Computer Skills Development in Early Childhood Classrooms: Yet Another Casualty of NCLB?

The author dedicated his research sabbatical to exploring the impact of NCLB on kindergarten and first grade curriculum. Data on weekly instructional time spent in each subject area (literacy, math, science, social studies, and computer skills) was collected from 100 school districts, representing all regions of the United States. The schools sampled included public, private, parochial and charter. Previous research had noted that the increase in time spent on reading/writing in early childhood settings had resulted in substantially less time spent on social studies and science. While this was certainly born out by the data gathered in this study, the biggest casualty of the NCLB driven emphasis on reading/writing was in the amount of time kindergartners and first graders spent "hands on" with computers. Given the foundational importance of the early learning years, this shift appears to be dramatically counterproductive. In this context, preparing new teachers who are committed to developing children's technology skills as part of their learning in ALL of their subject areas in absolutely critical.