



Development of an Assessment Credential System for Educators

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Abstract

The Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) developed the *Assessment Literacy Standards* (2015, 2017) to indicate what knowledge, dispositions, and performances assessment literate students and their families, teachers, building and district administrators, and local and state policymakers should possess. The purpose in creating such a comprehensive list of standards is to guide long-term learning about assessment for users of assessment. It was anticipated that some assessment users might seek to learn enough to be certified as “assessment specialists.” This session will describe the steps that have been and are being taken to achieve such a certification system.

Presentation Summary

Assessment credentialing is being developed to provide endorsements in assessment to licensed Michigan school administrators and MAC assessment certification for Michigan classroom teachers. The goal is to provide in-depth assessment literacy professional learning suitable at the district/school level or classroom level to endorse/certify administrators or teachers. The long-term goal of assessment credentialing is to have a certified assessment specialist in every one of the approximately 4,000 school buildings in the state. The MAC will offer opportunities to learn within three levels; only at the third level will assessment learning activities, accompanied by demonstration of competencies, result in one of two specialist credentials: Classroom Assessment Specialist or System Assessment Specialist.

Level 1 – Introductory. At this level, online, self-paced learning modules (ALMs) provide knowledge about fundamental assessment topics such as balanced assessment, developing assessments, and using assessment information. The ALMs are designed to be accessed by individual online learners, who can earn State Continuing Education Clock Hours. Following requests by districts for group licenses to use the ALM materials, in 2018-19 the MAC will pilot the use of ALMs to augment building and district professional learning plans and assessment system implementation efforts.

Level 2 – Intermediate. The same fundamental assessment topics are re-packaged in mini- courses that require demonstration of proficiency. These mini-courses require more in-depth learning. The learner submits a required collection of evidence, and trained assessment expert(s) supplies feedback



based on established criteria. A micro-credential is awarded when competency is demonstrated. An initial set of 8-9 courses are under development Summer 2018 with an upload to a learning management system scheduled for Fall 2018. The full catalogue of courses (20-25 topics) will be developed and piloted 2019-20.

Level 3 – Advanced. Specialist candidates select a defined problem of practice related to some area of demonstrated need in their school or district. They address their selected problem of practice through execution of a capstone experience, using Collaborative Based Inquiry (CBI). A portfolio of evidence is submitted that includes artifacts that demonstrate the exit competencies identified for Classroom Assessment Specialist or System Assessment Specialist. Following a presentation of learning, a panel of assessment experts determine competency based on pre-established criteria. Candidates map their work to the *Assessment Literacy Standards* and are assigned an assessment coach who works with them to approve their original plan of practice, hold regular conversations regarding progress, and provide feedback on the work.

These three levels of learning are aligned through consistent use of the *Assessment Literacy Standards*. The level II mini-courses comprise a large catalogue of assessment topic offerings and several courses require a culminating performance task sufficient to serve as an artifact of evidence to meet competency requirements for the aspiring assessment specialists. Using Level II courses to build knowledge and skill and/or demonstrate competency at Level III is offered as an intentional program support for Level III specialist candidates, but is not required. The use of CBI to support the reflection, facilitation, and leadership skills specialists will need in the field is being developed in partnership with expertise supplied by MI Learning Forward and MI ASCD.

Educators are working with the MAC to explore the ALMs and proposing a variety of uses dictated by their needs and audiences. Initial discussions have included licensing for building and district use for team learning and to support implementation and innovation initiatives. Other education associations have inquired about identifying “short stacks” of mini courses to embed in their own certification programs, and select Education Preparation Programs (EPP’s) are beginning to consider collaboration that could support and enhance their course work. The Michigan Department of Education has embedded a component in their new certification standards for “assessment literacy.” The State Board of Education endorsed the *Assessment Literacy Standards* in May 2016.

These ideas, while developed in Michigan, are applicable in any setting where the goals are to encourage assessment literacy broadly yet provide opportunities for some to learn about assessment more deeply. It is our belief that assessment systems can and should both certify and support learning; that sound assessment practice is essential in the development of competent, confident learners; and that the educators and stakeholders of our education system must be assessment literate to successfully prepare students to thrive in the world.

Resources for further exploration

Assessment Literacy Standards: <https://tinyurl.com/MAC-ALStandards>

Assessment Learning Modules: <https://plp.mivu.org/Registration.aspx?c=17>

Specifications Document for MI Learns Assessment System:

Available upon request by emailing assistant@michiganassessmentconsortium.org