

Standing Committee on Literacy Assessment

Charge:

- To monitor developments in assessment policies and practices;
- To inform Council leaders and NCTE members, as they consider policy and advocacy, about ways assessment practices are impacting teachers.
- To identify assessment practices that support the kinds of teaching and learning that research in literacy, language arts, literature, and composition studies demonstrates as most significant and effective.
- To identify opportunities or needs for NCTE research and/or publications on literacy assessment

Major activities: What major actions, projects, initiatives, or studies in your charge have been completed by your group since July 1, 2018? In each activity describe the more important features of the work, and connect your work to the NCTE Vision Statement, if applicable.

Major Projects and Initiatives

- Technical Report on our 2017-18 Survey of State Policy Representatives: included reports of state assessment activities in K-12 and postsecondary contexts as well as analysis of responses and recommendations to NCTE Executive Committee.
- Ways to Change the Conversation about Literacy Assessment Campaign aimed at moving the conversation about literacy assessment away from standardized testing and toward helpful uses of literacy assessment to support teaching and learning. The campaign has included print materials at convention, a blog series, a poster, a Twitter Chat, and NCTE sessions.

See below for more information about our work. It aligns directly with this charge.

1. List names, affiliations, and geographic region for all committee members.

CHAIR, Peggy O'Neill (Loyola University, Baltimore, MD)

Scott Filkins (Central High School, Champaign, IL) *Scott resigned in January because of other obligations*

Josh Flores (Birmingham, AL)

Bobbie Kabuto (Queens College, Flushing, NY)

Becky McCraw (Goucher Elementary School, Gaffney, SC)

Kathryn Mitchell Pierce (Saint Louis University, MO)

Elisa Waingort (Calgary, Alberta, Canada)

Kathleen Blake Yancey (Florida State University, Tallahassee)

2. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

- *Ways to Change the Conversation about Assessment:* A regular series on the NCTE blog. <http://www2.ncte.org/blog/category/assessment/> This began last year and has been ongoing (we've already posted a new entry for August 2019).
- 2 sessions during NCTE 2019 Annual Convention

3. What have you accomplished so far, and what is your timeline for future work?

Our committee met monthly via Zoom. The meeting minutes are posted on Google and available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B5GBr3K46SayYUxTX2JHLW1rbDA?usp=sharing>

Accomplishments July 1, 2018 –June 30, 2019

- Offered a well-attended roundtable at NCTE 2018 Annual Convention
- Initiated the blog *Ways to Change the Conversation about Assessment* and contributed 11 posts through June 30, 2019
- Created a poster and standing sign for convention linked to the blog as part of our campaign: *Changing the Conversation about Literacy Assessment*
https://www2.ncte.org/app/uploads/2018/11/NCTE-10016-AssessmentMeterBoard_8.5x11_V2.pdf

- Hosted an NCTE Twitter Chat about assessment on May 19
- Completed the [Technical Report](#) about the survey of NCTE policy representatives that we conducted in 2017-18 and submitted to NCTE leadership for expedited review

Future Projects

- Continue with the *Ways to Change the Conversation about Assessment* blog series (we already have posted an August blog and have more scheduled across the fall).
- Planning another Twitter Chat on classroom assessment during the fall (but that isn't scheduled yet).
- Offering 2 sessions, one a panel and one a roundtable, at the NCTE Annual Convention in Baltimore. These are already on the program and include teachers from outside of the committee as a means to get more people interested in serving on the committee.
- Determining our response to the feedback about the Technical Report: the expedited review recommended against publishing it, but we have permission to share information about it on the blog, which we will do for several reasons, among them to honor the contributions the survey participants made and our promise to them to share the results.
- Potential new project for fall: Create an assessment "quick guide" for teachers
- The term for the committee membership will expire in November. The new chair, Bobbie Kabuto, will take over as chair, with some members cycling out. We are in the process of inviting new members and will continue that process. Peggy and Bobbie are working on this through the Fall. We have secured one new member, Chris Gallagher, a college professor with expertise in writing assessment and Eric Turley, a high school teacher. We are actively seeking to diversify our membership.

4. How has the work of your group contributed to NCTE's role in shaping the profession of teaching and/or the understanding of literacy in educational contexts?

Assessment is a driving force in literacy teaching and educational policy. Our work is directly aimed at helping NCTE members to understand assessment's link to teaching and learning, especially as it relates to equity and inclusion. We are focused on moving the discussion beyond testing and standardized forms of assessment to more productive and helpful uses, especially in the classroom. Our blog exemplifies our focus on these goals.

We are interested in elevating teachers' voices in decision-making about assessment at all levels: school, district, state and federal. To this end we have collected information through a survey of the NCTE state policy representatives and will be sharing it this fall. Our work with changing the conversation is also a way of helping teachers' find their voices and feel confident about talking about assessment to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms and beyond; this effort grew out of what we heard from the policy representatives.

Suggestions from your group: Your good ideas help direct future NCTE actions.

1. What significant changes or trends in our field point to action from the Council?

The [Technical Report](#) mentioned above lists several important trends and recommendations for NCTE. Below, we highlight a few and mention others that have come to our attention.

The proliferation of legislation and mandated screening assessment in schools for dyslexia warrants a reasoned and multi-pronged response by NCTE. Much of what has been made available to teachers and the general public is based on flawed research, exaggerated claims based on anecdotal information, and designed to direct schools and families toward for profit "programs" that are based on questionable research. This topic overlaps with assessment,

professional development, legislative agendas, and research. A Quick Guide to dyslexia research and programming might be well-timed.

Based on information we gathered from the state representatives and other anecdotal information such as this article in the [Baltimore Sun](#), the use of technology for state testing is an issue. One of our [blogs](#) also took up this topic. Technology was also an issue in the administration and results of last NAEP writing assessment, according to reports.

Our survey of policy representatives and anecdotal information gathered from teachers show that tests and testing vendors seemed to play an oversized role in determining the focus of teachers' professional development opportunities. While keeping teachers informed about tests may be important, it should not dominate professional learning.

2. What trends need to factor into medium- to long-term NCTE planning?

Impact of ESSA on state literacy policies and assessments warrants continued monitoring. NCTE should try to get a sense of how ESSA is directly impacting literacy assessment policies across the states.

[SAT Landscape](#) index, which was initially called the Adversity Index, seems to demand monitoring in terms of how it is being used and what, if any, impact it has.

NAEP Writing Assessment is not scheduled until 2029, and the 2017 scores will not be released (because of a technology issue, according to reports). The last report on writing from NAEP was released in 2011. A report on the [NAEP Writing Assessment](#) should be released in 2020.

Peggy O'Neill, Chair