

## Assessment: A Matter of Trust

Note from the Editorial Leadership

By Rebecca E Gibbons

Welcome to Volume 7, Issue 1 of *Intersection: A Journal at the Intersection of Assessment and Learning*! This volume includes the best of the best for transferable assessment research and strategy by presenting perspectives from various representatives across the higher education sector, including medical education, minority-serving institutions, administrative assessment, and the STEM context. Taken together, the articles in this issue highlight a fundamental tenet of effective assessment practice that demonstrates the growth of our field: not only trust, but trustworthiness, in the tools we use to inform impact. By analyzing instruments, pedagogical methods, and data quality across different environments, the contributions in this issue demonstrate the field's progression from being challenged by the call for data collection and interpretation to purposeful, substantial investment in information, worthy of trust, and increasingly useful in classrooms and other institutional environments to drive improvement.



### Beyond Trust: An Issue of Trustworthiness

[Konkel \(2026\)](#) shares an investigation of assessment and evaluation of design thinking, a strategy has served various disciplines with a high degree of impact. This piece hammers home insight by exploring the ways in which Design Thinking Center directors articulate the strategies they use to identify the impact of their work, as most operate outside of the program assessment context which guides the structure of most *Intersection* articles. This piece provides the foundation to continue to explore validity and reliability of tools within the Design Thinking content, and highlights what is most meaningful in real-time for those leading the work. Konkel discusses that part of the key identifiers of quality assessment work is that the quality of evidence is evaluated as a prerequisite for the usefulness of such evidence in decision-making; evidence quality is exactly what [Koerner and colleagues \(2026\)](#) provide for their Core Competencies Assessment Scales. They approach the areas of generally expected learning in liberal arts contexts with thoughtful student self-evaluation, providing evidence that their scales can generate useful information for institutional actors seeking to enhance student perceptions of their learning along these outcomes. Providing additional psychometric evidence of quality, [Chamberlain and colleagues \(2026\)](#) evaluate the math examinations and generate a remarkably useful primer for new and experienced assessment professionals on some of the key measures of item quality, and, more importantly, their implications for the potential use of the data. [Simpson Steele and colleagues \(2026\)](#) comprehensively enhanced a College of Education's assessment instruments not only in the technical interest of validity and

reliability, but also (more importantly) on the responsiveness to the institution's dedicated cultural and place-based population served. Finally, [Sari and colleagues \(2026\)](#) provide an exploration in the medical school context of the impact of the ways in which quantitative exam data is translated by instructors into grades during the post-exam analysis process, producing a set of evidence-supported guidelines for consistency that can increase the trust in data interpretation across individual instructors across the institution. In all these efforts, the trustworthiness of each assessment tool has been subsequently enhanced, and models for implementing similar strategies across institutional context is also highlighted.

Individual instrumentation is not the only aspect of assessment that lends itself to investigation of trustworthiness, pedagogy and the process of learning are also key to progressing the initiatives of improvement. [Hogan \(2026\)](#) explores student perceptions when offered autonomy and choice in an assessment context, providing a view into the ways in which students consider the most accurate ways to showcase their own learning. [Carreras \(2026\)](#) blends an evidentiary quality investigation with the impact of automation's interaction with language learning, identifying spaces where automated grammar checking requires human enhancement reach sufficient student learning. Continuing the exploration of technology innovation and exploration, [Joseph & Muthiah \(2026\)](#) explore students' AI interactions in undergraduate STEM, finding a high degree of variability between individual levels of engagement and quality of experience in both qualitative and quantitative data. Student learning does not happen within a vacuum in classrooms and programs, but embedded in complex systems of administrative responsibility and student support service offerings. Conducting trustworthy assessment for learning, then, is key to the mission of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE, the publisher of *Intersection*). Practitioners are compelled to encompass learning and the conditions which create environments that facilitate learning outside of the classroom to produce meaningful and useful improvement efforts. [Wells \(2026\)](#) focuses on perspectives on the implementation of continuous improvement work in administrative and student support services functions, providing novel language to interpret the complexities of the work and overcome perceived barriers.

### **Gratitude to you, our Readers and Contributors**

The *Intersection* leadership team looks forward to engaging with readers on these and further articles, especially in the upcoming ACCELERATE and Generative AI Special Issues. All assessment aficionados and novices are welcome to share their work with *Intersection* for review; we are looking forward to continuing to innovate by hosting thought leadership

from prominent scholars, organizational collaborations, and ongoing publications of research and practice that progress the field and AALHE's mission.

I am expressing my most gratitude to the Editorial Board and peer reviewers who contributed to this issue, leveraging their expertise in measurement and experience and knowledge of assessment in practice to make these articles into significant contributions (note: editors only serve as reviewers for manuscripts that they are not involved in editing):

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