



New Century Education

## **What Does New Century Provide That Others Don't?** **A White Paper**

### ***Instruction Beyond Typical Grade Levels***

Most software products are sold in grade levels or clusters of grade levels (K-2 vs. 3-5 in elementary vs. middle school vs. high school). This means if a student is struggling with skills more than two grade levels below his enrollment, other software products cannot link to appropriate instruction. Unfortunately, At-Risk and Special Education students often do not enter a class with their skills all within grade levels. Ninth and tenth graders often are missing elementary grade level skills which are critical to recovery.

New Century does not sell its products by grade level or cluster of levels, because it delivers what the student needs, regardless of how far below grade level that student may need assistance. Lessons are designed to teach early grade level material without utilizing clowns, balloons, cartoon robots and other juvenile material that dis-enfranchises the older learner. Instead, New Century uses science, history and geography to present lesson content in a way that is engaging for all learners.

### ***Adaptive Diagnostic Tests***

Often, if educational software products have assessments, they only assess skills at the assigned grade level. If the At-Risk student is functioning deeply below grade level, the typical solution is to assign sequentially lower levels of tests in order to assess the student correctly, a time consuming and cumbersome process.

New Century worked with researchers at ETS to develop adaptive diagnostic tests. The student's response to the first question will dictate the second question. The response to the second question will dictate the third question. The tests continue to adapt the questions and "drill down" until the student strengths and weaknesses across several strands of learning are identified in detail. Typically, the process is complete in about 45 minutes. In the end, the teacher discovers that the student, who may be in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, suffers skill deficits in long division at the fourth grade level, and fractions at the second grade level. Only with a detailed understanding of the challenge, can instruction be assigned successfully.

### ***Assignment by Objective (Not Grade or Module)***

Many educational software products assign a student a level of instruction or a module (e.g. fourth grade fractions). All students assigned that module take the same sequence of instruction. As a result, students must inefficiently wade through instruction they have already mastered in order to work on a few lessons for the skills they must learn.

New Century assigns individual lessons granularly by the specific skill that the student needs to master (e.g. multiplication of fractions with two digit denominators). Once he is proficient in that discrete skill, he is reassigned to the next skill he must master (e.g. long division – three digit dividends and two digit divisors). This is a far more efficient means of filling in the gaps in a student's educational background and building an underperforming student's skills back to his grade level.

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### ***Dynamic Lesson Path Adjustment***

When a student fails a lesson, most educational software products make the student take the lesson over and over again, until the student either memorizes the lesson answers, or the software simply “kicks the student down the road” to the next lesson.

With New Century, if the student fails the lesson, he is given the opportunity to take the lesson again (he may have been distracted). However, if he fails a second time, he is presented with pre-requisite instruction to rebuild his skills to mastery of the learning objective.

If the student fails the next mastery test (embedded every few lessons) he will be asked to repeat prior lessons associated with the learning objectives of the failed or near mastered items. If he fails the mastery test a second time, he will see pre-requisite and or scaffolding instruction (including content typically not seen before), as well as prior lessons in order to re-build skills to mastery. Normally this approach will result in skill mastery when a test is re-administered. Repeated failure of the mastery test flags the teacher to intervene. In this way, New Century assures that students are truly learning the material and teachers are focused on helping each student with what they need most – a process that is both effective and efficient.

### ***Test Focused Instruction***

Most comprehensive courseware products comparable to New Century, do not offer integrated test preparatory programs for GED or state proficiency tests (ARMT, CST, and FCAT). If a solution is offered, it is typically a separate product and not integrated with the instructional content. Often what is provided is little more than practice tests in hopes that a student’s familiarity with the test items will enhance his ability to guess correctly.

New Century provides integrated Test Focused Instruction, which includes tests that are painstakingly blue printed to the GED or state proficiency test. However, New Century links the test results to a set of lessons designed to assure the student masters any remaining weakness in the tested learning objectives and underlying concepts. By teaching to mastery, the student is truly prepared for the test and any future application of the learning objective.