



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 9, 2016

Big Brother Seeking to Get in Your Child's Head — Literally

With help and funding from the federal government, Big Brother is about to get inside your child's mind — literally. Emerging technologies backed by the U.S. Department of Education are already being deployed in "education," with federal education bureaucrats hoping to eventually use those tools to monitor and track everything from children's "mindsets" and "attitudes" to their "emotions" and "cognitive processes." Much of it is being pursued under the guise of improving and individualizing schooling. But the reality is probably not that simple. Experts have been warning about the trends for decades. Even a layman, though, can see the dire potential abuses of such technology.



Aside from official documents, the latest [reports to document](#) the troubling trend — [albeit while trying to put a smiley face on the developments](#) — come from *Education Week*. According to an article by Benjamin Herold published last month, under the guise of providing "personalized learning experiences," new technology is targeting students' "individual emotions, cognitive processes, 'mindsets,' and character and personality traits." Apparently almost oblivious to the implications of entering into students' minds under the pretext of "educating" them, the multiple *Education Week* articles and other reports on the issue come across almost as advertisements for Big Brother and his growing capabilities.

On January 6, for example, the education-focused media outlet [touted](#) "new efforts to dramatically expand the types of data collected in the classroom and to focus more attention on responding to individual students' 'mindsets,' non-cognitive skills, and emotional states." Aside from one brief mention of privacy being a major concern, the report does not even consider that parents may not want their children's mindsets and emotional states to be tracked, probed, analyzed, and manipulated by Big Brother. The terrifying potential of such mind-breaking technology in the wrong hands is another subject that is never touched upon in the glowing reports, despite warnings about it from within the federal government stretching back to at least the 1970s.

Among the many tools being pursued are so-called "Intelligent Tutoring Systems," which monitor, track, and exploit students' emotional and physiological reactions. "The idea is that emotions have a powerful influence on cognition," computer science and psychology Professor Sidney D'Mello at the University of Notre Dame, who has done a great deal of research in the field, is quoted as saying by *Education Week*. "Ten years ago, there were things you could do in a lab that you couldn't do in the messiness of the real world," he said, adding that better and more affordable technology have provided a major boost for researchers. "Now, you can get a reasonable proxy of a student's heart rate from a webcam."



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Unsurprisingly, the federal government is unconstitutionally driving and funding much of the Orwellian advances in technology and its applications in “teaching” students what Big Brother wants them to know, and ensuring that its education agenda is being absorbed. In its most recently released “[National Education Technology Plan](#),” the Obama administration’s [increasingly controversial Department of Education](#) touts its agenda to blend technology and “learning” in potentially abusive ways. Under the vision, students would do much of their “learning” on “devices,” followed by “assessments,” which would be used to manipulate the children — even to the point of altering their personalities.

Under the heading “non-cognitive competencies,” for example, the document [outlines](#) how these technology-based “assessments” are being and will be used to “measure a broader range of desired educational outcomes, especially non-cognitive competencies.” So-called non-cognitive competencies, also referred to as “social and emotional learning” in the report, include “a range of skills, habits, and *attitudes* that facilitate functioning well in school, work, and life.” (Emphasis added.) Did you catch that? Big Brother wants to use “assessments” to measure the “attitudes” of your child. So does the United Nations and its educational bureaucracy, [as its leaders openly boast in press releases](#).

In a rational, reasonable world, that *might* not be something to be overly paranoid about — with the key word being *might*. But when one considers the [openly declared “education” agenda being pushed by the establishment and the Obama administration](#), suddenly the implications sound much more sinister. Even recently retired Education Secretary Arne Duncan has [repeatedly boasted](#) of using government schools, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as his “global partner,” to transform American children into “green” and “global” citizens. UNESCO’s agenda is also relatively transparent at this point, with its chief, [a Bulgarian Communist Party operative](#), practically shouting it from the rooftops.

In addition to the “assessments,” Orwellian and previously unimaginable technologies are also being deployed for the “learning” component of “education.” Essentially, the pseudo-education establishment is aiming to exploit emerging technologies that can gather data about students’ responses to stimuli — smiles or frowns, changes in pupil dilation, eye-movement tracking, heart rate, and more — and then customize the “learning” experience based on the individual students. What happens if such unfathomably powerful tools were used for pushing false information, attitudes at odds with parental beliefs, or even for outright brainwashing of students? That is rarely discussed, despite the establishment’s open admissions about what it hopes to accomplish in the minds of children.

A variety of research papers have recently emerged on the subject. Among them is one funded by both the federal government and [Common Core financier Bill Gates](#) that brought together researchers from the infamous Teachers College at Columbia University, [home of the socialist-humanist “godfather” of modern dumbed-down public education John Dewey](#), and the U.S. Army Research Laboratory. The paper explores, among other topics, what it called “affect,” defined as a state linked to “neurobiology, psychophysiology, and consciousness,” as well as how to regulate affect in an educational context. The study looked at six case studies, concluding that, while the field is in its infancy, it has promise and should be further studied.

Another paper, dubbed “Frontiers of Affect-Aware Learning Technologies,” with creepy echoes of Pavlov’s experiments on dogs, discusses deliberately confusing students under the guise of educating them. The authors “show how affective computing is challenging some of the widely-held norms by describing a technology that promotes learning by strategically inducing confusion in the minds of learners,” the paper states. “Although the experience of confusion is generally seen as negative, there is



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some evidence to indicate that confusion can create opportunities for learning,” the authors continue, noting that they developed a system that “strategically introduces confusion into the minds of the students.”

As *The New American* [reported](#) as far back as 2013, the federal government has been very busy promoting the use and advances in the sort of technology that would make any would-be totalitarian drool. Consider, for example, a February 2013 [report](#) by the Department of Education dubbed *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century*. Included in the 100-page report is information about technology that was already being used in an Education Department-funded tutoring program years ago.

“Researchers are exploring how to gather complex affective data and generate meaningful and usable information to feed back to learners, teachers, researchers, and the technology itself,” the report explains. “Connections to neuroscience are also beginning to emerge.” The technological tools already being used by federally funded education schemes to probe students’ minds and “measure” the children include, as described in the report, “four parallel streams of affective sensors.”

Among the devices already used through a federally funded tutoring scheme is a “facial expression camera” used to “detect emotion” and “capture facial expressions.” According to the report, the camera is linked to software that “extracts geometric properties on faces.” There is also a “posture analysis seat” and a “pressure mouse.” Finally, the report describes a “wireless skin conductance sensor” strapped to students’ wrists. The sensors collect “physiological response data from a biofeedback apparatus that measures blood volume, pulse, and galvanic skin response to examine student frustration.” Again, these systems are already being used in government-funded programs, and with technology racing ahead, developments are expected to become increasingly troubling.

Another [Education Department report](#) entitled *Enhancing, Teaching and Learning Through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics* acknowledges similarly alarming schemes. “A student learning database (or other big data repository) stores time-stamped student input and behaviors captured as students work within the system,” it notes. “A predictive model combines demographic data (from an external student information system) and learning/behavior data from the student learning database to track a student’s progress and make predictions about his or her future behaviors or performance.” Do you want Big Brother monitoring your children’s minds and using that information to predict their behaviors? Without action by the American people, this may well be coming, potentially in the not-too-distant future.

While much of what is already happening in the field likely sounds like bad science fiction to a layman, patriotic, God-fearing education researchers have been sounding the alarm about these developments for decades. Former U.S. Education Department Senior Adviser Charlotte Iserbyt, who served in the Reagan administration and [exposed much of what was going on](#) in her massive book *Deliberate Dumbing Down of America*, has long been warning of precisely this sort of technology. She has warned for decades that the establishment is hoping to literally condition Americans, starting with children in government schools, using the schemes explored by behaviorist B.F. Skinner and others, all to create a dumbed-down, compliant population of “worker bees” willing to accept totalitarianism at the global level.

With the emerging technologies now making that possible on a previously unimaginable scale, the future is now. “This tracking is totally illegal and unconstitutional,” Iserbyt said when asked about the latest developments. But it is not surprising. She pointed to warnings [quoted in her book \(page 138\)](#)



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that were provided in 1976 by Lawrence Grayson of the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute of Education, who foresaw the threat to individual privacy posed by new technologies in education. A few of his warnings, provided in an e-mail by Iserbyt, are re-printed here, because they are even more relevant today than when they were written generations ago.

"Modern technological devices, along with advances in the behavioral sciences, can threaten the privacy of students," Grayson warned, seemingly assuming, rightly or wrongly, that the establishment was at least motivated by good intentions. "Technology that can reveal innermost thoughts and motives or can change basic values and behaviors, must be used judiciously and only by qualified professionals under strictly controlled conditions.... Behavioral science, which is assuming an increasing role in educational technology, promises to make educational techniques more effective by recognizing individual differences among students and by patterning instruction to meet individual needs. However, behavioral science is more than an unbiased means to an end. It has a basic value position (Skinner, 1971) based on the premise that such 'values as freedom and democracy, which imply that the individual ultimately has free will and is responsible for his own actions, are not only cultural inventions, but illusions' (Harman, 1970). This position is contradictory to the basic premise of freedom and is demeaning to the dignity of the individual. Behavioral science inappropriately applied can impinge on individual values without allowing for personal differences and in education can violate the privacy of the student."

He continued: "Intent on improving education, educators, scientists, and others concerned with the development and application of technology are often insensitive to the issues of privacy raised by the use of their techniques. For example, many psychological and behavioral practices have been introduced on the ground that they will make education more efficient or effective. However, improvements in efficiency through technological applications can reinforce these practices without regard to their effects. What is now being done in education could be wrong, especially if carried out on a massive scale. As the use of technology becomes more widespread, we may reach the point where errors cannot be detected or corrected. This is especially important because technology interacts with society and culture to change established goals and virtues. Propagating an error on a national level could change the original goals to fit the erroneous situation. The error then becomes acceptable by default."

"In developing and applying technology to education, potential effects must be analyzed, so that negative possibilities can be identified and overcome before major resources are committed to projects that could produce undesirable long-term social consequences," Grayson concluded. "In matters affecting privacy it is better to err on the side of the individual, than on that of research or improved educational practice. Violations of privacy can never be fully redressed." Neither can damage done to children's minds by the sort of technology now being developed in [combination with the indoctrination and dumbing-down imposed in government schools](#).

Grayson could probably not have imagined the technology that right this instant is being developed and tested on children across America and beyond — much less the [sort of indoctrination that today passes for "education" in the public school system](#). But his prescient warnings must be urgently heeded before Washington, D.C., and its allies inflict irreparable harm on America and her children. Rather than continuing to march full-speed into the educational Brave New World being imposed by the establishment, Americans should demand that Congress immediately slam on the brakes. That means no more data gathering, data mining, behaviorism, indoctrination, or conditioning — whether at the



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federal, state, or local level. The future of American children and the nation itself may literally depend on it.

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