



Research Worth Knowing

Professor Alex Molnar, Ph.D
Director, Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)
www.edpolicylab.org

Prepared for:
East Valley Think Tank Meeting
Arizona State University Memorial Union
September 18th, 2003

1 – Early Education:

Early Childhood Education
W. Steven Barnett
Rutgers University Center for Early Education

Pre-kindergarten education for disadvantaged children can greatly increase their cognitive abilities and social and emotional development, leading to long-term increases in achievement while reducing crime and delinquency.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPURU/documents/EPURU%202002-101/Chapter%2001-Barnett-Final.rtf>

2 – Reduced Class-Size:

Class-Size Reduction in Grades K-3
Jeremy D. Finn
State University of New York at Buffalo

Reducing class size in grades K-3 has been found to have academic benefits in all subject areas, especially for children living in poverty. Studies published since the mid-1980s show that classroom behavior and test scores improve while students are in small classes.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPURU/documents/EPURU%202002-101/Chapter%2002-Finn-Final.htm>

See also *Class-Size Reduction: A Fresh Look at the Data* by Phil Smith, Alex Molnar, & John Zahorik. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee & Arizona State University
Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPURU/documents/EPURU-0309-110-EPURU.doc>

3 – Effective Teaching:

Converging Findings on Classroom Instruction

Barak Rosenshine

University of Illinois at Urbana

The research on cognitive processing underlies a major goal of education: helping students develop well-organized knowledge structures. A number of strategies have been found that consistently help students effectively acquire strong knowledge structures.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPRU%202002-101/Chapter%2009-Rosenshine-Final.htm>

See also *Teaching Practices for Smaller Classes* by John Zahorik, Anke Halbach, Karen Ehrle, and Alex Molnar. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee & Arizona State University.

Available on-line (subscription required) at: http://www.ascd.org/cms/objectlib/ascdframeset/index.cfm?publication=http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/index.htm

4 – Small Schools:

Small Schools

Craig Howley

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools

Smaller school size has been associated with higher achievement under certain conditions. Smaller schools promote substantially improved equity in achievement among all students, and smaller schools may be especially important for disadvantaged students. Many US schools are too large to serve students well, while smaller schools, especially in impoverished communities, are widely needed.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPRU%202002-101/Chapter%2003-Howley-Final.rtf>

5 – High-Stakes Testing:

The Impact of High-Stakes Tests on Student Academic Performance

Audrey Amrein & David Berliner

Arizona State University

This study looked at data from 28 states where high-stakes testing programs are already in place and found no systemic evidence of improved achievement after states implemented high-stakes testing programs.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPSL-0211-126-EPRU.pdf>

See also by Amrein & Berliner *An Analysis of Some Unintended and Negative Consequences of High-Stakes Testing*.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPSL-0211-125-EPRU.pdf>

See also *The Development and Consequences of Stereotype Consciousness in Middle Childhood* by Clark McKown and Rhona Weinstein. University of California, Berkeley. Available in: *Child Development*, March/April 2003, Vo. 74, N. 2, Pp. 498-515.

6 – Teacher Evaluation:

Value-Added Assessment of Teachers
Haggai Kupermintz
University of Colorado at Boulder

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) employs a sophisticated statistical methodology to estimate the aggregated yearly growth in student learning, as reflected in changes in test scores in five tested academic subjects. It assumes that changes in test scores from one year to the next accurately reflect student progress in learning. Yet, the model's empirical base is weak and fails to document adequately its efficacy as a teacher evaluation instrument. It remains unclear how other variables that may affect achievement as much as teacher effectiveness will determine the evaluation results. Much more research is needed in order to rationally judge the system's strength and weaknesses.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPRU%202002-101/Chapter%2011-Kupermintz-Final.htm>

7 – Teacher Quality:

Recruiting, Preparing, and Retaining High Quality Teachers: An Empirical Synthesis
Gerald Bracey & Alex Molnar
George Mason University/High Scope Foundation & Arizona State University

The authors found that to improve teacher quality and address teacher shortages, colleges of education should work collaboratively with school districts and community colleges. The report suggests that improving retention rates for qualified teachers may be the best short-term solution for expected teacher shortages.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0302-102-EPRU.doc>

8 – High School Dropouts:

Assessing Arizona's Dropout Problem: Why Current Measurements are Flawed, and How to Fix Them
Teresa Huerta
Arizona State University

This report finds that Arizona's methods of calculating dropout rates are misleading and confusing. The author recommends the adoption of a new method.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0309-112-EPRU.doc>

9 – School Commercialism:

What's in a Name? The Corporate Branding of America's Schools

Alex Molnar

Arizona State University

Commercial activities increasingly define children's experience of school. The manner and degree to which commerce is woven into the fabric of American schools is evident from the numerous examples provided in *The Fifth Annual Report on Trends in Schoolhouse Commercialism, Year 2001-2002*.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/CERU/Annual%20reports/EPSSL-0209-103-CERU.rtf>

See also *School Commercialism, Student Health, and the Pressure to Do More With Less* by Alex Molnar. Arizona State University.

Available on-line (October 1st) at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/CERU/documents/EPSSL-0307-105-CERU.doc>

10 – Choice and Equity:

The Equity Impact of Arizona's Education Tax Credit

Glen Wilson

Arizona State University

Arizona's private school tuition tax credit program is expensive and does relatively little to help poor students. The primary recipients of private school tuition tax credit money are families whose children are already enrolled in private schools.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPRU%202002-110/epru-0203-110.htm>

See also *Education Tax Credits: No Net Benefit to Arizona's Impoverished Students* by Kevin Welner. University of Colorado at Boulder.

Available on-line at: <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0302-105-EPRU.doc>

See also *Charter Schools and Race: A Lost Opportunity for Integrated Education* by Erica Frankenberg & Chungmei Lee. Harvard University.

Available on-line at: <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n32/>

See also *Determinants of Student Achievement: New Evidence from San Diego* by Julian Betts, Andrew Zau, & Lorien Rice. Public Policy Institute of California.

Available on-line at: http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/R_803JBR.pdf