

Foreword

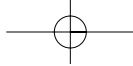
This is a book whose author has walked the walk, so the reader can find comfort and credibility as David Squires “talks the talk.” The Squires Balanced Curriculum is what is known as a front-loaded approach to curriculum development. That is, Squires has one enter the curriculum development process by thinking about what ought to be in the curriculum first, and thinking about assessment second. This approach has a long history and tradition, not the least of which is Ralph Tyler’s 1949 course syllabus at the University of Chicago, which asked curriculum developers to think about the needs of children and of society as a locus for creating goals and objectives to design learning experiences for children in classrooms. Tyler never had to worry about national and international standards, however, and current forms of assessment and accountability were not in place.

Squires has created a logical, step-by-step curriculum development process that is Web-based and that can lead not only to the creation of a platform of consensus regarding what ought to be in the curriculum, but also to a curriculum that is highly interlaced with broad-based foci of standards contingent on selection by the creating teacher.

The Squires model continues the tradition of centering on the teacher as the major defining agent within the curriculum development process, ensuring that the curriculum is not “teacher proof” but “teacher contingent.” Curriculum alignment is also part and parcel of the Squires approach, within a broad band of standards selected by teachers at the outset. This model also includes continuing attention to updating the curriculum, ensuring that the curriculum “is a living document” that continually incorporates change.

In the kind of national assessment approach dominant today, a consistent, logical, and incremental curriculum model is best suited to deliver the kinds of results defined and embedded in those assessments. Questions of what is “best” are subordinated to demonstrating results within these assessment systems. Squires’s approach assumes that schools and school districts will retain some forms of independence and autonomy within emerging national networks. As long as curriculum is delivered locally, this assumption remains valid. The teacher will always represent a major independent variable in curriculum delivery.

Finally, the work that Dr. Squires has done in moving the curriculum development process onto the Web has removed some of the tedium involved in crafting curriculum, making it “user-friendly” and open to the kinds of ongoing changes that



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make the promise of continual renewal of curriculum a reality. That in itself should ensure the reader that his or her time will be well spent in coming to understand what Squires means with the concept of Balanced Curriculum.

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