

Claire Simon, Teacher, Byram Hills School District

I am a third grade general education classroom teacher. In my opinion the Common Core Standards represent a positive philosophical shift for students. The increase in rigor, clearly defined expectations, and depth over breadth approach are all positive for young learners. However, there are some areas where the expectations are not developmentally appropriate. In reading, the shift in balance between fiction and non-fiction reading (50 -50) is an improvement for all students. The reading standards are clearly defined and appropriate. However, standard RI.3.2 is not developmentally appropriate for third graders. Most importantly, the lexile level expected for third graders (Level P) is also not developmentally appropriate. In writing, the addition of opinion writing as a standard is an excellent addition to expectations for third graders. Finally, in math the depth over breadth approach is very positive. Most of the standards represent appropriate expectations for students with the following exceptions. Third graders need more time to explore place value concepts. This teaching should be brought back into the third grade curriculum. In my experience it is not mastered by the end of second grade (developmental) Also, most third graders need more exposure to time and time passage concepts. This should be a deeper part of the third grade curriculum as many students are still working on how to tell analog time at this age.