

Should Indiana keep Common Core?



CARTOON BY COLLIN RAISER

Activity, light, good food can help beat the winter blues



BY ELLIE BURRELL
graphics editor

Maybe it's the bitter cold or the onset of senioritis. Days seem longer but the sun sets earlier. A thousand projects are all due in a week, and the kid in the back of math class is near tears.

'Tis the season to freak out and succumb to the winter blues.

Nobody likes going to school in three-degree weather. If someone says they do, they're lying. That being said, it's normal to feel bummed out as winter rolls in.

Popular psychology even has a name for it: seasonal affective disorder, or SAD.

According to Mayo Clinic, SAD can affect people of all ages and cause depression-like symptoms for a few months every year.

Whether or not a person has SAD or the winter blues, there are ways to make it through the break without spending weeks in the Bahamas. They may not draft an essay or placate a frustrated teacher, but they can help make the day a little brighter.

One such way that will literally make the day brighter is phototherapy. This is a type of therapy where a patient basks in specific wavelengths of light to simulate the effects of sunlight.

Although doctors use specially-made lamps, sitting on a sunny windowsill or soaking up rays while building a snowman have the same benefits. Exposing skin to sunlight for only an hour a day has been proven to boost vitamin D and improve one's mood.

Building snowmen and having snowball fights are great ways to spend time with friends over break while getting a bit of exercise.

Physical activity has the added benefit of improving mood by increasing adrenaline levels and bringing more oxygen to the brain and body.

While your mittens dry off after a day outside, warm up with a cup of hot chocolate and your favorite Christmas cookies.

Eating foods that one enjoys improves mood instantly. Whether that food is take-out or a roast that's been in the oven all day, enjoy a Christmas feast and worry about the consequences later.

If all else fails, gym memberships become even cheaper after the holidays.

Take time for personal care this winter, and keep your head up; only one semester to go!

Pro:

Common Core provides a good national educational standard

BY VERDA MIRZA
managing editor

The Common Core State Standards were created by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to help students, teachers and parents understand the goal they have to reach in order to gain the most success in oneself and the school.

Schools nationwide are judged based on their test scores and it would make sense to if all schools were teaching the same courses and lessons. Because of this, the federal government took it upon themselves to create the Common Core, which was for teachers to comprehend the learning goals that are expected of them to ensure that students get the most successful education.

Furthermore, the Common Core was aligned with what colleges are expecting of the incoming students. This would benefit many when attending college because there won't be a surprise when colleges request that a student take a specific class they need to get in.

United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently told *POLITICO* that "to oppose the Common Core is to oppose progress." Duncan is absolutely right. Our nation needs to make the initiative to better itself and what better way to start it by educating the younger generation to their highest ability.

The Core only promotes schools to reach the goals that are expected of them. However, many assume the Core is forcing teachers to teach in a certain way. That is not the case. The Core does have prepackaged lessons for the teachers; teachers have the option to freely teach the students their own way with Core standards in mind.

Equality among all students in the nation is promoted by the Common Core. Every student, no matter where they live, obtains the same opportunities and education. Students become well prepared for the competition that runs throughout the United States and other countries.

Fair judging on schools and their students is provided by the Core, even though many are opposed to it. Many people oppose change, but eventually, people will get the handle of it.

7 Inklings staffers agree

Katie Dillon • senior

"It gives schools an even playing field and it gives colleges a better idea of who to accept."



Caleb Smoot • sophomore

"I think the Common Core is a good thing because everyone should have the same educational opportunities and be on the same level."

Con:

Quality of education will suffer under nation-wide Common Core standards

BY ALAA ABDELDAIEM
reporter

Money is a powerful weapon, powerful enough to jeopardize the efficiency and quality of education.

It shouldn't be, but it is.

Common Core standards are just another market-based system that undermines the true value and quality of education. States around the country are willing to set aside better, more efficient standards for their inclusion in the Race to the Top funding program.

They shouldn't.

Schools should be motivated to implement new standards for the overall betterment of their students' education, not because it involves more cash.

The Common Core standards also create a set timeline and curriculum for every state to follow. How can someone dictate how fast a student should acquire their knowledge? Each person learns at a different pace, and with the implementation of these Common Core standards, education is based on the quantity of material a student learns and not the quality of it.

The new standards significantly reduce the amount of classic literature introduced in the classroom and attempt to replace it with more information-based text. Advocates say this is in place to help students be "fully prepared for the future" and so that "our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."

What about the individual's imagination? Teaching content with a higher Lexile rather than for its literary components once again focuses on quantity at the expense of quality.

Proponents of Common Core say that the new standards will increase proficiency rates and that students' test scores will be higher. But who is to say that the more rigorous standards won't backfire, that more students will fail than succeed?

No tests have been conducted to assure that the Common Core standards will succeed, and with its current defective and flawed components, there's no guarantee that they ever will.

19 Inklings staffers agree

Dan Hadary • English teacher

"(Students) may have grown (educationally) but by national standards maybe their growth wasn't enough, but to the individual that's still a feat."



Jillian Milicki • junior

"It takes away from the teachers' learning and the teachers' curriculum and what each teacher wants to do individually for their own class."