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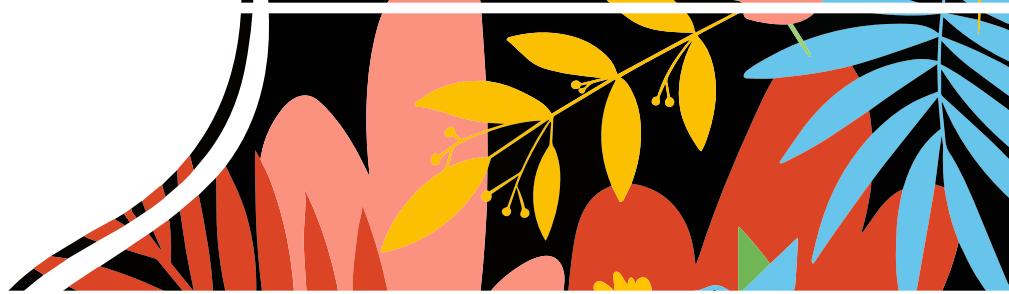
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Educators with a Futurist Mindset

By Delia Veve, David Adams, Kiri Soares and Candace Hugee

A month ago, one of the authors was sitting in a US History Classroom in New York City listening to a student discussion based off of the question: "Should rapid industrialization during the time period of 1865 to 1890 be considered a blessing or a curse?" A good question to be sure, and one that prompted deeper thinking on the part of both students and adults in the class. Thinking that we carried across the country to an ed-tech conference where we repeated one student's response, "So much has changed but school is still very much the same."

The student was right. Despite vast leaps in technology in the last 100 years, school is very much the same. Students and teachers come to the building five days a week for six hours a day. Students spend the majority of their time on "the core" subjects: English, Math, Social Studies and Science. In classes focused on the transfer of content: literary devices, the standard algorithm for solving a given equation,

important historical dates, and facts about our natural world. Technology is integrated into our classrooms, but it has not fundamentally changed the constants of our educational work: the curriculum - what we teach; our pedagogy - how we teach; who we learn with - students and teachers.

The absence of change, in and of itself, is not a negative.

In many cases we make changes that do not yield positive results.   However, if we are truly preparing the citizens, workers, artists and leaders of the future then we must consider what skills they are developing and what tools they are learning to use in our schools. Therefore, as educators we must approach our work with a dash of futurism.

Our purpose is not to prepare our students for the world that exists today, but rather to prepare our students for the world that will exist tomorrow. As the rate of technological advances continues to increase exponentially, the ability of educators to think beyond our own experiences becomes a critical feature of our work. Our willingness to distill what has been important to know and be able to do and integrate it with what will be important in the future, will allow us to create learning experiences that better prepare students for their future lives. Experiences that will inevitably incorporate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

AI is the hot topic in every corner of the world.

Reception to AI ranges from an energetic embrace, because it is going to revolutionize the way we do everything, to a reflexive rejec-tion, because it is going to replace humans and no one will have to think anymore. Yet, even amongst the earliest adopters and entrepreneurs marketing new AI apps, there is a strong consensus that AI is a tool, not something that is going to replace humans. In fact, AI is only as powerful as the people using it. As educators we must think about how we use this new tool to teach better, so that students' learning is enhanced and they are better prepared for their future lives.

It's the nature of education to have mixed reactions to the learning tools that emerge as society advances. In the Phaedrus, Plato, quoting Socrates, writes: "If men learn this [writing], it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks." However, just as writing became a staple of literacy and education, AI can be a catalyst to extend our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. So a new essential question came to the authors: "What kind of innovations do we need to mobilize to ensure that 100 years from now there is substantial evidence to support the argument that educators' use of AI was a blessing?" At the Urban Assembly, we intend to find out.

Urban Assembly schools recognize that all learning is social and that the development of social emotional competencies is fundamental to success in college, career, and community. Our mission is to advance students' economic and social mobility by improving public education. Our schools represent our design principles of high quality academics, post-secondary success, and social emotional development. Social-emotional competencies are more closely aligned to the skills identified as critical to success in the workforce than historical standards focused on content knowledge. This
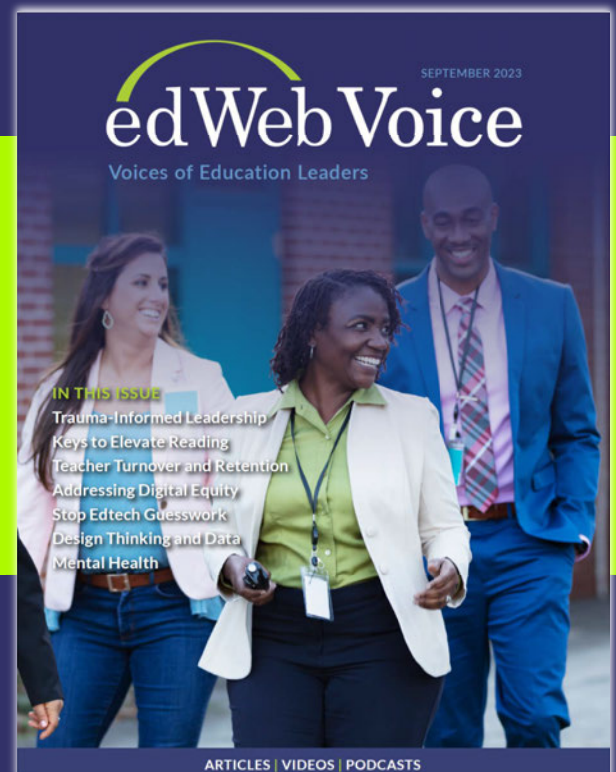
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Addressing Digital Equity | Stop Edtech Guessw

Best wishes for the 2023-2024 year ahead!

It's back-to-school time, and edWeb is delighted to bring you the September issue of the edWeb Voice!

Raising the voices of education leaders and providing a forum for them to talk with each other on a wide range of topics is important in these challenging times.

SEPTEMBER 2023

edWeb Voice

Voices of Education Leaders

IN THIS ISSUE
Trauma-Informed Leadership
Keys to Elevate Reading
Teacher Turnover and Retention
Addressing Digital Equity
Stop Edtech Guesswork
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ARTICLES | VIDEOS | PODCASTS

SEPTEMBER 2023

Voice

Leaders

Reading | Teacher Turnover and Retention |
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Catch up on recent presentations by ed leaders with articles, videos, and podcasts on:

- Trauma-informed leadership
- Keys to elevate reading
- Teacher turnover and retention
- Addressing digital equity
- Stopping edtech guesswork
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- Mental health

...and more!

Read edWeb Voice

suggests that we must reconsider the skills, standards and goals of our work as educators. Which means reconsidering what (the curriculum) and how (the pedagogy) we teach as well as our relationships with who we teach (the students).

In 2023, we need not replicate Plato's skepticisms about new technologies. AI provides an opportunity for us to engage in inquiry about the learning that really matters and how we should teach it. We should consider how "shallow learning" (formulas, vocabulary, dates, events) can be made more efficient through the use of AI and in doing so create more time for "deeper learning" (concepts, principles, analysis, interpretation). For example, retrieval practice is a well researched strategy for building essential knowledge. There are numerous apps and programs that are designed to support retrieval practice and in fact may do so better than a teacher. By making use of these technologies, teachers can free up their time inside and outside of the classroom to focus on deeper learning.

AI will change education, but educators retain the power to influence the trajectory of that change.

That change needs to be towards deeper learning. Jal Mehta and Lisa Fine report in their book In Search of Deeper Learning, that too often classrooms are characterized by teachers "telling" students the content which they attribute to the, "extreme volume of content that teachers are expected to cover by virtue of mandated grade-level standards." This leads many teachers to default to a transmission model of learning, where the focus is on coverage rather than deeper learning.

The world we are preparing our students for will value deeper learning, but deeper learning cannot be facilitated within a transmission model of learning.

It is instead cultivated through models of learning where learners are working to solve problems, draw connections, and develop processes for responding to novel situations. To do this, teachers need to reimagine what they and their students spend their time doing. AI cannot do the work of teachers, but it can certainly be used as a tool to make the shifts necessary to support deeper learning. Like Mehta and Fine, Jay McTighe and Harvey F. Silver identify the two challenges to deeper learning as being: "too much content" and "too much telling.". To avoid these pitfalls they suggest that teachers focus on the "big ideas" within the content and active meaning making by learners. These shifts are not easy, but AI can be a tool that teachers harness to maximize high quality learning experiences. Here at the UA, we intend to figure out how to make this work.

McTighe and Silver's shifts require that teachers adjust both their curriculum and their pedagogy, which cannot be done in isolation. We know that students' deeper learning is best facilitated in collaboration, this is also true for teachers. However, time is the resource in greatest demand and time that teachers spend collaborating with peers and with instructional coaches is time that is taken away from work with students. This is where AI can be used as a tool. By leveraging AI to make adaptations to curriculum and pedagogy, teachers can make their planning more efficient and in doing so, free up time to create deeper learning experiences for students.

One of the powers of AI and specifically tools like ChatGPT and Google's Bard is the capacity to quickly generate examples.

As teachers are planning, they can use AI to generate:

- Essential questions and big ideas for a topic
- Learning objectives linked to standards
- Questions about a given topic or text
- Possible student misconceptions
- Sample responses to a given task, prompt or question

Leaving teacher planning time to be used for the deeper thinking tasks of selecting the best examples, refining those examples to best fit the needs of their students, and identifying connections between the content that students are learning and the social-emotional competencies that students need for success beyond school–the kind of work that cannot be done by AI.

As teachers begin to work with AI as a tool, they will begin to see the possibilities for students to use it as a tool as well. Rather than viewing AI as a shortcut that circumvents thinking, the UA is intent on figuring out how AI can be used to deepen thinking and learning for both students and teachers. When that happens, more questions will be asked in classrooms that create the kind of discussion that inspired us to ask: "What kind of innovations do we need to mobilize to ensure that 100 years from now there is substantial evidence to support the argument that educators' use of AI was a blessing?"
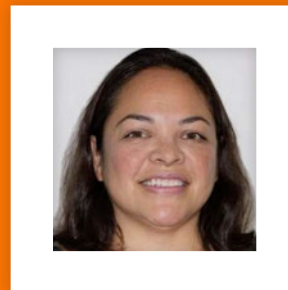
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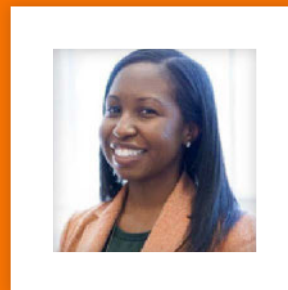

Cordelia Veve is the principal of the Urban Assembly School for Media Studies in Manhattan
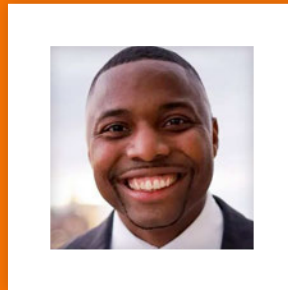
David Adams is the Chief Executive Officer of the Urban Assembly

Kiri Soares is the Principal of the Urban Assembly Institute for Math and Science for Young Women in Brooklyn

Candace Hugee is the former Principal of the Urban Assembly School for Collaborative Healthcare

On-campus or online, Landmark College Helps Students Who Learn Differently Succeed with Comprehensive Educational Model

Landmark College is one of the only accredited U.S. colleges designed exclusively for students who learn differently (LD), including students with learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), ADHD, autism, or executive function challenges. The Putney, Vermont-based institution combines research-based learning strategies and academic support to prepare students for the rigors of college-level work.

Over the course of nearly 40 years, Landmark College has evolved from a 2-year to a 4-year liberal arts college, offering associate and bachelor's degrees in a variety of disciplines, with optional minors and concentrations. The philosophical approach to "meet students where they are" has also led to the development of several short-term summer programs for high school and college-age students, as well as partial credit options that provide new students with a more gradual transition into college life.

Online programs continue to grow as well. For several years, the College has been partnering with high schools to offer dual enrollment courses to students with LD, and educators have been able to earn post-baccalaureate credentials through the online Certificate in Learning Differences and Neurodiversity. Now with the recently created umbrella brand LC Online, the College has also introduced a fully online first year of college, called College START, that can lead to earning an online associate degree in either liberal studies or business.

The Landmark College Difference

Landmark College offers the same range of student services found at any college—from counseling and health services to student life and athletics. The difference at Landmark College is that these professionals, like our faculty and academic advisors, bring specific expertise in, and a passion for, working with students who learn differently.

Working together, we help students discover their path as confident, empowered, and independent learners. We integrate our innovative learning strategies into everything we do.

Academic Advising

In addition to classes, students in their first year at Landmark College participate in weekly academic advising sessions while engaged with the advising curriculum. As students progress in their coursework, they become increasingly independent and meet with their advisor less frequently. Students pursuing their bachelor's degree work with degree specific advisors. The academic advisor is central to the system which supports individual student performance.

Centers for Academic Support

Landmark College's Centers for Academic Support offer unparalleled support to students who learn differently, at no additional charge. The Drake Center for Academic Support is the first place students turn for help with reading, writing, and study skills. Academic support centers within individual departments offer drop-in support and one-on-one scheduled appointments with Landmark College faculty. The College's Educational Technology Services and executive function coaching services are also housed here.

Counseling & Health

Counseling Services are available to provide support to students dealing with stress and other personal, social, or academic difficulties. Health Services offers support for physical issues.

Integrated Services for Students with Autism

Students with autism who are academically prepared for college may still face significant challenges navigating the social curriculum and adjusting to the more fluid routine of the college student. Landmark College recognizes the need to provide additional programming to assist students with autism to meet their college goals. Our integrated services model for ASD support services provides a structured living and learning environment that combines an effective pedagogical approach with tailored social and other programmatic supports.

Library

The Landmark College Library offers walk-in assistance as well as one-on-one appointments to assist students with research projects and developing information literacy. The Library building offers a welcoming space conducive to individual and small-group study, as well as resources to support students' curricular and extracurricular needs and interests.

Undergraduate Degrees and Curriculum

Landmark College offers a diverse selection of courses in anthropology, English, business, communications, humanities, philosophy, psychology, history, literature, math, science, foreign languages, theater, video, music, art, physical education, and other disciplines.

For all entering students, the curriculum sequence begins with skills-development courses, designed to address the key areas of writing, reading, communication and study skills. Self-management, as well as the development of self-understanding and self-advocacy, are also important parts of this first-semester curriculum.

Initial courses are offered at non-credit and credit levels. This allows students to be placed in classes where they are able to succeed, from the start. Due to our rigorous academic standards, more than 50% of incoming students begin in non-credit courses, with most moving into credit courses after one or two semesters.

Visit Our Campus

Landmark College offers several Open Houses each semester. You can also schedule a visit with our Admissions office any weekday during regular business hours by calling 802-387-6718 or emailing admissions@landmark.edu.

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Empowering Girls in Coding: Breaking Stereotypes and Encouraging Inclusivity

By Stuart Drexler and Estelle Ashman

It may come as a surprise to many that the world's first computer programmer was born in 1815 and was, in fact, a woman.

Ada Lovelace's groundbreaking collaboration with Charles Babbage lay the foundation for modern computing and modern feminism. While some might assume that gender biases are relics of the past, recent studies reveal that implicit bias persists even among young students today. A striking example is the 'draw-a-computer-scientist' test administered to eight and nine-year-olds, which overwhelmingly portrayed scientists as men, despite being taught by a female computer science teacher.

Of course, great strides have been made for women in the computer science industry, particularly in video games, such as the outstanding contributions from women including Carol Shaw, who designed a myriad of games for Atari; Roberta Williams, who co-founded video game development company Sierra On-Line; and Brenda Romero, a leading game designer responsible for countless popular games. Despite these great steps forward, it is imperative that we continue to address gender biases and actively implement practical solutions in the classroom to foster genuine and lasting change.

Arguably, the most powerful strategy for addressing gender disparities in the workforce is to introduce computer science initiatives in schools. This will foster an interest and start

equipping all students with digital skills from a young age. Further, by nurturing these skills, students can aspire to lucrative and highly sought-after roles in the rapidly evolving tech industry, offering them pathways to greater social mobility.

All of this, however, is easier said than done. Many schools find it challenging to gain traction with these initiatives, especially with girls who often perceive computer science as dry, technical, or mainly for boys. It's essential to debunk these misconceptions. Computer science is inherently creative and although it is currently male dominated, any person can thrive in a tech role with the right skills.

In our quest to promote inclusivity, it's critical to avoid repeating past mistakes. This requires thoughtful consideration of how stereotypes are addressed in the classroom and how students of all genders can be empowered to embrace their lessons. Importantly, the solution doesn't involve using pink tools or focusing on stereotypically 'girly' topics to engage girls. The objective is to provide a gender-neutral, balanced perspective on computer science. Students should not associate gender with any role; they should instead be empowered to see themselves in any position they desire. Representation and framing play pivotal roles in achieving this.

Despite an increase in women working in the computing and gaming sectors, the representation of women as computer scientists has yet to catch up.

Additionally, the actual percentage of women in tech does not reflect a gender-equal workforce. This disparity extends to the classroom, where teachers struggle to find resources that reso-

nate with all students. One potent approach to this is to teach students how to code their own video games.

Rather than searching for a one-size-fits-all game, educators can empower students to create their own games that reflect their unique experiences. Online platforms like Construct 3, for instance, teach students how to design and code their own video games. This approach promotes inclusivity by encouraging students from diverse backgrounds and demographics to participate, and breaks down stereotypes by showing that even those who never envisioned themselves as computer scientists can thrive in the role. It also exposes students to the collaboration of others with distinct skills sets: programmers, artists, production managers, marketers, etc. Taking part in such projects may help a student discover that they want to become a programmer, or help them realize that they have a passion to pursue one of the many important complimentary roles in software development.

Further to this, project-based learning is a well-established method for achieving high engagement. By assigning a video game project, teachers can boost engagement, especially among students, including girls, who might not typically engage with computer science. In states where computer science classes are not mandatory, low turnout from female students is often attributed to misconceptions. To address this, teachers should work to dispel these misconceptions by using examples that feature female tech-sector role-models. Teachers should also consider marketing their computer science classes in a more broadly appealing manner to encourage more girls to sign up, for example framing it with an emphasis on creativity and interactive project-led lessons. Simultaneously, policymakers must prioritize initiatives that level the educational and workforce playing field, such as requiring computer science credits for graduation.

Ultimately, empowering girls in coding requires challenging stereotypes, nurturing creativity, and fostering inclusivity. By offering a gender-neutral perspective, dismantling barriers through creative coding projects, and embracing diverse experiences, we can inspire the next generation of computer scientists, regardless of gender, to shape the future of technology.

## Pull-out panel: Practical top tips for getting girls engaged in computer science

1) Break down complex tasks into achievable steps

Instead of diving straight into technical aspects, break down complex coding tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Celebrate each accomplishment along the way. For example, when creating a video game character, first teach them how to design and animate a simple character. This approach ensures that everyone, even those with no coding experience, can see their progress and stay motivated throughout the learning process. You can also challenge them to come up with diverse characters and concepts relatable to them to help increase engagement from all students, but importantly girls.

2) Emphasize project-based learning

By integrating project-based learning into the curriculum for all topics, teachers can ensure that projects are adaptable to different skill levels and interests. This helps widen access and engagement for a broader range of students. For instance, encourage students to design and tailor a video game to their own interests by offering a brief demonstration of how you would make your own game. This will
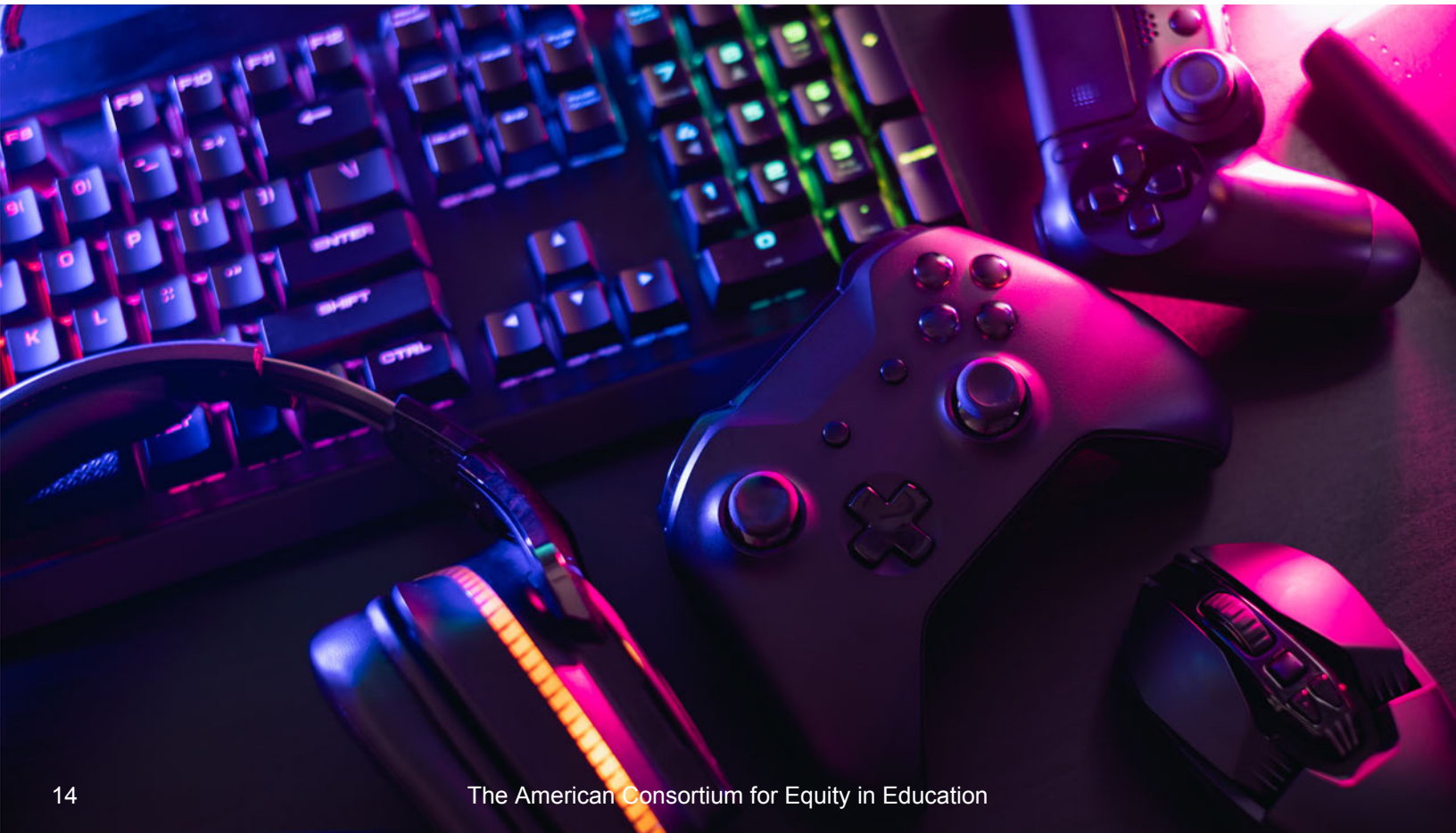
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help spark creativity and imagination and allow them to see that anything and everything is possible, including incorporating their own passions.

3) Link learning to real-world applications

Show students how coding skills can be applied beyond the classroom. Connect project-based lessons to real-world scenarios, such as developing a game that addresses an environmental issue or a social challenge. This approach helps students, including girls, understand the practical significance of coding and how they can embody a role in the tech workforce to tackle something they really care about.

4) Provide female-led examples

When developing project-based assignments, include examples led by female developers or game designers. By showcasing successful female role models in the field, girls can more easily relate to the tasks, feel empowered to engage, and visualize themselves in the role too. For instance, highlight female game developers who have created popular video games or female influencers sharing their experience in the field.

5) Highlight creativity over technical challenges

Position your coding class or project as a creative endeavor, not just a technical challenge. Emphasize the artistic and imaginative aspects of video game development. For instance, encourage students to design unique characters, create compelling storylines, and experiment with various visual elements. By framing coding as a creative outlet, you can attract a broader range of learners and empower girls to explore their creative potential.

As Digital Schoolhouse's Curriculum Content Developer, Estelle Ashman is responsible for the creation and curation of their innovative teaching resources. With a catalogue of workshops that include everything from lessons on algorithms using Ubisoft's Just Dance to investigating binary numbers with Nintendo's Super Mario Maker 2, Digital Schoolhouse is at the forefront of playful computing. With over 15 years teaching experience and a Masters in Teaching and Learning, Estelle is an enthusiastic practitioner who has the expertise to take difficult Computer Science concepts and present them in a new and innovative way.

Stuart Drexler is an educational technologist and product leader with over 25 years' experience in interactive learning, robotics & games. He has created educational journeys for millions of K-12 kids through his work with Sesame Workshop, Scholastic, Disney, LEGO and more. Stuart holds an Ed.M. from Harvard.

Threat Assessment Program Starter Kit

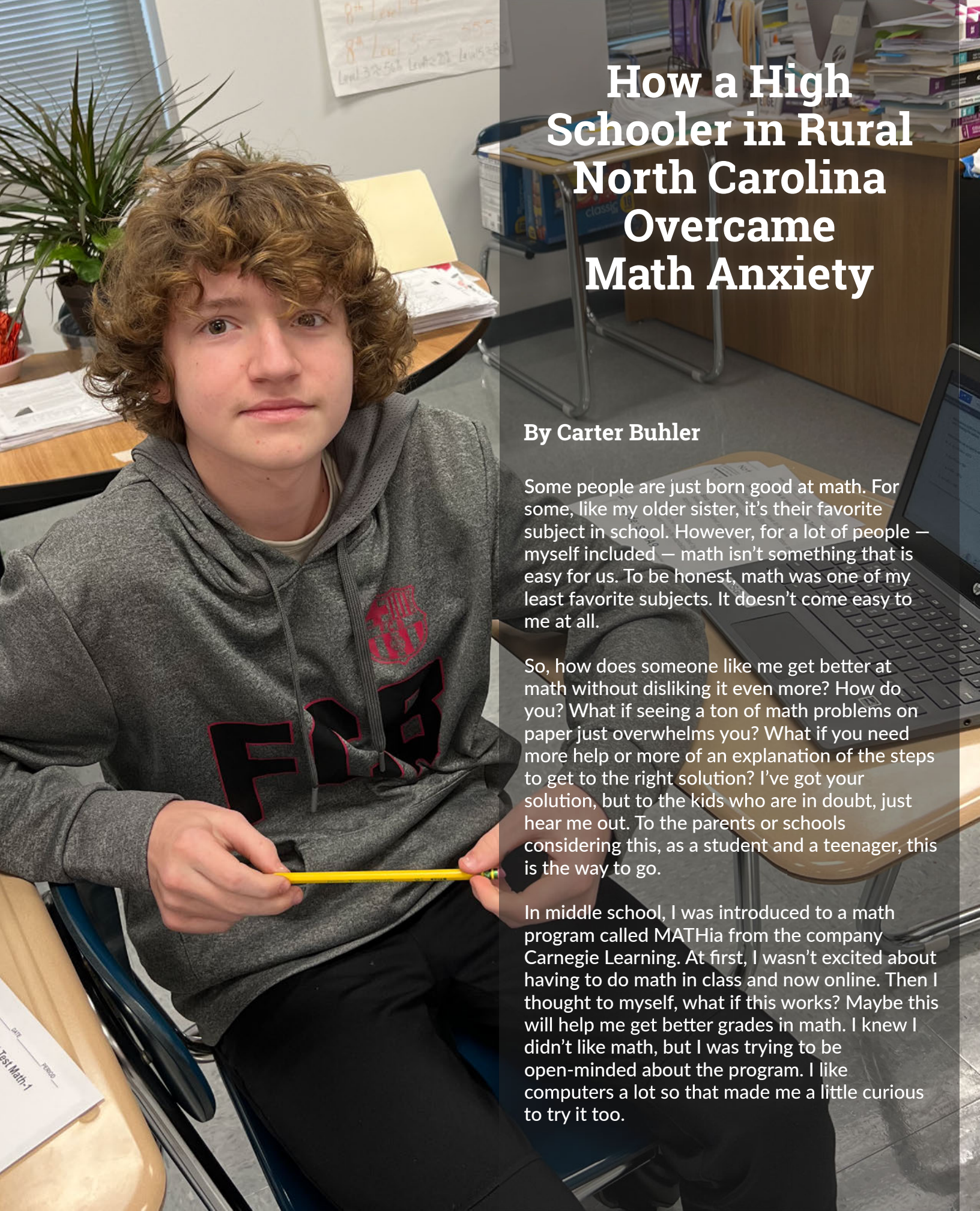## Eight Development & Implementation Tips for Your Behavioral Threat Assessment Program

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How a High Schooler in Rural North Carolina Overcame Math Anxiety

By Carter Buhler

Some people are just born good at math. For some, like my older sister, it's their favorite subject in school. However, for a lot of people — myself included — math isn't something that is easy for us. To be honest, math was one of my least favorite subjects. It doesn't come easy to me at all.

So, how does someone like me get better at math without disliking it even more? How do you? What if seeing a ton of math problems on paper just overwhelms you? What if you need more help or more of an explanation of the steps to get to the right solution? I've got your solution, but to the kids who are in doubt, just hear me out. To the parents or schools considering this, as a student and a teenager, this is the way to go.

In middle school, I was introduced to a math program called MATHia from the company Carnegie Learning. At first, I wasn't excited about having to do math in class and now online. Then I thought to myself, what if this works? Maybe this will help me get better grades in math. I knew I didn't like math, but I was trying to be open-minded about the program. I like computers a lot so that made me a little curious to try it too.

Since I was doing the program at school, I will explain what the online program was like for me. Also, keep in mind that this was for eighth-grade middle school. During class, I was able to grab a computer to use at my desk. My teacher would then give us our passwords and usernames. Before you even begin, you get to make an avatar of yourself. Once inside, you can open up all the lessons you need to do.

Programs can be "Progress Lessons" or "Checkpoint Lessons." When you have a lesson that uses the progress option, you will see circles at the top right corner next to the "I'm Done" button. As you get questions right and progress through your work, the circles will fill up. However, if you get one wrong, the progress on the circles will decrease. This really made me want to strive to get those circles filled!

I knew I needed to take my time and read the question and think about how to solve the equation. I noticed that I had been rushing a lot of my math work in school, and that may have been why I didn't understand everything so well. The progress portion really made me slow down and think.

The next way lessons can be done is called "Checkpoint lessons." During these lessons you are given a certain number of pages to finish correctly, if you get everything right you move on to the next page. Once you've gotten to the last page of the lesson, you click the "I'm done" button. From there, you move on to the next unit.

You work through different units, each containing a different number of lessons. Units could be Geometry, Pythagorean theorem, and many more depending on your grade level. Lessons may contain charts, graphs, videos, diagrams, a calculator, and even photos explaining what to do. You are never left just trying to figure it out on your own. When you get a question wrong, there is a hint button you can click to try and get some help. If you still get the

question wrong, this program will break the solution down step by step to show you what you need to do. This was something I am not ashamed to say that I had to use. I never felt like I was overwhelmed or didn't have the right amount of help needed to understand any of my lessons.

On the MATHia homepage, where it shows your avatar and lessons, you will see a big circle that shows your "total progress." Seeing this made me want to get it done even more. Plus that means there's less to do. Anytime I had free time in school I would log in and just start doing my lessons. That's how much of a change it made in me. I went from not liking math at all — dreading it actually — to logging in to get as much done as I could.
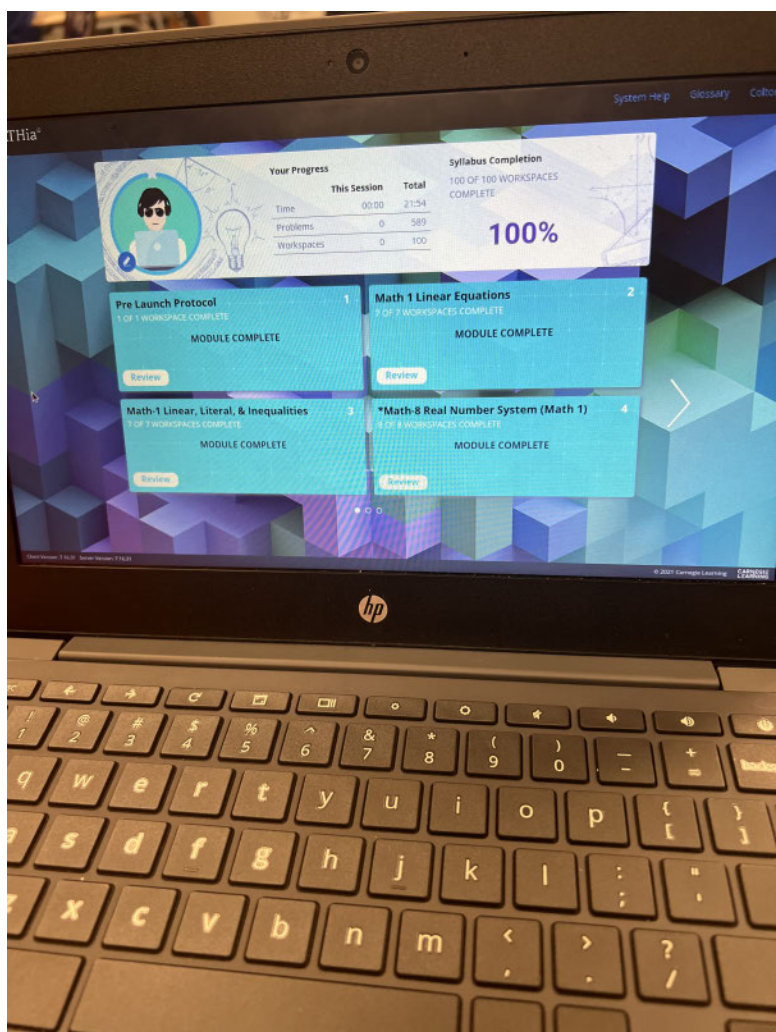
I felt smarter and more confident. I watched my classwork, test grades, and math grade go up, too. I was even able to help other kids in my class with their math work!

In my middle school, I was the first to finish the program. A friend of mine was the second. We were both really happy about it. I wasn't doing it to get any attention, awards, or recognition. I just liked doing MATHia and kept doing it until I was done.

I didn't realize the full impact of the program until I started thinking about how big the transition is from middle to high school. What comes next is college! When I started to talk to my mother about what I wanted to do in college, I quickly learned that math is a key foundation. I would like to work in the computer science field and maybe oceanography as well. Both of these careers require a very good education in math and sciences.
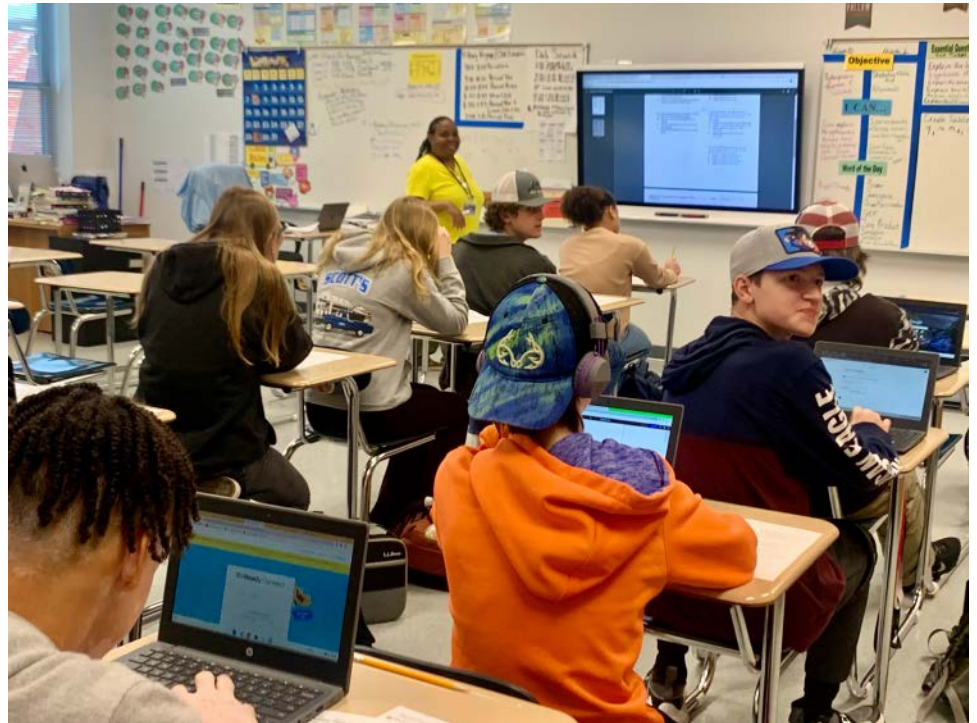
I'm no longer worried about math in the ways I was before. I know that if I struggle again, or just want to enhance my learning again, MATHia is a program for all grade levels. I know a lot of kids my age don't want to do math, but just give this program a try. Doing a little extra work is better than not doing well in school. Just see what it can do for you.
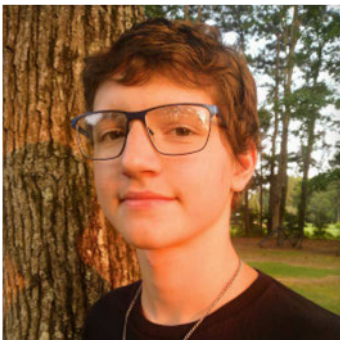
Carter Buhler is a 14-year-old high school freshman living in North Carolina with his family. He has always loved school and has maintained Honor Roll throughout his education. "I'm thankful my mother always taught me that school is important and encouraged me to do my best." Carter hopes to get an academic scholarship to attend a University to major in Computer Sciences and minor in Oceanography. He would also like to serve in the US Coast Guard or Navy Reserves. "I'm very blessed and thankful that God has given me all the opportunities I've had so far and all that is yet to come!"
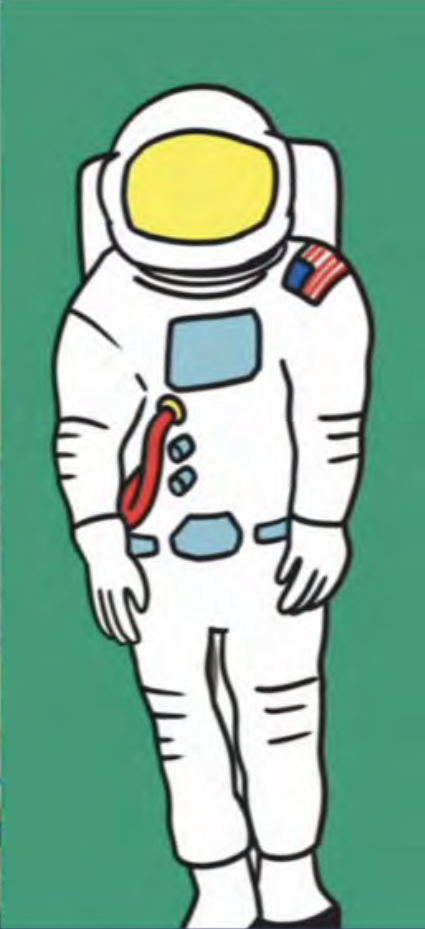
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Think Higher. Think College

Campaign Shines Spotlight on Employment Outcomes During National Disability Employment Awareness Month

What if every young adult with intellectual disability in the United States saw college as an option?

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The statistics paint a clear picture: higher education can be a game-changer for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It's a pathway to independence, better employment opportunities, and improved quality of life. However, to make this vision a reality for all, awareness and access to college must be expanded.

"Think Higher. Think College." Campaign
The "Think Higher. Think College." public awareness campaign is designed to do just that - build awareness and expand access to college for students with intellectual disabilities. Our mission is to ensure that every young adult with an intellectual disability sees college as a viable option and recognizes the transformative potential of higher education, especially for employment-related outcomes.

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Join us in celebrating this month of awareness and empowerment. Together, we can change lives and create a more inclusive and equitable world.

#ThinkEmploymentThinkCollege

Think Higher. Think College.

Take action at ThinkHigherEd.net

Assessments, Equity & AI Tools: Embracing the AI Era in Writing Instruction

By Micah Miner

The rapid advancements of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are revolutionizing the education sector, introducing powerful tools that can assist in writing instruction. These tools offer human-like text generation, insightful feedback, and can even aid in writing tasks. The possibilities are exciting, but they also bring about valid concerns.

As educators, we face the challenge of integrating these AI tools into our teaching and assessments, while preserving individual student accountability, academic integrity, and data privacy. All this, while preparing students for a future where AI is increasingly commonplace. In the following discussion, we will explore this delicate balance, reassess the definitions of plagiarism, examine the partnership between AI and human in learning, and consider ways to ensure equitable AI integration.

Navigating the Balance: Innovation versus Academic Integrity

AI writing assistants could become invaluable allies in student writing. These tools can provide suggestions and feedback as well as assist with brainstorming and organization. For instance, a student struggling with starting an essay might use an AI tool to generate several potential opening sentences, or place their content in an AI writing tool to suggest a better structure. These tools are not new – Microsoft and Google applications have long featured auto–correct grammar and predictive text as well as our cell phones in our messaging apps. Such features foster a continuous cycle of improvement.

However, caution must be exercised to prevent overdependence on these tools or breaches of academic integrity due to misuse.

Policies are evolving to address AI's role in education. For instance, the New York City Department of Education policy prohibits students from using AI to generate content submitted as their own work. Students must cite any AI-generated content used in their assignments. Similarly, the Los Angeles Unified School District allows students to use AI for idea generation, but again, AI-generated content must be cited. This policy also prohibits students from submitting AI-generated content as their own work. In contrast, San Francisco Unified School District requires more oversight. Their policy states that students cannot use AI to generate content without explicit teacher approval.

This idea of updating policies for generative AI tools aligns with the U.S. Department of Education's guidance. Their recent report champions a "humans in the loop" strategy for integrating AI into classrooms. It emphasizes educators, not algorithms, should remain the key decision-makers determining how and when to use AI tools. Student use of AI should be thoughtfully guided by teachers, rather than just using the tools for quick homework completion.

AI tools shouldn't be in our classrooms just because they're new or seem magical. Instead, we should be using them based on what our schools really need and what's most important to us as educators. With AI writing tools, for instance, we should use them thoughtfully. Our job as teachers is to show our students the right way to use these tools to help them learn better and think more positively about their abilities.

Remember, it's important for students to say when they used an AI tool in their work. This gives them credit for teaming up with the AI and encourages them to come up with their own ideas. A solid plan for promoting honesty in schoolwork can help students use AI in the right way. Practical steps include talking openly about what role AI should have, changing tests and assignments to fit with AI use, training on how to use AI ethically, setting rules for citing

AI-generated content, and giving clear guidance.

AI has a lot of potential to help with the writing process, but it can also make it tricky to support honesty in schoolwork. With a good plan, best practices, and a strong ethical culture, schools can use AI in meaningful ways while maintaining high academic standards and increasing access to writing support for students.

Redefining Assessments: Harnessing AI to Boost Learning

Traditional high-stakes essays and exams do not adequately evaluate the diverse skill set we strive to build in our students. AI tools like ChatGPT can effortlessly churn out rote writing tasks, leaving little room for human creativity or effort. We need a paradigm shift in assessments, embracing more authentic, diversified formats that prioritize competencies and process-based feedback and frequent check-ins over rote memorization.

Let's face it. AI tools like ChatGPT, Google Bard, or Microsoft Bing Chat can make some aspects of the writing process a breeze, but they can't replace the need for students to develop fundamental writing skills. Our students still need to practice organizing thoughts, articulating ideas, and crafting narratives. Sometimes it can help if students use AI tools that can assist and handle the grammar and spelling or outlines, and help our students focus more on content, arguments, and creativity. But this should not be every assignment, which is why it is important to have an adequate academic policy in your classroom, school, or district that can let teacher leverage AI sometimes for certain tasks with students to build competency and skills, and other times focus solely on student-created writing with collaborative peer feedback. There are tools that preserve and protect student data privacy while still providing access for them to learn how to use AI chatbots and similar tools.

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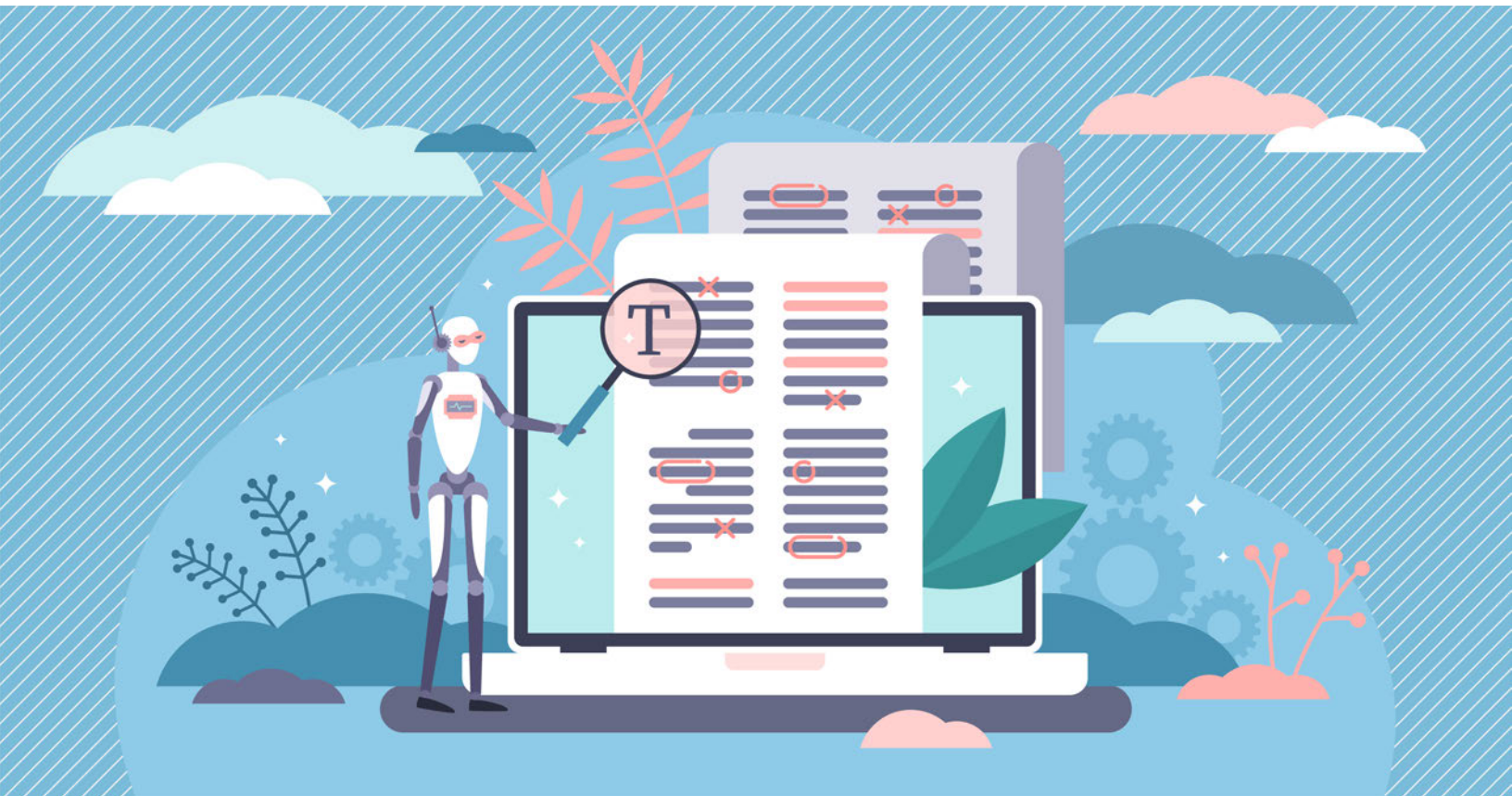
For example, Codebreaker Edu created Byte, a site that teachers can use to introduce students to AI chatbots without having students exchange personal student data. It accesses ChatGPT 3.5 Turbo AI from OpenAI without violating many state student privacy laws in place throughout the country. It is a way to introduce the tools with teacher guidance in class, while still teaching the importance of ethics, citation, and vetting the information when it hallucinates (for more information on hallucinations, go to my blog post on the topic here).

The reality is students will already be exposed to these and other sites outside of school, and some may have already found ways to use AI tools like ChatGPT, Google Bard, Microsoft Bing Chat and others to get homework help or to complete it without teacher oversight anyway. Teaching them how to use it ethically is better than pretending it doesn't exist because educators do not feel comfortable with the new technology, or they don't believe it should be used.

Emphasizing growth through iterative drafting with both AI and human feedback, grading different components of work, and integrating diverse formats such as presentations, conferences, and artistic media, offer a more rounded portrayal of student capabilities. The aim should shift from merely grading the final product to fostering the learning journey itself. AI tools, in this regard, can be a boon for formative assessment, offering timely inputs to aid students in enhancing their work.

The advent of advanced AI requires a nuanced reconsideration of plagiarism definitions, originally crafted for a pre-AI world. In the era of hybrid human-AI content authorship, conventional notions of plagiarism have become increasingly complicated. Instead of overhauling policies entirely, a balanced, context-specific approach is key.

We do not want to drive students away from using generative AI tools and chatbots

altogether, but rather nurture discernment in evaluating and integrating AI-generated content. Policies should define appropriate levels of AI usage, emphasizing that the essence of any assignment lies in human effort and original idea generation. By focusing on the learning process and growth, with regular feedback, we can maintain academic integrity and foster skill development rather than merely grading a final product. Essential in this is teaching digital literacy and critical thinking skills to students, preparing them to evaluate the information AI provides and align it with research ethics and academic integrity.

Building Fundamental Writing Skills: The Human-AI Partnership

AI offers invaluable assistance, but fundamental writing skills still demand regular practice and refinement. Tools like ChatGPT should augment, not replace, individual effort and skill development. It is critical for students to have many opportunities to hone essential abilities like logically organizing thoughts, articulating ideas coherently, and crafting structured narratives. Additionally, AI can facilitate grammar and spelling corrections, enabling students to focus more on content, arguments, and creativity.

I know of a school district that blocked websites such as Quill, an AI tool that provides feedback on language errors and helps students paraphrase their writing. One group of high school students, many from families where English wasn't the first language, protested. "Quill was our lifeline," they explained to their teacher. "Without it, who can correct our language mistakes? Our parents can't, and we don't have older siblings to help either. We're terrified to submit our writing without any feedback." This story underscores the need to strike a careful balance between preventing misuse of AI tools and restricting valuable resources.

This example shows the balance that needs to be struck between AI tools as they help in the writing process, academic integrity polices, and bold and outrageous cheating and plagiarism. Who else but teachers can help students navigate these academic and writing conversations? We cannot put our head in the sand and pretend they don't exist (at least on school networks), or we can engage in the debate and help collaborate with our peers and guide our students through this tumultuous and transformative time in teaching and learning as we deal with the disruption and help ourselves and our students find balance between thoughtful use of these new AI tools and still grow in their academic integrity.

Designing assignments in a way that copying AI responses doesn't substitute for skill demonstration is key. Strategic use of AI guidance can help reinforce student capabilities. For instance, requiring an original draft first, followed by having students review and choose which AI feedback to incorporate, promotes critical discernment and a sense of ownership. The objective should be to advance skills through a AI-human partnership that begins and ends with humans, not outsourcing student work entirely to an AI tool and getting credit for it.

Designing an Equitable AI-empowered Learning Environment

For digitally disadvantaged students, barriers to accessing AI tools can compound educational inequities. Proactive efforts are essential to enable equal opportunities for all learners to benefit from AI advancements. If not, students in certain settings will fail to get taught a skills set that will be essential to their future lives and careers. Teachers also need professional training to employ AI effectively in diverse classrooms and utilize tools in a culturally responsive manner. They must identify where biases exist in AI content and guide students accordingly. With

conscientious implementation, AI can help democratize learning rather than being a force that exacerbates divides. But achieving this requires intention and understanding student realities. AI should unlock new possibilities for every student, not privilege some unfairly over others.

Today's students will probably spend a lot of their lives and careers immersed in increasingly advanced AI. Fluency in responsibly using these technologies to complement human abilities will be an essential literacy. Hence, schools must adequately prepare students for this AI-suffused future. Through thoughtful usage policies and assignments, educators can equip learners with the discernment to productively apply AI tools. Students can gain real-world skills in evaluating AI content, mitigating risks, and extracting value to enrich their work. Rather than an all-purpose solution, AI should be treated as a versatile tool requiring wise application. Succeeding with AI will require understanding its limitations as much as its capabilities.

***This article was written by Micah Miner, but the two AI tools that were used as part of the writing process was ChatGPT 4 and Claude 2.

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Micah Miner serves as the District Instructional Technology & Social Studies Coordinator at Maywood, Melrose Park, Broadview School District 89. He believes equity matters, not just globally, but locally and all students deserve equity and access in education and life. Micah has served as a teacher in K-12 settings in both regular classrooms and alternative schools, as a social studies department chair, instructional technology coach, adjunct professor in social studies and instructional technology, and as a school and district administrator.

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Research Does Not Support Growth Mindset Strategies in the Classroom, but Here's Why Some Schools Are Still Doing It

By Howie Knoff

The field of psychology has identified over 175 different "cognitive biases" that cloud how we think, interpret things in our world, and interact with others.

One bias has been labeled the "culturally fluent idea" bias. For educators (and others), it occurs when a new program or intervention includes characteristics or strategies that someone already believes in that makes the new program immediately accepted without any evidence.

When a culturally fluent idea bias is present, educators not only do not read the (unsupportive) research on the program, but they also reject any unsupportive research as flawed, often criticizing the person who conducted the research and/or the individual citing it.

This particular bias explains how a range of publisher-marketed or popular press-driven programs—with few or negative research findings—have been accepted and implemented in schools nationwide. And the real problem here is that (a) these programs are a waste of time, money, resources, training, and staff commitment; and (b) some of them actually harm students both explicitly (for example, by impeding student learning and progress) and implicitly (for example, by undermining student confidence and motivation).

Recently, a sophisticated research study (Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2023 - https://-doi.org/10.1037/bul0000352) pooled many other individual research studies (in what is statistically called a meta-analysis) to objectively demonstrate that Growth Mindset programs or interventions in the classroom have no impact on students' academic achievement.

According to the researcher behind the Growth Mindset "movement," Dr. Carol Dweck, students who believe their cognitive skills can

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grow with time and effort will academically achieve more than those who believe these abilities are fixed. Dweck has monetized her work through the for-profit Mindset Works which offers its "Brainology" program.

Macnamara and Burgoyne conducted three meta-analytic studies involving 63 separate Growth Mindset studies that cumulatively involved 97,672 students. They found (a) major methodological shortcomings in the studies they reviewed; (b) that researchers with financial interests in Growth Mindset products reported more positive findings than those conducted by more objective researchers; and that (c) the Mindset interventions' effects were non-significant after correcting for publication bias.

That is, for the time spent teaching students how to adopt a "growth mindset," these students' academic outcomes were no better than students who were not taught or did not use these strategies.

But rather than just say, "It did not work," let's understand some critical implications. First, there are elements within the most common Growth Mindset programs that some educators already believe help students improve their academic achievement. Thus, their culturally fluent idea bias might cause them to reject Macnamara and Burgoyne's research—and even this article that you are now reading. In the end,

regardless of the research, they may begin (or continue) Growth Mindset instruction in their classroom or school.

Second, the time used to teach students Mindset strategies could have been invested in other, proven strategies that actually improved their academic learning and mastery.

Third, when the Mindset strategies did not work, how many students, staff, and schools were left more frustrated and more resistant to "trying something else"—like the proven strategies noted immediately above?

Fourth, there is always the fear—especially when increasing student achievement is a goal—that the failure to attain that goal is "blamed" on the students for "not doing what we trained or told them to do"—rather than on a poorly selected and ineffective intervention.

Finally, given the academic gaps present after the pandemic, there is concern that schools will use Growth Mindset interventions to help "fix" this problem when the real focus should be on curriculum, instruction, and student-teacher collaboration.

To read a more comprehensive review of Macnamara and Burgoyne's study and the implications and points above, please go to my recent Blog on the subject on the Project ACHIEVE website.

Howie Knoff, PhD, NCSP, is an international consultant, speaker, and author specializing in school improvement, strategic planning, social-emotional learning, social skills training, multi-tiered systems of support, and interventions with behaviorally challenging students. He has been a university professor (22 years) and State Department of Education federal grant director (13 years), and is currently the National Expert on three U.S. Department of Education School Climate Transformation Grants. The author of 24 books and 100+ articles/book chapters, he was the 21st President of the National Association of School Psychologists. Learn more at www.projectachieve.info.

2023 State EdTech Trends Report

By Erifer Fernandez Reyes and Evo Popoff

Preface by Kirsten Baeslar,
Superintendent of Public Instruction,
North Dakota Department of Education

Produced by W/A Whiteboard Advisors Commissioned by SETDA

The 2023 State EdTech Trends survey and report tracks how state education agencies and policymakers are adapting to a digital world post- pandemic while also identifying state priorities relating to technology and education.

Conducted in collaboration with Whiteboard Advisors, the report includes responses from SETDA members, state superintendents, and other senior state officials from 45 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), and Guam.

The report complements the survey data with state spotlights that showcase the work states are leading to support cybersecurity efforts, the effective and equitable use of edtech tools, and the development of policy to guide the use of AI in K-12 classrooms.

The report include also includes downloadable files that provide:

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Determining the Inclusivity of the Edtech You Use: Four Questions to Ask

By Earl Turner

There are a variety of educational technology options available on the market, many of which are extremely valuable when it comes to engagement, classroom management, grading, lesson development, and more. But with the plethora of options available, the selection process is not always easy. As a classroom teacher, technology allowed me to assign curriculum-aligned homework and instantly provide students with feedback – an essential yet overwhelming task for many educators.

When administrators and teachers purchase or implement technology in their classrooms, evaluating this technology's commitment to equity and inclusivity is essential. Teaching and learning through and from technology should embody the same best practices taken from teaching and learning without technology. Therefore, we must ensure that our educational approach values and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process (Gay 2010).

By understanding and integrating diverse historical, social, and cultural perspectives, education becomes more relevant and engaging for students. This approach maintains high academic expectations while embracing diverse learning styles, fostering strong teacher-student relationships, and promoting critical conscious-ness. By creating an inclusive and validating

classroom environment, all students, regardless of their backgrounds, feel valued and can achieve academic success. However, this is certainly much easier said than done. As a researcher focusing on equity research and development, I recommend asking four telling questions to determine a product's commitment to inclusivity in the classroom.

The Intent

The first and arguably most important question that buyers need to ask is "What is the product intended to do, and why?" Intention is everything. In order to determine whether a product will effectively serve students, we need to know why it was built. Intent tells us a lot about a product, to understand its potential for learning impact, as well as to understand how it will function in a diverse classroom.

Education technology is sometimes created to attempt to diminish the role of the teacher. Any technology built to do this, should, in my opinion, be immediately dismissed from the selection process. We never want to take the teacher out of the equation. Instead, the best technology augments and supports the teacher. Teachers know their students best, and are best equipped to serve the needs of all students. As a result, equitable and inclusive learning is impossible to achieve without the teacher involved.

Products that are built with the intention of celebrating students and improving learning outcomes will produce inclusive outcomes. The rationale behind why a product is used needs to be tied to best pedagogical practices, supported by research.

The Research

When we think about the intention behind a product, we have to determine whether the product acts on this intention in a way that makes sense. The second question to ask when determining whether a product will support inclusive classrooms is how the product was researched. Products created in a silo do not work. They need to have context, such as supporting logic models, background research. To determine inclusivity and equity, buyers should combine knowledge of research with the understood intent of the technology.

We need to determine whether the product has the flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances. The efficacy of technology in an inclusive classroom cannot be viewed in isolation; it requires consideration of the broader educational ecosystem. Investigating aspects like technology resources and support can reveal disparities, emphasizing that tools effective in high-tech environments might not translate well in resource-limited settings. The understanding of integration of technology determines if tech is an educational enhancer or a mere replacement for traditional tools. Preparedness of educators and learners, as highlighted by technology knowledge, skills, and attitudes, is vital for maximizing the benefits of these tools.

Furthermore, considering both the dimensions and environments provides a structured way to evaluate technology's impact. While teaching and learning offer insights into educational outcomes, understanding whether these occur in-school or out-of-school adds context. For true inclusivity, technology should integrate seamlessly across these environments. Yet, without the engagement and understanding of change agents like policymakers, the potential of such tools may remain unrealized, underscoring the importance of their role in the inclusive education landscape.

To this end, GoGuardian's Equity Research and Development (ERD) Team recognized the necessity of a grassroots understanding before diving into these complex categorizations. To get a comprehensive grasp of the real-world

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scenarios, the team initiated an extensive internal and external listening tour. This tour aimed to gather firsthand information on the existing inequities in schools, focusing especially on marginalized communities. The unprecedented impact of Covid-19, which accentuated the digital divide and further marginalized certain groups, became a central theme of our exploration. Engaging directly with educators, students, and parents from these communities provided the ERD team with invaluable insights, laying a solid foundation for subsequent research and framework development.

The Team

The third question we need to ask is "who created this product?" While the mission and vision of the organization behind the product is important, the actual team at that organization is even more important. The team behind a classroom product should have diverse backgrounds, various points of view, and should include teachers.

The best products are built for teachers, by teachers. Involving educators who understand the ins and outs of not only classroom technology usage but also what students need, what motivates them, and how to keep them safe in the classroom is extremely important. We pride ourselves in involving teachers at every point in the process. Not only do we have teachers on our product teams, but we also solicit constant feedback from teachers during the iteration process.

Environmental conditions like demographic and socioeconomic status have an impact on

student learning day-to-day. Teachers get this, and are best equipped to understand the implications of different technologies and strategies for different groups of students.

The Reflection

Students do best when they can see themselves in the technology they use. They need to feel reflected in the technology, which can manifest in a variety of ways. The first is through virtual, inclusive representations. The product team behind our gamified solution Giant Steps, alongside lead researchers like myself, developed avatar options by consulting with DEI experts from the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education to ensure all students could see themselves represented. As a result, students playing Giant Steps can craft an avatar that includes a wheelchair, cast, insulin pump, hearing aids, cochlear implants, hijab, patka, and so much more, in addition to a variety of hair, ear, eye, skin, and nose options.

Other options for student representation include using inclusive language, accessible solutions that support ESL students, and celebration of student learning and outcomes.

Research shows that students' outcomes are directly impacted by the design of the virtual classroom. In a 2011 study entitled "Classrooms matter: The design of virtual classrooms influences gender disparities in computer science classes," researchers found that students' success and sense of belonging were linked. When women in the experiment were faced with what was considered a "stereotypically" male environment, they were less likely to enroll, and ultimately saw less success. When you removed the stereotypes, there was a noticeable difference.

The Choice

There are a ton of technology options on the market, all serving different purposes. But as it becomes an increasing percentage of how students learn and how their time is spent in the classroom, we need to be increasingly aware of the importance of choosing solutions that support all students, and reflect the diversity of classrooms. By taking the time to reflect and asking the right questions, educators will be able to identify the solutions that not only make the most sense for their students from a learning perspective, but also from the perspective of maximizing inclusivity.

Click for references

Earl Turner III, EdD, is a Senior Researcher at GoGuardian, where he spearheads equity strategies to broaden the impact of technology for all students. Dr. Turner has a Doctorate from Johns Hopkins and a Master's Degree from Loyola Marymount, and was a founding member of various organizations, as an educator, and as a board member. Dr. Turner works at the intersection of education, technology, and entrepreneurship shaping the future of learning.

Harnessing the Positive Power of Social Media

Telling a school's story on social media can be powerful. Just ask principal Michael Randolph. Randolph is in his sixth year leading Leesburg High School in Leesburg, FL, and he has helped to transform the community's perception of the school simply by using social media.

For instance, the graduation rate at Leesburg High has risen nearly 20% since Randolph took the helm. It's a figure few would have thought possible in the years that preceded his tenure when the school was battling a less than stellar reputation.

In August 2019, Randolph realized he needed to change the narrative and started posting one positive story per day on his school's Facebook account. He dubbed the effort #180DaysofJoy, and it's been going strong ever since. "Our goal was to share the amazing things happening inside Leesburg High School," he says. "It has evolved, and now I can't just choose one positive thing. I choose multiple things every day."

Randolph says that in sharing the positives occurring at Leesburg High, the goodness only has multiplied. His school has received additional community support, found new funding sources, and increased its ability to recruit high-quality teachers because of such uplifting storytelling.

To find these stories, Randolph collects them by walking around his school and being present in the hallways. "I have to be intentional to go seek these items," he says. "It has helped me as a principal; I never leave Leesburg High School without thinking about the best part of my day."

On a larger scale, Maine Principals' Association Executive Director Dr. Holly Blair shares a positive story from a Maine school every day on her Twitter account, Instagram and the association's Facebook page and website. "I was tired of only hearing about the negative things going on in education—not just in Maine but throughout the nation," Blair says. "There are so many more great, amazing, positive things going

on in schools that people just don't know about."

Her Twitter feature, "Maine's Positive Story of the Day," features a highlight from one Maine K–12 school every day. Blair does not have to work very hard to solicit content for the feature; principals are eager to share their good news with her, so she can share it with others. "It takes 10 minutes out of my day, and to have that come back 1,000-fold in pride in schools, districts and communities, it's powerful, and it makes the educators feel good."
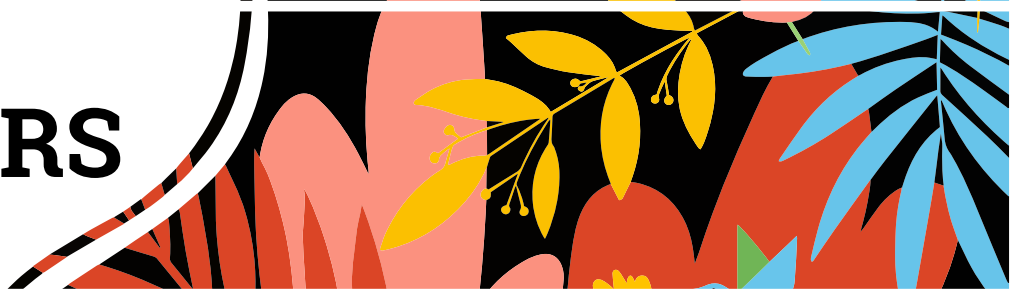
Maine's Positive Story of the Day also has generated some unexpected benefits for school leaders. "It's started to shift how people think," she says. "I tell my members, 'You are each other's best resources.' Through sharing on my Twitter, principals have started contacting each other and saying, 'Now I want to do this at my school.' It's ended up becoming a networking thing."

Another of Blair's reasons for highlighting the positive? Too often she sees educators being unfairly criticized by community members and in the media. "We are not unlike any other state that is seeing groups of people who are anti-education," she says. "You know how you combat it? Show them what's good! Let's get the stories out in front of them."

Leesburg High School
January 27 at 7:11 PM

Day 99 - The best part of my day was celebrating our Jacket FAMILY scholars during today's STING Breakfast! Thank you to all of our sponsors for supporting our FAMILY! Thanks to you, we were able to give out over $1,500 in cash and gift cards! Also, shout out to our Lady Jacket Weightlifting Team on winning today's District Championship for Olympic and Traditional! Finally, shout out to everyone who helped host a different District's Weightlifting meet immediately following o... **See more**

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