

Handbook for Assessment in the Service of Learning Volume III Afterword

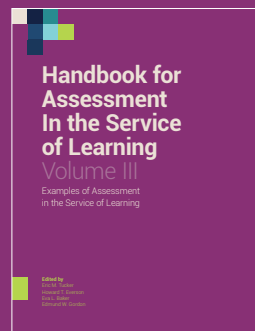
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Handbook for Assessment in the Service of Learning Volume III

Afterword

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What is the impact of this Volume? For decades, educators have aspired to transform assessment from a means of evaluating students' progress into a catalyst for learning—a vision championed by Edmund W. Gordon, who argues that the act of assessing should cultivate deeper understanding (Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education, 2013; Gordon, 2020). The collection of chapters in this volume reflects a shift from articulating the “why” to demonstrating the “how”; from aspiration to application. Building upon the theoretical and conceptual foundations set out in Volumes I and II, Volume III presents working examples of how to engineer and integrate assessment into learning across early childhood programs, K–12 classrooms, secondary science classrooms and art studios, and online platforms.

Taken together, these examples braid the design principles articulated in Volume I by Baker and colleagues—transparency; explicit focus and purpose; support for learner processes (motivation, attention, engagement, metacognition); modeling of growth over time; feedback-linked instruction; equity and attention to learner variation; and quality and validity (Baker, Everson, Tucker, & Gordon, 2025). The chapter authors demonstrate how educational assessments can be powerful learning experiences for students, while also providing instructionally useful information to teachers, students, and other stakeholders. These efforts intentionally embrace evidence-based design principles. Pellegrino and Everson (2025), for example, present a Next Generation Science Standards-aligned assessment approach that informs middle-school science instruction. Baker and Chung (2025), Buckley and Snow (2025), and DiCerbo (2025) show that game-based assessments yield rich evidence while keeping learners engaged.

By gathering evidence in instructional settings and providing useful and timely feedback, these examples show how assessment can be integrated with teaching and learning (Baker & Gordon, 2014).

As *evidentiary arguments*, these examples support warranted inferences about student competencies. Recognizing the role of feedback, they deliver timely, actionable insights to advance students' understanding and skills. As a *social practice*, the assessments are situated in authentic teaching and learning contexts. The exemplars show that when designed to be culturally responsive and identity-affirming—such as the AP Art and Design portfolio—assessments can become instruments of opportunity (Stone, Escoffery, Tabony, & Packer, 2025). Similarly, co-designing early childhood measures with communities can ensure assessments are culturally relevant, useful, and fair (Hanno, Moky Horner, Portilla, & Hsueh, 2025)

Conclusion: To Assess is to Teach and to Learn

Ultimately, this volume demonstrates that the maxim “to assess is to teach and to learn” translates into practical design principles (Baker et al., 2025). The path forward requires test developers, educators, and policymakers to consider the structural assets and cultural conditions for these innovations to thrive. To inform those discussions, this volume provides a collection of practical playbooks for architects of future assessment systems working to assemble the models and tools necessary to cultivate learning and drive meaningful improvement at both the classroom and system levels. The goal is not merely to create better tests. It is, as Gordon reminds us, to design educational assessments so that learners engage with them in ways that catalyze and cultivate learning and build enduring skills.

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