

## FROM THE EDITOR

### Bringing in the Disciplines

**E**arlier this year, in a subtle yet bold move, *Research & Practice in Assessment* was restructured in order to bring diverse academic disciplines into the field of assessment. This intentional philosophical shift was meant to advance the assessment discourse in two respects. *First*, it is an attempt to reduce the uncoupled nature of assessment scholarship by linking seemingly independent perspectives. This shift emphasizes the shared areas of knowledge between fields by bringing relevant work into the profession that may have only appeared within a given discipline. *Second*, while the assessment literature has become exceptionally strong with regard to measurement, this shift attempts to further strengthen other aspects of the literature such as its theory and philosophy. The latter are essential features of educational scholarship in the social sciences. Consequently, as psychology has played a significant role in strengthening the measurement aspects of higher education assessment, disciplines such as sociology, history, political science, economics, anthropology, and others offer paradigms that will strengthen and broaden higher education assessment theory and philosophy.

In this vein, the Winter Issue of *RPA* opens by “bringing in” a special feature penned by two economists and a social demographer that engages the measurement of productivity in higher education. Written by William Massy, Teresa Sullivan, and Christopher Mackie, the piece highlights the collaborative efforts of the panel commissioned by the National Research Council. Two peer review articles are presented that advance conceptual issues of measurement for authentic assessments. John Hathcoat and Jeremy Penn provide a framework for conceptualizing measurement error when using authentic assessments and investigate the extent to which student writing performance may generalize across multiple tasks. Then, using a common assignment and combined rubric, Rana Khan, Datta Kaur Khalsa, Kathryn Klose, and Yan Zhang Cooksey present a model to assess graduate student learning in four competencies.

In the reviews, Linda Sax comments on *Assessment for Excellence*, the recently revised edition by Alexander Astin and Anthony Iking Antonio. In light of the dominant discourse on innovation in higher education, Lisa Hatfield roots assessment professionals in our context with a review of *Reinventing Higher Education*. The conclusion of the issue is a deliberate contrast to its opening feature article. Here, in a piece entitled “Discovery”, the fine art photography of Adam Barnes is combined with an excerpt from Maria Montessori’s *The Discovery of the Child*.

As you engage the pieces herein, consider how your own disciplinary paradigm may be “brought in” to advance the higher education assessment discourse. There is value in variation and I hope you will consider penning a unique scholarly piece for submission to *Research & Practice in Assessment*.

Regards,

*Lashua Brown*

Liberty University

