
Foreword

Bridges make it possible for people to cross narrow streams or raging waters, apt metaphors for the issues and problems that confront today's teachers, professors, and school administrators as they strive to link curriculum, assessment, and the problems of school change and school renewal. In the case of *The Assessment Bridge: Positive Ways to Link Tests to Learning, Standards, and Curriculum Improvement*, author Pearl Solomon becomes the guide who accompanies us on our voyage from one land mass to the next.

Conversational in manner, yet deeply thought out, Solomon's book offers us her personal experience in developing a comprehensive program that uses testing, a changed curriculum, and the necessary supportive conditions to ensure implementation. But that is not all Solomon offers us: Solidly undergirding our bridge's roadway are the necessary research and historical context to help us understand not only why we are embarked on the journey of school reform but also how to think about our journey, learn from it, develop it, and become its leaders.

By reading this book, we learn about the context of 21st-century education. We learn why accountability, standards, and high-stakes tests have become part of the landscape on both sides of our bridge. We learn the vocabulary of testing, the means to restructure curriculum, and—a necessary prerequisite for building bridges—the many ways to develop leadership.

The Assessment Bridge uses four major components to span the gaps between testing, curriculum, and change, and together those turn this book into a unified roadmap for school reform: building capacity, generating ownership, developing leadership, and providing time for learning and change. By taking us by the hand and teaching us how to look at the context within which we live (and how that context keeps changing), we come to a better understanding of how we might *embrace* testing. We come to see testing not as a narrowing of the curriculum, but as a means to deepen teachers' involvement in creating the important ideas that must be assessed so that teachers can create curriculum and instruction appropriate for their students.

By providing multiple entry points onto the bridge between testing and curriculum, Solomon shows us that we can start with standards or we can start

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with tests, but none of us has to fall into the trap of being just an assessment person, or just a content person, or just a change person. Encyclopedic in its detail, yet always human, accessible, and friendly, Pearl Solomon's book is just the kind of bridge we need to span the ideological wars and make schools work for teachers and their students.

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