future elections," Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohue said. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) was the only Republican to support the Employee Free Choice Act by voting for cloture.

## Supplemental Educational Services are Effective

A new report was recently released titled, *State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act: Volume I—Title I School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, and Student Achievement*. It shows that Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are effective and there is an even greater impact on students the longer they are in the program. Students involved in SES scored higher in both reading and math in the first year and in subsequent years. The highest participation rates were seen among African-American and Hispanic students, with limited English proficient students and students with disabilities having relatively high participation rates as well.

"This report reinforces what I hear from parents from across the country—that SES is helping more students achieve. SES is a lifeline for students who need more resources and parents who want more options," said Education Secretary Margaret Spellings.

The Department of Education's plans for reauthorization call for the strengthening of SES services by making the following suggestions: (1) allowing schools to make tutoring available as soon as a school is marked in need of improvement; (2) providing more funding for tutoring, especially for students in rural

areas, English language learners, and students with disabilities; and, (3) allowing districts more flexibility in the ways in which they use federal dollars to inform parents about their options under SES.

"This study is something to take seriously. Congress isn't about to eliminate tutoring or school choice, anyway, but this should put more of a burden on school districts to expand SES services," stated Jack F. Jennings, President of the Center on Education Policy, in response to the report.

## NCTQ 2007 State Teacher Policy Yearbook

The National Council on Teacher Quality recently released an extensive study of every policy that states have implemented in regards to teacher quality. Many reports have analyzed the role the federal government has played in teacher quality through No Child Left Behind, but reports rarely take a close look at the education policies state governments have.

The report outlined six goals for teacher quality: (1) meeting NCLB teacher quality objectives; (2) teacher licensure; (3) teacher evaluation and compensation; (4) state approval of teacher preparation; (5) alternate routes to certification; and, (6) preparation of special education teachers.

The study reported that states as a whole came close to meeting 21 percent of the goals.

One of the findings from the study concluded that most states do not require that teachers receive annual performance evaluations, a norm in most professions. Only fourteen states require annual evaluations.

The report also found that teachers who did not graduate from schools of education find it very difficult to receive certification. Only six states offer true alternate routes to certification. Teachers who move from state to state often find it very hard to earn licensure in different states. Additionally, teachers often have to complete additional coursework or repeat preparation programs.

Kate Walsh, the president of NCTQ, realizes that many factors besides policy contribute to the quality of teachers. The report does not seek to refer to the actual quality of teachers in the state. Ms. Walsh remarked, "State policy can make good teachers better and poor teachers abysmal."

To review the report in its entirety and to see your state's profile, go to <http://www.nctq.org/stpy/>. ■



To read AAE press releases, visit [www.aaeteachers.org](http://www.aaeteachers.org). Click on "press room."

# Why We Leave

## School Staffing Survey Provides Perspective

By Mike Antonucci

Education researchers have waited patiently for the latest Schools and Staffing Survey from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and we finally have what the federal agency is calling a “first look” at Teacher Attrition and Mobility.

The categories used by NCES in computing teacher turnover do not match up neatly with those used by Richard Ingersoll and those citing the claim that “half of all new teachers leave the profession within the first five years.” However, the data benefit them in that the NCES numbers move the claim from unsubstantiated to arguable.



Find *Teacher Attrition and Mobility* by visiting <http://nces.ed.gov>.

If you work the raw numbers from Table 2 of the report, you find that in 2005 about 8.6 percent of teachers with three years of experience or less left the profession. Crunch the numbers again, and the rate for teachers with nine years of experience or less was 8.2 percent. If we split the difference and assume the rate for teachers leaving with five years of experience or less was 8.4 percent per year. Accumulated over five years, it would mean 42 percent of new teachers leave the profession in the first five years.

I am willing to get off my hobby horse and concede that, for sound bite purposes, 42 percent is close enough to qualify as “about half.”

Table 6 of the report tries to help the reader understand why teachers leave

the profession. The NCES questionnaire allowed respondents to choose more than one reason (the average respondent chose two), but the percentages are still useful.

### A Closer Look

Teacher union talking points would have us believe that teachers leave because of poor pay, lousy working conditions, and lack of respect and support. Certainly, these problems were mentioned by those leaving:

- 25.3 percent cited a desire to “pursue a position other than that of K-12 teacher” (which could include becoming a vice principal, principal, or other school administration job).
- 16.0 percent cited being “dissatisfied with previous school or teaching assignment.”
- 14.2 percent cited “better salary or benefits” as a reason for leaving.
- 14.6 percent cited being “dissatisfied with teaching as a career.”
- 5.3 percent cited a desire “to take courses to improve career opportunities outside the field of education.”

These are actual problems. School administrators and politicians alike need to examine such dissatisfaction and, where possible, correct it. However, let’s not overstate it. These percentages pale when compared to the other reasons cited for leaving:

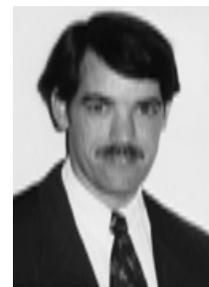
- 31.4 percent retired.
- 20.4 percent cited “other family or personal reasons.”
- 18.7 percent cited “pregnancy or child rearing.”



- 14.6 percent were laid off or otherwise left involuntarily.
- 11.8 percent cited “health.”
- 11.2 percent changed residence.
- 8.9 percent cited the desire “to take courses to improve career opportunities within the field of education.”

Most of these have nothing to do with teaching as a career. They are common to all careers and are therefore unlikely to be affected by changes in education policy. Move on to Table 7 and you find that 29.1 percent of those leaving are still working in the field of education, just not as K-12 teachers.

Add this all up and you do not rid yourself of the problem of teacher turnover, but you get some much-needed context in an environment where there are stark differences between reality and the requirements of political agendas. ■



Mike Antonucci is the founder of the Education Intelligence Agency, [www.eiaonline.com](http://www.eiaonline.com)

# Teacher's Little Helper

## New roles for technology

By Mike Petrilli

Can technology turn well-meaning but ill-prepared teachers into effective instructors? A new breed of education business is betting on it. While none claim that they are “teacher proofing” the classroom, several are building tools that aim to turn mere mortals into excellent teachers.

One class of products seeks to make teachers more efficient and productive. Wireless Generation, for example, offers software that turns handheld computers into diagnostic tools that quickly identify gaps in students’ reading and mathematics skills. Data are instantaneously uploaded to a program that helps instructors analyze student performance over time and personalize their instructional strategies for each child.

Other products aim to enhance classroom instruction directly. For decades this has been the Holy Grail of the education technology industry. And for years the market has offered products like lesson-plan banks, tools to align lessons to state standards, and more recently, subscriptions to digital content providers (such as Discovery Education) that allow instructors to embed high-quality video, music, or graphics into their teaching. But early applications of this technology forced the teacher to play writer, director, and pro-

ducer for each set of digitally enhanced lessons. That’s a lot to expect from the average teacher and reinforces the inefficient practice of asking every teacher to reinvent the wheel.

Enter companies such as Agile Mind, which produces fully developed lessons in math and science that are rich with visualizations and simulations. This new generation of content providers shows potential, says Adam Newman, a vice president at the consulting firm Eduventures, because their products are “crafted with an understanding of the challenges and constraints of the classroom.”

Some of the most important parts of the education process happen after the school bell rings, when teachers grade student homework, papers, and tests. Why can’t

English essays, for example, be zipped off electronically to be marked up and graded overnight by English majors or graduate students around the country (or even around the world), then handed back to the student the next day? A company called EduMetry is pursuing exactly this business for large-

scale courses at the higher education level. EduMetry works with professors to create common grading rubrics; tests are graded online and feedback is provided electronically, creating a digital record of student work along the way. K-12 teachers might like similar homework-grading help, and students would receive feedback faster than they can from their teacher alone.

All of these products and services cost money—money that has to be squeezed out of an education system that plows almost all of its resources into personnel. Of course, there is another way. As

**Should education technology push our system to finally choose teacher quality over teacher quantity, it will have a transformative effect indeed.**



Chester E. Finn Jr. explains, in the past half-century our K-12 public education student population has grown 50 percent while our teacher corps has grown nearly 300 percent, largely in pursuit of smaller classes. If the size of our teacher force had merely kept pace with student growth and we spent the extra money attracting more-accomplished individuals to the field, today’s average teacher salary would be close to \$100,000 per year.

If teachers unions find the new technologies demeaning or threatening, perhaps they will finally get serious about working to raise teacher pay, compensate high performers accordingly, and give up their small classes in return. Should education technology push our system to finally choose teacher quality over teacher quantity, it will have a transformative effect indeed. But as long as it costs less money and political will to enhance legions of mediocre teachers than it would to compensate fewer highly talented ones, these technologies should find a market. ■



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