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Colorado's Assessment Literacy Program

Angela Landrum
September 16, 2015

Angela Landrum: Good afternoon everyone, thank you so much for attending today. I just wanted to give a little bit of background on the work that we've been doing here in Colorado before Joan and Margaret step in to give more details. My work at CDE focuses primarily on formative and interim assessment as well as assessment literacy, and I'm also engaged quite a bit in performance assessment and

development. I pretty much deal with all content areas and all grade levels.



We have a particular perspective here in Colorado on assessment. It's really very simple. As we talk with our educators and stakeholders across the state, our exclusive goal of assessment is to support the instructional priorities and the Colorado Academic Standards to promote learning for all students, period. If there's not an opportunity for an assessment to meet that particular goal, then we really have to question why it is we're engaging in that assessment practice.



Like most states, Colorado is currently beset with many sometimes competing education initiatives that rely on the effective use of assessment information. The implementation of new assessments, standards, educator effectiveness systems and accountability systems require educators to possess more assessment knowledge and skills than has been necessary in the past. That's why we've begun implementing all these initiatives. We've heard from educators that, one, there's a lack of assessment resources that are truly aligned to both the content and the rigor of the Colorado Academic Standards, and, two, there's a pervasive culture of over-testing, due, in part, to gaps in assessment knowledge across the educational sector.

This led to a few things: misuse of assessment information; misconceptions regarding assessment purpose or purposes; and the lack of systems thinking when considering how and why assessments are developed or selected.


The Colorado Assessment Literacy Program was created to help fill those knowledge gaps and to articulate what a high-quality assessment system looks like and how it functions to serve student learning. There's a real need for clarification regarding assessment practices in order to reduce the anxiety that educators are now feeling, and to really focus on improving outcomes for students.

Colorado Assessment Literacy Program

PURPOSE
To assist Colorado educators in deepening their understanding of the varied purposes and uses of assessment information that guide actionable educational decisions

- Educators need to know:
 - The purposes and functions of a high quality assessment system
 - Where and how to access assessment resources
 - When and why an assessment is being given
 - How to select and/or design assessments for various purposes
 - How to determine the knowledge and skills an assessment is designed to measure
 - How to use assessment data to make instructional decisions, provide feedback to students, and improve student achievement

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We began about a year-and-a-half ago by trying to articulate what we wanted to do better in terms of assessment practice. I spent many months discussing what assessment literacy should look like with our teachers, our principals, our district leaders, my colleagues here at CDE, and colleagues in other state education agencies. We all agreed that the ability to effectively use assessment information for an actionable purpose that benefitted student learning should be the only reason to engage in assessment practice.

There was agreement that there's not necessarily a need to do more assessment. In fact, in some cases, or in most cases, less is most likely warranted. It's really about intentionally using the information you're receiving from your assessment in ways that move students forward. All assessments need to have a purpose and provide information that advances learning for all students.

As you look at the “educators need to know” list in this slide, the one that focuses on when and why an assessment is being given really gives rise to important conversations at all levels of the system regarding the purpose and use of assessment information. This kind of engagement and communication among teachers, principals, district administrators, and state staff is critical for ensuring that the assessment system is working for the benefit of students, rather than it being a burden that students must overcome in order to demonstrate what they know and what they can do.

Colorado's Assessment Literacy Program is striving to provide resources on how to use assessment information to make instructional decisions, provide feedback to students, and improve student achievement overall. This includes how that process works, where to start, and what are the steps involved for instructional, programmatic and educator evaluation purposes.


A presentation slide for the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program. The title "Colorado Assessment Literacy Program" is in white text on a blue background. Below it, the section "Key Program Components" is underlined. A bulleted list follows: Stakeholders, Comprehensive Assessment System Framework, Assessment Literacy Professional Learning Modules, and Establishing Sustainable Resources and Supports. The slide number "6" is in the bottom left, and the CDE logo is in the bottom right.

Colorado Assessment Literacy Program

Key Program Components

- Stakeholders
- Comprehensive Assessment System Framework
- Assessment Literacy Professional Learning Modules
- Establishing Sustainable Resources and Supports

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I had a conversation a while back with a colleague from another SEA. She made it very clear to me that my number-one priority in terms of stakeholders really ought to be focused internally here at CDE. It's probably the same throughout all SEAs across the nation, but most units within the various SEAs talk to educator and district representatives about assessment in some way. It's imperative that we, as an agency, really began to speak the same language.

I requested from every leader in each unit here at CDE, as appropriate, a liaison to represent their area as part of a cross-unit work team. As a result the voice of every unit engaged in communicating to the field regarding assessment has been incorporated into this work since the beginning.

We've also taken a transparent approach throughout the development of this work engaging educators, education partners, leaders, and the public in opportunities to contribute to this work and to provide feedback. From the previous slide you can see that

the scope of our purpose is huge. We began by looking at what it was that we could build upon, not starting from scratch. There was absolutely no reason to do that.

With assistance from CRESST, the resources at CDE, in our districts, in our partners and in other states were inventoried so we could determine what we could develop that's "new," and what exists already that could provide a structure and context for more meaningful use. As a result, you can imagine the resources we collected were immense. Because we were interested in streamlining and reducing confusion, not creating more chaos, we determined that we should begin with grounding assessment in a common framework of assessment types, purposes, uses, and the like. Essentially, getting everyone on the same page with how we talk about the different types of assessment and what their intended purposes and uses are.

This framework gave rise to the development of these in-depth professional learning modules designed to provide the user with more detailed information about the assessment type. These modules also include content-specific examples which have been a big hit, if you will, with our educators in the field.

These are the components that Joan and Margaret are going to go into greater detail on, and they've served as the primary work of CRESST in the development of the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program. Before I pass the presentation on to Joan to discuss the framework, I will mention that the online resources will eventually go live at the end of this month and will continue to be built upon and improved over time. While the online resources are essential to supporting Colorado educators, we realize that creating an opportunity to interface directly with educators regarding the foundational components of assessment literacy is absolutely necessary. Beginning at the end of this month and continuing throughout next summer I'll be working with districts and regions to customize professional learning opportunities to not only introduce these resources, but help them create sustainable structures at the local level to continue to advance high-quality assessment practices.



This is just my contact information. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions on any component of our program. I'd be happy to talk with any of you. Thanks very much, and I'll pass it back to Sujie.

Moderator:

Thanks, Angela. Before we move on, could we take a quick moment to ask a question that came in regarding the development of this initiative. It's a question around whether or not it started with the assessment office or with the instructional office and how you went about integrating both.

Angela Landrum:

Well, I'll tell you where it's funded out of. It's a product of our Race to the Top program. While the assessment literacy component was something that the assessment office has taken the lead on, it's been an interest across the department, from our standards and instructional support office, very heavily, as well as interest and involvement from our educator effectiveness office and from our school and district support and improvement areas. All across the department there's been huge interest and support for this work. That's been going on for a very long time. I think the first conversation I had about the need for assessment literacy resources at CDE was probably seven years ago. That took place with someone who is actually in our school and district improvement office. Yeah, it's kind of an agency-wide interest level.

Joan Herman



- CSAI Associate Director
- Co-Director Emeritus of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA



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Colorado's Comprehensive Standards-Based Assessment Framework

Joan Herman
September 16, 2015



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Moderator:

Thank you Angela. Now we're going to move on to Joan Herman who is going to be talking a little bit more about why coherent assessment systems, what makes an assessment system coherent, and the components in thinking about coherence within Colorado's assessment framework. I think Joan, as you're talking, it would be great to get some feedback from you about, again, this integration

aspect of how we get different departments within state departments of education to work together in developing a coherent assessment system.

Joan Herman:

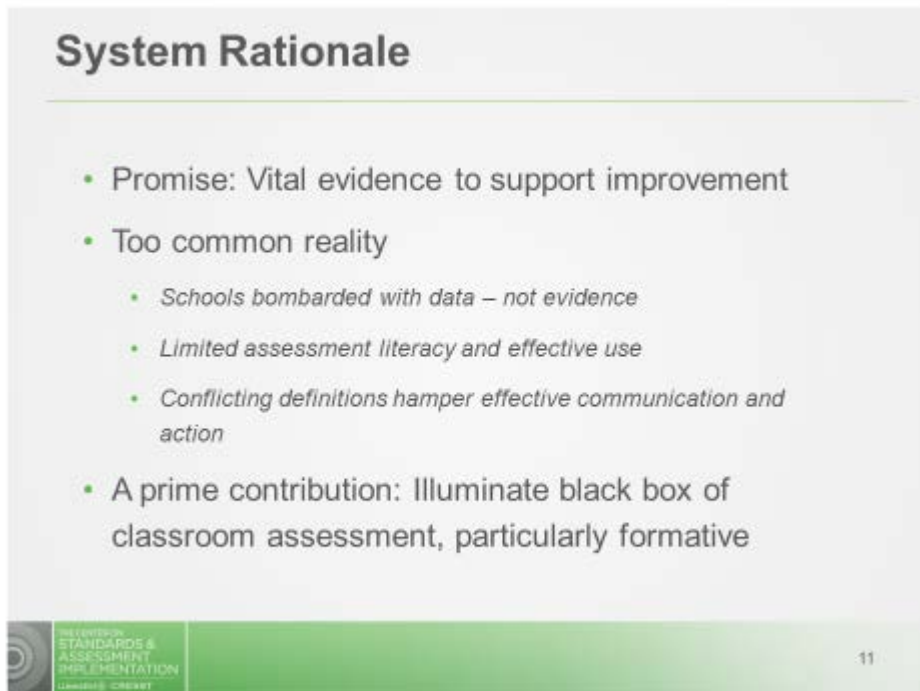
Thanks Sujie, and thanks, Angela, for a great presentation. I'm very pleased and proud to be joining this webinar to share CRESST's work with Colorado. I think it's been a really productive collaboration. Angela, I hope you agree. It's produced some very useful assessment literacy resources that can be adapted for states across the country, even though our initial target has been Colorado, and the framework is very much customized to Colorado needs. Of course, I may be a bit biased.

Certainly I'd be remiss if I didn't credit Angela and Colorado educators and colleagues for the quality of the framework that we've been able to produce. It was their idea and we went through multiple review and revision cycles with them. Colorado's feedback and suggestions were spot on for helping us to improve. I'd also be remiss if I didn't note that Angela is absolutely a consummate professional and a joy to work with.



My job today is to share the framework which lays out Colorado's vision of a comprehensive and coherent system of assessment that supports teaching and learning of Colorado standards and of the state's continuous improvement toward that goal. In my time I'll share why we think the framework is important and how it makes

sense of a range of different types of assessments, laying out a continuum of complimentary assessment processes and tools. I'll then share the framework components that are used to describe each type of assessment. Finally, I'll mention how the framework connects to other ongoing initiatives at the department, which Angela has already mentioned, and supports a unified state-wide view of effective teaching and learning.



System Rationale

- Promise: Vital evidence to support improvement
- Too common reality
 - *Schools bombarded with data – not evidence*
 - *Limited assessment literacy and effective use*
 - *Conflicting definitions hamper effective communication and action*
- A prime contribution: Illuminate black box of classroom assessment, particularly formative

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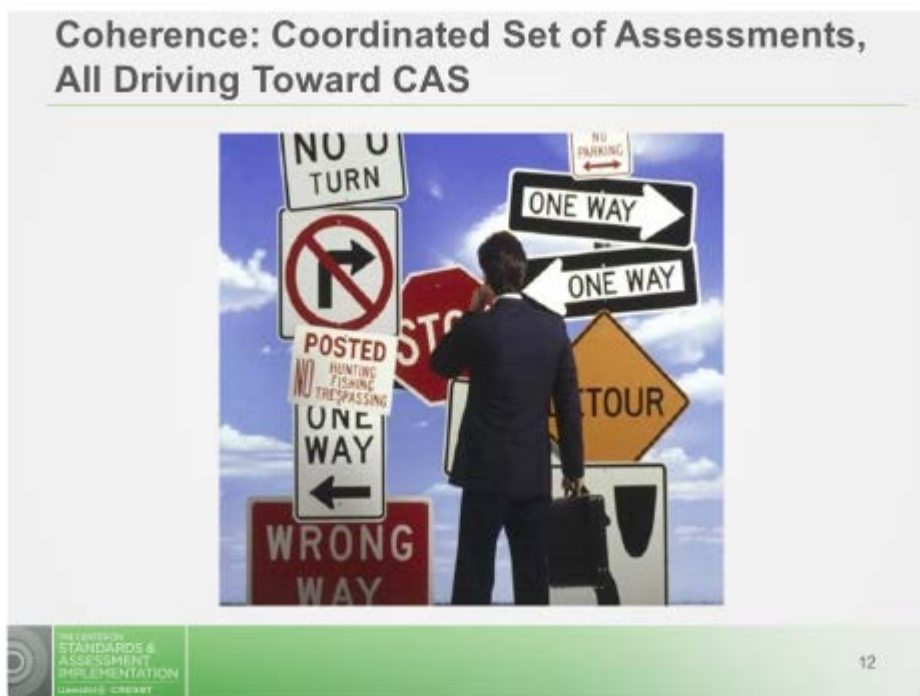
STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Why a framework? Angela has already discussed this, so I'll be brief. Why a framework? Because assessment is supposed to provide vital evidence to improve educational decision making, but its promise has not been adequately realized. Why not? Educator's assessment literacy has been one issue. Educators, whatever the level, heretofore have not had opportunities to develop their capacity to design, select, interpret, and use assessment to improve learning. Bombarded with data and urged to use it continuously, educators at all levels may have upped their ability to talk the talk, but their capacity to walk the walk has a ways to go.

With Colorado we feel that educators at all levels need data from a coherent system of assessment to support their needs, and a common language and guidance to understand and use the system well. The framework serves these underlying purposes. As a special contribution, I'm particularly proud of the way in which the framework untangles the mess of classroom assessment, and clarifies the role that assessment plays both in supporting ongoing

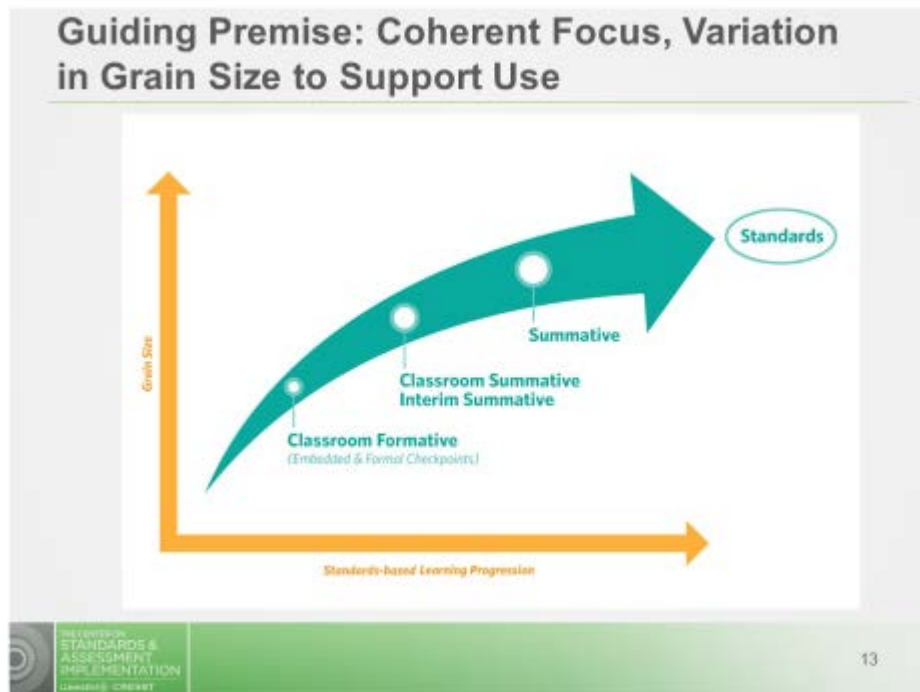
instruction, and for classroom and other summative decision-making purposes, for example, grading.

Not all classroom assessment is formative, in the classic Margaret Heritage sense, nor is summative a dirty word. In fact, summative data, we all know, can be used formatively. We stress these uses throughout the framework.



As Colorado has well recognized, multiple kinds of assessment are needed to meet the decision-making needs at different levels and for different purposes, and these multiple assessments must coalesce into a coherent system of assessments that focus all levels on the same goal: achieving Colorado standards. In contrast to the picture you see here, Colorado's vision of a multi-level assessment system provides clear and consistent direction from all levels on the roads that students must travel to achieve success, and it provides appropriate data for users at each level to fuel and accelerate student progress toward that goal.

The framework both lays out a vision and provides Colorado educators a means to ensure coherence in their assessment system. It informs a range of decision-making purposes by offering a broad and deep perspective on student learning and achievement, and the kinds of assessment that can promote such learning.



The figure here shows the guiding premise of the framework. All assessment in the system shares a consistent focus on Colorado’s rigorous academic standards, from classroom formative to classroom assessment and interim assessments, on through end-of-year summative measures, state assessment, NAEP, even international assessments. The grain size—the level of detail the assessment provides about the specifics of student learning—moves from small to large based on the decision making needs at each level.

For example, obviously teachers need fine-grain continuous data to make decisions and to inform instruction. State policy makers need more general barometers, but ones that still signal what is important for students to know and be able to do. The figure also is meant to convey a system that reflects a progression of interconnected goals that add up to student success in major competencies and accomplishment of state standards.

Short-term learning goals assessed by frequent classroom formative assessment, the smallest grain size, build toward the medium-term goals addressed by classroom, interim, and summative assessment, a much larger grain size. These, in turn, build towards the long-term goals, end-of-year goals, and success with Colorado standards.

Note as well, in this figure, that classroom formative assessment, designed to inform teaching and learning during the process of instruction, is subdivided into formative assessment embedded during the actual process of instruction—for example, if students are discussing working responding—and formal, formative checkpoints that provide in-process data on how all students are doing, and provide an opportunity to fill in any gaps. Note as well, as I’ve said, that the framework differentiates classroom summative and classroom formative assessments.

Description of Each Assessment Type					
Definition of terms					
Type and User	Purpose	Frequency and Relationship to Instruction	Methods	Information	Uses/Actions
Category of assessment and who uses the assessment type and results	Function assessment serves within a comprehensive system of standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment	How often and when to assess students in relation to instructional goals	Strategies for obtaining evidence of learning	Types of evidence or information gained from assessment to inform uses and actions (see next column)	Actions that educators and students might take in relation to assessment information

For each of these assessment types—including classroom formative, classroom summative, interim annual state tests, national and international tests, diagnostic and screening tests—the framework then provides the following categories of information, as you can see here. First, type and user. The type of assessment and who is responsible for it primarily. For example, embedded formative assessment is clearly the domain of the teacher, versus interim testing which tends to be the domain of school or district decision making.

Next, purpose. The function this type of assessment serves. For example, all assessments actually signal what is important for students to know and be able to do, but formative assessment is designed and implemented simply to assist ongoing teaching and learning while interim tests monitor student achievement and serve the needs of more programmatic improvement.

Next, frequency and relationship to instruction, which denotes how often and when each type of assessment occurs in relationship to instructional goals. For example, imbedded formative assessment is a minute-by-minute activity, while formal formative assessment is more likely to be weekly or so.

Next, assessment methods: the strategies used for obtaining evidence of learning for this type of assessment. In formative assessment you've got observation, spontaneous and planned questioning, analysis of student ongoing work, while for interim and end-of-year testing you've got more standardized or common measures, measures which you can use to make comparisons and identify classes and groups of students who are doing well and those that may be struggling. If you look at the framework you'll also see that the framework incorporates actual instruments used in Colorado. For example CMAS and WIDA Access for English language development.

Next, information: what this type of assessment tells you. For formative assessment: the status of students' current learning, difficulties or misunderstandings that students specifically may be experiencing, and their emerging ideas and conceptions. For more summative measures, the information provided is guided or not, making progress or not; a more abrupt decision.

Finally, uses or actions: the type of actions that users might take based on assessment evidence. For example, for formative assessment, depending on what the evidence tells one, teachers and students might continue with planned instruction, might stop and find out more, might provide specific feedback to individual students, or might adjust immediate instructional moves. While, for interim testing, the results should validate teacher's judgments, be used by schools or districts to make within program decisions, to communicate with parents, to readjust school, district or classroom programs and structures, and/or to provide special services for teachers or students who are identified as needing help.

Includes Full Range of Potential Users

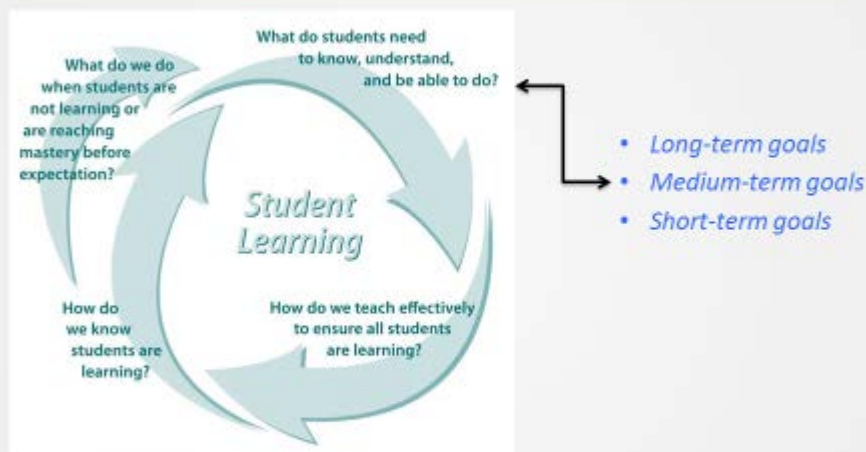
Letter	User
S	Student
T	Teacher
SSP	School Support Professionals
SA	School Administrator
P	Parent
D	District Administrator
ST	State



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You'll see here that the framework considers a full range of potential assessment users, including students, teachers, school support professionals, school leaders, district administrators, parents, and state policy makers and administrators. Our attempt here, as in every aspect of the framework, was to be as comprehensive as possible.

Builds on Colorado's Cycle of Learning



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I think it's important to point out that Colorado's assessment framework doesn't sit apart from existing state initiatives, but attempts to be fully integrated with them. I must say thank you to our Colorado reviewers for this suggestion. The framework is not an add-on, but an elaboration of other related efforts that have preceded it and will continue alongside it. Here we see the cycle of student learning that Colorado has worked hard to establish state-wide as the paradigm for teaching and learning. Margaret will provide another example as well.

You'll see here the four questions posed during the learning cycle. What do students need to know and be able to do, how do we teach effectively to ensure all students are learning, how do we know students are learning, and what do we do when students are not learning or reaching mastery? We've coordinated our assessment framework with this cycle by differentiating the various decision-making levels at which the cycle operates and the corresponding level of goals or grain size for which each level is responsible.

This just happens to correspond to the varying grain sizes of the different assessment types in our framework. Following Williams's conception, we differentiate short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. Classroom formative assessment provides information about student learning relative to immediate short-term goals, minute-by-minute to weekly, for use by teachers and students. Classroom summative and interim assessments give information relative to medium-term goals for use by teachers, school leaders, and districts. Annual summative assessments indicate students' achievement with respect to longer-term goals, for example, achievement of grade level standards.

Short-Term Goals

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency and Relationship to Instruction
Classroom Formative: Formal checkpoints on learning progress	Assist/evaluate teaching and learning	Minute-by-minute
	Monitor learning relative to lesson goals	Daily
Classroom Formative: Embedded in ongoing teaching and learning	Signal important learning goals	Weekly
	Monitor progress with specifically targeted intervention	During teaching and learning
		Or as fits with instructional plan or schedule



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You'll see here representatives of the assessment types and purposes associated with each level of goal. If you see the framework itself, you'll also see that it integrates assessment for intervention and RTI students as well, which I consider is another special accomplishment.

Medium-Term Goals

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency and Relationship to Instruction
Interim Summative	Signal important learning goals	After a more extended period of teaching and learning (e.g., after a unit is completed and before another unit begins)
Classroom Summative	Evaluate achievement	At the end of a semester
	Monitor student achievement based on learning goals	3x per year or more
	Inform improvement strategies for:	Across instructional units/calendar periods
	• Teachers	
	• Schools	
	• Districts	



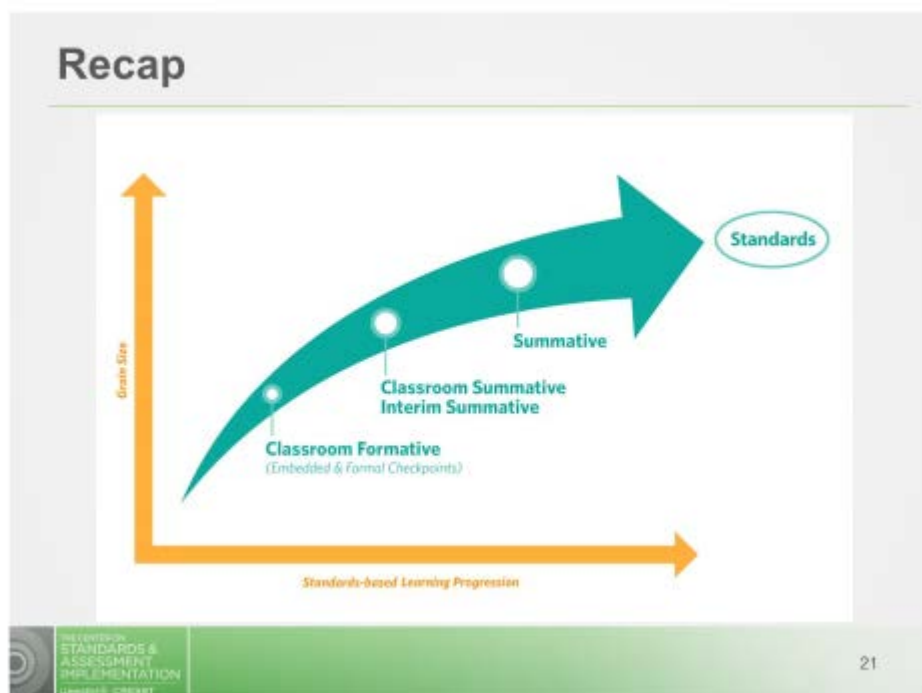
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Long-Term Goals

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency and Relationship to Instruction
Summative: State, district, school, other external mandated	Accountability	After a year's worth or a course's worth of instruction and learning
National & International Assessments	Informing improvement strategies	
	Signal important learning goals	
	Align curriculum	

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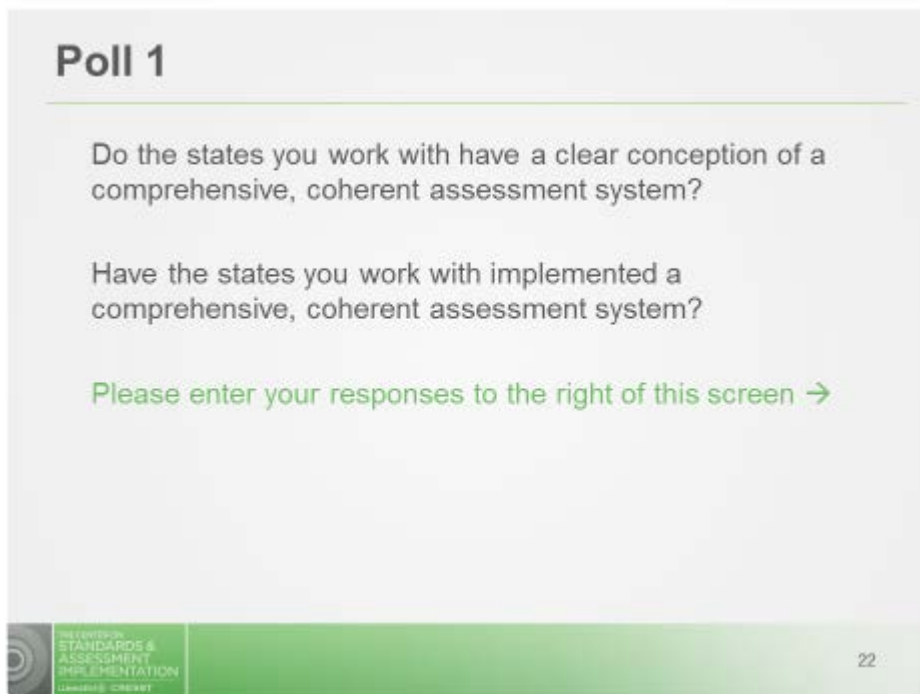
Here, medium-term goals, and the long-term goals.



To recap, the Colorado framework, which I think is generalizable for use in any number of states, establishes a system where all assessments in the system are standards-based, mapped along a progression of interconnected goals toward the ultimate goal, the

Colorado standards. Each assessment type provides a different level of detail or grain size about student learning and achievement so that relevant actors at each level of the Colorado education system can take appropriate action to improve student learning.

Let me stop here and turn the podium back over to Sujie for a poll, and then on to the next segment. Thank you.



Poll 1

Do the states you work with have a clear conception of a comprehensive, coherent assessment system?

Have the states you work with implemented a comprehensive, coherent assessment system?

Please enter your responses to the right of this screen →

THE COLORADO STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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Moderator:

Thanks, Joan. In front of you all you should see poll questions and options to enter responses. First, “do the states you work with have a clear conception of a comprehensive, coherent assessment system,” as has been described in the previous two presentations, and “have the states you work with implemented a comprehensive coherent assessment,” again, as described? If you can take a quick moment to answer these questions, we’ll move on in a second. In the meantime, please submit any questions that you might have for either Angela or Joan into that chat box.

Joan, while folks are answering these two poll questions, we do have a question that’s come in regarding the timeframe that it’s taken with Colorado to implement this system. Can you give a sense of how far along they are and what the development timeframe is?

Joan Herman:

I think I would have to pass that question over to Angela with regard to the pieces of the system that are currently in place. Our involvement was on the development of the framework, which is

the goal to which Colorado aspires. I could tell you how long it took us to develop the framework, but not the crucial question of how do you get from where states are to a comprehensive system. From my perspective it's around helping locals at the district level, at the school level, at the teacher level, make good selection systems about the assessments they're using or developing.

As the question implies, it's a long-term process. I mean we start with, of course, new assessments of Colorado standards provided by PARCC, which provides a target which is well aligned with the Colorado standards. I think that the challenge at this point is to make sure that the interim assessments and teachers' assessments and school assessments are well represented and aligned with the rigor of Colorado goals.

Moderator: Angela, could you talk, maybe a minute, about a timeframe in terms of actually developing and implementing the system in Colorado?

Angela Landrum: Sure. As I mentioned a moment ago, we will be rolling out these resources, which include the framework, at the end of this month. As Joan was just talking about, we also recognize the need to interface with educators and not just say, "here, isn't this a great online resource that we have," but to help them really understand how to use these resources, and how to embed them within their own local context. We are doing some in-person, face-to-face professional learning across the state, beginning, literally, in about a week-and-a-half through next summer. That's how we're going to be utilizing the remainder of our Race to the Top funds.

We're really looking at this year as a full-court press implementation year for that purpose. Ultimately, we really want to be able to create some sustainable structures at the local level so we can continue to provide those online resources and some higher-level support and things moving forward. If things don't change at the local level, then there's not a lot we can do even with all our fancy whistles and bells and online systems. We're really going to focus on helping our districts and regions do that.

Moderator: Great, thank you. Thanks, everybody, for submitting in your responses to the poll questions. It looks like somewhat is the most frequent answer for both questions around understanding the clear conception of a comprehensive, coherent assessment, as well as having implemented them.

Margaret Heritage



- CSAI Content Advisor on Curriculum and Instruction
- Senior Scientist at WestEd

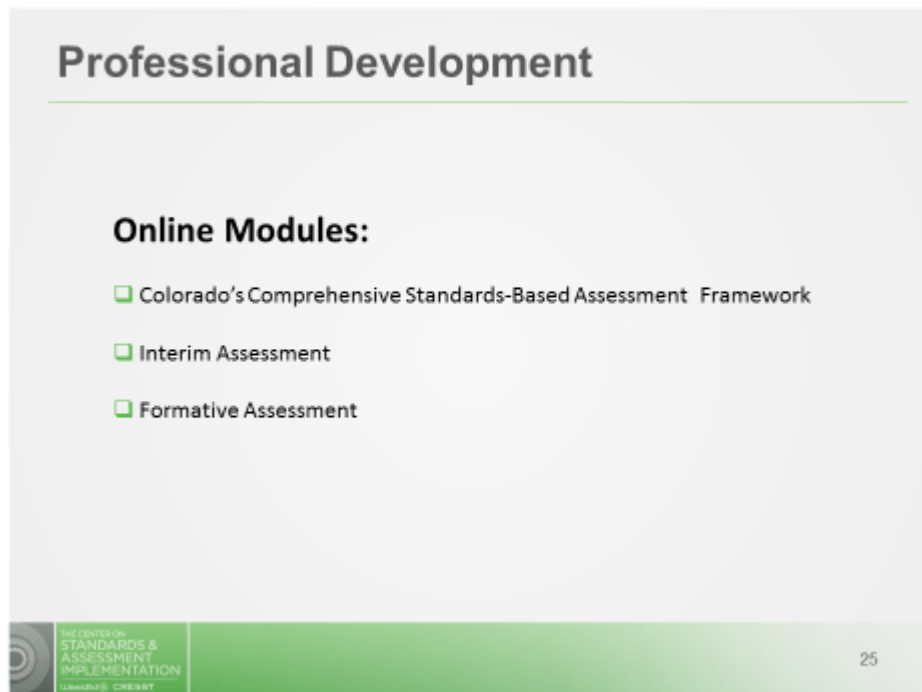


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I think as we're moving forward with the next phase, with Margaret talking a little bit more about professional learning modules—if it's appropriate to integrate into your conversation, Margaret—it'd be great to have a conversation about what additional accountability systems are in place in Colorado to compliment this framework. That might be something we want to also bounce back to Joan and Angela at the end. Thank you.

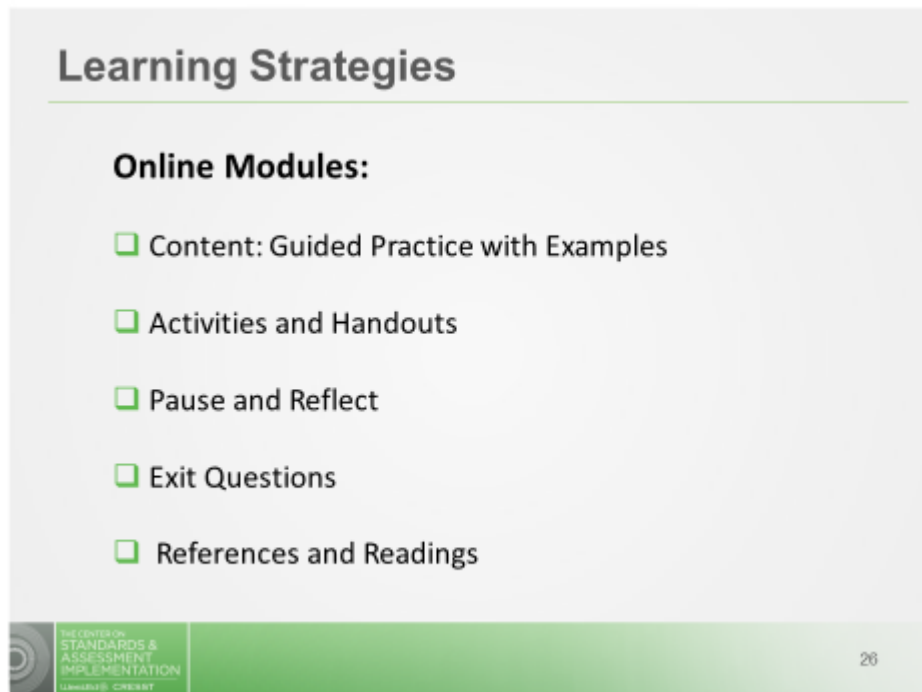


Margaret Heritage: I am going to talk a little bit now about the professional learning that we put in place for Colorado to implement as a web-based system to support the framework. Before I do so, I want to just echo Joan's comments about Angela and her Colorado colleagues. I had a lot of contact with them, and they were just top-notch and such great collaborators. I think that's an important lesson learned in this, that it's a two-way street. I think our collaboration really benefitted this project very much.



What we did in the end was to develop three core modules for the professional learning for the implementation of the framework. The first one was focused on the framework itself. To be quite honest, we hadn't originally set out to do a module on the framework. After our first implementation of ideas around professional learning it became very clear that we had to do this. This module is really focused on what the framework means, what the purpose is, and it is very similar to what Joan just described to you in terms of the organization, the assessment types, who uses them, and so on.

For the next one we did, on interim assessment, we also adopted a similar approach as we did to the standards-based assessment framework module, focusing on the use of interim assessment and the purposes that they are designed for. Finally, probably the largest module we did, because it comprised several sections, was on formative assessment. Joan has just described our conceptualization of formative assessment.



Some of the learning strategies that we used in all the modules are listed on the screen. We started each one with some content, giving people some conceptualization of the assessment type, the purposes, the uses, and the actions that could be taken. That was very much the beginning point of each module: the conceptualization of what these assessment types were and how they could best be used.

From that we took the view that the end users would need some guided practice. I'll show you some examples of that a bit later in the presentation. Really guiding teachers and users through the ideas of the assessment, how they could be used. For example, in the interim assessment module, we gave some activities around interpreting reports. Teachers would use and hone their skills in drawing inferences from the kinds of data reports that are often associated with interim assessment.

We had those kinds of activities, and we also offered handouts, supplementary information. For example, in the interim assessment we had handouts for folks on reliability indices, so that teachers would have that information, and handouts on fairness and bias. These were some of these concepts associated with assessment that we wanted to ensure are very much part of our program, but also, at the same time, wanted to make sure were in user-friendly modes so that people wouldn't be completely put off by some of these technical aspects of assessment literacy.

We also included, a lot of times, for people to stop, take a breath, focus on what they'd learned and then think about how that related to their own work. We guided that—these pause and reflect opportunities—through specific questions. I mentioned that Colorado is actually designing and implementing the web-based solution to all of this. The idea of these pause and reflect opportunities is that teachers would enter their responses into an online journal, which could be accumulated over time. They have that as a record for themselves, and also a way to go back and reflect on earlier thoughts as their knowledge became more deep and expanded.

We have exit questions at the end of each module, and we conceptualize these as ways to consolidate their knowledge. These would be questions related to the content, and also a way for teachers to think, “hmm, well maybe I don't understand that as well as I should, so I can go back and do some more work.”

Then, finally, because so much of what we've done is grounded in research and leading theory, we gave references to each of the modules, and in some instances provided additional readings when we thought that would be beneficial. Of course, those additional readings were optional.

Those, in broad brush strokes, were the learning strategies that we adopted for each of these core modules that we developed.

Collaboration with CDE



- Ongoing discussions
- Feedback on initial drafts
- Content Collaborative added examples
- CDE will create web-based delivery system

INTEGRATION
STANDARDS &
ASSESSMENT
IMPLEMENTATION
LEARNING CREDIT

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I won't dwell too much on this because Joan has mentioned our collaboration. I do think it's important to really underscore the reciprocal nature of our work and ongoing discussions and feedback. I do want to take my hat off to Colorado and Angela in particular for the transparency that was adopted as the leitmotif of this whole project.

For example, when we first developed the framework and we'd gone back and forth with CDE people, Angela wanted to have this—I'm saying Angela, I'm sure it's Angela and her colleagues, but Angela was the one I was dealing with—open to the entire state. We put together a PowerPoint presentation and an audio presentation to go on the state website, and we got feedback from people who had taken the time to review them.

There was an opportunity for educators across Colorado to contribute in other ways, which I thought makes it really robust and gives people buy-in and all that good stuff we always talk about. We had very good feedback on any initial drafts. Very useful feedback, so we entered into a process of drafts, feedback, review, refinement, more feedback, and so on. It was very iterative.

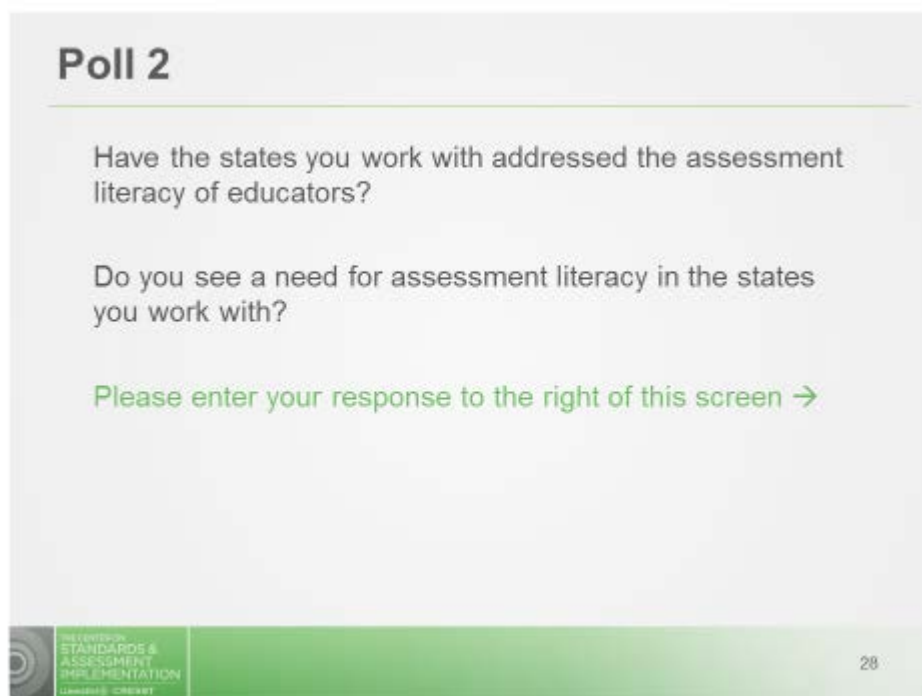
I don't think Angela mentioned the content collaboratives. Maybe I could pause, Angela, for you to say who these people are, because I think they were integral to the work. I also think that it would be useful for folks to know about this network you created in Colorado as an example of how to support this kind of work and other work. Maybe we could just unmute Angela for a second and she can come back in and just say a little bit about content collaboratives.

Angela Landrum: Yes, absolutely. The content collaboratives were actually created back in 2012 as part of our Race to the Top work. They are groups of educators that represent each of our 11 content areas for which we have Colorado Academic Standards represented. Most are classroom teachers, but we also have district representatives and some that are community members as well. These folks have been really engaged in the assessment component of our Race to the Top program since 2012. They are a highly-trained cohort of educators that have very specific content knowledge as related to assessment.

They are the ones that we have gone to to help create the content-specific examples that are being reflected in the modules that have been built by Margaret, Joan, and their team at CRESST. It's been a learning experience for these folks as well. I think that the buy-in

from the field, once we are able to roll these out, is going to be huge, because they're going to be able to see how these modules can apply to them in their context. Because if you're a science teacher, you want to see science examples. If you're a visual arts teacher, you want to see visual arts examples. We've really strived to engage our educators in that way, in order to create examples that serve all of those needs.

Margaret Heritage: Thank you very much, Angela. That was great. Again, we engaged in reciprocal feedback where collaboratives would send us examples, we'd give feedback, they'd refine, and so on. The collaboration along these circular dimensions was very strong. I think it led to a really solid, robust product.



Moderator: We have another quick poll coming up. There are two questions here: “have the states you work with addressed the assessment literacy of educators specifically” and “do you see a need for assessment literacy in the states you work with?” I think some of this is around readiness. As you're filling those out, we do have a couple of questions that I would love for Angela to address. The first is around the accountability system that you see in place that complements the framework that we've just discussed. Also, what are some of the ways in which you're now seeing Colorado's assessment system differently than before this work began to ultimately improve the system?

Angela Landrum: Well, in terms of accountability, there isn't going to be anything in statute that says that you must use these resources or you're going to be out of compliance. There's not going to be anything like that. However, we have very deliberately embedded within the framework and within the modules connections to our teacher quality standards from our educator effectiveness protocols. You can see the connections there. That will really help drive some very informed conversations at the local level around the use of assessment at the classroom level and at the building level, as you're talking about educator effectiveness for teachers and for principals.

At the same time, I've also been able to have conversations with some of the folks in our accountability area around how it is that we engage our districts with their interim assessments. We are using some of the protocols that have been developed through this process, as well as some of our other prior processes that the content collaboratives have been engaged in to determine the quality and the appropriate usefulness of interim assessments that our districts are using for a variety of purposes that do serve accountability purposes.

Those are some things that are initially starting to happen. Over time, we'll see. We're hoping that the framework can really help, like I said before, ground everyone in a common language. As we move forward, perhaps that will help influence any decisions that are made, both at the state level and local level.

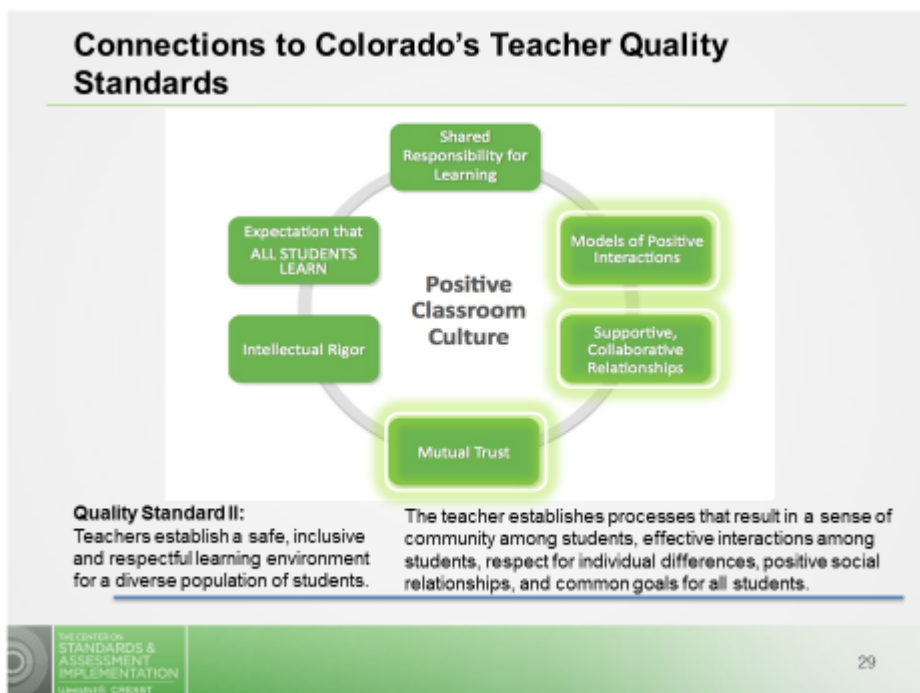
As far as changes in the way that I've seen, or that we've seen, Colorado's assessment system, I think the thing that's been the most prevalent is being able to communicate, through the framework and the modules, this continuum of assessments. That phrase, continuum of assessment, is something our executive director for assessment established several years ago. We really wanted to be able to demonstrate what that looks like and how all of the assessment types serve a valuable and useful purpose, and, most importantly, how they're all interconnected.

Being able to articulate assessment as a practice and that assessment exists or should exist within a comprehensive, coherent framework—that in and of itself has changed the environment of assessment. We really want to change conversations. As Joan said, we don't want assessment to be a dirty word anymore. We want folks to understand that if you really want to be able to know where your students are at and where they're going, you have to engage in high-quality assessment practices, and that should be a positive thing, and not something that's considered negative.

I think those are the things that we're really trying to change in terms of perception and the culture of the use, and then how we discuss assessment in Colorado.

Moderator:

Great, thank you so much, Angela. The results are in, and it looks like it's about a 50/50 split in that first question around how the states you work with address the literacy of educators, specifically, and then we see 100 percent responding "yes" to the question around seeing a need for literacy in the states that you all work with.



Margaret Heritage: Let me just go through a couple of slides quickly. Angela mentioned, and we felt this was really important, to connect current initiatives with Colorado. Joan mentioned and Angela has mentioned all these competing demands, and we don't want to be seen as yet another thing. Where possible we were connecting what we were doing with existing Colorado work. This is just an example from one of the module sections of our formative assessment modules on a positive classroom culture. If you click on these different elements where it aligns, the teacher quality standards are highlighted.

I think that's been important as well, and a good lesson learned about this work that we need to ensure that it is connected, and we join the dots for people—that was the phrase or sentence, rather, that we kept on using. We need to join the dots so people see how

it all coheres. I can go through these slides quickly, Sujie, so that we can get on with the discussion.

Interim Module Focus

Three main purposes for the use of interim assessments:

- Signal Important Learning Goals
- Monitor and Evaluate Student Achievement
- Inform Improvement Strategies

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This was the subsection, these core subsections, of our interim assessment module that we were signaling the three main purposes. To signal important learning goals—clearly as Joan said, interim assessments, or any assessments communicates a strong message to users, including students, teachers and parents, of what learning is valued and important, and the importance, in that regard, of alignment, the assessment to the standards, or in the case of interim assessments, to medium-term goals on the weighted standards. Monitoring and evaluating student achievement—and we help people think about the kinds of questions they could ask of interim data in order to support that purpose. Then, of course, informing improvement strategies. In addition to this we did a mini module within this larger module on technical quality where we looked to conceptions of technical quality in as user-friendly a way as we possibly could.

Section on Assessment Quality

Considerations for the selection or development of interim assessments:

- Validity
- Reliability (handout on reliability indices)
- Fairness and Bias (handout on forms of test bias)
- Utility



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These are the considerations that we had, and we had a couple of handouts that people could read in bed when they were having sleepless nights and so on, just to bone up on these important concepts.



This was our conception of formative assessment. We have sub-modules on each of these components, these critical areas in formative assessment. We also added sub-modules on peer- and self-assessment and then classroom culture, which we recognized as very important to the context of the classroom to support these types of practices.

Let me end there. That's given you a quick overview of some of the work that we've been doing. I'll now hand it back to Sujie.

Moderator:

Thank you Margaret. I know there's a lot of information here. Again, we'll be posting all of this information online. You can access this, but we really did want to spend some time thinking through, as that comprehensive network, how we best support our states, given where they are and the different places or the different phases of implementation and readiness to think about coherent assessment systems.

I'm going to open up there for a moment as we think about, again, where we are at the RCCs, and where we can best step in as a Center on Standards, Assessment, and Implementation to support some of the work that you all are doing.

I did mention earlier, when we began the webinar, that this is going to be the first in a series of webinars that we want to have specifically around coherent assessment systems this year, bringing to the table some of the work that we are all doing with our states—states in different phases of both developing frameworks of their own, as well as further down the implementation you were implying, that phase of working with their educators in implementing.

A question coming in around how will RCCs be able to access the modules? Are the modules available outside of Colorado?

Angela Landrum:

Yes, they absolutely are completely open source. As I mentioned, we will have them up by the end of the month. I can certainly share that information back with Joan, Margaret, and Sujie, to make sure that the participants from this webinar and from this system can have access and you know where to find them on the CDE website. Yeah, absolutely, they're available for anyone.

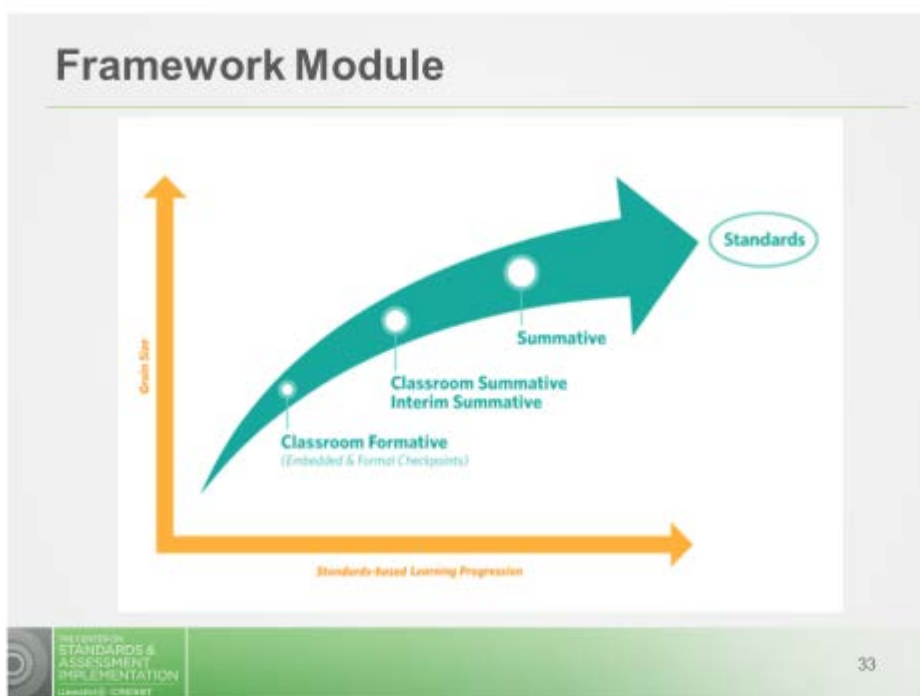
We also have the ability with this system, if you participate in the modules; you can have a log in, save your progress, and so on, because there are going to be educators that could use these for demonstration purposes for educator evaluation, or for some sort of recertification credit. Things like that.

Moderator:

Great, thank you Angela. I think, again, as we're working with our SEAs in developing and disseminating some of this information with states, I think it would be great to think about, as that network, how we might want to share some of the information, resources, and tools across our state.

Any of the other RCC and state liaisons that are working with other states on developing coherent assessment systems or working more specifically around assessment literacy for their districts and schools—I'd love to hear from all of you about where you are, maybe in your development and implementation phase, and some of the challenges and triumphs that you've encountered over the past year, and where you think you'll be heading in this year coming up.

Margaret, I know we really whipped through your presentation. We do have some questions for some folks for some of those examples, if you have time to go back through, specifically going through that framework module. I think somebody saw something on the interim assessment module that they were really interested in taking a look at again, if you have time to go back over those slides.



Margaret Heritage:

Yes, of course. I mentioned the framework module in the beginning. The purpose of this is to make sure that folks understood what the point of this framework was and how they

could use it effectively in the context of a coherent assessment system. This was important.

What do students need

Long-term goals

Long-term goals

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency and Relationship to Instruction
Summative: State, district, school, other external mandated	Accountability	After a year's worth or a course's worth of instruction and learning
National & International Assessments	Informing improvement strategies	
	Signal important learning goals	
	Align curriculum	

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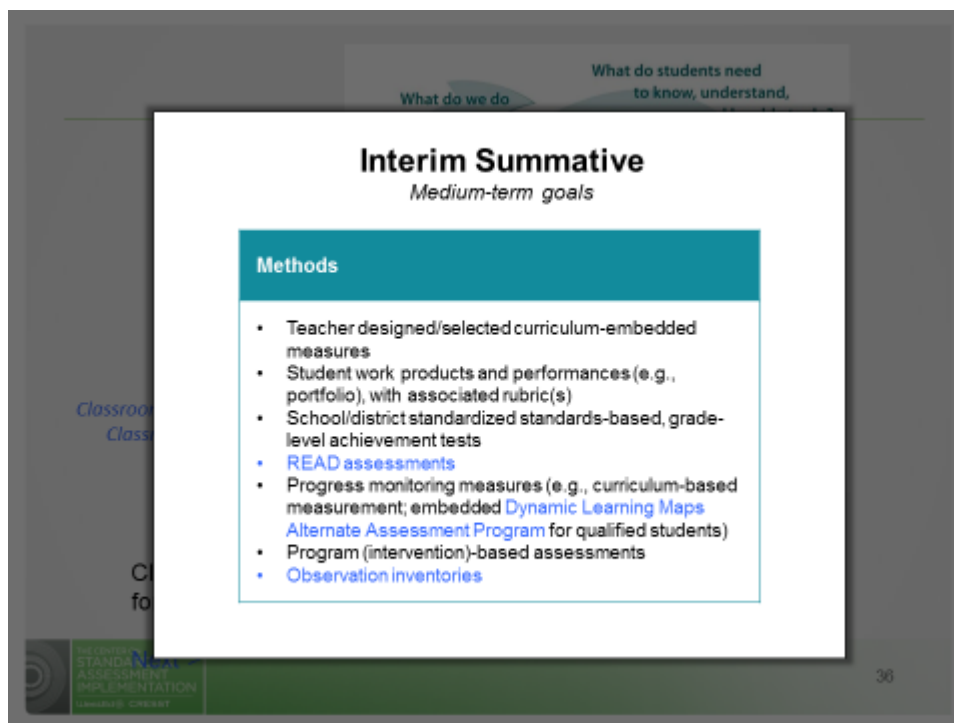
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Joan's already shown this. We spent time actually going through the framework, and it might be useful, if Angela's agreeable, if we can post the framework. We're only taking sections of it, because it's actually hard to—it's a big document. If Angela's agreeable, perhaps we could post that so people can see it in its entirety.

Type	Information	Uses and Actions
Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of student achievement with respect to standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the status and progress of student achievement (T, SSP, SA, D, ST)
Classroom Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be able to provide relative growth information for students and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make judgments about student learning relative to standards (S, T, SSP, SA, F, D, ST)
Interim Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardized test results aggregated and disaggregated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trends/patterns in student performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gauge student, school, district, and state year-to-year progress (SA, D, ST)
Classroom Formative: Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative performances of cohorts, subgroups, grade levels, subject areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement planning (e.g., UIP, prioritize professional learning and resource decisions, curriculum program realignment, reflect on effectiveness of school initiatives) (S, T, SSP, SA, F, D, ST)
Classroom Formative: Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative performance of teachers, schools, districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator evaluations (T, SA, D)
Diagnostic and Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in closing achievement gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification (S, F, SA, D) Family or student action based on results (S, F)
National and International		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and improve assessment (T, SSP, SA, D, ST) Describe student performance at the school/district level for state and federal accountability ratings (SA, D, ST)

This is one of the screen shots that we put into the modules, because this actually comes from the modules and the framework itself. You can see on the left-hand side the different kinds of assessments that Joan has talked about earlier, and then the level of detail we go into in the information that is obtained from these, particularly uses and actions. We wanted to ensure that people really understood what the purpose of these assessments were, and that they're used for their intended purposes, because I think everybody on this call knows that there's a lot of confusion out there in the field.

The letters in the parentheses are the users of these assessments, because we also wanted to make it clear who were the primary users of these assessments. The idea is that you click on the next one—classroom summative, interim summative—and then you get information along these lines about the information, the uses, and actions. That was part of the interim.



The methods—we went into some considerable detail. I don't know if you can see in the background, it's grayed out, the Colorado Cycle of Learning. Say you clicked on what Joan showed you, you clicked on the medium term goals. This is the kind of screen shot that would come up, where you would see what the various methods were associated with interim-summative assessing medium term goals.

What you can see in the blue are links to the CDE's own website. As Angela said, we did a very comprehensive inventory of what Colorado already has. We identified gaps, which this professional learning was intended to fill. Then we also incorporated existing assessments, the READ assessments, the part of what Colorado does, Dynamic Learning Maps, observation inventories. Anything that was already on the Colorado website, or that was information on it from CDE, we would link that directly, again, trying to make it as coherent as possible so people could see how assessments they're familiar with—because everybody's familiar with these—how they fit into this framework.

Type	Information	Uses and Actions
Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of achievement of intermediate goals toward meeting standards • Prediction of end-of-year proficiency • Standardized test results aggregated and disaggregated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By grade level, school and/or teacher • By student subgroup • By sub-skill • Trends/patterns in student performance • Student data dashboard/graphic representation of understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on effectiveness of planning and instruction (T, SSP) • Reflect on effectiveness of school/district structures, programs, curricula (SSP, SA, D) • Make within-year decisions about instructional approaches or programs (T, SSP) • Make within-year adjustments to curriculum/programs (T, SSP, SA) • Reporting (including communication with families and district personnel) (T, SSP, SA, F, D) • Family involvement based on results (F) • Identify student for supplemental intervention (T, SSP, SA) • Readjust professional learning priorities and resource decisions (T, SSP, SA, D) • Continue or readjust improvement strategies (T, SSP, SA, D) • Identify students in need of additional support or interventions (T, SSP, SA, D) • Identify potential promising practices (SSP, SA, D) • Refine and improve assessment (T, SSP, SA)
Classroom Summative		
Interim Summative		
Classroom Formative: Embedded		
Classroom Formative: Formal		
Diagnostic and Screening		
National and International		

Again, here we have the interim summative and who uses them and so on.

Interim Module Focus

Three main purposes for the use of interim assessments:

- Signal Important Learning Goals
- Monitor and Evaluate Student Achievement
- Inform Improvement Strategies

I've already mentioned this, so if people have any questions, I'd be happy to answer it. Joan is the undisputed expert on interim

assessment, and so working with Joan we were able to frame these as the core areas of interim assessment.

Of course, each of these has subsections: cautions about using them for predictive purposes and so on. These were the core areas. We gave people, as I mentioned earlier in the learning strategies, the conceptions about these, the conceptions within the framework, and then opportunities to practice interpreting interim data and think about the kinds of decision they could make in order to support student learning.

Section on Assessment Quality

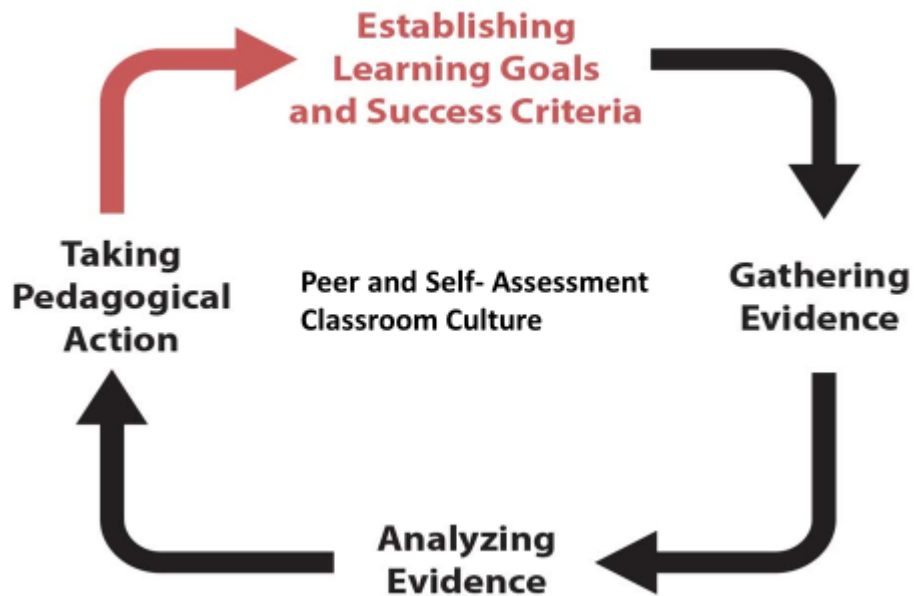
Considerations for the selection or development of interim assessments:

- Validity
- Reliability (handout on reliability indices)
- Fairness and Bias (handout on forms of test bias)
- Utility

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Yeah, I've already talked about that. We thought this was really important. It's something that we don't see, by and large, that teachers come out of pre-service training with. Other work we've done at CRESST suggests that even principals don't necessarily have a good handle on this kind of information, and yet they readily adopt interim assessment without really understanding the criteria on which they should be judged as suitable for the schools or the district purposes. We wanted people to at least have some way of judging the value of what they were using.



Guided Noticing

Eliciting Evidence: Eighth-grade lesson

0:00-1:21

Notice how the teacher asks the students to share their ideas from the previous lesson and how the teacher pushes their thinking by her question “what up there convinces you?” and invites extended explanations.

Her questions are a strategy to obtain evidence of the students’ understanding.

Note your own points of interest.

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Again, I’ve mentioned this. I’ll stop here because people wanted to talk about interim in particular. I’ll just give you a couple of examples, and then we can go back to the interim, and I’ll hand it over to Joan for that. This is what I meant by guided noticing. We have links to certain videos, and then we ask the teachers to notice certain aspects. One of the things that we found in our work is that

when teachers are introduced to new concepts, at the risk of stating the obvious, they need a lot of practice in having it shown to them.

I can talk personally that often I show a video to teachers of certain aspects of practice, and because it's not part of their repertoire or their routine, or even their mental model of practice, it's hard for them to recognize it. We did a lot of this and then asked them to note their own points of interest. We pointed out certain things we thought were important for them to notice, and then they noted their own points in their journals.

Questioning and Prompting (Shell Center 2013)

Examples

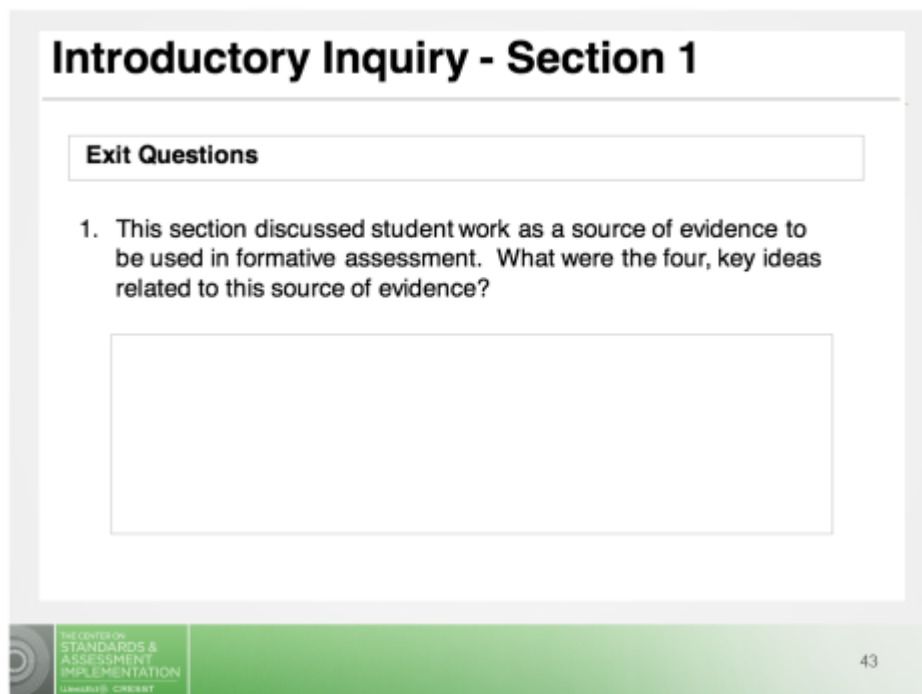
Mathematics Assessment Project: Formative Assessment Lessons for middle school
Students analyze a diagram of a store with spaces labeled by letter. In the store there is a fixed surveillance camera. Students determine what it can see and what it cannot.

Common Issues	Suggested Questions and Prompts
Incorrectly identifies people which cannot be seen by the camera at P For example: The student thinks that person E cannot be seen.	How do you know which part of the shop cannot be seen by the camera? Can you shade this area?
Considers full squares only For example: The student thinks that the full square containing person F/H cannot be seen.	Which 'full' squares cannot be seen by the camera? Which 'part' squares cannot be seen? Show on the diagram exactly where the camera can/not see.

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We used existing resources, for example from the Shell Center, to give ideas of how you could follow-up from common issues identified. This is actually from a formative assessment lesson for middle school. These are actually research-based, so we felt pretty confident of incorporating these as examples of how you might follow-up with some common issues that you might see relative to particular mathematical concepts. Of course these have all been added to the corpus of examples—have been added to by the content collaborative. We set the ball rolling on the CRESST end with ideas, and then the content collaboratives.



This was just an example—I mentioned exit questions. To consolidate people’s learning, to give them a chance to say, “what have I really gotten out of this?” Again, they would enter these into their journals. These are what our designer calls “gray scale.” I know that Colorado is going to make them look gorgeous and everything. Everything you’ve seen is just gray scale. We’re delivering the content in Colorado, and they’re the ones who are actually going to put it into a web-based environment.

That’s given you, I think, a quick overview. At least I’ve been able to do a bit more. If anybody has any more questions, I’m sure I would be glad to answer them, or would want to go back to any more of the slides, we can do that as well.

Moderator: Thank you Margaret. Please go ahead and send in any questions you have around the framework. It’d be great to dive in a little bit deeper, Joan, around the interim module focuses.

Joan Herman: I’d be interested in knowing what people’s particular questions about interim assessment are, and just to make what’s probably the obvious point that assessment literacy is an issue that’s very dear to CSAI’s heart. We’re certainly open to working with additional states. Colorado is very generous in making the resources we’ve created with them available for other use. I think one of the exciting things, as Colorado rolls out these resources, will also be to identify gaps in the information provided, or identify additional

needs of educators in Colorado of what they need to better use assessment, to choose better assessments that will actually put into place this very comprehensive and coherent assessment system that indeed will be useful for propelling kids' progress towards the standards.

We're anxious to work with any and all of you on assessment literacy issues in your states. If you have such issues, please call me. Margaret credited me being the interim maven. We at CRESST did a study, and what we found was that almost exclusively—this was in middle school mathematics and elementary school mathematics—that the assessments and the items failed to incorporate the mathematical practices and were directed at very low levels of learning. If you're familiar with Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge framework, they were mostly at level one. Sometimes they ventured into level two, and they never ventured into level three.

What that indicates is—this was in California, perhaps Colorado educators are a lot better selectors than our California schools—what that suggests is that interim assessment is totally unaligned with the rigorous goals of new state standards, meaning that feedback from those measures, which teachers and schools are paying a lot of attention to, probably will not help schools get to the ultimate goal, because they're not assessing the right stuff.

I'd really be interested in hearing from whatever participants remain, where they see the primary assessment literacy needs in their state. Is it in implementing formative assessment? Is it in implementing interim assessment, doing that well? Is it in the connections between the two? What are the primary problems you all face or you all see in your states?

Moderator:

I think one response, Joan, was maybe around the aspects of interim literacy that are being addressed by this particular framework, at least in Colorado, and how it's being tied to both the instructional practice decision making, as well as accountability. Joan or Angela, I think if you had a moment to address, again, the questions around how the work in Colorado is tied to the institutional practice decision making, as well as some of your accountability decisions, that'd be great.

Joan Herman:

I think accountability is: did kids get to the goal. Right? Laying responsibility for kids getting to the goal at the feet of various stakeholders, particularly teachers. How do we connect to accountability? Number one, we think a coherent assessment system is teachers, educators, school leaders and others having a

system that well aligns with their goals and provides a coherent pathway from the day-to-day instruction to what kids know at the end of a quarter, to what they continue to build over the course of the years, until hopefully they get to success on the standards. That's the way we get to good results on accountability tests.

In terms of how it connects to accountability, as Margaret said, as Angela said, and I think as I said, we've tried to do that by connecting everything in the framework, where there are connections to accountability frameworks in the state, to teacher quality, to school goals and the like. We've made those connections explicit.

For me, and we all put our own lens on these questions, getting to accountability goals is getting reflective practices in place in classrooms so that kids are helped to learn and achieve the standards that they're eventually tested on, and that those tests reflect, indeed, the major competencies that we want kids to accomplish.

As I said, at this moment in time, I think Colorado, as a member of PARCC, has end-of-year accountability tests that at least reasonably reflects its standards. It sets the right target. It signals the kinds of learning that need to happen. Colorado, like, I think, every state in the union, is a local-control state. They can't mandate what happens at the other levels. What they have to do is build the capacity of those levels to both make good decisions about selecting or developing assessments that will serve the purposes of interim assessment as ongoing classroom assessment and the like, as well as select good instructional materials and the like.

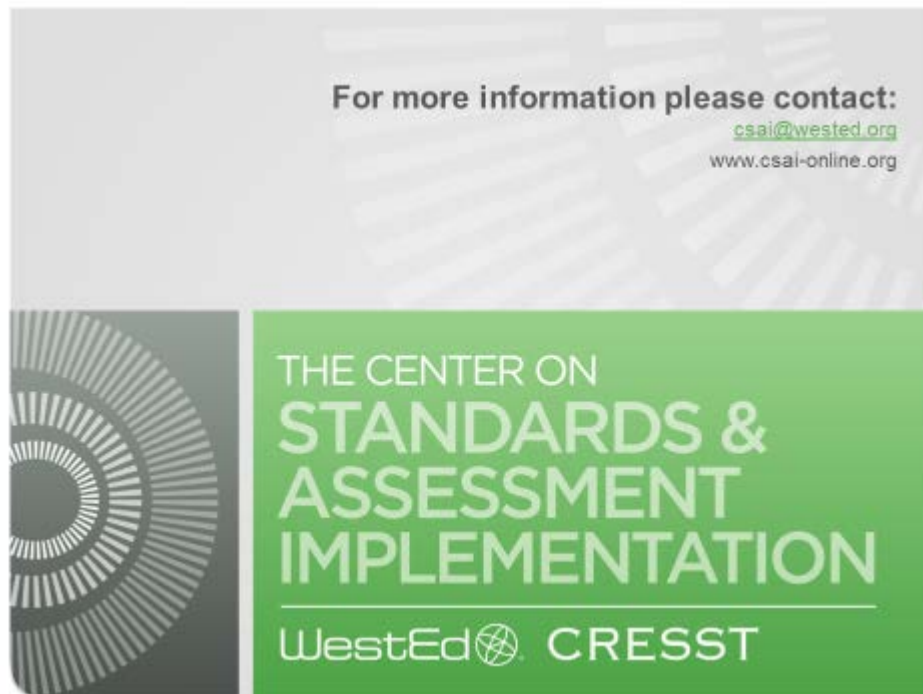
It's a professional development problem, I think, not a mandate problem. They've taken huge strides ahead by developing these initial modules to help build the capacity at the local level to move towards this vision.

Angela Landrum: I can give you a practical example of one of the ways in which we are utilizing the framework and the notions that we're putting forward in our assessment literacy program as part of our accountability system. That is, obviously, we have our districts that are using a variety of vendor-based interim assessments that they do need to use for accountability purposes. We are now having our content collaborative members go through those vendor-based assessments that have been submitted to us, from the districts, to do a quality review.

This is new territory for us. What we are finding with our content collaborative members is they are responding to what is in those interim assessments in a more productive way. Rather than saying, “well, it’s got low-level DOK, it doesn’t cover all the content,” they’re saying what it does do and what it doesn’t do, and then giving recommendations of how a district might approach getting a more comprehensive picture of what it is that a student might need to be able to demonstrate at different points in time.

We’re taking that approach so that districts can be a little bit more prepared to understand what the functionality of those interim assessments really are. From that perspective, we’re trying to help build the assessment literacy of our district personnel to help them make better choices around those interim assessments that they are selecting. That’s for our content areas that actually have vendor-based interim assessments. Of course, the majority of our content areas do not have those. What do we do for those? Well, we have protocols in place and resources in place that help at the district level and at the building level and at the classroom level, help our educators build high-quality assessments that they can use for a variety of purposes. Then, in those cases, it’s mostly for educator effectiveness purposes.

I’m hoping that that helps a little bit, but we are moving in that direction so that we can, like Joan said, help build that capacity, but build it with a light push, I guess you could say. That’s one way that we really hope that we can help influence the way districts start to look at the quality and utility of their interim assessments.



Moderator:

Great, thank you so much Angela, and Joan, and Margaret. I don't see any other questions coming in, but please for folks on, if you have any additional questions for our presenters today, send them in and we are happy to get those out to them, and then put up a complete question answer sheet with the recording of this webinar and the slide deck from today. You can take a look at some of those and go to some of the links that our presenters walked through during the presentation.

Like I said, this is the first in a series of discussions we'd like to have around developing coherent assessments systems with our state and how best we can work with a network to do so for this coming year. We appreciate your time and attendance today. With that, have a great afternoon everybody.

This document is produced by The Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI). CSAI, a collaboration between WestEd and CRESST, provides state education agencies (SEAs) and Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) with research support, technical assistance, tools, and other resources to help inform decisions about standards, assessment, and accountability. Visit www.csai-online.org for more information.

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