

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Benchmark Education Receives Grant for New Online ACE© Research Project Organizer

K-12 Publisher Benefits from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Grant

PELHAM, NY, Aug. 13, 2013 – Literacy publisher [Benchmark Education Company](#) announced that it received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s “Literacy Courseware Challenge” for its innovative new online *ACE*® *Research Project Organizer* (RPO). The grant will fund the development of RPOs around major themes, including environment, government, economics, and technology and society with a culminating focus on argumentative writing.

ACE Research is one of three Adaptive, Collaborative Environments (ACE) Digital Learning Modules that will be available to schools later this fall. *ACE RPO* addresses the challenging reading and writing Common Core State Standards’ expectations. This research project organizer brings teaching, learning, and assessment into a Web-based environment for students and educators. Students can work one-to-one or collaborate around engaging monthly cross-curricular content area topics for grades 3 to 8. It directs multi-week units of study, differentiated by grade level – providing students with extended opportunities to engage in authentic, rigorous, and varied writing practice on a number of key topics. At each grade level, topics such as Exploration, Habitats, Communities, Native Americans, the U.S Constitution, and Communication, are offered.

“We are very proud that the Gates Foundation has acknowledged *ACE* with this prestigious grant,” said Tom Reycraft, chief executive officer of Benchmark Education. “At a time when schools are looking for the right tools to help their students meet the reading and writing Common Core requirements, *ACE* will prepare them to think critically to achieve individual and collaborative research goals.”

ACE also enriches the educational experience by enabling students to engage in several social collaboration features, including forums, chats, and messaging, which allow them to confer with and receive just-in-time feedback from teachers. Students can also request support, engage in peer editing, and submit work for moderation and sharing with an authentic, safe audience. With *ACE*, the school day can be extended with online access to e-books and critical thinking activities.

For educators, *ACE* provides resources that address Big Ideas, Essential Questions, Common Core Standards, Curriculum-related Content and Key Concepts, in addition to a

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robust set of professional development and support materials. Immediate access to student work provides teachers key on-going, actionable, formative-assessment data on student understanding of varied text formats.

Dr. Sarah Chauncey, Director of Digital Product Development and Training at Benchmark Education and lead investigator for the Gates Grant, created the digital–research project organizer that led to *ACE*. A seasoned educator with wide-ranging technology industry experience, Dr. Chauncey developed a version of the product under real school conditions over a five-year period. Her project organizers drew the attention of teachers in other schools within the district and then teachers around the country and the globe.

Headquartered in Pelham, NY, Benchmark Education Company is a leading publisher of K–12 core, supplemental, and intervention literacy resources in English and Spanish. These resources are supported by instructional technology solutions as well as on-site and online customized professional development training for teachers and administrators. Benchmark print and online resources are differentiated to support all learners in all settings and are research-based and proven. In addition to extensive educational use in the USA, they are also used in schools and training centers in the Middle East, Canada, South America, and Asia.

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