

### **Module 3 - Determining the Outcomes of the Common Assessments**

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

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

[Slide 3] - In this module, you will learn about why educators assess students, including:

- Teachers and school administrators assess students for many reasons
- Assessments with different purposes should be built differently
- The type of reporting you want should guide assessment development
- Addressing these issues early on is the first step toward having a valid assessment.

[Slide 4] - You may feel ready to build a common assessment. You have determined the learning targets, your team is assembled and you feel ready...let's go!

[Slide 5] - Your enthusiasm is wonderful, and will be very helpful, but let's slow down just a little. Do you know why you're creating your assessment? This sounds like a very basic question, but it's really very important. When you build assessments, if you don't have a clear idea of the purpose for your assessment, you have a good chance of ending up with an assessment that's not as useful as it could be.

[Slide 6] - You are going to spend quite a bit of time building this assessment. You want to be sure that the finished product will meet your needs. You can't build an assessment to meet your needs if you don't know what your needs are!

[Slide 7] - Teachers assess students for several reasons. These include:

- Determine why students are struggling to learn certain concepts
- Provide remedial instruction to students who are struggling to learn the targets of instruction.
- Determine how much students have learned in order to grade them
- Determine what learning targets to address next with a class

[Slide 8] - School administrators use assessment data on students for other, equally valuable purposes:

- Select students for a special program or class, such as a gifted class
- Determine readiness for future learning, such as college dual enrollment
- Place students in an appropriate program, such as special education

- Determine the adequacy of student performance (accountability)

[Slide 9] - Students use assessment data in the following ways:

- Determine where they are on a learning progression
- Determine next steps in their own learning
- Direct their independent learning inside and outside of the classroom
- Deciding whether and how to continue learning

[Slide 10] - The bottom line is that no one assessment will serve every user and every use. The diagnostic information that may be helpful to a classroom teacher or student will not be of much use to the district or school administrator. On the other hand, a standardized test will probably not provide much useful information to classroom teachers because it will not provide useful information on a timely basis. However, these tests may be useful to the public. Thus, we need to construct (or select) assessments that will meet the needs of the users for information. More than one assessment may be needed to meet all users' needs.

Let's look at a few examples....

[Slide 11] - A common assessment used in a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade course at the beginning of the year can identify where remediation is necessary before the grade-level curriculum is delivered. At the end of the school year, a common assessment based on that year's curriculum could help students and teachers determine how successful instruction and learning have been.

[Slide 12] - A set of common interim benchmark assessments used periodically during the school year by 5<sup>th</sup>-grade social studies teachers can identify holes in the curriculum that prevent optimal learning for students. This might also be useful for a curriculum director to guide the improvement of the social studies curriculum and instruction for future years.

[Slide 13] - An end-of-course common assessment in high school biology can allow teachers to see how differently students perform in individual classrooms and perhaps compare their results to those from other schools.

[Slide 14] - A common assessment at the district level might be used by teachers at an elementary grade level to see how the curriculum is being taught across the district. It might also be used by district administrators to note similarities and differences across the buildings. Teachers in a building might use common assessments to talk deeply about their instructional practice.

[Slide 15] - Another important consideration in developing any assessment is how detailed the assessment results need to be – at the student level or in summary across the learning targets.

[Slide 16] - Here is an example that illustrates how a common assessment might be developed and used in your school. It shows that although the assessment was developed to grade students at the end of a semester, there is a desire to use the assessment to learn more about students and the assessment itself. Not all of these may be feasible given this common assessment.

[Slide 17] - Suppose you're building a common final exam to be given in a 55-minute class period after the first semester. We all know that you won't be able to assess everything you've done in your classroom in the first semester, so this final exam will most likely focus on the "high points"...the really important stuff. Even then, the really important stuff won't be assessed in great detail.

[Slide 18] - So we build our final exam, have our students complete it, and look at the results. What can we learn? Typically, we use a final exam for grading. To this end we have probably assigned a number to the test performance that we'll combine with other scores to generate a grade. You all know exactly how this works.

[Slide 19] - Lets try to look a little more deeply at the results. Can we get any "diagnostic" information from this test? We might really like having diagnostic information available. Remember, this test was over 20 weeks' worth of content and only hit the high points. Can that give diagnostic information?

[Slide 20] - Suppose everyone in the class responded incorrectly to question #1 on the final exam. What would that tell you? It would tell you information that something was wrong with that question. Perhaps students didn't learn that content, perhaps the test question didn't assess the content very well or in a way that aligned with how students learned it. We know something is wrong, but not what. Something clearly isn't working as we'd like.

[Slide 21] - Let's continue looking at the results from our final exam. Question #2 shows much better student performance. In fact, every student got #2 correct except for one. What do we know from this? Well, we can infer that students know this content better than that of question #1. What about our lone student who didn't answer correctly? Do we have good information to help them? Again, probably not. We know that they didn't answer this one question correctly. What does this say? Does it indicate that they don't know the content? Made an error along the way? We know that there's an issue with this student...we're just not sure what the issue is!

[Slide 22] - I think you're starting to see that a final exam isn't sufficient to answer all types of questions you might use an assessment to answer. The final exam gave you a percent correct score that can be used in grading. If that's what you wanted, you got it. If you want to build a test for diagnostic information related to where students might make procedural errors, you will build that test differently. You shouldn't try to diagnose 20 weeks' worth of content on one test!

[Slide 23] - The more detail desired for the reports of individual results, such as to diagnose areas of student weakness, the more items needed to assess students. Unless overall assessment time is unlimited, which is a rarity, a diagnostic assessment is likely to cover fewer skills but each in greater depth.

[Slide 24] - The larger the number of standards to be assessed in a district assessment, the fewer the number of items that can be used to measure *each* standard. If the number of items per standard is small, the reliability of the results may be lower. This may affect the quality of the decisions to be made based on the assessment results.

[Slide 25] - Therefore, it is important for each developer/user of common assessments to determine several things:

- Who are the users of the common assessment results?
- What use(s) do these users wish to make of the results of the common assessments?
- How will the results of each common assessment be reported?
- Can all of the users' needs be met with one common assessment, or is a coordinated system of assessments needed?

[Slide 26] - Assessments used for different purposes may be built differently. Knowing what you want from your assessment up front will help you build it to meet those needs. This is the first step toward validity.

[Slide 27] - So to summarize:

- We assess students for lots of reasons
- Assessments with different purposes may be built differently
- The type of reporting should guide the assessment construction
- Addressing these issues early on is the first step toward having a valid assessment.

[Slide 28] - In the following modules we'll go into more details about how you construct your common assessments. Be sure you have your purpose(s) clearly in mind!

If your learning team already has identified or created learning targets, please skip the next module and go on to Module 5. If you first need to create learning targets for your common assessments, please go on to the next Module (number 4) where you will learn about constructing learning targets for your common assessment.