

Education Matters

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Lights, Camera, Action!

Should video
cameras
be put in
classrooms?

By Mike Petrilli



Way back in 1989, James Q. Wilson defined “coping organizations” as those in which managers can neither observe the activities of frontline workers nor measure their results. Police departments were perfect examples, as supervisors could not watch cops on patrol or easily gauge their crime-fighting effectiveness. As a result, agencies had to enforce rigid policies and procedures as the only way to manage their staffs.

Then, in the 1990s, New York City introduced CompStat, and this equation changed forever. The NYPD compiled and continuously updated reams of crime data, which were used to identify hot spots and problem areas. In weekly meetings, precinct commanders were held accountable for quickly addressing crime spikes in their jurisdictions. Suddenly “management by results” became possible—not just in the Big Apple but in police departments nationwide.

But something else also happened in the 1990s: Video cameras were installed in thousands of patrol cars all across the country. The rationale was simple: People who got pulled over could be told that they were under surveillance, making dangerous behavior during traffic stops less likely. Moreover, if cops knew



The Gates project is focused on using video only for teacher evaluation, not regular monitoring.



that they, too, were being observed, they would be less likely to engage in brutality or unjust searches. Maybe their supervisors couldn't ride along with them, but video cameras could serve as partial surrogates.

Wilson also pointed to schools as prime examples of coping organizations. "A school administrator," he wrote, "cannot watch teachers teach (except through classroom visits that momentarily may change the teacher's behavior) and cannot tell how much students have learned (except by standardized tests that do not clearly differentiate between what the teacher has imparted and what the student has acquired otherwise)."

As with police, education reformers have spent the last two decades trying to change these assumptions. On the "managing by results" side, there has been the big battle over the use of test data for accountability purposes (CompStat for schools), culminating in the fight over value-added measurement of teacher performance. Perhaps now we can finally "differentiate between what the teacher has imparted and what the student has acquired otherwise." Yet even advocates acknowledge the imperfections of this approach. What if a teacher gets great results in student learning, but does it by "teaching to the test," or, worse, cheating? What if she ignores important parts of the curriculum that aren't easily assessed? Or, on the flip side, what if her value-added scores show lackluster student progress, but it's due to factors completely outside her control?

Understandably, teachers and their unions don't want test scores to count for everything; classroom observations are key, too. But, as Wilson pointed out two decades ago, planning a

couple of visits from the principal is hardly sufficient. These visits may "change the teacher's behavior," thereby providing a skewed view of efficacy; furthermore, principals may not be the best judges of effective teaching. Some just aren't much good at that.

So why not put video cameras in classrooms, and use the recordings as part of teachers' evaluations?

That's a question Tom Kane has been asking. Kane, an education and economics professor on leave from Harvard University, leads a massive initiative supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that is developing new approaches to evaluating teachers, with high-definition 360-degree cameras at the center. Three thousand teachers in six cities are participating; for doing so, they receive stipends and lots of feedback from experts.

"There are a number of huge advantages to video," Kane told me. "One, it gives you a common piece of evidence to discuss with an instructional coach or supervisor. Second, it will prove to be economically much more viable because you're not paying observers to drive around to various schools to do observations." Furthermore, he contends, "If a teacher doesn't think that his principal is giving him a fair evaluation because of some vendetta, he can have an external expert with no personal ax to grind watch and give feedback."

The Gates project is focused on using video only for teacher evaluation, not regular monitoring. Teachers are videotaped only four times a year, not every day. But why not go further? "That right now for us is a bridge too far," said Kane. "When the camera rolls out of the room, teachers know it's rolled out of the room." And in many places, including Washington, D.C., collective-bargaining agreements explicitly restrict the use of "electronic monitoring equipment."

But it feels like just a matter of time. Already one company—WatchMeGrow—sells Internet video-streaming services to child-care centers; parents can log on to their computers at work and watch little Johnny or Cassie all day long. (Cameras are placed in classrooms, on the playgrounds, and in other common areas.) It's not hard to imagine these parents wanting the same opportunity once their kids graduate to kindergarten and beyond. And think about the possibilities for curbing school violence or guarding against child abuse.

Teachers may scream about infringements on their "professionalism," but effective teachers will have little to fear. Already, their expectation of complete autonomy—that they close their doors and do what they want—has been undermined by standards, tests, and other reforms of the modern era. Why not watch teachers in action? Sooner or later, that little video camera, always on, will just fade into the background. ■



Mike Petrilli is one of the nation's foremost education experts. As Vice President for National Programs and Policy at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, he oversees the Institute's research projects and publications and contributes to the Flypaper blog.

Scholarships & Grants Available for Teachers

Encourage your colleagues during this time of budget cuts in schools

By Paula Jackson-Eaglin

The mad rush of back-to-school time has passed, and teachers across the nation are settling into classroom routines, daily schedules, and the demands of a new group of students. As the true work of educating the next generation of Americans gets fully underway, many educators find themselves short on the materials they need to use in the classroom.

Whether it's books, computer software, lab materials, math manipulatives, or other supplies, countless teachers will begin buying the items necessary for the classroom out of their own pockets this month. Other teachers will begin seeking ways to improve their own abilities as a professional. For some, this may be a graduate course; for others, it may take the form of professional development workshops; still others may begin attending content area conferences, all in an effort to become better, more highly trained professionals. As state and federal funds continue to dry up, more and more of these expenses are borne by the individual teacher.

AAE can help. The National Scholarships and Grants Program, made available by the AAE Foundation, provides scholarships and grants in amounts up to \$500 to support professional development or classroom materials. It is a competitive process, but the program is open to all educators, in all states, even if they aren't AAE members. Don't keep this program a secret!

The deadline for this round of scholarships and grants is October 1. Please use September to share information about the program with your colleagues. Here are some suggestions for how you can let other teachers know about the program:

- Ask your principal if you can have 5 minutes at the next faculty meeting



AAE scholarship award recipient Pamela Graybeal (middle) with her school administrator (right) and Jill Newell, AAE Director of Professional Development.



AAE scholarship award recipient Christie Bello (middle) with her school administrator (left) and Jill Newell.



AAE scholarship award recipient Andrew Palmer (right) with his school administrator.

to tell your colleagues about the AAE Scholarship and Grant program. Remind him or her that you need to do it this month because of the October 1 deadline. Email me at paula@aaeteachers.org if you need a script of what to say.

- Go to our website and print out a copy of the scholarship and grant flyer and post it in your teachers' lounge.
- Call us toll-free at (877) 385-6264 and request enough copies of the flyer to distribute in teacher mailboxes at your school.
- If your district policies allow, consider sending an email to fellow educators with a short description of the program that includes links to our webpage and the online applications.
- Make an announcement on your facebook page. Email alexandra@aaeteachers.org for a predesigned post that will include all the links.
- Tweet about it! Use your twitter account to let others know about the program.

- Have others apply with you. Why not get together with your content area or grade-level team, and apply together for materials you can share? Make it a joint effort.

However you decide to tell others about AAE's National Scholarships and Grants Program, we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to share your professional association with others. Be sure to also provide AAE membership information to interested individuals. This is just one more way AAE can say, "You're a professional, we support you." ■



Paula Jackson-Eaglin is National Membership Director for the Association of American Educators. In this role, Paula travels all over the country speaking with policy makers, administrators, and teachers about the nonunion option. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and veteran educator.



How Easily Can You Change?

Most people would rather die than change. Here's why, and what a school can do about it.

By Dr. Kevin Daniel

Recent information from the medical field reveals that when people are faced with lifestyle changes that can extend, enhance, or even save their lives, far too many return in less than 18 months to the lifestyle that threatens their health. So what's the problem with change and why do so many of us resist it? Theories abound, and in schools, many connect to the following themes:

1. It is easier to continue to do what I have always done.
2. I am exhausted and cannot take on another initiative.
3. There is no compelling reason to change.
4. It is easier to trench in because there will be no long-term plan for professional development and no clearly defined expectations for implementation. And there will be a new initiative coming soon.
5. There is a genuine fear of the unknown.

The order and magnitude of change were important considerations in the research done by Waters, Marzano and McNulty on school leadership that has a positive correlation with student achievement. Two types of change were referenced in that meta-analysis:

FIRST-ORDER change is consistent with prevailing values, meets with general agreement, and can be implemented using

people's existing knowledge and skills. This type of change doesn't take much effort or time to adjust. It can happen with minimal disruption to what is already happening. Most change in schools is first order.

SECOND-ORDER change is when it is not obvious how it will make things better, it requires people to learn new approaches, and it conflicts with prevailing norms. It requires new skills, is a breakaway from past practices, and demands new ways of thinking. Second-order change is often met with resistance. Very little change in schools is second order. It is important to understand that what may be a first-order change for some is second order for others. An example of a change initiative uniquely impacting staff is moving toward a standards-based grading and reporting system. For some, this change initiative is viewed as "this just makes sense," and "why haven't we been doing this before now." For others, moving toward a standards-based system is met with "you have got to be kidding me," "here we go again," or "wait until the parents hear we are eliminating grades."

Change That Fails

Unfortunately too many have had experience in failed change efforts and initiatives. In most of these situations the failed change can be linked to the following:

1. The purpose of the change was not clear or understood.
2. A lack of agreed-upon outcomes of what the change should look like when fully implemented. Accountability for implementation was random at best.
3. A lack of sustained professional development, coaching support, and feedback provided to staff for the long-term.
4. The impact and the scope of the change were underestimated by leaders.
5. A loud few entrenched, got political, and got their way.

Successfully Navigating Change

Change is inevitable. How we respond to it is the key. A big factor in dealing successfully with change is focusing on the things within your power to influence and not dwelling on the rest. Fixating on the things you cannot control is a fast-track to nowhere and kills morale. I encourage five considerations to successfully manage change:

1. Attitude is everything. Life is what we make of it most days, and finding the bright spots in change and the positive opportunities that lie within are beneficial and frankly, healthier than the alternative.
2. Seek first to understand. It is important that opinions are based upon factual information rather than on the perception or interpretation of others. Ask clarifying questions (with a positive tone) that seek an understanding of what the intended outcomes of the change are.
3. Ask for support and time. Just as students need extra time and support, so do adults, particularly during change. Make sure to discuss with your colleagues and administrative team the important links between professional development, collaboration, coaching support, and the time to implement an initiative.
4. Insist on a commitment to full implementation. Tactfully and professionally get a commitment from school and district leaders to go the distance or not at all. Work with leaders to see how the new initiative connects to existing work and improvement plans. Request a timeline or offer to assist in the development of one that includes the professional development plan and expectations for implementation.

Ask to be included in a process with leaders that will help to identify anticipated observations when the initiative is working well. Seek a continuum of implementation so that staff members clearly understand the difference between pre-initiation versus full implementation. Schools are good at adopting initiatives but not as proficient at following through on making them work well and ensuring that everyone is rowing in the same direction.

5. Don't get bitter; get better. Let's face it. Change is messy and does not work in a linear pattern for everyone. Each one is impacted by change in a different way. It is easy to get focused on the negative, gravitate toward others of the same mindset, and become a victim. This may sound harsh, but remember, schools exist for students to learn rather than the



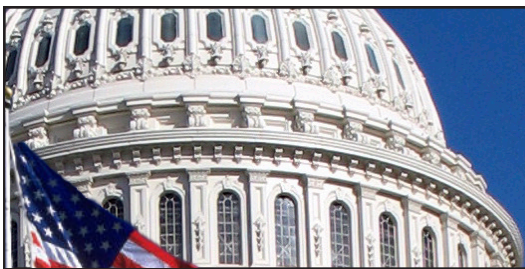
ease or convenience of the adults. I suggest an alternative approach — don't get bitter; get better and take advantage of the opportunities to learn, grow and build new skills so that you are a better educator for students. The best educators think beyond self and plow through the tough times!

Final Thoughts

While most of us know that doing what we have always done will yield the same results, knowing is not good enough. To understand and then act upon this we must move beyond superficial changes that closely resemble the past. Perhaps we should make dramatic changes to some things. Not everything, particularly if there are things already working and there are multiple measures of supporting data to validate that claim. If we are going to close the achievement gap, reduce the drop-out rate, and prepare every graduate to walk across that stage with the opportunities to do anything he set his heart and mind toward achieving, it may require some new thinking and new doing. That might require some second-order change in my world. How about yours?



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News from Washington, D.C.

Reports from AAE's Office
in the Nation's Capital

NCLB Reauthorization Not on Schedule

By Alexandra Schroeck

In the midst of the debt ceiling crisis of the summer, the prospect of meaningful action on education seems laughable on Capitol Hill. As congressional leaders scrambled to broker a deal on the debt, education, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), has been pushed aside.

The nine-year-old law has seen its share of debate since the Department of Education introduced its blueprint for change last spring, a document issued to create a framework for federal reforms. The original target date for an NCLB overhaul was last Easter. Then it was late spring. Now it's sometime this year—if ever.

While the House has begun the process with a five-part series of targeted bills, a bipartisan, comprehensive reform of the nation's most important federal education legislation still seems far from wrapping up, according to congressional insiders on the House side.

In a closed-door meeting with House education leadership, it was noted that not only are the bills cleared through committee not on the schedule for a full House vote, but also they have not seen any movement from the Senate on their proposed plan. Without a clear plan from both chambers, the bill is sure to take a back seat to other pressing legislation.

Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, Labor, and Pensions, declined an interview yesterday with education reporters about specific plans for reauthorization. While he joked about not being able to meet any timelines, it was noted that the committee under his watch currently does not have a public draft of legislation.



Currently, Senator Harkin is negotiating with his Republican panel colleague Senator Enzi on a bill to present from the Senate. Harkin aides were quick to say that the negotiations are going well, but major issues including “accountability, teachers, and comparability are still under debate.” Despite the internal talks, Senator Harkin said he was hopeful for a future bipartisan product. He further speculated that a bipartisan bill was more likely in the Senate than the House, pointing to the proposed cutting of federal programs by the House that yielded exclusively Republican support.

Meanwhile at the Department of Education, the plan to issue state blanket waivers this school year has lost steam after several prominent Democrats spoke out against it. Senator Harkin has expressed his discontent for the waivers; so has Congressman Miller, the top Democrat

on the House education panel. Insiders predict that with the staunch opposition, Secretary Duncan has accepted a momentary truce for an unspoken deadline of reauthorization in 2011.

While only time will tell how and when NCLB is overhauled, reauthorization and reform remain a top priority according to both the Obama administration and congressional leaders. ■



Alexandra Schroeck is AAE's Manager of Communications and Legislative Affairs. She has served in a communications capacity for a Washington, D.C.-based trade association and on Capitol Hill

for the then ranking member of the House Congressional Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Teaching in a Tech-Driven World

Tips and Practical Advice for Leveraging the Internet in the Classroom

By Jill Newell

The Internet and a host of other new technologies have revolutionized everything in our lives, from paying bills to shopping and everything in between. Education is now well on its way to being revolutionized by these same technologies with online learning programs being adopted in school systems across the nation. These programs and tools are enabling teachers and students alike to tailor their day based on a new standard. While the prospect of change can seem daunting, with an open mind and a little research educators in today's world are more than capable of rising to the challenges of teaching twenty-first century students.

In a climate when children are carrying around iPads and the American teaching population is aging, getting on the same page (or touch screen) as students can become a challenge. The fact is today's students have never experienced a world without iPhones, email, and social networking.

Social Media Value

New research shows that while young people use social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter for staying connected to their friends and favorite pop culture figures, they're also engaged in these sites as a means to make school and career connections.

A high school student might check a study-tip Facebook group for the latest assignments and then log on to Skype to discuss a group project. The possibilities are endless, and students know they can use these technologies to get ahead in competitive, college-bound environments.

How to Respond

So what can you do as an educator to meet your students in the middle and

leverage this technology? Find out what your students respond to and incorporate the technologies they are already using. Be available when they are studying. Do the research. Internet resources are always changing and growing, and unlike a library, it never closes.

By using teaching techniques that incorporate social media and networking sites, teachers are able to increase students engagement, increase technological proficiency, contribute to a greater sense of collaboration in the classroom, and build better communication skills.

If you primarily interact with older students, consider starting a blog or Facebook group for your course. Sometimes a place for students to interact and share ideas on class material in the comfort of their own home can increase involvement.

One website I use and recommend is www.todaysmeet.com. Similar to Twitter, this website provides a backchannel for sharing helpful Web links, notes, and books during the training without interrupting the instructor. Teachers also can go back to the "room" later as a refresher and gauge student interest and answer questions. The best part is the service is free!

The Power of Video

If you are working with younger students, try supplementing your lecture with a clip from YouTube or a video clip from Khan Academy, a nonprofit group that allows teachers and students access to thousands of instructional videos.

Simple and free video conferencing technology is single-handedly changing the face of instruction to the benefit of both students and teachers.

Can you imagine a world in which a student's education knows no interruptions or limitations? Those days are nearly here. Snow days won't mean missed weeks of school, and collaborating on group projects won't mean hours lost in the classroom. The time spent with teachers will be meaningful and maximized.



Video technology is aiding foreign language instruction. For example, in one Connecticut middle school, students are learning Mandarin Chinese live from an instructor based in Beijing.

These innovations spell advancement for the teaching profession, and thousands of teachers are using these technologies to their advantage. With new technologies, educators will also be able to customize their working environment. As technology evolves and its reach is widened, we continually hear success stories of teachers setting their own schedules through online schools and nontraditional charters.

The bottom line is education is being enhanced by innovation and technology. Spend some time today looking into new resources and ways to infuse technology into an old lesson plan and join with your students in conquering new technologies. Embracing these new platforms and opportunities are the hallmarks of the modern-day educator. Don't get left behind; it's easier than you think. ■



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LAST CHANCE!

Voice Your Opinion

You are invited to participate in the 2011 AAE National Survey!

Join with teachers across America and voice your opinion on issues including school choice, pensions, curriculum, education funding, and collective bargaining.

To complete the survey, visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q9JGS3F>

**As a benefit of membership in the Association of American Educators, all active members are invited to participate in national surveys. Members are required to enter their Member ID as proof of active membership when submitting the survey. Survey results are anonymous. Results will be posted on the AAE website.*



3 Back-to-School Ways to Introduce Colleagues to the Benefits of AAE

1 Faculty Meeting. It only takes a minute or two to tell your fellow educators about AAE and to pass out information. Wouldn't it be worth asking your principal if you could have two minutes at the end of the meeting to tell everyone about your professional organization? We can even provide you with suggestions of what to say and answers to frequently asked questions.

2 Friendly Note. We all love to get notes from a friend. Consider writing a welcome Back-to-School note to a fellow teacher or teachers, attaching an AAE brochure and a piece of candy, and leaving it on other teachers' desks. Who wouldn't want to be welcomed back to school? We can even provide AAE promotional items to include with your notes.

3 Mailboxes. Teacher mailboxes are a nonintrusive way to reach out to others. If your school policy allows it, why not distribute AAE membership brochures in teachers' mailboxes? We are happy to provide you with all the materials you need.