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February 2011

Research and Innovation in Learning

# Research Update

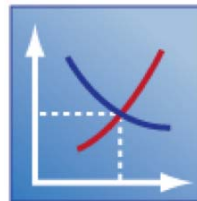
Center for Technology in Learning



## Helping Learning Scientists Think Critically About Education and the Economy

A team of SRI International scholars articulates eight thought-provoking issues about the relationships between educational improvement and economic competitiveness.

In a new publication in the *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, a team of SRI scholars provides a broad and comprehensive report following two years of intensive collaboration between learning scientists and economists. The team found that most of the evidence linking education to economic growth is based on measures of education that almost everyone agrees are largely irrelevant to the 21st century economy – and that if we were to optimize education to raise scores on those old measures, we might actually decrease economic competitiveness.



The report suggests four areas in which learning scientists could have the greatest impact on the economy:

1. assessing 21st century skills effectively at scale,
2. helping the public more strongly reconceptualize learning as a lifewide activity (not restricted to school),
3. focusing on meaningful and sustainable scale up of technology-based innovations that deepen students' understanding, and
4. developing a body of research on how youth learn to participate in innovation.

Read the full [journal article](#).

## SRI to Evaluate NSF's Informal Science Education Program

Building a hot air balloon at home, designing small machines in a museum workshop, or revitalizing a creek during a summer camp: hands-on, out-of-school experiences can nurture children's sense of scientific inquiry and also impact the intellectual caliber of our citizenry. How does NSF funding create possibilities to advance the field and the state of the art for developing powerful informal learning experiences such as these? To find answers, SRI will lead a 3-year program evaluation of the past decade of the NSF Informal Science Education (NSE) program, which supports innovation in research, development, infrastructure, and capacity-building for learning outside formal school settings. SRI's high-profile evaluation, conducted with partners at Inverness Research and the Exploratorium in San Francisco, will provide the first comprehensive understanding of the ISE landscape based on investigating NSF's contributions



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[Read about SRI's role as a leader in Education and Innovation in \*Education Week\*](#)

[CTL's Bill Penuel presented on behalf of two LIFE Center research teams at the Principal Investigators Meeting of the Science of Learning Centers](#)

[CTL's Dr. Jeremy Roschelle presented at the 2010 STEM in Education Conference in Brisbane, Australia](#)

[SRI International Awarded Department of Education Grant to Validate Web-based Classroom Assessment Tool](#)

[Secretary of Education Arne Duncan released the U.S. Department of Education's final National Education Technology Plan 2010, CTL Director Barbara Means led SRI's activities supporting the plan's development](#)

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to the development of social, human, technical, and institutional capital in the field and the resulting range of learning opportunities and outcomes for children and adults who participate in informal science experiences.

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### Listen to Bill Penuel's Podcast: How Classroom Assessments Can Improve Teaching and Learning



Effective classroom assessments can reveal important information about schools and individual students. Unfortunately, most current tests don't assess vital innovation skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. Researchers at SRI's Center for Technology in Learning are working to develop classroom assessments that can be as effective as tutoring and serve as a diagnostic tool for teachers. Bill Penuel explains why it's important to provide teachers with technology that informs – but doesn't automate – the assessment process. [Listen now.](#)

SRI International ([www.sri.com](http://www.sri.com)) is an independent, nonprofit research institute. The mission of SRI's Center for Technology in Learning (CTL) is to improve learning and teaching through innovation and inquiry. Much of our work is conducted in educational settings such as classrooms, after-school programs, and teacher education programs. Visit [ctl.sri.com](http://ctl.sri.com).

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