

CCSS issues.

Like all education reform policies, I truly believe that the source of CCSS changes had the best of intentions. And also like all education reform policies that I have experienced in my 12 years in education, the roll out/implantation, has missed the mark. As a middle school math teacher, I applaud the philosophy of lessons built from a foundation of conceptual thinking. However, a balance is needed. The most efficient way to solve math problems is often found in the algorithm. Using algorithms after the conceptual introduction should be encouraged, not discouraged. Getting students ready to think and reflect and attach new learning to old learning is the way to ensure long term learning, something, in my experience that has been worthy of reform. Changing the methods completely is bringing a new set of problems to our classrooms. The new teacher evaluation methods are counterproductive to what we, as teachers need to accomplish in the classrooms. Somehow, direct teaching has received a terrible connotation. Both conceptual/inquiry based and direct teaching methods are needed. However, teachers are terrified to use direct teaching methods as the way the new evaluation systems are designed, as such methods will lead to penalties in our professional documentations. We, as educators, are supposed to keep our students' best interest at the heart of what we do. Tying testing into our evaluation is going against the grain of servicing the student to the best of our abilities. In addition, the testing is premature and this "cart before the horse" mentality is making the transition very difficult on student, parents, administrators, and teachers. There should have been a slow roll out to ensure appropriate success. First, K-2, then 3-5, etc. Instead, we are letting the for-profit testing companies dictate what goes on in our classrooms. Again, the good intentions are there, but the waters have been muddied by the rush of implementation. Our mantra should be students first, period. Educators should be helping form the new policies to ensure that student needs are being met. It is time to admit that the changes were rushed, go back, reflect, research, poll the people who understand education, and do this the right way. Otherwise, what are we doing? What is our purpose?

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