

Study: Teacher Development Courses are Ineffective

Teacher development courses are ineffective. Common sense reached that conclusion long ago. But fortunately, there's now a study that confirms it entitled "[The Mirage](#): Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development."

According to [The Boston Globe](#),

"The study released Tuesday by TNTP, a nonprofit organization, found no evidence that any particular approach or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve in the classroom.

'We are bombarding teachers with a lot of help, but the truth is, it's not helping all that much,' said Dan Weisberg, TNTP's chief executive. 'We're basically throwing a lot of things against the wall and not even looking to see whether it works.'"

The study gives a number of steps to overcome these deficiencies, but I have a simpler one.

Today's teachers do not need more help in understanding child psychology, nor instruction on how to make perfect lesson plans. What they need is the opportunity to grow in greater knowledge of the subject area as they teach their students. According to author [David Hicks](#), this is the method which made ancient schoolteachers successful.

Hicks notes that a good education is one which "challenges both teacher and pupil: the one to justify his superior wisdom and intellectual skill; the other to win his teacher's praise by matching his performance." An education such as this builds a relationship between teacher and student which eliminates

the need for “educational psychology, teaching aids, and learning paraphernalia.”

Hicks goes on to say:

“Yet with a weird logic, today’s professional educator argues that mutual learning implies equal ignorance. He substitutes class preparation and teaching technique for knowledge and eros [viewed by the ancients as a solid, good working relationship between teacher and student, not the romantic love we view it as today]. He measures the personal element in education according to the teacher’s understanding of the student mind, not vice versa. ...

In many instances, the modern lesson plan disguises the teacher’s embarrassing lack of knowledge... The ideas and beliefs men live for and die with seldom come out of lesson plans, but the lesson plan satisfies the teacher’s need for an appearance of knowledge.”

Is it time to unshackle teachers from the bondage of having to study numerous educational philosophies and methods?