

## **Ellen Schulze, Teacher, Utica CSD**

Because I now push in as an ESL teacher, I have seen Common Core in action. While I was never impressed with CC, what I'm seeing is more than a little alarming.

Kindergarten students are fidgeting while their teachers read them texts I know are beyond their comprehension. Only one or two students seemed to follow the lesson on -at words. The rest were lost. Second graders are spending a lot of time listening rather than practicing basic reading and writing skills. Third grade teachers are reporting that they have the least prepared group of students they have taught in their 20+ years of teaching. Fourth grade teachers struggle with questions their students can't answer and find they are spending little time on the basic skills - skimming, scanning, context clues, vocabulary.

The conclusion I reach is that Common Core seems to expect students to gain skills without practice. This may work for the brightest students, but average and slow students need practice, support and literal question types. Higher order thinking is a goal for older students, but it is being introduced before students are ready and before they have a solid foundation of basic literacy skills.

Seeing CC in action convinces me that it is hopelessly flawed. We need to return to the standards NY had before CC showed up. They actually worked. We should continuously search for better teaching methods --but there are no short cuts. CC is based on magical thinking. Someone seemed to think shaking everything up would fix it, but students are not thriving - they are losing ground. And while we are discussing flawed revisions, the changes to CR 154 are hurting ESL students terribly. Can we please discuss that as well?