

Vantage Point

The examination of student learning and development can grow dull when assessment efforts become rote or the burdens of regulatory reporting become the polestar. Personal experience, institutional culture, and standard expectations can also contribute to a routine approach to assessment. Higher education professionals engaging in assessment work can preserve, or perhaps renew, the luster of their efforts by remaining focused on student learning, but occasionally changing their vantage point.

The contributions presented in this issue of *Research & Practice in Assessment* demonstrate an array of vantage points used to examine student learning and development. Each feature demonstrates a different approach, but all are focused on what students learn and how they develop as a result of their curricular and co-curricular experiences. This volume provides readers with the opportunity to view assessment from a particular methodological perspective, from a disciplinary approach, broadly across the curriculum, and from the perspective of selected student populations. Perhaps you already share one of these perspectives, but hopefully at least one of them provides you with a new vantage point.

The Summer 2015 issue includes four peer-reviewed articles that exemplify the various approaches of measuring student learning and development. Newhart encourages readers to examine deep questions about student learning and gain a richer insight into the student experience by using qualitative assessment methods that do not limit one's ability to conduct such an examination. Ozaki, Worley, and Cherry use multiple methods to identify the assessment processes used by fine and performing arts programs in the context of a disciplinary framework. Looking more broadly at assessment of general education, Hawthorne, Bol, Pribesh, and Suh examine the effect of different motivational prompts on student performance on low-stakes, general education assessments. Fauria and Fuller articulate their findings about the curricular and co-curricular activities that impact the success of transfer students.

In the reviews, Hawthorne comments on *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*, Second Edition, a text that provides a broad overview of assessment for both experienced and novice assessment professionals. Merrill reviews *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates*, a look at the relationship between the college experience and the transition into adulthood of the class of 2009. This issue includes two Notes in Brief exemplifying different approaches to assessment practice. Newton, Maher, and Smith recount the assessment of a newly implemented student success program and the partnership with advanced graduate students who led the assessment efforts. Heinerichs, Bernotsky, and Rieser Danner describe an institution-level assessment improvement process and offer practical advice for undertaking such

an initiative. I also encourage you to consider approaches to your assessment efforts that may provide renewed excitement or new experiences, as you reflect upon the photograph showcased in *Ruminare*. I hope your engagement with the contributions of this issue provide you with vantage points that keep your assessment efforts from becoming dull.

Regards,

Katie Busby

Tulane University

