

Tiffany Otten, Parent

"I don't object to Common Core as a principle, but how it has been rolled out in NY is a nightmare. I even get all of the common core "math nightmares" - I get where they are coming from as smarter ways to think about math.

What I DON'T support is that the way this has been rolled out has completely removed teachers' abilities to respond to students individually. My son has an IEP for high-functioning autism, and common core in NY fails miserably to account for that. There are multiple ways to assess a student's learning. Not sure how? As a teacher! THIS is not it. The perfect metaphor for this is the adage showing a bird, chimpanzee, penguin, fish, seal, dog, and an elephant, and they are judged on their ability to climb the tree. Ask them about the biology of the tree. Why they're important. Not to climb it.

I took a college history course after graduation just out of interest at a technical school. I became friends with an incredibly intelligent programmer who could code anything, but was awful at essays. Though essays were a key part of the class - after all, they convey a comprehensive and complex understanding - the *medium* did not allow her to demonstrate what she knew. So, the professor allowed her to submit her answers in outline form. They were fully fleshed-out arguments in proper structure that, *given to a writer*, would be publication-worthy essays. As-is, were a clear demonstration of her understanding of the topic. She ended up loving history, much to her surprise, and her grade reflected her understanding of the content, not how well she can write an essay.

LET TEACHERS TEACH. They are amazing assets who know what they're doing. You don't hire Dali and ask him to complete your paint-by-number with your boring ROYGBIV palette. You don't go to a hospital and tell the surgeon which stitch to use. And if there's any question on if this isn't the case here, then why did the head of the BOE for NY send HIS kids to schools that had that freedom?

I do understand it is well-intentioned. But it's broken. You know that. I applaud the courage it took to say "we goofed, we need to fix this." Please keep it up and re-empower teachers and schools to do what they are experts in."