

**Public Hearing  
Regents Learning Standards  
and High School Graduation Requirements**

**NY State Standing Committee on Education  
NYC, September 23, 2003**

**Testimony submitted by Christina Trowbridge  
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For the record, my name is Cristina Trowbridge and I am a first year science teacher at Humanities Preparatory Academy. After only one week of teaching, I feel compelled to submit my testimony to the New York Senate Education Committee Hearings.

On the third day of school, my colleagues and I took 60 high school students on a field trip to Central Park to investigate math and science inquiry-based activities. Students participated in activities from finding the height of Cleopatra's needle, observing wildlife at turtle pond, to demonstrating the geologic time scale. Students also participated in an exercise to reflect on their multiple intelligences. It is this exercise, in particular, for which I am commenting.

The students' honest assessment of their intelligences reinforced what I intuitively know and what many people on this committee know. That is, we all have different strengths (smarts) although these intelligences can change and develop over time. Can one test adequately evaluate these multiple intelligences?

For example, some of our students said they are visual learners who learn by seeing. So when we actually had a few students stretched out on Central Park's Great Lawn to demonstrate the 3 billion years of biological/geological time for their fellow classmates, it became "so clear" to our students of the enormous amount of time it took life to go from single-cell to multi cellular organisms. These activities take time to teach and take time to learn. Curriculum that is test-driven does not allow teachers and students to do these types of activities.

This is my job as a teacher to make connections to students' perspectives, to improve their skill level and to provide a high level of inquiry-based science learning. This student-centered approach is what attracted me to make a life change and leave a successful career as a museum administrator and diversity facilitator.

This past summer I was accepted into the Teaching Opportunity Program, which brings "career change" people into New York City Public School System to teach in areas that are undeserved (Math, Science, Spanish and Special Education).

Similar to the NYC Teaching Fellows program this program and many other new teaching immersion initiatives encourage change in the New York City Public Schools. All summer long in prep teacher training, professors would say we were chosen to bring change to the system.

We were taught to use alternative assessment, to think outside of the box, and to incorporate our professional work and life experience into the classroom. We were taught how complex learning is and how all of us learn differently. We learned about multiple intelligences and the importance of reaching out to our students' multiple perspectives as well.

It is for these exact reasons that I decided to make a life change because I could apply my knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for learning to provide high-level instruction and to support student achievement.

For the past 15 years, I have worked with youth and adults in a natural history museum in New Mexico. My years as a museum director and educator shaped my views about how people learn. My work with teenagers and adults in an informal learning environment cemented my view that all of us are learners and are seeking nurturing environments in which to do our learning.

This is what my job is as a new teacher: to be a leader in the movement to bring systemic change to the New York City public school system that needs desperately to provide different approaches and experiences to engage students to learn and to understand the arts and sciences.

So after only one week of teaching, I agree with educator Deborah Meier "that a standardized one-size-fits-all test could be invented and imposed by the state, ... and that it could be true to any form of serious intellectual and/or technical psychometric standards is just plain undoable."

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