

## **Module 2 - What are Common Assessments?**

[Slide 1] - Welcome to the Michigan Assessment Consortium Common Assessment Development series. The topic of this module is “Common Assessments.”

[Slide 2] - My name is Julie McDaniel and I will be your guide for this module.

[Slide 3] - In this module, you will learn about what common assessments are, on which learning targets they might be based, and why common assessments are so important.

[Slide 4] - What makes an assessment “common?” It is more than an assessment given by more than one teacher. Instead, a common assessment provides a way to build a community of shared practice in a school or district. This is very different from two or more teachers using the same assessment. To explain, two teachers using the same assessment and evaluating that assessment in the same manner have made the first step toward common assessments; however, this is not enough.

[Slide 5] - A common assessment is built on the same learning targets, whether the targets were developed at the school, district, state and/or national levels.

A common assessment based on local learning targets will only measure local learning progress and thus be limited in value in determining student performance in comparison to state and national standards.

[Slide 6] - A common assessment based on content standards from organizations such as the Michigan Department of Education or from the national level will permit schools to compare the results of their students with state or national expectations.

Each developer of common assessments will need to determine the learning targets on which to base their common assessments. This determination will be explained in a subsequent module.

[Slide 7] - It is the USE of the common assessment results by two or more teachers, however, that allows the teachers to look deeply at practice -- both at their own practice and that of their colleagues.

In this type of reflective inquiry, teachers begin to see how changes in their instructional practice can lead to increased student learning. By giving the same assessment based on the same standards, teachers are able to compare notes on how they taught the skill(s), what students appeared to learn, and how they might provide improved instruction, now and in the future.

[Slide 8] - As teachers see how shared practice using the same measures leads to higher student achievement, a community of shared practice is born. Teachers will periodically discuss and agree on learning targets, instructional strategies, and measures of outcomes. The result will be an increased sense of working together to make sure that all students are learning.

[Slide 9] - Because common assessments are given to all students in the same grade or course, educators can determine if students were given a fair chance to learn the intended curriculum, by reviewing the results of the assessment. This may call for adjustments to the instructional program to make sure that students were afforded the opportunity to learn appropriate course or grade content.

[Slide 10] - Common assessments increase the likelihood that all students will have equal access to increased learning, regardless of the teacher or classroom. The student is placed at the center of all efforts and all efforts are focused on increased learning. Because common assessments provide a common benchmark against which to measure student performance, the learning of students across schools and districts may be improved as well.

[Slide 11] – One result of this increased emphasis on student learning could be helping students to self-assess their own learning. Students may become more active partners in their own learning and achievement. This could serve to increase student motivation to learn and to succeed.

[Slide 12] - Before you plan the development of your common assessments, you need to stop and make one of the most important decisions of the assessment building process. Do you have a clear and appropriate purpose(s) for your common assessments? This process involves determining how the assessments will be used and by whom. Then, you will need to decide what learning targets to measure.

[Slide 13] - This module defined what common assessments are, and why they are so important to improve student learning. The goal of the common assessment is to create a community of shared practice among teachers that leads to self-directed students who are in charge of their own learning.

If your team has already selected the learning targets to assess, as well as determined the purpose(s) of your common assessments, please feel free to move to module 6.