

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE ACT THROUGH CORE INSTRUCTION

Research to Practice

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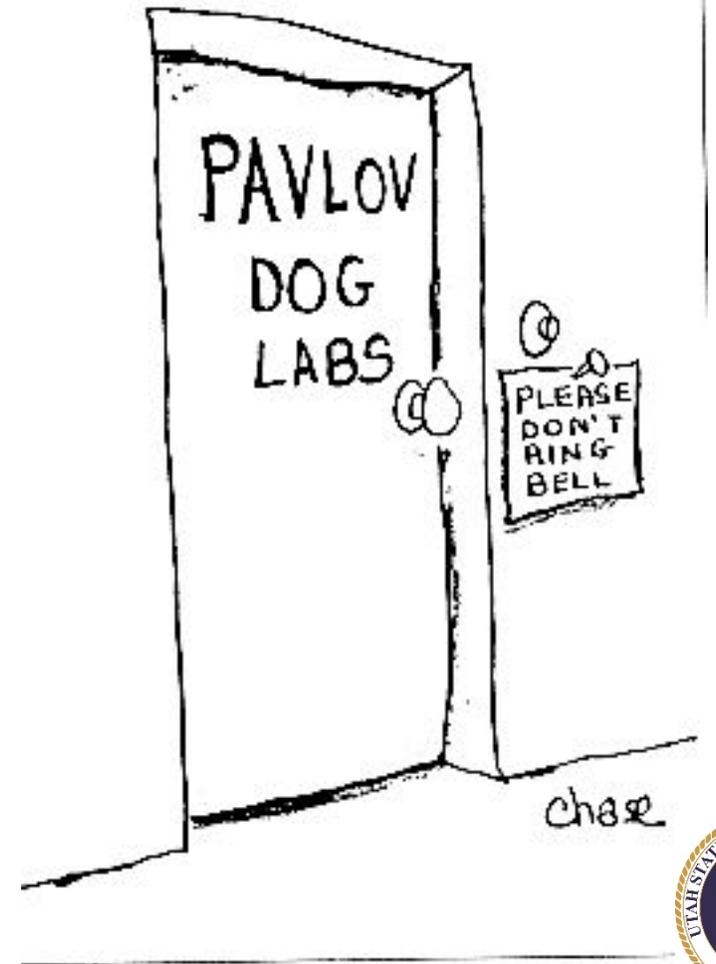
Education Specialist, College and Career Readiness | ACT



LEARNING INTENTIONS

Be able to describe

- What does and does not work in ACT prep
- 3 early education factors that predict student success
- Instructional practices in English, math, and science that improve ACT outcomes



POLL!

What kind of preparation makes the biggest difference in ACT scores?

 A. Student participation in an **ACT prep program** to remediate academic gaps

 B. Practicing test questions and strategies **during class time** to ensure **extra practice time**

 C. **Challenging** academic atmosphere, curriculum, and **critical thinking** skills

 **Challenging academic atmosphere, curriculum, and critical thinking skills**



**HIGH QUALITY CORE INSTRUCTION =
BETTER ACT RESULTS THAN INTENSIVE
ACT PREP DURING CLASS TIME ¹**

Challenging academic atmosphere, curriculum, and critical thinking provides best shot at ACT success

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

Spending *class time* on test prep *does not* make students more prepared for the ACT. ¹

What works?



RESEARCH ABOUT ACT PREP

- Challenging academic atmosphere
- Demanding academic curriculum
- College prep attitude/environment for all students
- Critical thinking skills
- Good school atmosphere
- High student on-task rate



¹ University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2008). *ACT Test Prep - More is Not Better*.

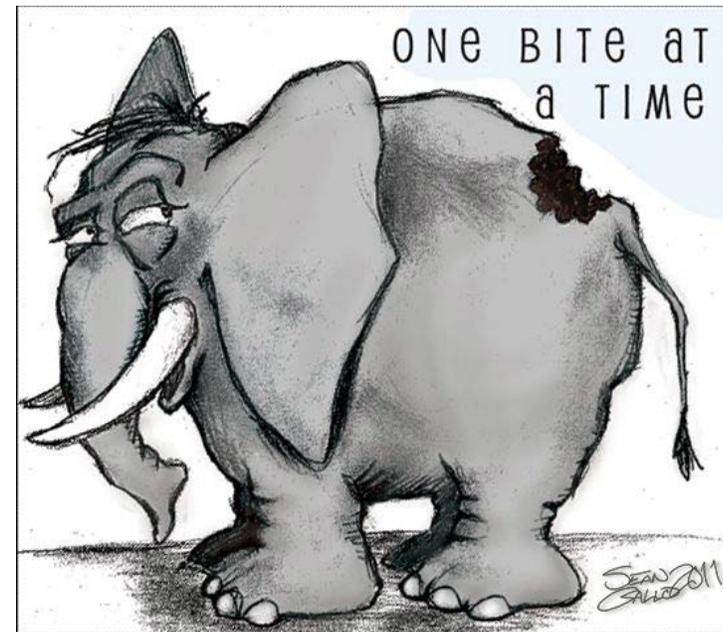


RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

80% of 11th graders & 60% of teachers – thought scores due primarily to test-taking skills ¹

Not the case! ²

- ACT requires long-term skills
- Higher-order analytical skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Complex reading
- Data analysis
- Attention to details
- Ability to write well



¹ University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2008). *ACT Test Prep - More is Not Better*.

² ACT. (2017). *Technical manual*. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT_Technical_Manual.pdf



LONG-TERM PREPARATION MATTERS

Research says . . .

- Children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are *four times* more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers (Hernandez, 2011)



Hernandez, D. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 3.



LONG-TERM PREPARATION MATTERS, CONT.

Students who arrive at school ready to learn but then miss 10 percent of kindergarten and first grade score 60 points below regularly attending students on third-grade reading tests, on average (Applied Survey Research, 2011).

Absenteeism strongly correlates with poor student outcomes, K – 12 (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

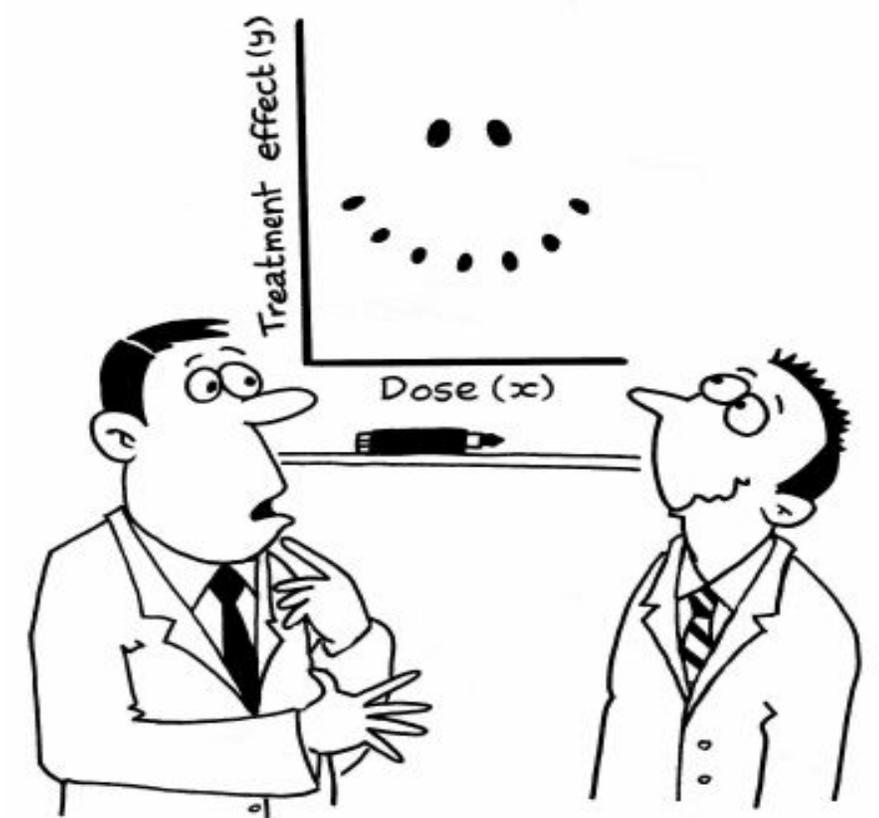


Allensworth, E. M., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshmen year*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/07%20What%20Matters%20Final.pdf>

Applied Survey Research. (2011). *Attendance in early elementary grades: Associations with student characteristics, school readiness, and third grade outcomes*. Mini-report prepared for Attendance Works. Watsonville, CA: Applied Survey Research. Retrieved from www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ASR-Mini-Report-AttendanceReadiness-and-Third-Grade-Outcomes-7-8-11.pdf

ONE MORE . . .

Mastery of early math skills predicts future math achievement *and* future reading achievement - just as reliably as early literacy mastery of vocabulary, letters and phonetics predicts later reading success (Duncan et al., 2007).



"It's a non-linear pattern with outliers.....but for some reason I'm very happy with the data."

FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

[Predictors of Post Secondary Success](https://ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success_final_0.pdf) from
American Institutes for Research

(https://ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Center_Predictors%20of%20Postsecondary%20Success_final_0.pdf)

Pre-K – post secondary



INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Using Core
instruction to build
skills

HOW TO PREP — ENGLISH CLASSES

KEY WORDS?

- Ask students to **improve** a piece of writing
- Have students **explain** how writers use tools like symbolism
- Students should **discuss how** culture, time, or place **affects** an author's writing
- Get students to **debate** the meaning of their readings
- Have students **rewrite** papers or essays **in response to** comments

University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2008). *ACT Success: Good Grades, Not Test Practice*



HOW TO PREPARE FOR ACT WRITING

Discussions and debates

Write with different purposes for different audiences

Analyze issues and identify authors' perspectives and purposes

Write with a **time limit** to practice **clearly** conveying ideas within a limited timeframe

Utah Compose

Shmoop

ACT. (2017). *Preparing for the ACT Test*. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Preparing-for-the-ACT.pdf>



HOW TO PREP – MATH CLASSES

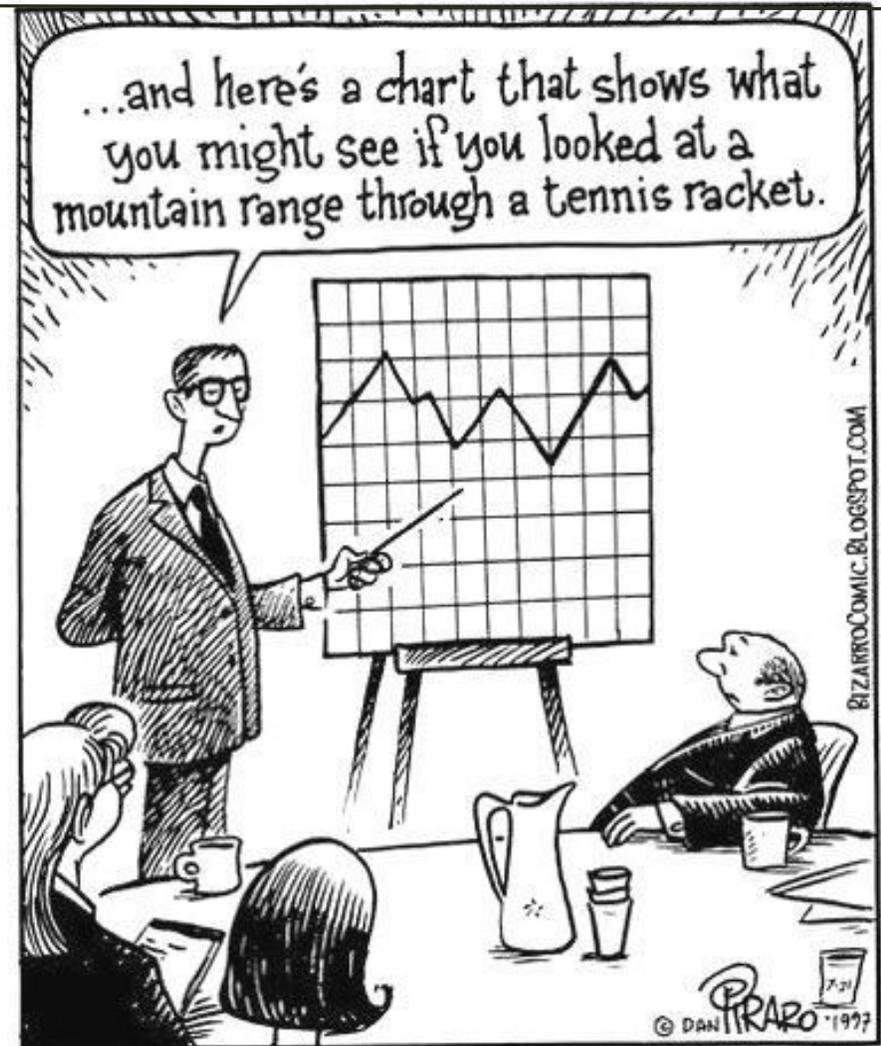
KEY PHRASES?

Have students **discuss** **different** solutions to problems with each other

Have students **explain** the process for finding solutions in different ways (think-alouds)

Use graphing calculators

University of Chicago Urban Education Institute.
(2008). *ACT Success: Good Grades, Not Test Practice*



HOW TO PREP — SCIENCE CLASSES

KEY PHRASES?

Students should use evidence/data to support arguments or hypotheses

Have students generate their own hypotheses

Offer opportunities to interpret information from graphs and tables

Read and discuss scientific reports

- good source — [Science Daily](https://www.sciencedaily.com/) (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/>)

Ask students to write lab reports





IN ALL CLASSES

Learn **metacognitive** skills and self-evaluation skills

Students should:

- Read questions **carefully** – determine what the question is asking
- On **timed** multiple-choice tests
 - **Practice** pacing
 - answer the **easiest** questions **first**
 - Use **logic** to answer more difficult questions - try to eliminate incorrect answers and compare answer choices
 - Answer every question (for practice ACT tests)



WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

More detailed info on the [ACT K12 Educator and Administrator Resources Page](http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-educator/resources.html)

(<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-educator/resources.html>)

- Technical Manual
- Technical Manual Supplement



TURN TO YOUR NEIGHBOR: 2 MINUTES

What are you currently doing?

What new ideas could you add?

Resources for finding evidence-based practice information:

- What Works Clearinghouse: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/>
- Ideas That Work: <https://ccrs.osepideasthatwork.org/>
- IRIS center at Vanderbilt University Evidence-based practice summaries: http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ebp_summaries/
- Promising Practices Network: <http://www.promisingpractices.net/programs.asp>
- Visible Learning Influences and Effect Sizes: <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>



UPCOMING TRAININGS

How can I get more help and information?

ACT-SPONSORED TRAININGS

November 16th, 12:30 PM

- In-person training
- After AD meeting - At Salt Lake District Office

December 4th, 10:00 AM

- Online Q&A on accommodations



USBE TRAININGS

Preparing Students for the ACT through Core instruction

- December 12th, 9 – 11 AM at USBE
- or
- January 9th, 9-11 AM at USBE

TRAINING
AND
Support

Preparing for Smooth Sailing on Test Administration Day (proctoring prep, new test administrators, etc.)

- January 10th 1-3 PM, USBE



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QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS?

