



PROJECT MUSE®

What We Really Value

Bob Broad

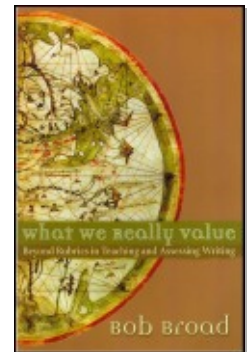
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EPILOGUE

Our society's orientation toward educational evaluation is undergoing a paradigm shift, away from the technical requirements and justifications of positivist psychometrics and toward considerations such as how well assessments support best practices in teaching and learning. In this context, we owe it to ourselves, our students, our colleagues, and our supporters in the wider society to take advantage of these shifts and to develop new methods of writing assessment to illustrate "*that knowledge is complex, ambiguous, and socially constructed in a context*" (Baxter Magolda, 195; Baxter Magolda's emphasis). Dynamic Criteria Mapping is one of those new methods. It will help us move into a new era of writing assessment in which the endeavors of teaching and assessing writing are theoretically and ethically aligned and are therefore mutually supportive.

In the end, Dynamic Criteria Mapping does for writing assessment what the technology of writing did several thousand years ago for human thought and language: captures it, sets it down on paper, makes it into a concrete object that can be reflected on, interpreted, shared, discussed, negotiated, and revised. As a profession, we are ready for this new technique because we have developed theoretical approaches that allow us to embrace complexity and make it meaningful. We no longer need to turn away, panic-stricken, from the rich and context-bound truth of how experts really assess writing. Instead, we can face that truth equipped with tools (qualitative inquiry) and attitudes (hermeneutics) that help us tap the energy of apparent chaos without being consumed by it. We can embrace the life of things:

You are fabulous creatures, each and every one.
And I bless you: *More Life*.
The Great Work Begins.

END OF PLAY

(Kushner 146, emphasis original)