FOREWORD

Having taught technology to fifth-grade students, I have witnessed firsthand the excitement and engagement it can bring to the learning process. But there aren’t many people I know who truly understand this phenomenon more than my longtime friend and colleague, John Couch. I first met John back in 1978 just after he was hired as Apple’s fifty-fourth employee by Steve Jobs. John was brought on as our first director of new products, and was soon promoted to be our vice president of software and lead the software team that created the graphical user interface.

Even back then John had a knack for simplifying and communicating complex ideas, and today there aren’t many areas that need simplifying and fixing more than education. I can’t remember a time when John wasn’t passionate about education. I still remember the extraordinary stories he would tell of his time teaching at UC Berkeley and Cal State, or the decade he spent rebuilding a K-12 school in San Diego. It was no surprise to me at all then when, shortly after Steve Jobs rejoined Apple, John was brought back, this time as the company’s first-ever vice president of education. Since that time he has been an integral part of Apple’s ongoing efforts to transform education from passive traditions to active innovations.
This book might well be thought of as an inside look at all John’s experiences—and, in a sense, Apple’s—along the way. It takes the reader from Steve Jobs’s passion for education, into the brains and minds of digital natives, and on to a new framework for learning that has the potential to make obsolete the consumption/memorization model used today. Through personal anecdotes and the stories of real teachers, John explores new ways of learning and teaching. Last, he gives the reader a glimpse of future technologies that have the opportunity to usher in a truly personalized learning environment where every student can unlock their hidden potential and change the world. I believe that every parent, teacher, principal, politician, activist, innovator, and leader who is responsible for and/or passionate about teaching, learning, or training in any capacity will benefit greatly from reading this book.

—Steve Wozniak
Cofounder, Apple Computer