

Table 1. Analysis of National Monitoring Cases 1 and 2 in Relation to the IRA–NCTE Assessment Standards

Assessment standard	Case 1: NAEP	Case 2: NEMP
1. The interests of the student are paramount in assessment.	Relatively little attention is paid to student interests in generating items. Although one aspect of the test invites a broad curriculum, increasing pressures associated with the test have curriculum-distorting potential.	Items are selected for student engagement. Assessments are closely tied to professional development in order to improve teaching. The assessment addresses a broad curriculum without high stakes that would distort the curriculum.
2. The teacher is the most important agent of assessment.	Little attention is paid to the teacher’s role.	Teacher professional development is deliberately linked to training for test administration and scoring tasks.
3. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning.	There is no deliberate link between assessment and the improvement of teaching and learning, though, in recent years, there has been increasing pressure for higher generic scores.	Teacher professional development is specifically linked to training for administration and scoring tasks. Teachers are able to use excellent items as part of their instruction.
4. Assessment must reflect and allow for critical inquiry into curriculum and instruction.	The curriculum is addressed broadly in the lower stakes long-term test but less broadly in the higher stakes “main NAEP,” increasing the likelihood of curriculum distortion in the latter test.	The curriculum is addressed broadly; communication of results is extensive and in plain language with concrete examples, and the performance of subgroups is analyzed. Because items go beyond the current curriculum, the effects of changes in curriculum can be analyzed.
5. Assessment must recognize and reflect the intellectually and socially complex nature of reading and writing and	Items represent literacy as an individual cognitive activity with a modest degree of complexity relatively unconnected to home and society. The test recognizes the value to schools and society of a broad description of the	Items reflect the full complexity of literacy in a wide range of contexts and applications, both individual and social. Tasks are drawn from in-school and outside-school practices and deliberately attend to cultural and linguistic matters.

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the important roles of school, home, and society in literacy development.	consequences of education.	
6. Assessment must be fair and equitable.	Items are selected and piloted to ensure fairness. Only one language is represented. Test performances are analyzed to reveal educational inequities. Private (mostly religious) schools are not clearly represented in the sampling system.	Items are selected and piloted to ensure fairness. Both primary cultural languages are represented. Item performances are analyzed to reveal educational inequities. If a school selected through the sampling system declines to participate, another school with similar characteristics is selected to ensure representation.
7. The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first and most important consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment.	The initial intention of an untainted indicator of national educational efforts is no longer realized because of changes in the sampling system (both items and students) that invite distorting pressures.	The consequence of the procedure is primarily professional development for teachers and a wide awareness of goals and progress in schooling. Because high stakes are not attached to the testing there is little incentive to distort the curriculum. These were central considerations in the design of the assessment.
8. The assessment process should involve multiple perspectives and sources of data.	The preparation of the test specifically includes a wide range of cultural and stakeholder representatives.	The preparation of the test specifically includes a wide range of cultural and stakeholder representatives.
9. Assessment must be based in the local school learning community, including active	Local involvement is encouraged mostly through distribution of test results. Few items are released, which limits the meaningfulness of results to members of the public.	Local involvement is encouraged mostly through distribution of results and education of the public by providing extensive examples of test items and examples of the range of responses. This process regularly

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and essential participation of families and community members.		reminds the public of the breadth of the curriculum.
10. All stakeholders in the educational - community—students, families, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the public—must have an equal voice in the development, interpretation, and reporting of assessment information.	Representatives of various stakeholder groups are engaged in the development and trialing of the assessment items.	Representatives of various stakeholder groups are engaged in the development and trialing of the assessment items, an ongoing process since a large percentage of items is released to the public. Representatives are also convened to discuss and interpret the results as part of releasing information to the press. The assessment program is politically independent, limiting the relative power of some otherwise more powerful groups.
11. Families must be involved as active, essential participants in the assessment process.	Families have access to assessment information about changes in the effects of schooling.	Families have access to concrete, interpretable assessment information about changes in the effects of schooling.