

# COVID19 Distance-Learning Rules Help Big Tech Shut Down Brick-and-Mortar Public Schools, Replace Human Teachers with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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*The [DeVos](#) Department of Education's new "Proposed Rules" for federal regulations of "Distance Education and Innovation" ([85 FR 18638](#)) will effectively open the floodgates for online education corporations to put public brick-and-mortar schools out of business by streamlining "adaptive-learning and other artificial intelligence" technologies that replace "human instructors" with "competency-based education (CBE)" software which provide "direct assessment" through "subscription-based" courseware that [data-mine](#) students' cognitive-behavioral algorithms to "personalize" digital lessons.*

## **What Is Computerized CBE? No More Classrooms, No More "Credit Hours":**



As I have [documented](#) in several [articles](#), "CBE" is a euphemism for educational methods that deploy computer modules based on Harvard Psychologist B. F. Skinner's "teaching machines," which implement operant-conditioning methods to "shape" student learning into "competent" behaviors geared toward college or career readiness. The terms "competency-based education" and "CBE" are used 147 times in the new Proposed Rules for [85 FR 18638](#), which is a total of 64 pages long. Compare this to the 392-pages of federal legislation that cover the entire Every Student Succeeds Act ([ESSA](#)), which only contains 6 references to "competency-based education."

According to Skinnerian CBE advocates, competency-based computer learning at home is better than human instruction in a classroom because the one-to-one student/computer ratio enables each student to learn at his or her own pace. [85 FR 18638](#) states "CBE programs . . . measure student progress based on their demonstration of specific competencies rather than sitting in a seat or at a computer for a prescribed period of time. Many CBE programs are designed to permit students to learn at their own pace." Stated differently, when a student enrolled in CBE courseware is ready to move on to the next

lesson, he or she can click on the next learning module without having to wait for the teacher to deliver the next lecture. And if a CBE student is not ready to move on to the next virtual lesson, he or she can remediate by repeating the same digital learning module without being “left behind” when the teacher moves on to the next lecture.

### **“Subscription-Based” Distance Learning, Pay-as-You-Go**

To facilitate “self-paced” CBE learning, online education corporations and other software companies are offering “subscription-based” e-learning services that enroll students on a pay-as-you-go basis. These self-paced CBE courses allow a student to “subscribe” for enrollment into virtual-learning modules which can be rolled over with monthly subscription fees for as long or as soon as it takes for the student to demonstrate “competency” in the course.

Now that basically every US school has converted to virtual “distance learning” through computers, 85 FR 18638 is attempting to loosen federal requirements for self-paced CBE courseware so that online education corporations can rake in federal funding for delivering more subscription-based “competency” lessons through digital platforms:

[c] urrent regulations require an institution to evaluate a student’s pace of completion by dividing completed credits over attempted credits. This calculation is difficult to apply in competency-based programs, including subscription-based programs, because there is often no set period of time during which a student “attempts” a competency in such programs; rather, the student works on a competency until he or she can demonstrate mastery of it. Given the limitations in this proposed definition on a student’s eligibility to receive additional disbursements [of federal funds], we believe it is unnecessary and needlessly burdensome for an institution’s SAP policy to include pace requirements for subscription-based programs.

In other words, these new (de)regulations will relax the legal requirements for online education corporations to receive federal funds, such as financial aid grants, as payments for students’ CBE subscription fees. It should be noted that “subscription-based” e-learning is referenced 112 times in these new Proposed Rules.

### **Adaptive Learning = Post-Human Artificial Intelligence**

As I have [documented](#) in numerous articles, self-paced CBE subscriptions and “adaptive-learning” software basically go hand in hand. CBE “courseware” subscriptions “personalize” lessons for students through “adaptive-learning” computers, which are nothing less than modern digitalized versions of the “Skinner box,” or [“teaching machine.”](#) Adaptive-learning software revamps B. F. Skinner’s “programmed instruction” with “artificial intelligence” that automates “stimulus-response” methods of educational psychology to train students for academic and career “competences.”

Essentially, adaptive-learning courseware enables “self-paced” learning because the psychological-conditioning software “adapts” its lessons based on how the student “responds” to the virtual “stimuli,” such as multiple-choice or short-answer modules on digital windows. The faster the student responds with correct answers, the faster the learning stimuli will progress the student towards full “competence” at the end of the subscription-based course’s module sequence.

Incentivizing broader enrollment in subscription-based adaptive-learning courseware, [85 FR 18638](#) expands the definition of accreditable “academic engagement” as “ participation by a student in . . . an online course with an opportunity for interaction or an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction. . . . Such interaction could include the use of artificial intelligence or other adaptive learning tools.” Under this revised definition of “academic engagement,” schools will be given expanded flexibility to accredit a vast range of self-paced CBE curriculums delivered by online education companies through adaptive-learning AI that programs students with operant-conditioning algorithms.

Moreover, “academic engagement” is being further expanded to give adaptive CBE courseware the greenlight to phase out certain requirements for human instruction: “[a]ctive engagement . . . could include the use of artificial intelligence or other adaptive learning tools so that the student is receiving feedback from technology-mediated instruction. The interaction need not be exclusively with a human instructor.” Indeed, adaptive AI can deliver “feedback” on student learning through [“direct assessment,”](#) which is referenced 226 times in the new Proposed Rules.

Of course, in a bankrupt economy where people are locked down under emergency pandemic pretenses, such adaptive AI courseware will be more convenient since the software can be available for the student 24-hours a day (unlike a human teacher). In addition, the non-human AI bots will be much cheaper than human instructors who need to be fed and housed. So it looks like the proposed (de)regulations will set up incentives which will ensure that the virtual-learning industry is able to swallow up federal education funds while public brick-and-mortar schools and human teachers are starved out into obsolescence.

To be sure, AI adaptive-learning algorithms are evolving faster than legislators can deliberate on new regulations for such new “machine learning” innovations. Thus, to get out of the way of “progress,” [85 FR 18638](#) is basically writing a blank check for AI corporations to sell schools and students new e-learning products and ed-tech “updates” without preliminary regulatory permission from the federal government:

[t] he current regulations [which] do not address subscription-based programs or consider programs made possible through artificial intelligence-driven adaptive learning. . . . Because of the time it takes to implement new regulations, it is unlikely that the Department will be able to keep pace with developing technologies and other innovations in real time. These proposed regulations attempt to remove barriers that institutions face when trying to create and implement new and innovative ways of providing education to students, and also provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that future innovations we cannot yet anticipate have an opportunity to move forward without undue risk of a negative program finding or other sanction on an institution.

To put it another way, AI-learning algorithms evolve faster than legislators can regulate, so these new federal rules will “remove barriers” to AI ed-tech progress by allowing educational institutions the “flexibility” to rubberstamp new AI courseware programs without prior regulatory approval from the US Department of Ed.

But if the federal government allows AI ed-tech to develop faster than Congress can regulate, then the Department of Ed will render itself into a mere ceremonial bureaucracy

that has abdicated its authority to AI algorithms, which means artificial intelligence will be in the driver's seat taking control of the future of education policy as virtual distance learning becomes the mainstream mode of schooling in a post-corona economy.

It should be noted that Edgar McCulloch, who is a Government Relations representative of the [IBM Corporation](#), sat on the "Accreditation and Innovation negotiating committee" involved in the proposal of these new federal rules. This is worth noting because IBM develops AI ed-tech through its [Watson artificial-intelligence](#) program which partners with the globalist [Pearson Education LLC](#): the "world's largest education company," which also runs online schooling companies including Connections Academy.

How much stimulus money will be vacuumed up by online education corporations and AI courseware companies under these new federal rules? Will brick-and-mortar schools be able to survive in a post-corona economy in which people are either heavily travel restricted or too poor to pay for school buildings and human employees? Will human teachers, or even human ethics, survive in a world in which the total deregulation of technocratic advancement exalts AI as the [judge, jury, and executioner](#) of human learning?

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