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Best Practices in



Education

by [Angela Barton](#)



The term “best practices” in education refers to strategies and techniques that are found to be effective over time. I am just wondering who exactly determines this. Are we talking about teachers, or are we talking about institutions that have a stake in educational big business? It really seems like the latter when we look at the ridiculousness of the below “best practices.”

1. Common core math

The theory of helping students understand the “why” of math is important but developmentally inappropriate. Students are better at memorizing processes at young ages than thinking about the

reasons behind why something works.

Let them memorize math facts and basic algorithms that will help them be successful and more developmentally prepared to understand the reasoning behind the processes. Don't strip the ability of parents to help their children with school work. The basics of math are important.

2. Standardized testing

So, we **differentiate** instruction in order to prepare students for **standardized** tests! What part of that makes sense? **All these tests measure** is which students are good test-takers; the results ignore other positive qualities that contribute to students' future successes.

And don't even get us started on the ridiculousness of tying test scores to **the pay of teachers**.

3. Scripted curriculum

Teachers are the most creative people in the world and understand the needs of their students best, yet we aren't trusted to teach effectively.

We must be given "the magic words" from a scripted curriculum that takes creativity, imagination, and personality out of teaching and learning. It becomes **BORING**.

4. Standards-based Kindergarten

Don't get me started on this one. I have taught kindergarten and witnessed many changes in the past twenty years. The behavioral problems we see in the classroom are partly due to imposing developmentally inappropriate practices on five-year-olds.

This supposed “best practice” expects kindergarteners to attend a full day of instruction, have minimal opportunities to imaginatively play and learn, write full paragraphs, and read advanced books. Students are telling us they are not ready for this by acting out. We are not listening to them nor are we listening to teachers who say this is **“too much.”**

5. SLG, PIC

Let’s just say anything with a three-letter **acronym** is a ridiculous best practice. We know which students need help with particular areas of the curriculum. We don’t need to be required to spend countless hours analyzing and writing reports on this data.

6. Data walls

Data walls displayed in the classroom are constant reminders to some students that they are not as

successful as everyone else no matter how hard they try. Comparisons like this are not exactly motivating and encouraging.

7. No recess

There is a trend among administrators to maximize learning minutes in the classroom by taking away recess for kids, especially in upper elementary grades. This is problematic because every [research study](#) has shown that students focus better if they have outlets for their energy.

8. Flexible seating

We can barely keep our students awake as it is, but give a teenager a Lazy Boy, and class time will become nap time.

And elementary students with big, bouncy [hoppity](#)

horses as chairs do not spell “focused on instruction” to me.

9. Restorative justice

Although restorative justice practices do have consequences built into the program, administrators need to be trained appropriately. They see this as a pass to give students candy and rewards when we send them to the office. This ties the hands of teachers to be taken seriously when it comes to consequences for out-of-control behavior.

10. Standards on the board

Who on God’s green earth thought to themselves, “I know what will improve student learning. Let’s have teachers write words on the board that no one will ever read except an admin observer?”

Although there are many “best practices” that are tried and true, please get rid of the ridiculousness that **wastes the time of teachers** and doesn't contain one scintilla of sense. This is part of the problem that drives teachers out of the profession.

