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School Mask Mandates Mean Trauma For Millions Of Children, Especially Those From Low-Income Families

 **Zak Ringelstein** Contributor 
Education
Teacher, Founder of Zigazoo & UClass, Columbia's Teachers College.

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Little girl in face mask looking in the window glass with rain drops. GETTY

I have spent my career as an educator fighting standardized testing and the havoc it has wreaked on the mental health and well-being of American schoolchildren, especially kids from low-income families.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, our years of activism were finally paying off and popular legislation across the country was just starting to roll back draconian high-stakes exams, citing the harm it does to the psychology, health, and academic performance of America's schoolchildren. Instead of desks in a row, they recommended round tables. Instead of multiple choice assignments, they recommended collaborative projects. Instead of punitive discipline, they recommended mindfulness and socio-emotional learning.

The future looked bright for a free, student-centered, constructivist education for all children. It seemed that finally it wouldn't just be rich families who could afford to opt out of restrictive test-based academic settings.

That was until Covid-19 reached America's shores and overnight transformed the American public education system into something unrecognizable: a system of restrictions and mandates far more repressive than standardized testing ever was. Students in most American classrooms now must wear a covering over their face and stay distanced from their peers the entire school day. In many schools, students are forced to play by themselves during recess. Even for the youngest of school children, desks are in rows. Kids can't see each other's smiles or learn critically important social and verbal skills.

The phrase I hear repeated over and over again to justify masks is: "kids are resilient."

But as an elementary school educator and Ph.D. student at Columbia University trained in trauma-informed instruction, I am concerned that this statement is overly simplistic and misleading. What we should be saying is: "masks and social distancing induce trauma and trauma at a young age is developmentally dangerous, especially for children who are experiencing trauma in other parts of their lives."

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Psychologists have often misrepresented trauma as only resulting from isolated events, like the loss of a parent or a car accident. But studies on poverty have helped expand the definition of trauma to ongoing, persistent stress or fear when a child is constantly releasing the stress hormone, cortisol. According to the [American Psychiatric Association](#), “traumas are defined as events that result in or pose a threat to a person’s physical integrity and that cause a reaction of intense fear, horror, or helplessness.” This is the kind of threat children perceive when they are told to distance themselves from other children and cover the part of their body with which they communicate, express their emotions, and feed themselves. Forcing children to wear masks or distance themselves from peers not only signals that they are a threat to others and/or that others are a threat to them, but also takes away the most basic way children calm their nervous system. As Psychology Today [reported](#), “facial expressions of others help us to calm our nervous system, but if we don’t receive those signals, we might go into survival mode.”

More studies should be conducted on just how traumas from Covid-19 restrictions in schools are associated with the long-term health and well-being of American children, but [research on Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome](#) has illuminated that “stress and fear, in response to actual or possible threat, enhances the possibility of forming trauma-related memories.” Every year of a child’s early life lays the foundation for their adulthood and insecure foundations do, in fact, crumble. According to [Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs](#), children without assurance of their personal security (e.g. social anxiety from masks and social distancing) are often incapable of making healthy social connections and may have difficulty building intimate relationships in their lives. [Neurological research](#) demonstrates that kids who experience this kind of fear and trauma at a young age undergo structural and functional restructuring of their brain’s prefrontal cortex, resulting in emotional and cognitive processing problems. This trauma is especially concerning for children growing up in poverty who often have the compounding effect of other trauma at home or in their community. Before Covid-19, already [nearly half](#) of all American children had experienced trauma in their lives.

Furthermore, children in masks who are socially distanced are more likely to lead a sedentary lifestyle at school and home, and therefore are also [more likely to become both obese](#) and depressed. Obesity [disproportionately affects children from low-income backgrounds](#) and can lead to lifelong health challenges that often result in early death. Tragically, the prevalence of clinical depression and anxiety have already [doubled for children globally](#) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and will likely worsen with continued restrictions.

Children in masks are also likely to miss out on critical [language development](#), another fundamental area of growth in early years where children from low-income backgrounds already have [disproportionate disadvantages](#).

Covid-19 cases among children have increased due to the Delta variant, but according to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), “0.00%-0.03% of all child COVID-19 cases resulted in death” this past week. Despite sensationalized clickbait news coverage, a child’s current [chance of death from Covid-19](#) in America is lower than their [chance of dying](#) from a lightning strike or car accident.

We should keep watching the data to monitor whether children experience morbidity and mortality worse than they currently do, and adjust as is appropriate. But we must ask ourselves: do the benefits of masks and social distancing truly outweigh the long-term psychological, physical, social, and academic harm we are inflicting on a whole generation of American schoolchildren? If we care about equity and the most vulnerable members of our society, we at least can’t be afraid to ask.



Zak Ringelstein

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Zak Ringelstein is a teacher who has spent his career advocating for an education system that brings joy, purpose, and liberation. Recently he founded Zigazoo to give... [Read More](#)

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Aug 27, 2021, 06:07pm EDT

Available Now, Samsung Galaxy Buds 2 Are Smaller, Lighter And More Affordable Noise Cancelling Earbuds

F **Dave Johnson** Forbes Staff
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I'm a senior editor at Forbes and I write about all things tech.

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f Samsung already has a crowded lineup of true wireless earbuds—
models like the Galaxy Buds, Galaxy Buds+, Galaxy Buds Live and
twitter Galaxy Buds Pro appeal to a variety of audio lovers, running the
in gamut from basic audio features in the Buds+ to the premium Buds
Pro with active noise cancelling, water resistance and gaming features.



The Galaxy Buds 2 come in four colors schemes. SAMSUNG

The latest wireless earbud offering from Samsung is yet another member of this popular Galaxy Buds line. The [Samsung Galaxy Buds 2](#) are a welcome addition for anyone looking for comfortable earbuds with active noise cancellation, and a budget-friendly price point.

In fact, these new buds are the perfect addition to a new Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 3 or Fold 3 smartphone, or the new Galaxy Watch 4 / Watch 4 Classic smartwatch, as they allow for wireless and hands-free phone conversations, plus the ability to truly hear and enjoy audio generated by these latest devices when it comes to music, podcasts, audiobooks, TV shows or movies, for example.

As for style, the Buds 2 come in graphite, lavender, olive, and white. If you're looking for earbuds that'll go with almost any outfit, white is probably your best option. The charging docks are all finished in white, but feature the chosen earbud color as an accent when you flip open the lid.

The new Samsung Galaxy Buds 2 puts active noise cancellation in an affordable package. SAMSUNG

So how does it fit in? The Galaxy Buds 2 is most closely a big brother to the Galaxy Buds+. It's an incremental improvement on that pair, while borrowing noise cancellation technology from Samsung's top-end earbuds. In fact, Samsung has incorporated a handful of improvements while offering it at a very attractive price (less than \$150).

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Samsung has streamlined the look of the Galaxy Buds 2, smoothing out the design so they now look sort of like a pair of pearls (but not exactly in a chic sense). At the same time, Samsung says that the Buds 2 are now 15% smaller and 20% lighter than the older Buds+, which should add up to a very comfortable fit. That's thanks in part to a selection of interchangeable tips which you can try in conjunction with an "earbud fit test" in the mobile app to dial in the perfect fit. In fact, the Buds 2 are designed so they can comfortably be worn all day long.

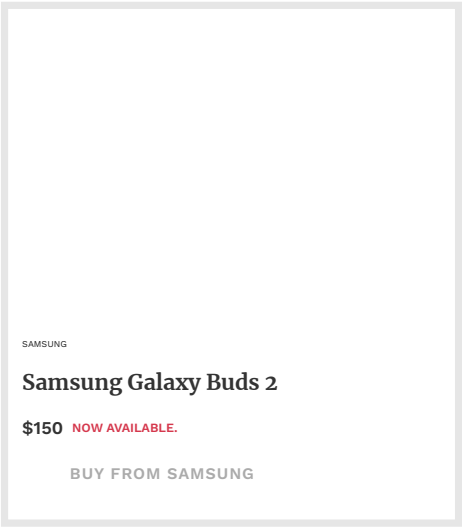
Under the hood, the Galaxy Buds 2 feature two-way speakers with separate woofers and tweeters. But the real news here is the inclusion of active noise cancellation, which Samsung says can eliminate 98% of ambient sound. It also features an Ambient Aware mode—you can choose from among three ambient sound levels so you can hear what's going on around you if needed without removing your earbuds. For calls, the Buds 2 include three microphones and rely on machine learning to filter background noise out of your conversations.

The Buds 2 do offer wireless charging (with a compatible charger or smartphone), but the charging case comes with a USB cable. Battery life will depend a lot on which audio mode(s) and features you utilize throughout your day. Be sure to take advantage of the free Galaxy Wearable mobile app on your Android smartphone to fully customize and best utilize these buds, plus take advantage of the Find My Earbuds feature if you misplace one or both of them.

As for water resistance, the Buds 2 have a 5ATM rating, which means you can submerge them in water, although they are not designed for use while scuba diving, for example.

How to Buy the Samsung Galaxy Buds 2

The Samsung Galaxy Buds 2 are now available for \$149.99, making them the lowest price for noise cancelling earbuds in the Samsung lineup. From the Samsung website, a \$15 discount is being offered to teachers, students, first responders, government employees and active military personnel.



Dave Johnson

I'm a senior editor at Forbes and though I started out in New Jersey, I am currently living in Los Angeles. After college, I served in the Air Force where I operated... [Read More](#)

Jason R. Rich

I am an accomplished author, journalist, and photographer who specialized in consumer technologies.

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Aug 29, 2021, 06:00am EDT | 381 views

More Universities, Higher Ed Groups Step Up To Help Afghan Refugees

Michael T. Nietzel Senior Contributor

Education

I am a former university president who writes about higher education.

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A U.S. Marine lifts an infant over a barbed wire fence during an evacuation at Hamid Karzai ... [+]
COURTESY OF OMAR HAIDIRI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

As the desperate attempt to evacuate thousands of people from Afghanistan continues following the stunning takeover of the country by the Taliban, more American colleges and higher education organizations are offering several forms of assistance to Afghan emigres.

The [University of Tulsa](#) (TU) was among the first, when, earlier this month, it announced it would provide two scholarships to Afghan refugees who enroll as undergraduates. Available immediately, TU’s scholarships will cover the total cost of attendance at the university for up to four years.

Other institutions are joining the cause with an outpouring of support.

The **University of California, Berkeley’s Human Rights Center** has partnered with **San Jose State University’s Human Rights Institute** and the UC Berkeley Afghan Student Association to launch a [crowdfunded Afghanistan Emergency Fund](#) with the goal of providing immediate support for at-risk Afghans. It set and met an initial goal of raising \$100,000 by August 27 (with a promised dollar-for dollar match from the UC Berkeley Vice Chancellor for Research Opportunity Fund), but that goal has since been increased to \$250,000 by September 15.

Goddard College [announced last Friday](#) that it would be willing to house Afghan refugees at dormitories on its Plainfield, Vermont campus for at least two months this fall. While the plans for doing so have yet to be finalized, Goddard President Dan Hocoy said the decision was a “no-brainer.” Hocoy added, “I was so pleased because I really believe that it’s part of our mission to address the current needs of our global community.” Goddard operates on a low Occupancy model that requires its students to be on campus for only short periods of time so it should have the capacity to provide temporary housing if need be.

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At **Northern Virginia Community College**, the gymnasium and other facilities are being used to [temporarily house Afghan refugees](#) before they are transferred to more permanent locations. Accommodations for up to 500 people are being readied.

University of the People, a tuition-free, American-accredited online university, [announced](#) it’s offering 1,000 scholarships for Afghan women to pursue a bachelor’s degree on their platform. The aid will presumably cover the assessment fees charged per course.

New York’s **Bard College**, working with several partners - the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), Open Society University Network (OSUN) and the American University of Afghanistan (AUAf) - [has offered](#) to take in as many as 100 students as well as threatened scholars on its Annandale campus.

Goodwin University and the **University of Bridgeport**, two private universities in Connecticut, [wrote a letter to President Biden](#) pledging their support in the form of housing, assistance with language skills, and work and career programs for Afghan refugees. The University of Bridgeport also committed use of a 140-bed dormitory that’s not currently occupied by students for housing on a temporary basis.

On Friday, **Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf** said Philadelphia was [expected to receive Afghan refugees](#) soon as part of the overall rescue operation. Among other preparations, physicians from **Thomas Jefferson University** and **Temple University** are expected to perform triage for refugees arriving at the airport.

Higher Education organizations and other academic groups were also offering their assistance and mobilizing support. For example:

- **American Council on Education** [President Ted Mitchell issued a statement](#) that his organization would “work as closely as possible with the Department of State and Congress to do everything we can to open the doors of the United States to displaced Afghans who wish to join the millions of international students and scholars who have contributed to the cultural and intellectual vibrancy of our campuses and to our national economic prosperity.”
- The **Institute of International Education (IIE)** has initiated the [IIE Afghanistan Crisis Response](#), a fund that will help support displaced Afghan students and scholars.
- **Scholars at Risk**, a global network of higher ed institutions that helps scholars under threat in their home countries find academic opportunities in other nations, wrote a [letter to Secretary of State Anthony Blinken](#) asking that several immediate steps be taken to expedite the evacuation and visa processing of Afghan students and scholars. The letter, which has collected hundreds of signatories, also requests “a dedicated funding stream for scholars, students, and civil society actors from Afghanistan...to undertake study, fellowships, lectureships, research positions or temporary academic positions at U.S. higher education institutions.”

Of course, all these official institutional responses come in addition to the thousands of college students across the U.S. who are engaging in grassroots fundraising, advocacy, and in what some have called a “[digital Dunkirk](#),” serving as long-distance guides for American and Afghan friends trying to flee Afghanistan before time runs out.

Follow me on [Twitter](#).

Michael T. Nietzel

I am president emeritus of Missouri State University. After earning my B.A. from Wheaton College (Illinois), I was awarded a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the... [Read More](#)

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ESPN Reportedly In Talks With Caesars Entertainment And DraftKings For Licensing Deal Worth Billions

Derek Saul Contributor ©

Education

I cover higher education with a focus on the business of sports.

TOPLINE Disney-owned ESPN is in talks with sports gambling giants Caesars Entertainment and DraftKings to license its brand to one of them, with the winner of the bidding potentially naming its sportsbook after the sports broadcaster in a deal worth at least \$3 billion, The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) Friday.

ESPN is reportedly discussing s multibillion-dollar deal with gambling companies.
(Photo by Mike ... [+] GETTY IMAGES FOR ESPN)

KEY FACTS

- The deal would allow ESPN to get in on the lucrative sports betting market without opening and operating a sportsbook on its own, the Journal said, though it noted the talks could fall through.
- DraftKings declined to comment when contacted by *Forbes*, while Caesars has not yet responded to a request for comment.
- Markets reacted strongly to the news, with shares of Caesars rising 4.25% Friday to close at \$104.24, while Disney rose 2.03% to \$180.14 and DraftKings climbed 3.72% to \$60.01.
- Sports betting is [currently legal](#) in 27 states and Washington, D.C.

KEY BACKGROUND

ESPN already has close ties with both Caesars and DraftKings, establishing a marketing deal with both companies in September 2020 that set [DraftKings](#) as ESPN’s exclusive daily fantasy sports provider and [Caesars](#) as ESPN’s exclusive odds provider. The sports media giant also opened an ESPN studio at the Caesars-owned Linq Hotel on the Las Vegas strip in August 2020. ESPN has increasingly committed to providing sports betting content, including the Daily Wager television show, which is filmed at the Linq and airs on ESPN+, its paid subscription division.

BIG NUMBER

\$44 billion. U.S. gambling revenue is set to [surpass](#) \$44 billion in 2021, which would be the most lucrative total ever.

FURTHER READING

[ESPN Explores Sports-Betting Deal Worth at Least \\$3 Billion \(The Wall Street Journal\)](#)

[U.S. Gambling Revenue To Break \\$44 Billion Record In 2021 \(Forbes\)](#)

[DraftKings’ Founders Say Profitability Depends On Rollout Of States Legalizing Sports Betting \(Forbes\)](#)

[ESPN to Open Studio at The Linq Hotel on Las Vegas Strip \(Sports Illustrated\)](#)

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Derek Saul

I am an editorial intern on the Colleges team, with a particular passion for college athletics and the business behind it. I graduated this spring from Duke University.... [Read More](#)

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Here’s What Teachers Need This Fall (Hint: It’s Not

As Medical School Applications Skyrocket, More Candidates May Turn To The Caribbean More Happy Talk)

Peter Greene Senior Contributor 
Education
I look at K-12 policies and practices from the classroom perspective.

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A little more help, please? GETTY

School is ramping up, and so is teacher anxiety; things have been heading south over just the past couple of weeks. COVID 2.0 is rapidly changes the rules of the game. A [small](#) but vocal portion of the population [is loudly—even violently](#)—opposed to safety measures for schools; some of those opponents occupy the governor’s mansions of their states. Meanwhile, the hunt is on to root out any teachers crossing the ill-defined line marking newly-forbidden controversies, with several organizations—including some [run by state officials](#)—collecting and pursuing leads from any disgruntled parents.

For many classroom teachers, the rules for school in the midst of this storm have changed since last year, but the bottom line has not—many teachers are on their own. When the pandemic first hit, there was an absence of direction from state and federal authorities; now there is plenty of guidance, even commands, from state and federal authorities (as well as school boards and the people who have shown up to holler at them), but so much of it is contradictory or wildly misguided that, as was the case last year, teachers are left to sort things out on their own.

This fall will reveal the quality of leadership in school district’s across the country. Many are already failing the test.

What don’t teachers need this fall? They don’t need trinkets and empty attaboys. They don’t need speeches that try to pump them up by minimizing the challenges they face, a suggestion that this is all just a walk in the park through a light shower. They don’t need to hear “You’ve got this,” especially when what it really means is “You’ll have to get this on your own.” Sometimes the encouragement to practice self care some perilously close to “You’d better take care of yourself, because nobody else here is going to.”

What teachers need from administrators this fall is support.

In places where anything remotely resembling CRT is in classrooms, teachers need administrations that demonstrate support and courage. Many states have opened a [full on witch hunt](#) for any teachers or schools [that are “indoctrinating” students](#). Because these criteria are so broad and vague (one North Carolina dance teacher was [reported to the state task force](#) for teaching that blackface is not good), some administrators are going to bend over backwards to [avoid anything remotely controversial](#). It’s true that teachers, as government employees, have limited freedom of speech (see also: why your public school teacher shouldn’t lead students in Christian prayer) and that there is [such a thing as going too far](#). But teachers are now wondering if they can teach about racially charged topics in US history without fearing for their job, and the critical factor is not a small, noisy sector of the public, but the guts of school administrators, who can say “Teach what’s right. I’ll back you up” or “Don’t teach anything at all ever that might get me angry phone calls.”

The same level of support applies to the issues surrounding masking and vaccines. In some classrooms, teachers are realizing that if they call for masking, nobody on any level is going to back them up (even in the many districts where masks are mandated on school buses—but not in schools). Teachers are scared, parents are scared, the general public is scared, and somehow, in some places, the buck is being passed to teachers.

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In too many places around the country, teachers feel as if they’re in that old joke where the commander asks for volunteers to step forward, and everyone else in line takes a step back.

So what teachers need this fall is administrators who step up, who are honest and serious about the problems ahead and their plans to deal with them. The most important function of a school administrator is to make it possible for teachers to do their jobs; on a good day, that’s a pretty simple job, but in the midst of a big storm, teachers need more coverage than a tiny, tattered umbrella.

Follow me on [Twitter](#).

Peter Greene

I spent 39 years as a high school English teacher, looking at how hot new reform policies affect the classroom.

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Aug 27, 2021, 12:36pm EDT | 687 views

To Boost Learning, Be Cautious About Reading And Writing On Screens

Natalie Wexler Senior Contributor 
Education
I write about education, cognitive science, and fairness.

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Studies show that teaching handwriting has academic benefits, and that students overestimate their ... [+] GETTY

Digital devices are here to stay, but studies show that if we rely on them heavily for reading and writing, learning may suffer.

The traditional methods of reading and writing—using paper and pencil—have long been on the wane at all grade levels. The Common Core State Standards [called for](#) teaching kids to use a keyboard but said nothing about handwriting. School districts [touted](#) policies that provided every student with a digital device. Textbook publishers [nudged](#) college students toward virtual materials.

At the same time, research was raising red flags. [Studies showed](#) that students who took notes by hand understood material better than those who typed them on digital devices. Other research [suggested](#) that teaching kids to write by hand builds fine motor skills that are crucial for future academic success. Evidence [indicated](#) that reading print

leads to better comprehension, especially if the text is nonfiction, lengthy, and not presented in narrative form.

Remote and hybrid learning over the past 18 months has put the shift to digital reading and writing on steroids. And now there’s even more data pointing to the risks of relying heavily on screens—or at least, doing so without certain safeguards.

A recent study from researchers at Johns Hopkins [found](#) that people who learned a new alphabet through writing by hand did so faster and better than those who studied it through videos or typing. Another experiment [found](#) that those who wrote notes on paper remembered the information better than those who used digital devices.

Both studies were done with adults, but the Hopkins researchers said in [a press release](#) they expect their findings apply to children as well. One, Robert Wiley, said he’s been giving his young nieces and nephew pens and pencils as gifts. The other researcher, Brenda Rapp, said the study provides “fairly strong evidence that handwriting supports literacy in ways that go beyond the actual penmanship.”

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Many children at lower grade levels have missed out on handwriting instruction over the last year and a half, because it’s [hard to teach remotely](#). When that’s the case, the evidence indicates that teachers shouldn’t forge ahead and assume kids will pick it up—or that they can just learn to type instead. Typing is an important skill, but if it’s used as a substitute for teaching handwriting, students may well suffer academically.

The evidence on the drawbacks of digital reading is more voluminous than that on writing, but some of it is contradictory. Some researchers [have found](#) that students express a marked preference for print over digital text, with higher proportions [saying](#) reading from a screen is boring or tiring. Others [have found](#) students strongly prefer digital reading. The studies agree, however, that those who read on a screen are overly confident that they’ve understood what they’ve read.

A research duo at the University of Maryland, Patricia Alexander and Lauren Trakhman, have done a total of seven studies on the different effects of print and digital reading on comprehension. During [a recent appearance](#) on the podcast The Science of Reading, they said they were surprised by the consistent discrepancy between how much their subjects—college students—*thought* they understood and what they actually took in. Despite their confident assertions to the contrary, students’ comprehension was actually better when they read print.

“They bought the message that they were digital natives,” Alexander said.

One problem, Alexander and Trakhman say, is that people read digital text much more quickly than print. And if you do something quickly, you assume it’s easier. But it may seem easier because you’re not paying as much attention as you need to.

At least one other researcher [has seen](#) speed as a problem in digital reading. But another, who analyzed 33 studies on the subject, [didn’t see](#) differences in reading times between the two types of media.

Whatever the reasons for the differences between print and digital reading, the combination of poor comprehension and overconfidence is a dangerous one—similar to [the Dunning-Kruger Effect](#), the finding that people who perform poorly on a task tend to rate their performance highly. If we’re not careful, we could find ourselves with a generation of readers who skim text on screens, are confident they understand it—and possibly act on what they think it says—but are seriously misinformed.

As with some of the handwriting studies, the reading studies described above have focused on adults or older teenagers. That’s not unusual. The people conducting research tend to be university professors, and the students who happen to be in their vicinity are convenient subjects. But the findings probably apply to younger students as well.

There’s also research in this area on children eight years old and under, though. There, too, the data generally [gives an edge](#) to paper, although the benefits seem to be stronger for adults. One difference is that for young children, digital seems to be a *better* option for nonfiction—the opposite of findings for older readers.

Certain kinds of digital enhancements in text for children—features that repeat key vocabulary words, for example, or provide context—can boost comprehension. But too many bells and whistles that are unrelated to the text’s content can be distracting and overstimulating. And the advantages of one medium over another can vary with the context: One analysis of 39 studies [found](#), for example, that children from low-income families generally did better with paper books, but there was no difference between print and digital for kids from middle- or high-income families.

As Alexander and Trakhman recognize, digital devices aren’t going anywhere. So we need to figure how to help students read text on screens more effectively. And Trakhman’s dissertation research indicates that may not be difficult. After students got a 30-minute interactive presentation alerting them to the differences between print and digital reading—for example, that digital readers are overconfident about their comprehension and are less likely to reread a passage or look at a diagram referred to in the text—their digital reading comprehension improved markedly.

Other advice includes using a mix of print and digital texts, and understanding why you’re using one rather than another; making text on a screen look as much like a hard-copy book as possible; and printing out digital passages that are particularly important.

Alexander and Trakhman also suggest showing kids how to use apps to annotate digital text—with a stylus that mimics the experience of taking notes by hand, if possible, to get the benefits of that method of note-taking.

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Natalie Wexler


Natalie Wexler is the author of [The Knowledge Gap: The Hidden Cause of America's Broken Education System—and How to Fix It](#) (Avery, 2019). She is also the co-author, with... [Read More](#)

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National Science Foundation Commits \$75 Million To University Innovation Hubs

Michael T. Nietzel Senior Contributor 
[Education](#)
I am a former university president who writes about higher education.



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The National Science Foundation's multi-year investment in five university innovation networks is ... [+] GETTY

The [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) announced this week that, as part of its Innovation Corps, (I-Corps™) program, it will establish five I-Corps Hubs. Each hub, funded at \$3 million a year for five years for a total of \$15 million per hub, will be headed by a lead university and involve an alliance of at least eight universities. While most of the participating institutions are large research universities, two of the hubs also include a Historically Black College and University.

The goal of the hubs is to scale up the National Innovation Network and provide experiential entrepreneurial training to academic researchers across all fields of science and engineering. The hubs will enable researchers to translate basic research results into products that can be brought to the marketplace. According to the NSF news release, the hubs are also expected to “work collaboratively to build and sustain a diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem throughout the U.S.”

"For 10 years, the NSF I-Corps program has been critical to fostering the creative spirit and entrepreneurship that enables NSF-funded research to be translated into new products and services and contribute to the nation's economy," said NSF Deputy Assistant Director for Engineering Linda Blevins. "I am delighted to launch the first of our I-Corps Hubs, which will form the foundation for strengthening and scaling this innovation ecosystem. The I-Corps Hubs will bring together diverse scientists and engineers, entrepreneurs, business leaders and industry partners from every part of our country, providing everyone with an opportunity to solve key challenges and spur economic growth, including new startups and new jobs."

The I-Corps program was established in 2011. It is intended to connect NSF-funded university researchers in science and engineering with the technological, entrepreneurial, and business communities via the National Innovation Network. A main objective of the Network is the commercialization of deep technologies that come from basic discoveries in science and engineering.

The I-Corps Hubs will serve national needs through five areas of responsibility, defined by NSF to be:

- Create and implement tools, resources and training activities that enhance the nation's innovation capacity.
- Identify, develop, and support promising research that can generate economic value.
- Gather, analyze, evaluate, and utilize the data and insights resulting from the experiences of those participating in local, regional, and national I-Corps programs.
- Provide opportunities to diverse communities of innovators.
- Share and leverage effective innovation practices on a national scale to improve quality of life throughout the nation.

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The five I-Corps Hubs announced this week are as follows:

NSF I-Corps Hub: Great Lakes region

- [University of Michigan](#) — Lead
- Iowa State University
- Michigan Technological University

- Missouri University of Science & Technology
- Purdue University
- The University of Akron
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- The University of Toledo
- University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee

NSF I-Corps Hub: Mid-Atlantic region

- [University of Maryland, College Park](#) — Lead
- Carnegie Mellon University
- The George Washington University
- Howard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- North Carolina State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Pennsylvania
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

NSF I-Corps Hub: New York region

- [The City University of New York](#) — Lead
- Columbia University
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- New York University
- Rockefeller University
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Stony Brook University
- University of Massachusetts Medical School
- University at Albany

NSF I-Corps Hub: Northeast region

- [Princeton University](#) — Lead
- Delaware State University
- Lehigh University
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Rowan University
- Rutgers University
- Temple University
- University of Delaware

NSF I-Corps Hub: West region

- [University of Southern California](#) — Lead
- California Institute of Technology
- Colorado School of Mines
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Colorado Boulder
- The University of New Mexico
- The University of Utah

Ultimately, the value of the hubs will be found in the extent to which they accelerate the economic impacts and social benefits of federally funded research. Will they improve health care, solve environmental problems, advance computing, create useful technologies, and lead to

the development of new materials and engineered products? Will they create more opportunities for researchers to start up businesses based on their discoveries? Will they allow scientists, including those from backgrounds historically underrepresented in science and engineering, to flourish as entrepreneurs.

NSF indicated that it plans to issue another I-Corps Hubs solicitation in Fall 2021 to continue to expand opportunities for entrepreneurship education and technology translation throughout the United States.

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Michael T. Nietzel


I am president emeritus of Missouri State University. After earning my B.A. from Wheaton College (Illinois), I was awarded a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the... [Read More](#)


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As Medical School Applications Skyrocket, More Candidates May Turn To The Caribbean

Kristen Moon Contributor ©
Education
I write about the strategy leading to successful college admissions.

 Some are calling it the "Fauci Effect." Others attribute it to a lack of gap year opportunities or a less burdensome virtual application process. Whatever the reason, one thing is clear: applications to medical school [have skyrocketed](#).





Medical schools have gotten more competitive and hopefully applicants are turning towards ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

According to the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), applications [increased 18%](#) over the 2020 cycle. They grew less than [3% per year](#), on average, over the last decade.

The dramatic increase in apps this year is an acceleration of a long-running trend. The number of applicants jumped [nearly 60%](#) between 2002 and 2020. The number of spots available at U.S. medical schools hasn't kept pace. Between 2002 and 2020, the number of students who enrolled in med school increased [just 35%](#).

During the most recent application cycle, Boston University School of Medicine received over [12,000 applications](#) for 110 seats. Stanford

University School of Medicine received 11,000 applications for 90 seats.

Increasingly long admissions odds are causing many U.S. students to [consider medical schools](#) abroad, particularly those in the Caribbean.

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Why Can't U.S. Medical Schools Create More Seats?

A [1980 report](#) published by the federally chartered Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee predicted that the United States would soon have an excess of doctors. So no new medical schools were established in the two decades that followed.

But since then, the U.S. population has [grown and aged](#). That has dramatically [increased demand](#) for physician care. Now, the country is projected to be short up to [124,000 doctors](#) by 2034, according to the AAMC's latest figures.

Creating a new medical school requires years of work and [millions of dollars](#). And it's difficult for existing schools to grow. As Geoffrey Young, the AAMC's senior director of student affairs and programs, said in an [interview](#) with *MedPage Today* earlier this year, many schools lack the necessary resources to support larger classes and would have to go through a laborious accreditation process to boost class sizes.

"For decades, medical schools weren't meeting the needs of an increasingly older U.S. population. Now, they're forced to play a game of catch-up," said Dr. G. Richard Olds, co-founder of UC-Riverside School of Medicine and current president of [St. George's University](#) (SGU) in Grenada, in an interview with Moon Prep.

Consequently, there won't be enough medical school slots for the foreseeable future. As Jayme Bograd, director of application services, recruitment, and student affairs for the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, [told MedPage Today](#) in January, "There will be qualified people that just don't have a seat to medical school this year."

Caribbean Med Schools – A Worthy Alternative

Qualified students who come out on the wrong end of an admissions decision may find that a Caribbean medical school is a worthwhile option.

International med schools may be more willing to look beyond a low MCAT score or one semester of subpar grades than U.S. schools. There are plenty of people who would make excellent doctors who do not have the opportunity to work in hospitals or have experiences and skills that compensate for a lower-than-average GPA. International schools [take pride](#) in finding - and admitting - them.

"A student's test-taking ability shouldn't define their potential as a doctor," Olds said. "Caribbean medical schools provide a necessary pathway for thousands of highly competitive U.S. applicants every year."

It's important to note that not all Caribbean medical schools are created equal. While some have long-standing records of student success, others have varying attrition rates, accreditation status, and student opportunities.

Consequently, applicants must research the Caribbean medical schools they're considering and [weigh their options](#) carefully. Medical school hopefuls should [ask about the school's](#) accreditation, federal student loan qualification, affiliated hospitals, student support, and residency match rates before making a decision. [St. George's University](#), for example, placed over [1,000 students](#) in residencies this year.

Is It Common To Get A Medical Education Abroad?

More and more students are attending medical school abroad - and then returning to the United States to practice. Since 2010, the number of international medical graduates (IMGs) practicing in the United States has grown by [nearly 18%](#).

According to the latest data from the Federation of State Medical Boards, the share of licensed U.S. IMGs who have graduated from Caribbean medical schools has increased by more than [150% since 2010](#). About [one-quarter](#) of all licensed doctors in the United States are [international medical graduates](#). Many of them are U.S. citizens.

"More than [three-quarters](#) of SGU students are [U.S. citizens](#)," Olds said. "Our students are also more likely to work in underserved areas and specialties where physician shortages are most acute."

More students are applying to medical schools than ever before. After careful research and consideration, many of them may decide that pursuing their medical educations abroad is a smart move.

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Kristen Moon

I am an independent college counselor and the founder and CEO of Moon Prep. Moon Prep is comprised of a team of experienced college counselors that guide students through... [Read More](#)

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