Without structural change in schools, the Common Core Standards are doomed.

There is little doubt that the Common Core standards push schools, teachers and students to more inquiry-based, deeper understandings than many traditional standards. The Common Core model implies groups of students working together to examine concepts and problems. The teacher is less the "Sage on the Stage" and more the coach, the facilitator, the one who asks the provocative and engaging questions.

Yet to make this seemingly more meaningful shift, there are three basic structural barriers to success that few school systems are ready to embrace.

The first barrier is the limited time on task for meaningful learning. The traditional (some say factory) model of a school marches students through set classes of 42 minutes each. It doesn't matter if it might take much longer to set up and facilitate small group discussions, explorations, and creativity. Complex projects are almost impossible. It is 42 and out. The irony of this is that in the real, adult world of work, we are smart enough to know that not all tasks are accomplished in the same artificial time.

Traditional bell schedules, sometimes determined by collective bargaining agreements, will continue to stifle and negate the benefits of Common Core. Few schools are prepared to address this issue sensibly. Few are willing to set out blocks of time for meaningful projects, inquiry, and group work. In short, the logistical challenges of adults who administer schools will trump the learning challenges of the students. Many of the most prominent and successful S.T.E.M. programs operate outside of the usual bell schedule and school day.

A corollary of the time problem is the unwillingness or inability to extend learning time through technology, and online learning. We can extend even group work through low-cost or free Internet applications, and we can extend the limits of the physical school day by engaging students (and their families) in learning after school hours. Furthermore, the physiology of adolescence tells us that the daily biorhythms of teens include late night engagement and early morning drowsiness.

A second barrier is that we want students to work in groups to solve problems, but we test them individually. Our goal is to promote the skills and attitudes to work in teams as adults do. But stay tuned for more individual, multiple-choice superficial assessments. The very economics of the testing industry, coupled with already stressed public school budgets, will continue to drive policy makers to opt for the less expensive and easier to grade bubble tests.

The third structural barrier is the narrowness of our assessments. In 2013, America still does not thoughtfully assess student achievements in science, or social studies, or music, or art, or economics, or civics -- all of which we know are part of a well-educated citizenry. It is little wonder that without the high stakes tests, particularly in elementary grades, the goal of the well-rounded child is lost. We know how to assess sophisticated science projects using experts, but this is not part of the standardized test conversation. We know how to audition a child for the orchestra, or evaluate an art portfolio, or recognize well-written poetry. We speak about civic literacy and citizen public service, but these too are outside the national conversation.

In summary, the promise of a more meaningful, and deeper, learning experience held out by the idealized Common Core Standards cannot thrive within the traditional factory model of a school.