



## Wrestling with Vampires

*My American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines “vampire” as: 1. A reanimated corpse that is believed to rise from the grave at night and suck the blood of sleeping people. 2. A person, such as an extortionist, who preys upon others. My contention is that there is a kind of person who seems to combine aspects of the two types of vampires. They are educationists who work in groups to extort billions of dollars from the “sleeping people” called taxpayers for a bogus product called “education reform,” and they also suck out the brains and intelligence of the children who will be the subject of these reforms.



Sucking out the brains of children may be a bit extreme in the image it conveys. But it’s hard for me to actually describe what they do without indulging in some poetic license. How do you describe the dumbing-down process so that the average parent can understand what you are talking about? I could call these educators misguided, or misinformed, or ignorant. But these vampires all have advanced degrees from good universities, and they work in some of the most prestigious political think-tanks in Washington. And they think nothing of dreaming up useless reforms that will cost billions of dollars, for they know what an easy touch the average American is when you mention that it’s all for the children.

Actually, I have been wrestling with these educational vampires for over thirty years before I realized what and who I was dealing with. It is when they came up with this Common Core State Standards nonsense that I realized that the authors and authorizers of this program were indeed vampires. They don’t arise out of their graves, although they worship the ghosts of John Dewey and Horace Mann. Indeed, they are very much alive and are well ensconced in very comfortable working quarters. They are pure unadulterated extortionists because they provide nothing of value but require taxpayers to shell out billions for their efforts. Their enablers and co-conspirators are politicians who pass laws implementing these reforms.

It is very easy in America to implement worthless reforms for our public schools which are run by a cabal of atheists and secular humanists who believe in moral relativism and are not the least troubled by the fact that the reforms they advocate are worthless. Actually, they are worth whatever the gullible taxpayers are willing to pay for them. But how are parents or taxpayers to know what is or is not valuable in education? The value of anything is determined by what the buyer is willing to pay for it. And if the taxpayer is being persuaded to pay billions for it, that’s what it’s worth.

The Common Core State Standards website tells you everything you might want to know about this great fraud. But you can’t realize what a fraud it is unless you put all of the pieces of this intricate puzzle together. Frauds of this size and complexity have to be difficult to decode because billions of dollars are at stake. So the perpetrators don’t make it easy for the average person to figure it out. Besides, who wants to spend time reading some of the most boring “standards” ever concocted by



human beings?

First of all, these standards on reading and math don't tell us anything other than what we already know about the subjects. Educating children has been going on for thousands of years, and in America our early educators were probably the very best ever produced by Western civilization. The textbooks they wrote in the 19th century are the products of brilliant and honest minds. None of today's pseudo-educators can come close to them. These great masters knew of the difficulties involved in the training and educating of the young mind, and the students knew what was expected of them. As young adults they went out and created the greatest economy in the history of mankind without any federal subsidies. They embraced their heritage of freedom and free-enterprise with remarkable fervor and intelligence. And we are the beneficiaries of their endeavors.

My first encounter with the vampires was after I wrote *The New Illiterates*, in which I exposed the extremely harmful effects that the whole-word method had on children. Rudolf Flesch had made us aware of the damage being done to these defenseless children in his book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, published in 1955. The vampires came down on him like a pack of wolves. (Pardon the mixed metaphor.) But by the time my book came out in 1973, they had been so successful in protecting their fiefdom that they completely ignored me. They controlled the schools, the reading programs, the superintendents, the politicians, the school boards, and the colleges of education. They feared no one on the other side.

I knew that the men doing this were highly intelligent. But no one has ever bothered to find out the IQ of vampires. Intelligence, it appears, has nothing to do with morality. Some of the most evil men in history were highly intelligent. But these educationist vampires were for the most part atheists, socialists, communists, and secular humanists. Some Christians were fooled by them, but many were not.

My next encounter with the vampires was when I wrote *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*. The legal department of the National Education Association bought six copies of the book which they read with a fine-tooth comb only to find that there was nothing they could sue me on. So they just ignored me. If they said I didn't exist, no teacher would know about the book, and the national media would not touch it. Fortunately, there was at the time a growing conservative movement, and these bright dissenters bought 60,000 copies of the book, which had a positive influence on the new homeschool movement.

But it wasn't until I had to deal with the Common Core State Standards that I finally realized what and who I was dealing with. I had received e-mails from several readers asking me about the CCSS, but I didn't know much about it.

Finally, I decided to bite the bullet and look into it. What I found confirmed my suspicion that it was a phony deal meant to line the pockets of the educationists with more money than they could ever hope for in one lifetime. They warned us all that implementation would cost billions, and without knowing what it was about, the states began implementing it.

Who supports the CCSS? The usual suspects: Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association; Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers; Roy Romer, former superintendent of the Los Angeles public schools, which has some of the worst schools in the country (Romer is known as a long-time establishment knee-jerk liberal); and Kathryn Au, president of the International Reading Association (IRA), the citadel of the whole-word method. In her endorsement



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statement, she said: “Build capacity for literacy leadership at the building level to promote and sustain standards-based change.” Try analyzing that sentence. What is “literacy leadership”? What is the “building level”? What is “standards-based change” all about? What are they changing? From what to what? The IRA statement says:

IRA has called for a complete package in our nation’s efforts to raise students’ literacy achievement through standards. The components needed are (1) rigorous goals for students’ performance, (2) assessments to monitor students’ progress toward these goals, and (3) professional development that enables teachers to provide students with the needed instruction.

You don’t raise students’ literacy achievement through “standards” but through the proper teaching of reading by intensive, systematic phonics. In the 19th century Americans were taught to read by one little book, the *Blue Backed Speller*, by Noah Webster. His book spawned a whole bunch of imitators who all taught reading by phonics. We don’t need the CCSS to tell us how to teach children to read. We already know how!

The idea that we need “professional development” that enables teachers to provide students with the needed instruction is an indictment of our teachers colleges which should have done that for these teachers. These vampires keep writing as if Americans didn’t know anything about education until they came up with their CCSS reforms.

Another reason why they are so anxious for us to adopt the CCSS is because it will finally give us a National Education System like those in Europe. It was the Prussian system that inspired Horace Mann to create his centralized state control of schools and state teacher seminary in a so-called Normal School. It was there that young potential teachers were taught phrenology and the sight-word method of teaching reading.

Indeed, in March of 1840 a bill was introduced in the Massachusetts legislature by conservatives to get rid of the centralized system set up by Mann. The Committee advancing the bill argued:

Your Committee have already stated that the French and Prussian system of public schools appears to have been devised, more for the purpose of modifying the sentiments and opinions of the rising generations, according to a certain government standard, than as a mere means of diffusing elementary knowledge.... The right to mold the political, moral, and religious, opinions of his children is a right exclusively and jealously reserved by our laws to every parent: and for the government to attempt, directly or indirectly, as to these matters, to stand in the parent’s place, is an undertaking of very questionable policy.

That was then, when the first legal step was taken by liberals leading toward a national education system. But for decades Congress opposed such a system. As for the bill, it was defeated by the liberals.

In any case, the simple truth is that we had a common core when I was going to school back in the 1930s and ‘40s, and it worked well enough to produce the “greatest generation.” We don’t need a new one that lacks the logic, quality, and consistency of the old one. If Noah Webster could teach an entire nation to read with one little instruction book, why do we need a billion-dollar boondoggle when my own inexpensive *Alpha-Phonics* program can do for America today what Webster’s primer did for our country back in the 19th century? But the vampires won’t hear of it. It costs too little and works too well.

We are supposed to be a science-minded society, forever seeking how to make and do things better. Yet, when it comes to the simple tasks of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic in our elementary



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schools, we are told that we can do it only through a new billion-dollar common core. Meanwhile, the vampires are smiling all the way to the bank.



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