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As a teacher with many years of experience, who has seen initiatives come and go, I've become convinced that the problem with the Common Core is not in its implementation, it is with the Common Core itself. Yes, it's true that people are always resistant to change, but this change is of an unprecedented scope and nature. It has been railroaded through without research or piloting, both of which are time tested traditional methods of appropriate curriculum adoption.

The "standards" were written by a group of people who had limited real experience in education. Policy people are not experts. A validation committee which included members with expertise in Math and Language Arts was formed to sign off on the standards; many of the members refused to do so. The standards were never field tested, or vetted before the public.

The standards represent a one size fits all mentality. Unlike our Constitution, the Common Core standards are not a living document. Districts are not free to change them. Local control has long been a hallmark of education in this country, and this process totally usurps local control.

Testing should be an assessment of learning, not the pivot point around which everything else revolves. Proponents will say that Common Core does not dictate curriculum, but when teachers', and therefore a district's rating is based on the test scores, it follows that the curriculum will closely follow the test. When the test is the ultimate arbiter, the test will drive the curriculum. It is often said that there is latitude in how the standards are met, but there's not much latitude for innovation if the information on the test and how well your students regurgitate that information will determine your rating as a professional. Education will mostly be test prep, with the remainder of the time dedicated to taking the test.

The test of the test, which is going on now in most schools, is causing disruption of learning. Schedules in my school are being disrupted from March 17<sup>th</sup> through the beginning of May. People have to give up classroom space for the testing. It remains to be seen how the untimed nature of the test will affect those children who need to remain in a room after the estimated tests time has passed, when that room is needed for a class. Although this is a test run, these are not issues that are likely to change when it counts.

Student performance in this country has actually been declining since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, which represented the advent of high stakes testing. The testing required by the Common Core raises the stakes to a higher level.

The teacher evaluation piece is a step backward. While my district's prior evaluation process focused on professional growth, this evaluation system relies on student learning goals that reflect a small portion of what goes on in my classroom every day. Added to the fact that the scope of a teacher's development is being limited to narrow goals, we have been saddled with a computerized accountability system which has sucked up huge amounts of time previously dedicated to curriculum.

There is no doubt that standards are important, and I'm all for raising them. But how do we know that these standards, which are being widely implemented, and costing towns a lot of money, are the right ones? It is incumbent upon the State Board of Education to set the direction, but how many of those board members are, or ever have been practitioners of education? Connecticut had standards before the Common Core, and they were good ones: improve them, by all means. If you stop the Common Core now, the sky will not fall down. Children will continue to learn as they did before No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. In my opinion, our students, our country, our future, would all be better off for it.