

John Salvia & Charles Hughes.
CURRICULUM-BASED ASSESSMENT:
TESTING WHAT IS TAUGHT.
New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1990.
338 pp.

Traditionally, teachers have not been particularly concerned with the construction of their classroom tests. With an increasing emphasis on the accurate assessment of learning, though, teachers are developing the awareness that their tests may not be measuring what has been taught. They now know that an optimal match between what has been taught and what is being tested is necessary to ensure that course objectives are satisfied. Additionally, teachers now recognize that different test-item types (e.g., matching, true-false, essay) measure different levels of learning in terms of Bloom's taxonomy.

This cognizance has important implications for books in the area of criterion-referenced assessment. The contemporary trend is to focus specifically on the technical construction of test items with little or no attention paid to their relevance to the classroom curriculum. In addition to this, texts in the area of evaluation in teaching tend to lump criterion-referenced and norm-referenced testing into the same volume. Although combining the two concepts allows teachers a more extensive picture of educational assessment, the technical jargon used in norm-referenced assessment may frighten them away from any form of testing. Another disadvantage of the combination is that teachers very seldom use standardized assessment to fulfil curricular objectives, making its inclusion unnecessary.

Salvia and Hughes have attempted to meet current educational needs by making a solid effort to integrate the essential concepts and procedures of curriculum-based assessment into one volume. What makes this text stand out in a comparative sense is that they have done it by focusing solely on criterion-referenced testing without using technical jargon or a great deal of statistical facts. Each chapter of this "user friendly" text contains an advance organizer to assist the reader in focusing on particularly important concepts. So as not to encumber the introductory reader, but yet enable those interested to obtain additional information, all technical supplementary information is dealt with through the use of footnotes. Keeping these facts in mind it is easy to see how this book is designed specifically for teachers and education students.

The primary focus of this book is the measurement of classroom learning. In chapter one the importance of assessment in education is discussed, then the advantages and disadvantages of published achievement tests

and teacher-made tests are outlined. The last segment of this chapter contains an 8-step model for curriculum-based assessment. Subsequently, each of these points is expanded upon in the next four chapters. An explanation of how this model can be applied to each of the major areas of classroom instruction is then presented in the six succeeding chapters: reading, mathematics, written language, adaptive and social behaviour, learning strategies, and preschool education. Practical examples are furnished at the conclusion of each of these six chapters. In these examples Salvia and Hughes have attempted to include the various types of assessment decisions made in schools, the diverse ages of students assessed, the different levels of severity of a student's problem, and many educational settings. Finally, chapter twelve offers suggestions to the teacher for developing a more effective and efficient classroom.

From the perspective of someone who was previously a classroom teacher this book has long been awaited. The presentation of classroom assessment without technical jargon and elaborated statistics is a major feat. Salvia and Hughes are to be commended for their practical and thoughtful approach to curriculum-based assessment. This book will be a welcome addition to any classroom teacher's library.

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STYLE: TEN LESSONS IN CLARITY AND GRACE.

Third Edition.

Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.

241 pp.

This 241-page book teaches how to write well in English. And it does this superbly. There are few people who would not be able, upon reading this book, to learn some additional skills for use in their preferred literary genre. The book purports to teach how to write clearly, cohesively, concisely, even elegantly and has the double merit of succeeding in this, on the one hand, and exhibiting these virtues itself, on the other. Aside from its purely pedagogic elements, the book is fun to read. It is splashed with colourful, historical, entertaining, and often amusing examples of good writing. And the quotations from renown writers are generally instructive, relevant, even memorable.