

Common and Core Standards and the Diversity of Students' Lives and Experiences

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Compton-Lilly presents a close analysis of the Common Core Standards to explore one critical dimension - the idea that meaning resides within texts and is unconnected to children's past experiences. Compton-Lilly's concern rests on the illogical assumption that a "common" and assumedly "core" set of standards can address social inequity and ensure that all children become highly literate. Despite mainstream accounts that blame teachers and cite declining standards, the real problem may be our ability to equitably serve the vast range of children who attend American schools.

A Sampling of Guiding Thoughts:

Lucy Calkins (2012) asks, "Why is *now* a good time to raise the stakes for our children, when a huge percentage are living in poverty and when the safety nets have been torn apart and there is no funding to improve education" (p. 3).

The Common Core Standards (CCS) are based on a backward design model. However, this logic ignores the diversity of experiences and backgrounds that children bring to literacy learning. Compton-Lilly raises this point to highlight the remarkable range of ways of being, valuing, knowing, and experiencing that children bring with them as they enter schools.

Attending to the diversity of students' backgrounds is difficult when a "common" set of "core" standards neither recognizes nor reflects the multiple ways of being, knowing, and thinking that children bring to classrooms.

In other words, by privileging one way of being literate and making sense of texts, the common core limits what counts for students who bring different ways of acting, interacting, and displaying what they know.

The historical problem with American schools has been our inability to equitably recognize, value and build upon different ways as we plan and implement instruction and particularly as we assess student progress (Willis, 2008).

To read Compton-Lilly's critique of the Common Core:

Compton-Lilly, C. & Stewart, K. (2013). Common and Core Standards and the Diversity of Students' Lives and Experiences. In P. Shannon (Ed.) *Closer Readings of the Common Core: Asking big questions about English/Language Arts Standards* (pp. 62-70). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

To read more about issues related to the Common Core . . .

Calkins, L., Ehrenworth, M., & Lehman, C. (2012). Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating achievement. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Shannon, P. (ed.) (2013). *Closer Readings of the Common Core: Asking big questions about English/Language Arts Standards*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann