

Slide 1

## Student test scores in math computation and the implications for chemistry instruction

Presented 8/2/2010 at the  
Cognition Symposium of the  
ACS Biennial Conference on Chemistry Education (BCCE)  
By Rick Nelson, Retired Instructor  
EANelson@ChemReview.Net

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Good Morning.  
Let me begin with an apology. I am going to go fast,  
But at the end I will put up a web address where you may  
Review at your leisure any slides that you might find interesting.

In my view,

(Vote for ONE:)

In **first**-year chem, the ***math background*** of entering students is:

- A. A major problem
- B. A minor problem
- C. Not a problem

2

To start, I'd like to ask you to please **read** this question

-- then be ready to vote for A, B, or C.

Ready? How many of you would vote (raise your hand) for A, \_\_\_\_\_ B? \_\_\_\_\_  
C? \_\_\_\_\_

Good. Try question 2.

Vote for ONE:

In 1<sup>st</sup> year chem, it is *most* important for students to have **background knowledge** in

- A. Use of a calculator
- B. The theory of mathematics
- C. Math computation

Please read and be ready to vote....

In chemistry, we ask students  
To solve problems like THIS

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$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{E} &= \mathcal{E}_{\text{cell}}^{\circ} - \frac{0.0591}{n} \log(Q) \\ &= 1.76 - \frac{0.0591}{2} \log \left( \frac{[\text{Zn}^{2+}][\text{VO}^{2+}]^2}{[\text{VO}_2^{+}]^2[\text{H}^{+}]^4} \right) \\ &= 1.76 - \frac{0.0591}{2} \log \left( \frac{(1.0 \times 10^{-1})(1.0 \times 10^{-2})^2}{(2.0)^2(0.50)^4} \right) \\ &= 1.76 - \frac{0.0591}{2} \log (4 \times 10^{-5}) = 1.76 + 0.13 = 1.89 \text{ V}\end{aligned}$$

-- Zumdahl, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

and THIS

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$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{M} &= \frac{dRT}{P} \\ &= \frac{(3.09 \text{ g/L})(0.0821 \text{ L-atm/mol-K})(304 \text{ K})}{(735/760) \text{ atm}} \\ &= 79.7 \text{ g/mol}\end{aligned}$$

-- Brown, Lemay, 8th Ed. p. 368

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Or this

Vote for ONE:

In 1<sup>st</sup> year Chem, it is *most* important for students to have background knowledge in

- A. Use of a calculator
- B. The theory of mathematics
- C. Math computation

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All of these 3 are important.

But if you had to pick ONE, Which is most important?

How many vote for      A: \_\_\_\_\_      B: \_\_\_\_\_      C: \_\_\_\_\_

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NCTM standards = ?

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Question 3

If you are familiar with the NCTM standards,  
please raise your hand?  
OK.

Raise your hand IF you  
consider yourself to be a

**Constructivist**

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Finally ....

Theorists – be patient.  
I am going to argue that  
In applying constructivism, math  
Is different from chemistry.  
Bear with me.



## Background Knowledge

“The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows.”

-- David Ausubel

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Whatever your theoretical beliefs, just about everyone agrees that Background knowledge is important in learning.

(And as you indicated by your vote,  
The background knowledge that we especially depend on in chemistry  
is in math computation  
Which you also voted was a major problem.)

Let's look at the evidence. (Is computation background a problem?  
If so, WHY? And how can we fix the problem?)

## Virginia Math Results:

- Stanford 9 standardized test given **statewide**
- National percentile median = 50 on 1995 norms

VA all students	Grade 9				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Math	54	55	55	55	55

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n2

About 8 years ago, I was representing my faculty organization

On a task force looking at

why so many students entered college needing math remediation.

When I looked at the Virginia test scores, in "Total Math"

Our students were above national median 50th percentile -- and steady. (point)

But to a chem instructor, that didn't look right. So

I looked in the report detail, where I found that on the test Virginia was using

Two **subtests** were reported, described as

- “**Math Problem Solving**, which focuses on **reasoning** skills, and
- **Math Procedures**, which measures the student’s facility with **computation**.”

There were two subtests. “Total math” was a combination of

→ “Problem solving” which measured reasoning

And “procedures” which measured computation.

## Virginia Math Test Scores

VA Stanford 9	Grade 9				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Math	54	55	55	55	55
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>58</b>	61	63	64	<b>65</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	44	42	41	<b>39</b>

All state 9<sup>th</sup> graders: 80,000 students/year in 134 independent districts.

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The subtests showed that student scores  
→ in reasoning were high and going higher,  
But in computation were low and going lower.

These data say that

### Virginia Math Test Scores

VA Stanford 9	Grade 9				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Math	54	55	55	55	55
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>58</b>	61	63	64	<b>65</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	44	42	41	<b>39</b>

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1. Knowing “total math” tells you nothing about math computation.
  2. Teaching “reasoning” did not teach students how to solve calculations. There was no transfer.
- In math computation, when your state average is at the 39<sup>th</sup> percentile, Not many kids are going to be ready for the rigor and pace of college general chemistry.

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VA Stanford 9	Grade 9				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Math	54	55	55	55	55
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>58</b>	61	63	64	<b>65</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	44	42	41	<b>39</b>

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Finally, since these numbers are for 130+ independent school districts  
Choosing whatever curricula and textbooks they want  
Is Virginia's 39<sup>th</sup> percentile a random sample of America?

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	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
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<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>58</b>	61	63	64	<b>65</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	44	42	41	<b>39</b>

- “Total Math” hides math computation.
- Reasoning did not help computation.
- 39<sup>th</sup> percentile = not ready for chemistry
- 134 independent districts = sample of nation?

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Finally, since these numbers are for 130+ independent school districts  
Choosing whatever curricula and textbooks they want  
Is Virginia's 39<sup>th</sup> percentile a random sample of America?

Next three slides from:

Tom Loveless  
Brown Center on Education Policy  
of the Brookings Institution  
Presentation on Math Reform  
at AEI March 4, 2002

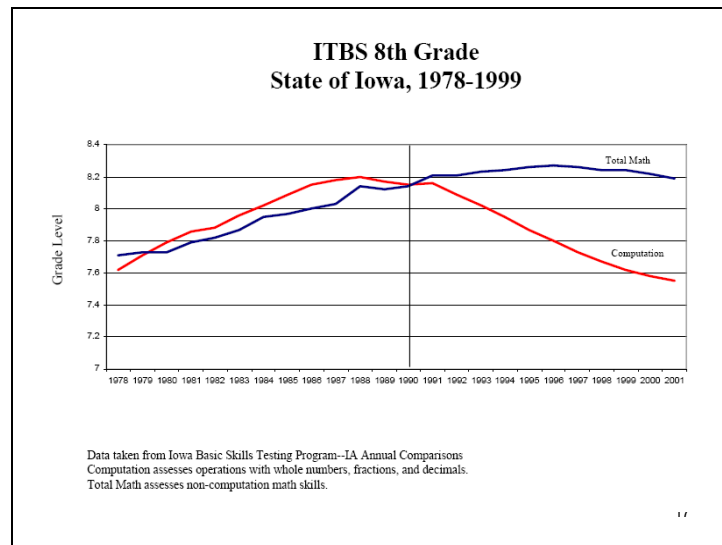
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I went looking for more data,  
and found this report online from  
Tom Loveless at the Brookings Institution

Tom said the best data was for the state of Iowa.

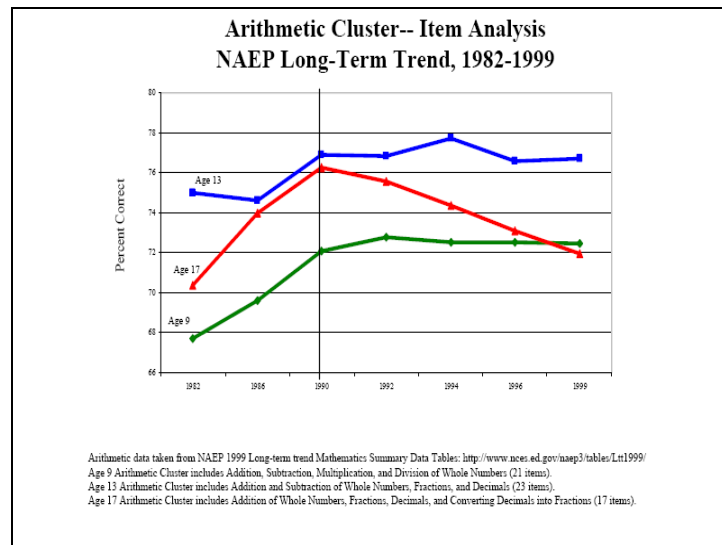


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Like Virginia,  
Each Iowa district does its own textbook adoption.  
And Iowa also required state testing in every district.  
But -- Iowa gave the same test for over 20 years.

The BLUE line is “total math” and the RED line is computation  
Both went up between 1978 and 1990  
But starting in 1990, total math flattens out -- and computation goes down --  
Just like Virginia during this period.  
And, like Virginia, “total math” does not predict scores in computation.

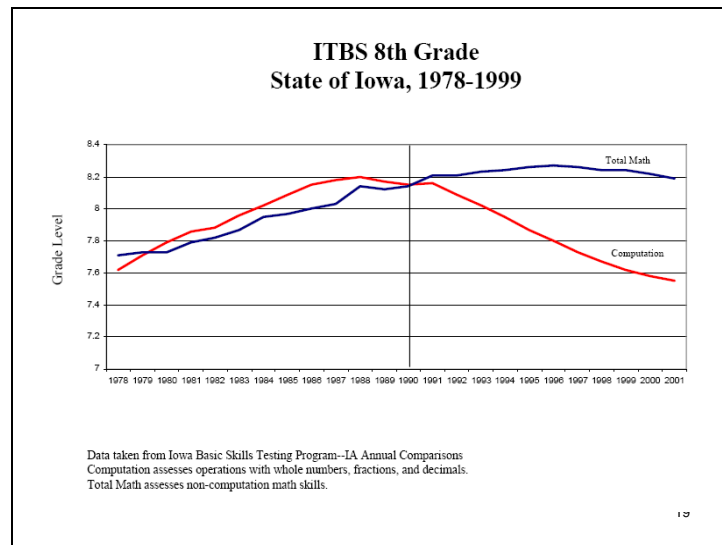


Dr. Loveless also looked at a nation-wide measure:

The National Assessment of Educational Progress  
(NAEP -- the “nape”) the “nation’s report card,”  
Given every two years in every state.

For the oldest group -- 17 year olds in red --  
Tom looked at the arithmetic that we do a lot of in chemistry  
And found that scores went up from 1982 to 1990  
But after **1990**, went down.

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Just like for COMPUTATION in Iowa

thus

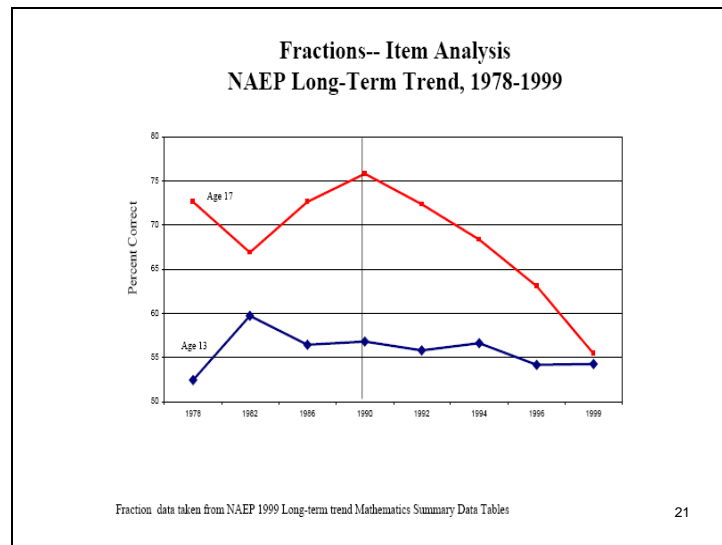
$$u_{\text{rms}} = \sqrt{\frac{3 \left( 8.3145 \frac{\text{J}}{\text{K} \cdot \text{mol}} \right) (298 \text{ K})}{4.00 \times 10^{-3} \frac{\text{kg}}{\text{mol}}}} = \sqrt{1.86 \times 10^6 \frac{\text{J}}{\text{kg}}}$$

Since the units of J are  $\text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2/\text{s}^2$ , this expression becomes

$$\sqrt{1.86 \times 10^6 \frac{\text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2}{\text{kg} \cdot \text{s}^2}} = 1.36 \times 10^3 \text{ m/s}$$

-- Zumdahl, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. p. 218

In chemistry, we do some fractions.  
Dr. Loveless looked at fractions on the NAEP:



And found , for the 17 year olds in red, fluctuation,  
Then a dramatic decline -- after 1990.  
There is a LOT more data, but the evidence is consistent and convergent.  
Computation goes down after 1990.  
Why?

“The **1989** NCTM standards played the role  
of national standards....

Nearly all state standards after 1990 were  
modeled on the *1989 NCTM Standards*.”

-- from **Computation Skills, Calculators, and  
Achievement Gaps: An Analysis of NAEP Items**  
Tom Loveless, The Brookings Institution, April 2004

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n520

In his paper, Dr. Loveless says this:  
Take a look.

## The Math Wars

Short history:

**A quarter century of US 'math wars' and  
political partisanship**

David Klein

California State University, Northridge

<http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/bshm.html>

longer version:

<http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/AHistory.html>

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What's this about?

You can find more information in my slides at these references. But briefly:

The NCTM is the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

They publish policy statements on K-12 math curriculum.

## ***1989 NCTM Standards***

Recommended for “**INcreased** attention” were  
In Grades 5-8:

- “**Reasoning** inductively and deductively”
- “**Creating algorithms** and procedures”

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In 1989, NCTM published their “standards”  
That became the standards in nearly every state.

The NCTM standards favored reasoning. That’s good.

But the NCTM said 5<sup>th</sup> graders should be **constructing** their own math algorithms.

The NCTM standards are a version of the learning theory called constructivism  
Perhaps carried to an extreme.



## ***1989 NCTM Standards***

Recommended for “**DE**creased attention” were

- “Finding **exact** forms of answers”
- “Memorizing **rules** and **algorithms**”
- “**Manipulating symbols**”
- “Paper and pencil **fraction** computation”,
- “Relying on **outside authority** (teacher or answer key)”
- “Rote **practice**”
- “Long division”

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For example,  
The NCTM said math teachers should

Decrease attention to arithmetic  
Decrease attention to algebra  
Decrease attention to fractions.

If students do not practice  
Arithmetic, algebra, and fractions  
What's going to happen to them when they get to

thus

$$u_{\text{rms}} = \sqrt{\frac{3 \left( 8.3145 \frac{\text{J}}{\text{K} \cdot \text{mol}} \right) (298 \text{ K})}{4.00 \times 10^{-3} \frac{\text{kg}}{\text{mol}}}} = \sqrt{1.86 \times 10^6 \frac{\text{J}}{\text{kg}}}$$

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-- Zumdahl, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. p. 218

Chemistry?

## ***1989 NCTM Standards***

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- “Paper and pencil **fraction** computation”,
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- “Rote **practice**”
- “Long division”

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These standards  
became the effective law by the year 2000  
In every state except Massachusetts and California.  
Is it a big surprise that your students are having  
trouble solving calculations?

## Bottom Line

“By 2000, all but 2 states (California and Massachusetts) ... modeled their own curriculum **standards** on the NCTM's, and publishers revised math **textbooks** to conform with NCTM's prescriptions.”

-- from

**Computation Skills, Calculators, and  
Achievement Gaps:**

**An Analysis of NAEP Items**

Tom Loveless, The Brookings Institution, April 2004

## ***1989 NCTM Standards***

Recommended for “**INcreased** attention” were

In Grades **K-4**:

- “Use of **calculators** and computers”

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7:15

And I do mean required.

Take a look.

The NCTM recommended increasing the use of -- **calculators** -- in -- **Kindergarten**.

## NJ: Use Calculators in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

**Q and A -- Core Standards in Mathematics**  
**NJ State Board of Education – 1996 to 2010**

**Q:** The standard says that students will "use calculators as problem-solving tools...." For what grade levels is this a reasonable expectation?

**A:** **Calculators** can and should be used at **all grade levels** .... The majority of questions on New Jersey's new **third-** and fourth-grade **assessments** in mathematics will assume student access to at least a four-function calculator.

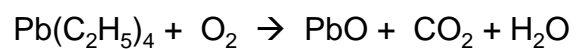
-- <http://www.state.nj.us/education/frameworks/math/math3.pdf>  
[http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/overview/faq\\_cccs\\_math.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/overview/faq_cccs_math.htm)

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This is no joke.  
Take a look at the orders to teachers  
From the NJ Bd of Ed  
in that last parg

This is not optional for teachers.  
In K-12, what is tested on state tests had better get taught.

To Balance:



use a calculator ?

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My question for YOU is:

When students arrive in your class

And need a calculator to balance an equation,

How are they going to do in chemistry?

## **1992: California Imposes NCTM Statewide**

- In 1992, California adopted state-wide textbook adoption standards that followed the NCTM recommendations.

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California is an important exception.

If you teach in California, you may want to take a look at these slides.

Briefly:

California adopted NCTM in 1992.

Over the next 4 years, Student test scores collapsed.

California got out of NCTM by 2000.

And scores are going up.

Detail:

California is a “no local curriculum control – state control” state.

In 1992 California adopted NCTM-based standards and textbooks statewide.



### California Results:

- Went from ~30<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in 1992 to 49<sup>th</sup> on 1996 NAEP 4th grade scores -- ahead of only Mississippi.
- The percentage of entering CSU system freshmen failing an entry-level math test, leading to remedial courses, went from **23%** in 1989 to **54%** in 1997.

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During the next 5 years, California test scores collapsed.

## California Reverses Course:


**Dec. 1997:** The California Board of Education approves new standards written by four mathematicians at Stanford.

**Opposing** the 1997 Standards:  
the *News Bulletin of the NCTM* (2/98) charged:

- "California's... curriculum standards emphasize basic skills and de-emphasize creative problem solving, procedural skills, and critical thinking."

**In Favor:** More than 100 California mathematics professors signed an open letter supporting the 1997 standards – including the chairs of the mathematics departments at Cal Tech and Stanford.

California then dumped the NCTM standards  
(and returned to teaching basic skills)



Stanford 9 Results  
1998-2001

PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE

MATHEMATICS TEST						
Grade	1998	1999	2000	2001	CHANGE 1998-2001	COHORT CHANGE
2	43	49	57	58	15	
3	40	48	56	59	19	
4	39	44	51	54	15	
5	41	45	50	55	14	12
6	46	50	55	58	12	18
7	42	45	48	50	8	11
8	42	45	48	49	7	8
9	47	48	51	51	4	5
10	41	44	46	45	4	3
11	43	45	48	46	3	4

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And since then scores have gone up by every measure  
But less so for children who were in school during the NCTM years.

**California Standards Test Results, 2003–2009**  
**Mathematics**

**Table 5: Percentages of Students Scoring at Proficient and Above\***

Grade	2003	2005	2007	2009	Change in Percentage 2003–2009
Grade 3	46	54	58	64	18
Grade 5	35	44	49	57	22
Grade 7	30	37	39	43	13
General Math	20	22	21	26	6
Algebra I <sup>†</sup>	21	19	24	28	7
Geometry	26	26	24	26	0
Algebra II	29	26	27	28	-1
Integrated 1	7	7	9	11	4

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But even in the fall of 2010, many students entering California colleges did not get much arithmetic back in K-3.  
Those students are still behind where they should be.  
But in 3 years, that problem will be in the past,  
And California will be 10-15 years ahead of the rest of the nation.

### California Standards Test Results, 2003–2009 Mathematics

Table 6: Numbers of Students Tested\*

Test	2003	2005	2007	2009	Change in Number 2003-2009
General Math	451,126	374,900	307,656	258,863	-192,263
Algebra I	505,883	681,924	744,814	758,139	252,256
Geometry	270,560	333,334	371,118	399,369	128,809
Algebra II	162,672	196,079	231,335	251,168	88,496
Integrated I	14,359	8,716	7,071	9,962	-4,397
Total	1,500,936	1,696,192	1,776,274	1,806,685	305,749

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Enrollment in higher math is up quite a bit.

## California Science Scores

### Science—End-of-Course Tests (Grades Nine Through Eleven)

Table 11: Percentages of Students Scoring at Proficient and Above\*

Test	2003	2005	2007	2009	Change in Percentage 2003-2009
Earth Science	21	23	26	28	7
Biology	37	32	37	42	5
Chemistry	31	27	31	36	5
Physics	29	31	35	46	17

In science scores are up a bit, and

## California Science Enrollment

### Science—End-of-Course (Grades Nine Through Eleven)

Table 12: Numbers of Students Tested\*

Test	2003	2005	2007	2009	Change in Number 2003- 2009
Earth Science	89,676	173,958	207,246	226,111	136,435
Biology	334,005	453,685	507,155	534,877	200,872
Chemistry	153,491	196,700	227,866	247,306	93,815
Physics	44,878	59,382	63,450	67,838	22,960

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Enrollment is way up  
(but compare bio to chem and physics)

## Other States

Outside of California,  
NCTM-type standards and textbooks  
adoption was more gradual, and  
the changes were more gradual and often  
un-noticed (especially after national testing  
stopped), so  
the NCTM standards and textbooks in most  
places remained in place.

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By getting out by 2000, California has a 10-15 year lead over the 48 other states

In recovering from  
letting students construct their own algorithms.



## 2002: Computation Data Stops

No Child Left Behind (NCLB, K-12)

- Required tests on *State* Standards
- Due to cost, most states stop nationally normed tests that separate “computation” from “total math.”

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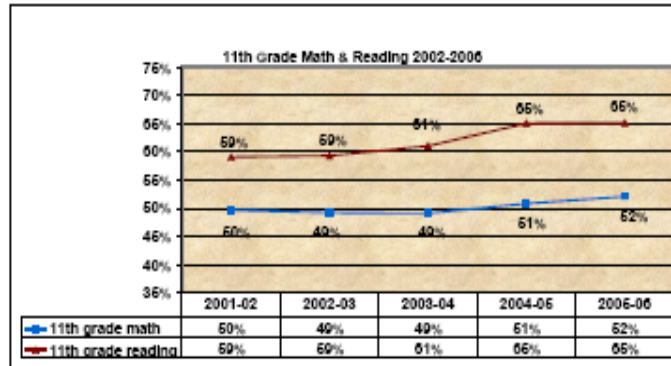
Why does the data stop in 2002 ? The answer is: NCLB.

No Child Left Behind required states to test on state standards,  
And virtually every state then stopped  
reporting math computation. Why?

On NCTM standards, computation is “de-emphasized.”

So why pay for tests to measure computation?

## Pennsylvania:



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Nearly all state test data is like this  
that says 50-52% of students are “proficient in math in PA,”  
But that tells you nothing about how state students compare  
California, or China or India – the real competition.

## 2003 to 2010

- STEM talk, but readiness not measured.
- \$\$ Millions/yr spent on state K-12 tests, but
- Computation scores not reported,
- National norms not reported.
- Readiness for chem, physics, engineering?  
Was low. Now: no one knows.

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Readiness for STEM courses is talked about,  
And every state is spending millions of dollars every year on testing.

But, for the past 8 years, nearly every state has decided not to report test results  
on the skills needed  
For chemistry, physics, and engineering.

# Good News

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But there is some good news.

## NIH Learning Research:

**1995:** NIH starts research on learning difficulties.

**2000:** NIH NRP Report recommends

- Systematic, explicit instruction
- Drill and practice = fluency in fundamentals.

**2004:** NIH-based “Reading First” starts

**2008:** RF students tested, scores UP

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In 1995, the NIH began to study how the brain works and how students learn.

That research laid the foundation for the new “**cognitive science**,”  
And where cognitive science has been applied to instruction,  
the results have been impressive.

Sacramento, CA			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Urban District – Low Scores</li><li>• 1998: New Superintendent adopts math books with cognitive science emphasis</li><li>• Scores skyrocket.</li></ul>			
Student Test Scores – Sacramento, CA			
Stanford Test – National Percentiles – Math Procedures			
YEAR	Grade 2	Grade 4	Grade 6
1998	30	32	43
1999	46	39	53
2000	55	50	61
2001	57	57	64
Change	Up 27	Up 25	Up 21

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In 1998, Sacramento, a high poverty urban district.  
Adopted a cognitive-science-based math program.

Look at those gains in computation – just from using  
science-based textbooks.

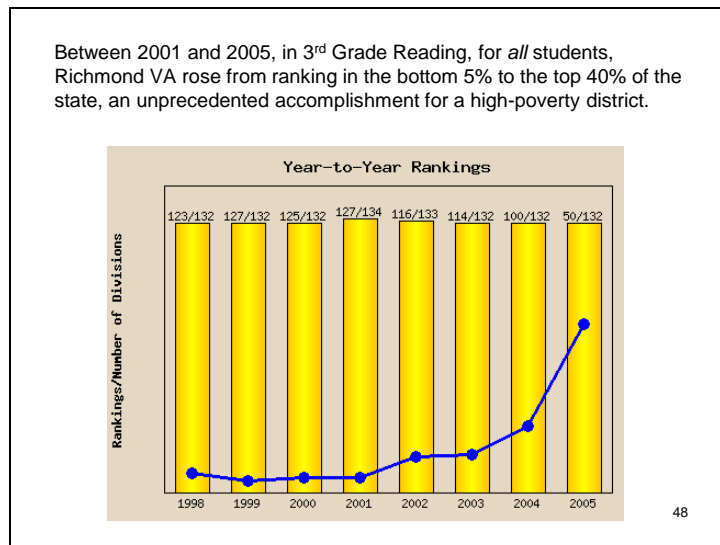
## Richmond, VA

- 25,000 students
- Urban, High-poverty
- 70% Reduced and Free Lunch
- 90% African-American

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Richmond VA is another urban, high poverty district.

In 2001, Richmond started using a new curriculum based on cognitive science



And in reading, Richmond students went  
(from ranking 123 out of the 132 districts in the state to 50th of 132)  
From bottom 5% of the state, typical for urban districts, to the top 40% --in just 4 years.

Those are unprecedented urban scores.  
All it took was the adoption of science-based textbooks  
And training to help teachers apply the new research about how the brain works.

If high-poverty Richmond can achieve those gains,  
How much could we increase the number of students earning STEM degrees  
If we did what Richmond did , and adopted instruction based on cognitive-science  
Across our math and science curriculum?



## The Two Philosophies:

Traditionalists/Behaviorists believed in

- Drill and Practice, Memorization of Facts
- “Learning is Hard Work”

Progressives/Constructivists/NCTM believed

- Learn Naturally, By Discovery
- Don’t “Drill and Kill”; Don’t Memorize

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Many of you are familiar with the recent cognitive research.  
Let me tell you what I think it says to science educators.  
The research addresses the 200-year-old debate  
In education over behaviorism vs. constructivism:  
drill and practice versus discovery.

And the science says, you need parts of BOTH.

## NIH /Cognitive Science findings:

Constructivists were right on:

- Discovery & Inquiry Motivate Students
- Concepts are Crucial for Memory
- Must construct conceptual framework
- Speech is learned naturally -- to age ~12

## However:

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The science says that constructivism  
got many things right.

My own heros and heroines in chemistry are the constructivists  
Who have done so much good work to motivate students to want to learn science.  
Without that, none of the rest of this matters.  
BUT

## Memorization? Necessary.

“Data from the last 30 years lead to a conclusion that is not scientifically challengeable:

**thinking well requires knowing facts....**

Critical thinking processes like reasoning and problem solving are intimately intertwined with factual knowledge that is in long-term **memory** (not just in the environment).

\* Building expertise actually changes the thought process, but such change takes many years of advanced study.“

-- Daniel Willingham

[http://archive.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/issues/spring2009/index.htm](http://archive.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/spring2009/index.htm)

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Here's the bad news:

Take a look at this slide – this is what the science says.

Nobody likes to hear this, but:

To become a good problem solver takes memorization:

repeated practice of facts and algorithms

That are the core knowledge in a discipline

To solve problems, you must have CONCEPTS -- PLUS facts PLUS algorithms  
In your long-term memory.

## NIH/Cognitive Science findings:

- Except for speech, learning is hard work.  
Solving problems requires
- Extensive Knowledge In LT **Memory** +
- **Fluency**: Automatic recall of fundamentals

-- *NRP Report*, NIH (2000), Willingham, *Cognition* (2004)

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The science says learning is hard work.  
The way you learned chemistry is the only way that works.  
Solving problems requires fluency:  
Fast automatic recall of fundamentals.

Because of limitations on working memory, students nearly always  
must solve problems using .... Using...??  
Here's a hint:

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?...  
algorithms.

Science does say that the role models for our students should be people who  
Are famous for their work ethic, people who practice

Slide 54

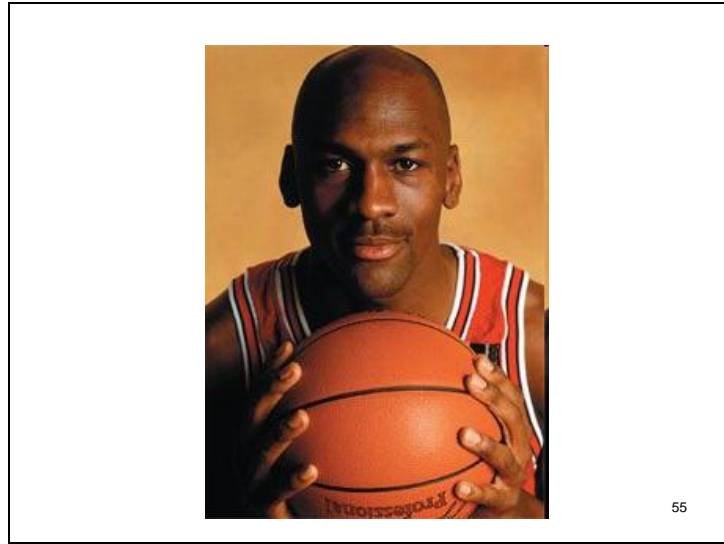


54

drill

Lindsay Vonn

Slide 55



And

mj

Slide 56



practice

That's the science.

Joshua Bell



## In Chemistry

Don Dahm at Rowan University used cognitive-science-based homework to

- Reduce required lecture time and
- Increase lab time

While maintaining high achievement.

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I've been working on a project with Don Dahm at Rowan University to apply cognitive science to chemistry.

(Our goal is to have students practice computation as homework before lecture so that lecture on math is reduced, and more time is available for concepts and labs.)

Given an Engineering Chem schedule of

- 75% of std. GenChem lecture time and only 25% of std. GenChem Lab time,

By using cog sci-based homework, Don was able to change to

- 50% GenChem Lecture time and 50% Lab

Then he gave the *ACS General Chemistry 2 Semester Exam*. Students scored at the

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At Rowan, the schedule allowed most of the engineers to have only one semester of chemistry.

Starting from a schedule that had 75%....

With 50% less lecture,

How well would students do on the 2 semester ACS exam?

The ACS median is the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile; Don's students scored at the

## 63<sup>rd</sup> ACS Percentile

- In part by assigning computation lessons as homework prep for lecture.
- Details on his model (plus all assignments): Search “ACS ChED CCCE Newsletter” Or
- [http://ched-ccce.org/newsletter/Pages\\_NewsF09/F2009\\_News.html](http://ched-ccce.org/newsletter/Pages_NewsF09/F2009_News.html)

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the 63<sup>rd</sup> ACS percentile, and Don doubled the time available for labs.

In the crisis that is about to be upon us, IF you are forced to cut your budget for first-year instruction,  
And you want to save lab time and achievement,  
You might want to take a look at the “hybrid” design that Don developed.

## At Frostburg

Read about Mary Mumper's success using a Prep Chem design focused on computation, also at:

"ACS ChED CCCE Newsletter" or

[http://ched-ccce.org/newsletter/Pages\\_NewsF09/F2009\\_News.html](http://ched-ccce.org/newsletter/Pages_NewsF09/F2009_News.html)

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In Prep Chem, at Frostburg, Mary Mumper has also used the same lessons as Don and she was very happy with the results, which you can read about here.

## Change In Standards

### **March, 2010:**

National Governor's Assn. proposes

- K-12 "Common Core Standards"
- Non-federal, state voluntary, draft "National Standards"

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n1340

Finally, in 2010,

A new set of national math standards has been proposed.

Over half the states have already agreed to adopt them.

For a review of the  
Common Core Math Standards:

- [http://edexcellence.net/doc/20100323\\_CommonCoreReview\\_Math.pdf](http://edexcellence.net/doc/20100323_CommonCoreReview_Math.pdf)

The standards are here.

## Common Core Standards:

Good on Computation:

- “Fluently add and subtract within 20.”  
(Grade 2)
- “Fluently ... multiply whole numbers  
using the standard algorithm....”  
(Grade 5)

(Fluent means: fast from memory.)

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They are based on cognitive science – see *fluency* ?  
And they are very good.  
But don't be fooled.

Standards do not determine what is taught.  
In K-12, it is the subjects with scores that are posted  
on the internet that get taught.

## But Standards Don't Fix

To Get Students Prepared for STEM:

- Computation must be reported separately from "total math."

What is tested is taught.

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The math needed for chemistry will be taught  
IF and ONLY IF  
computation is a posted score in your state.

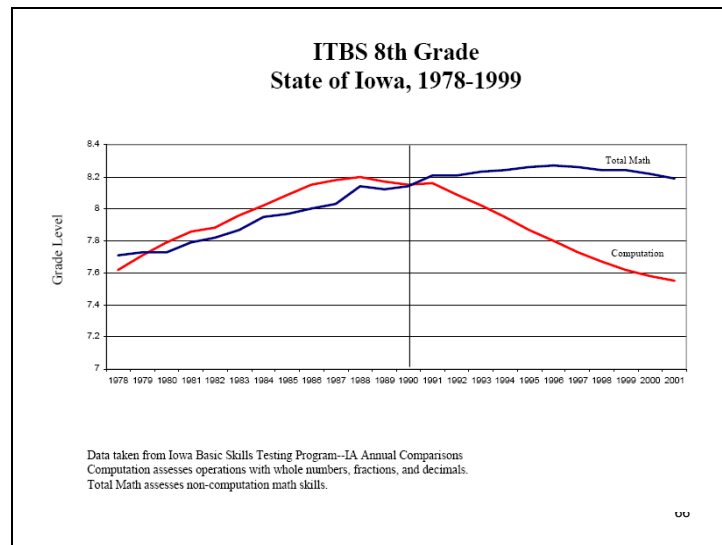
Let's Summarize.



### Virginia Math Test Scores

VA Stanford 9	Grade 9				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Math	54	55	55	55	55
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>58</b>	61	63	64	<b>65</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	44	42	41	<b>39</b>

Today, we have identified a problem.  
You voted that poor student computation skills were a major problem in chemistry instruction,  
And the data confirmed the problem.



We've identified the reason for the problem: states told teachers to stop teaching computation  
And states stopped testing computation.  
(When students were taught to solve calculations, they were getting better.  
When states told teachers to stop teaching computation, students got worse.)  
This has been going on for 20 years,  
But it can be fixed.

## 1. Ask Your State to Report Computation

**Explain the problem to business and political leaders.**

- A. Gather any computation DATA.
- B. Share it with STEM colleagues.

Let me suggest this three point plan.

To begin, explain the problem to your state's decision-makers.

You understand the importance of computation.  
No one else does.

### C. Decide Goals. Consider:

- Report computation
- Include chemists, physicists, and engineers when deciding *computation* standards.
- Limit calculators on tests
- Measure versus international norms
- Test readiness for college and work
- High test security and reliability

## The Key

- D. Take DATA to tech **business** leaders.  
Ask support. You'll get it.
- E. Take **business** leaders to ask **political**  
leaders for support.

## Results

- **You will win.**
- **Over 5-15 years = better prepared students.**

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You will win

But students who have not been taught fundamentals,  
It will have take years to get them to where they should be.

## 2. Use Cog Sci to remediate

During the wait, triage:

- Use cognitive science to improve computation using homework, prep chem.

(see Don and Mary's experiments).

So, while you are waiting for better preparation,  
Use cognitive science to offer remediation to those who can be helped.

### 3. Apply Cognitive Science to Instruction:

- **In class:** Motivation and Concepts
- **Homework:** Facts, Algorithms, Practice

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- Experiment -- read about cognitive science, and apply it in your classes.

For homework, find a book that students can read that teaches and reviews background knowledge. Set deadlines -- and quiz.



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39<sup>th</sup> percentile → America in decline  
BUT IF we apply cognitive science,

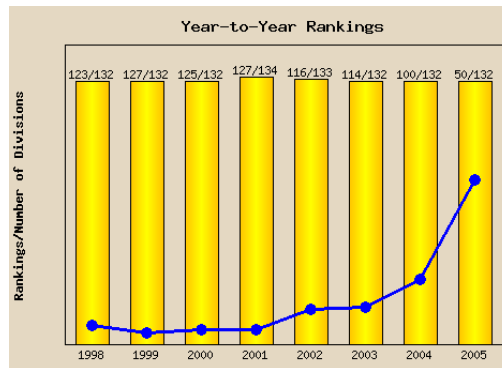
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So, we have shown a solution: you, who understand the problem,  
Ask your states to test on computation. And I hope you will do this.  
Because this is not just a problem in chemistry.

Science is the foundation for a competitive national economy.  
If we do not address this problem, it guarantees crisis after crisis  
In funding for education, for our pension plans, and for our nation.

But if we apply cognitive science to instruction,  
Achievement does

## Achievement Does This:

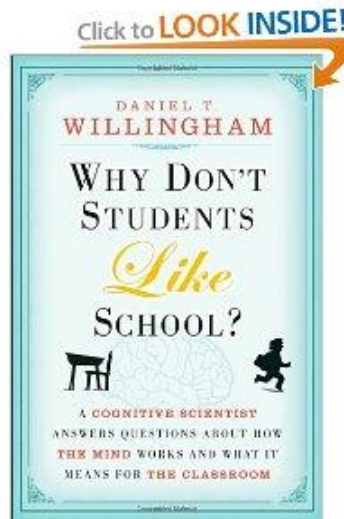


this.

The world needs for democratic values that America stands for to prosper and prevail.

You can have a key role in making that happen.

**3 Books  
on the  
New  
Cognitive  
Science:  
1. Easy  
Read**

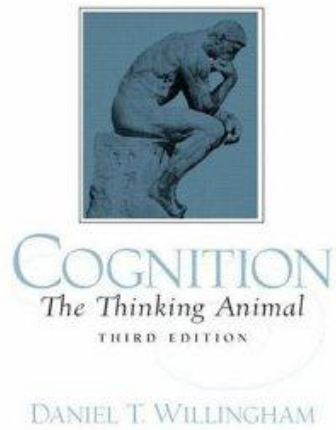


To learn more  
about the new cognitive science,  
here are 3 books.

This is Easy

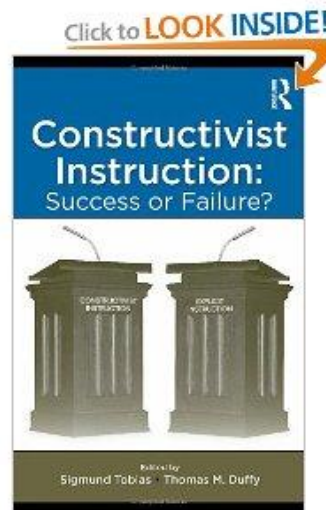
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**2.  
Cog  
Psych  
Textbook**



A textbook

**3.  
Cutting  
Edge  
on  
Theory**



and psychobabble, but very good.

These slides are posted at  
[www.ChemReview.Net](http://www.ChemReview.Net)  
at **BCCE** on the left.  
Thank You! Questions?

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Thank you for your patience.  
These slides are posted here.  
Please feel free to put them to good use.