

Framing Statements on Assessment

(<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/assess/118875.htm>)

NCTE Guideline

A guideline approved by the NCTE Executive Committee and found to be consistent with NCTE positions on education issues

Framing Statements on Assessment

Revised Report of the Assessment and Testing Study Group
of the NCTE Executive Committee
November 2004

NCTE holds the following beliefs about assessment:

- Assessment must include multiple measures and must be manageable.
- Consumers of assessment data should be knowledgeable about the things the test data can and cannot say about learning.
- Teachers and schools should be permitted to select site-specific assessment tools from a bank of alternatives and/or to create their own.

Based on these beliefs, NCTE upholds the following vision regarding assessment. We want:

- To help teachers develop competence in using various forms of data about how students are doing and what they need in order to continue to grow -- assessment for both formative and summative purposes.
- Teachers to be knowledgeable about many forms of assessment and to be able to use these data-collection tools in order to articulate what students have learned and their growth in using strategies for further learning. We also want teachers to be able to provide appropriate parties purposeful accounting for student learning (e.g., descriptive narratives).
- Teachers to use collections of assessment strategies appropriate in their settings. We also want teachers to be knowledgeable about the appropriate uses and limitations of use for each of these assessments.
- Conversations in schools, businesses and communities to be focused on “assessment” as an ongoing part of how we educators do our work -- taking stock of what students have accomplished and making plans for what needs to come next for continued learning.
- Parents to be knowledgeable and involved in the assessment process for their children and their schools. We also want parents to have a voice in establishing the criteria by which their schools will be judged.

To attain our vision, NCTE will act on the following Guiding Principles when taking action regarding Assessment. NCTE:

- Intends to work PreK-University in our efforts to influence assessment practices.
- Will send a consistent message opposing sole reliance on standardized tests.
- Will help teachers cope with the reality they currently have while helping them critique current testing mandates and forms and propose alternatives to the current reality.
- Believes parents should be knowledgeable and involved in the assessment process, including establishing the criteria by which their schools will be judged.
- Wants to influence the way “mid course corrections” are approached, particularly the ways data are used in the process.

Ultimately our goal will be that those involved in and affected by assessment will attain the following ends.

In Knowledge and Disposition

- ELA teachers' decisions regarding assessment are trusted by parents, administrators, and other interested stakeholders.
- ELA teachers are knowledgeable about assessment principles and implement assessment strategies that make sense in light of their daily instructional practice.
- ELA teachers help students understand how to become (appropriately) self-critical and reflective so that they can take these "habits of mind" to other disciplines and the workplace.
- ELA teachers are confident and skillful in articulating specific details about student growth in areas of reading, writing, literature response, use of oral and written language for learning, etc.
- Assessment Coordinators assume primary responsibility for communicating classroom assessment information to groups outside the school building.
- Teachers, administrators, and school communities work together to change school culture, to shift the assessment paradigm such that learning theory matches assessment theory.
- Assessment Coordinators are able to translate and communicate assessment information to school officials, community members, and legislators.
- Teachers are free to focus on teaching and learning -- and assessment is an integral part of the process, not something set aside from the process.
- Assessment Coordinators provide regular, cohesive information sessions for parents and other stakeholders, helping them learn how to prepare their children for tests, how to work for their children as learning advocates, and how to be active participants in ongoing assessment conversations about their children's learning.

In Environment and Materials (how/when do assessments take place)

- ELA teachers -- in collaboration with students -- have primary control over the types of assessment data that are gathered about students, and how these data are analyzed and interpreted and most important, used in any decision-making process.
- ELA teachers have time during the school day to develop, interpret, and use assessment information to guide their planning.
- ELA teachers feel a sense of "spaciousness" with time and creativity to work with students.
- ELA teachers select their own assessment programs from various options, and/or create their own.
- ELA teachers work with a steady stream of low-stakes assessment of day-to-day learning, rather than decoding high stakes "end point" assessment numbers. This stream of data informs differentiated practice.
- ELA teacher study groups have assessment conversations focused on "significant" learning -- learning that is significant in both the in-school and out-of-school lives of students, as well as what can be done better.
- Classroom assessments developed by teachers feed directly into district assessments -- are an integral part of how the district establishes the effectiveness of its programs.
- Assessment practices embrace diversity in terms of learning styles, rates and routes of learning, and languages for learning. "One size fits all" assessments are not used by schools or imposed by legislators and policymakers.
- Assessment practices are well integrated with instruction and produce a stream of feedback that is useful to teachers in planning learning engagements. This integration eliminates a separate time for "test prep."
- Where tests with writing prompts are used, students have an opportunity to identify a range of interests or matters that they consider themselves to have expertise in, and are then be presented with prompts designed to match these interests (so that they can write about what they know, rather than an issue or subject that means nothing to them).
- All student writing, including college entrance exams, are evaluated by knowledgeable humans rather than scored by machines.
- Literacy assessments are situated in the classroom learning context and will help stakeholders focus on strengths, areas of concern, goals to improve, and actions to be taken. Assessments are only valid to the extent that they help students learn.
- Assessments include both content-specific goals as well as "habits of mind" and assessment of growth in "learning how to learn."

In Student Impact

- Students value assessment and have a better sense of why it's important (for learning) and why and how it works.
- Students participate in ongoing, multiple, authentic means of assessment of their learning, as they learn to be self-assessors.
- Students participate in and/or lead learning conferences about their work.
- Students monitor and assess their own learning with guidance.
- Classroom assessment data are used to inform others about the learning success of students and schools.
- All stakeholders contribute to decisions about how their schools will be judged.

Related Information:

There is no related information at this time.

