Israeli high-tech is improving US education

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For years, teachers have been complaining about large class sizes, an old-fashioned learning environment and a lack of support for students with different learning styles. Now Dovi Weiss, a Ph.D. student from Tel Aviv University's Jaime and Joan Constantiner School of Education and the Chief Pedagogical Officer of the Israeli company Time To Know, has developed a new digital teaching platform integrating technology, a digital curriculum, real-time class participation, and instant educator empowerment — and it's already revolutionizing classrooms in New York and Texas.

Early results from pilot programs indicate significant success at re-energizing education for both children and teachers. Children in Texas with access to this new educational platform outperformed their peers by a significant margin, demonstrating better reasoning and problem-solving skills. In a control group study, only seven percent of children who used the [Time](#) To Know platform to improve their mathematics skills were characterized as "below average," compared to 34 percent of children in a control group which received traditional education.

The vision and theory behind this program, developed in collaboration with Time To Know Founder, Shmeul Meitar, has been published in Educational Echo and Time To Know has been chosen by the President's Conference in Israel as one of the Israeli companies with the potential to create a better tomorrow.

Rooting out the bugs in traditional education

Weiss says his method represents the first time that technology is fully integrated into the classroom, not just in occasional use in computer labs. His interactive format encourages student participation and empowers the teacher through instant feedback.

Traditional teaching techniques fail on multiple levels, Weiss says. They fail to address the different learning styles among a group of students or the students' lack of engagement, and there is an absence of an ongoing assessment technique to determine student progress. The Time To Know program addresses these problems.

Each child is outfitted with a notepad or tablet, to be used approximately half of the in-class time. Teachers introduce a given subject, then open software activities to encourage the children to explore the concepts they have just learned independently or in small groups. Completed work can be sent to a networked "gallery" to be shared for discussion, while teachers retain full control over the curriculum and associated activities.

Most important, says Weiss, teachers can assess the effectiveness of their teaching immediately. At the end of the lesson, teachers receive an in-depth report on where the children succeeded or foundered, permitting them to revise an ineffective lesson plan and identify pupils who might need extra help. This permits new opportunities for "data-driven" teaching, he adds.

Raising grades, improving behavior, boosting attendance

The Time To Know classroom is spreading success throughout the world's educational systems. Next year, the program will be in more than 20 schools in New York City through the NYC Department of Education's Innovation Zone (iZone) program, select schools in the

Grand Prairie Independent School District in Texas, and about 100 Israeli schools.

A pilot project is also scheduled to launch in Singapore, even though students there already boast top grades. "In today's world it's not enough to get top results," Weiss explains. "You also need to encourage students to be more innovative and collaborative, to think and explore better. We have a responsibility to educate 21st century learners, to give them 21st century skills — and implant an ongoing joy of learning combined with real achievements."

Preliminary results indicate that this teaching method is not only improving student performance, but also helping to solve behavioral problems. Attendance among Time To Know students is up, and disciplinary problems among the same students have declined significantly.

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