

**Gina Sanchirico, Teacher, Mount Pleasant Cottage School Union Free School District**

The purported goal of the Common Core is success for all students. But success for all requires openness towards cognitive diversity, and isn't so easily standardized.

Forcing all students, including the cognitively disabled, into the same, age-pegged standards, deprives atypical students of optimized learning opportunities and attainable goals at their level of developmental readiness.

The standards don't allow enough flexibility for students who learn differently.

Restricting students to curricula beyond their cognitive capacities substantially lowers their achievement and diminishes self-esteem and has the potential for creating further emotional distress.

Sample texts, exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require of all students in a given grade band to engage with. Teachers can't modify the text itself to match the student's reading level, which has been the job of the special educator.

Autism is largely a social disability, with key deficits in understanding character and motivation and in drawing inferences from dialogues—in real life as much as in reading comprehension.

Well-meaning aspirations for special-needs children can foster deep and widespread denial—in particular among educators facing high-stakes standards."