Essay

After reading the article about slowing reforms due to teacher resistance, we have some dissenting opinions we'd like to share. Fundamentally, your research was conducted with the incorrect set of participant survey groups. We are of the opinion that those groups surveyed are the cause of slowing reforms and have used teachers as a convenient scapegoat to air their grievances concerning technology use.

The "blue ribbon panel" was "commissioned and paid for by a consortium of leading technology manufacturers" which leads one to believe the results of the panel were clearly biased toward those funding the survey. It was also mentioned that parents groups are "upset about the apparent waste of their tax dollars" but they seem just fine wasting funding that could be put toward valuable research for what teachers need.

It would be more beneficial to survey teachers to see what was needed instead of forcing unsolicited goods into the hands of already overwhelmed educators. It is well known that software developers' goal is to make sales, parents are more willing to offload blame for failing students and administrators are concerned with scores. It seems as though the focus of the study was more about degrading teaching instead of working to correct the perceived technological gaps. No administrator is going to refuse new technology but they do not know enough about the new materials to show those using it how to best implement them for success. Giving a teacher software that is irrelevant and unnecessary is detrimental to the learning environment outside sources are trying to create. Teachers are overburdened and when others are adding new technology without training, explanation or time for mastery can only lead toward the misuse of aforementioned technologies. If teachers had been surveyed the results would have drastically different.

Those currently working with students can only decide upon the tools necessary to add value to the classroom. To have shared the information collected within the studies showing the affordances of new technologies would have been more beneficial to the public. This would raise awareness for current education needs for students instead of undermining the efforts of classroom professionals.

Making efforts toward a more collaborative educational system would include asking for teacher input. Instead of sending teachers to the proverbial stake, asking their opinions and working toward a common goal of student success is what the community is truly calling for. Who is really to blame for the perceived weakness of the educational system?