



Developing an Assessment Credential System for Educators

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Abstract

Michigan Assessment Consortium's (MAC) *Assessment Literacy Standards* indicate the knowledge, performances, and dispositions assessment literate students, educators, and policymakers possess. These standards are guiding long-term assessment learning. Some educators may seek an introductory assessment understanding; others may seek to learn more or become a certified "assessment specialist." The MAC has undertaken steps to implement the Michigan Learns Assessment System (ALS), which will include three distinct levels to earn credit and deepen knowledge.

Michigan's envisioned assessment literacy learning opportunities include:

- Introductory (Level 1) – Eight learning modules provide fundamental assessment knowledge, resulting in certificates for module completion (state continuing education clock hours)
- Intermediate (Level 2) – Assessment topics are covered in short courses requiring demonstration of proficiency, resulting in award of micro-credential for courses completed.
- Advanced (Level 3) – Given a defined school/district assessment problem of practice, applicant demonstrates leadership ability in collaborative work. Results in certification.

Presentation Summary

Michigan Assessment Consortium's (MAC) *Assessment Literacy Standards* (2015, 2017) indicate what assessment knowledge, performances, and dispositions are needed for a person to be "assessment literate." Standards are articulated for multiple groups: students and their families, teachers, building and district administrators, and local and state policymakers. The purpose of this comprehensive set of standards is to guide long-term learning about assessment for assessment users. It was anticipated that some assessment users might seek to learn enough to be certified as "assessment specialists."

Consequently, the MAC has undertaken a series of steps to develop an assessment credentialing system 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 professional learning in assessment literacy suitable at the district/school systems level or classroom levels to endorse/certify



administrators or teachers. The long-term goal of assessment credentialing is to prepare and support (statewide) certified assessment specialists at two tiers of leadership:

1. systems assessment specialists in every school district
2. classroom assessment specialist in every school

Michigan's ALS offers three distinct levels at which participants can earn credit and deepen knowledge aligned to the *Assessment Literacy Standards*.

Introductory (Level 1) – Eight online modules provide fundamental assessment knowledge about topics such as balanced assessment systems, assessment systems necessary to develop 21st Century learners, developing and selecting assessments, and using assessment information to certify and to support learning. Learning is online, self-paced and not facilitated. Pilots during 2018-19 configured use of the modules in blended learning formats to augment building and district professional learning plans and assessment system implementation efforts.

Intermediate (Level 2) – Assessment topics are addressed in short courses (12-20 hours) that require a demonstration of proficiency. These courses are monitored by a facilitator, and the evidence submitted is evaluated by assessment experts. Currently 15 of 30 envisioned courses are developed, organized by strands; the strands mimic the broad topics presented in the online learning modules (Level 1). A field test has been conducted spring/summer 2019. Learners may elect to take just one course, a full strand, or a combination of courses that would result in the production of artifacts sufficient to populate a required portfolio (necessary to earn a specialist credential at Level 3).

Advanced (Level 3) – Candidates for certification select a defined problem of practice related to school or district assessment in order to demonstrate leadership ability in working collaboratively at that site. Individuals complete a collaborative inquiry process module, then work with a district or school team to carry it out. Candidates will assemble a detailed capstone presentation describing the problem of practice and how it was addressed; present it to a panel of assessment experts; and map their work to the *Assessment Literacy Standards*. A portfolio of evidence will include artifacts sufficient to demonstrate mastery of the competencies a classroom specialist or system assessment specialist needs in order to lead assessment innovation and implementation work. Each participant will be assigned an assessment coach who approves their original plan of practice, monitors and supports progress, and provides feedback on the work. Successful activities result in certification.

The goal of a leveled system is to encourage assessment literacy broadly yet provide opportunities for some to learn about assessment deeply, particularly those with job responsibilities that demand knowledge about effective assessment practice and quality, balanced assessment systems.

Resources for further exploration

Presentation Materials: <https://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/event/2019-ncsa-developing-an-assessment-credentialing-system-for-educators/>

Assessment Literacy Standards, MAC:

michiganassessmentconsortium.org/assessment-literacy-standards

Assessment Learning Modules: michiganassessmentconsortium.org/almodules