**Agenda**

**Phoenix, AZ • October 16–18**

### Monday, October 16

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>7:00–8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>8:00–9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Keynote—Tom Schimmer</td>
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<td><em>Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement</em></td>
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<td>9:45–10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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# Breakouts at a Glance

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<td>Grading for Accuracy: Most Recent or Most Frequent?</td>
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<td>Analyzing Student Formative Assessment Work Products</td>
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<td>Investing Students in Their Learning</td>
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Session Descriptions

Kim Bailey
Ready, Set, Action! Using Common Assessments to Improve Learning
How do effective teams use assessments? This session reviews the Plan–Do–Study–Act cycle that effective teams employ. Kim Bailey highlights the practical, collaborative protocols that result in the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments, and in high levels of student learning.

Participants in this session:
- Examine the Plan–Do–Study–Act cycle that teams use to maximize student learning.
- Analyze their team’s current strengths and potential for enhancing effectiveness.
- Receive sample protocols to impact the focus and efficacy of their team’s collaboration.

From Learning Targets to Maximized Learning: Empowering and Engaging Students Through Assessment
When we involve students in the learning process, we increase the likelihood that they will “hit the mark.” This session highlights best practices for engaging students in learning, including converting targets written in “teacher-ese” to accessible, student-friendly targets and building opportunities to give, get, and use timely feedback in their learning.

Participants in this session:
- Review the elements and benefits of engaging students in the assessment process.
- Examine quality practices that teams can embed in their instructional plans and assessment practices to involve and empower students.
- Discuss first steps they can use to move toward quality practices at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels.

Leading Quality Assessment Practices
Implementing a schoolwide assessment model requires that leaders not only establish a clear vision, but also engage in intentional planning and ongoing support. This session engages site leaders to examine the role of quality assessment practices in their schools, a process for communicating and building commitment toward a shared vision, and strategies for systematically supporting its implementation.

Participants in this session:
- Clarify their visions of quality assessment practices.
- Discuss strategies for all stakeholders to plan and commit to an effective model of assessments that strengthen student learning and engagement.
- Explore processes for leaders to examine their current reality regarding assessment practices.
- Strategize a leadership plan to enhance assessment practices at their sites.

Do Your Common Assessments Pass the ACID Test?
How can teams ensure that their common assessments accurately measure student learning? Kim Bailey shows how assessments should pass ACID test—be aligned, clearly written, informative, and designed to meet the demands of high-stakes assessments. Applying this metric to their assessments helps educators produce high-quality, actionable data that support student learning.
Participants in this session:
- Examine characteristics of quality assessments.
- Discuss implications for assessment design in light of rigorous and complex standards.
- Reflect on their sites’ current assessment practices using the ACID test filters.

Cassandra Erkens
Modeling What Matters
Quality leadership is the work of formative assessment. This keynote explores formative assessment practices as quality leadership strategies and provides tools and resources for teacher leaders and administrators to begin modeling the process of using assessment practices to develop assessment literacy among staff. Systemic change happens when leaders model the way and then engage staff in exploring transparent practices over time.

As a result of this session, participants:
- Understand the role of leadership in supporting significant change efforts.
- Identify leadership practices that align with quality formative assessment.
- Explore options for engaging staff in the quality formative assessment process.

Designing With the Three Rs in Mind
Today, educators prepare learners for a world teachers may have difficulty comprehending themselves. How can teachers create assessments that tap into current global and technological realms? How can they help students move beyond regurgitating information to co-creating new insights and solutions for a complex and rapidly changing world? Cassandra Erkens explores the integration of relationships, relevance, and rigor in assessment design.

Participants in this session:
- Explore assessment implications for next-generation standards expectations.
- Examine assessment implications for rigor and relevance.
- Identify features of 21st century skills that must be addressed differently than our currently accepted practices.

Engineering Engaging Conversations
The quality of formative data teachers can generate during instruction is directly related to the quality of the questions they ask and the classroom conversations data generate. This session explores two frameworks: one for creating engaging conversations and one for monitoring student engagement and learning.

Participants in this session explore a framework for generating engaging conversations and apply a structure for monitoring student engagement and learning.

Making Homework Count
Teachers use homework for four primary purposes: practice, preparation, extension, and integration of classroom learning. According to some research, homework is one of the most powerful instructional strategies for impacting student achievement. Other research indicates there is little to no correlation between homework and achievement results.
How might teachers leverage homework to increase student productivity and achievement results? Cassandra Erkens explores considerations for the design and use of homework as a formative assessment tool that can bolster student learning.

Participants in this session:
- Align the intent of homework with promising practices in homework design and use.
- Identify formative assessment tools and processes to support homework as an opportunity for safe practice.
- Explore instructionally sensitive responses to practice-related data to maximize success with next-generation standards.

**Rubrics and Scales: Tools for Evaluating Performance**
As educators move toward integrating next-generation standards and standards-based grading, many questions arise about rubrics and scales as tools to measure proficiency. What are these tools? Where do they come from? How do we best use them? Do they interact or work in isolation?

Well-developed rubrics and scales are windows through which students see what their teachers request and require of them. Rubrics and scales are also mirrors that reveal to students what they know and still need to learn. Cassandra Erkens explores the purpose, design, and management features of rubrics and scales and best ways to achieve student investment.

Participants in this session:
- Learn criteria for quality measurement tools that certify and promote continued learning.
- Identify features and design strategies of rubrics and scales.
- Practice creating rubrics and scales within a case study.

**William M. Ferriter**

**Creating a Culture of Feedback**
In the spring of 2012, Canadian educational change expert Dean Shareski issued a simple challenge on his blog: “I'm wondering if you're ready to let your students assess themselves. Not as some experiment where you end up grading them apart but where you really give the reigns over to them?” This session introduces participants to the tangible steps William Ferriter has taken in his sixth-grade classroom to move from a culture of grading to a culture of feedback as a result of Dean’s challenge.

Participants in this session:
- Discuss the differences between grading and feedback.
- Explore simple self-assessment behaviors that can be integrated into any classroom.
- Learn more about the common challenges of moving from a culture of grading to a culture of feedback in a classroom.

**Digital Tools That Make Differentiation Doable**
If schools are truly working to ensure success for every student, learning experiences need to be customized and aligned to student interests, needs, and unique learning styles. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation manageable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality. In this session, William Ferriter introduces
Participants to a range of digital tools that can be used to: 1) track progress by student and standard, 2) provide structure for differentiated classrooms, and 3) facilitate initial attempts at remediation and enrichment.

Participants in this session learn ways that digital tools can:
- Provide quick checks for understanding and tracking progress by student and standard.
- Deliver content and free class time for individualized instruction.
- Facilitate the use of classroom observations as evidence of student progress.

**Assessing Learning in a Purpose-Driven Classroom**

In his blog “Why School?” (2012), technology expert Will Richardson maintains that today’s classrooms are failing students. He writes, "We focus on the easiest parts of the learning interaction … accomplishments that can be easily identified and scored. Learning is relegated to the quantifiable." He posits that to create highly engaged learning spaces classrooms must be reimagined as places where students work together to do work that matters. These arguments aren't new; project-based learning has been promoted for the better part of a decade. But how do we assess learning in classrooms where complex projects—rather than accomplishments that can be easily identified and scored—stand at the center of the curriculum?

Participants in this session:
- Discuss why project-based learning should play a role in the modern classroom.
- Examine a planning template that illustrates project-based learning experiences focused on essential outcomes in a curriculum.
- Explore simple steps teachers can take to evaluate student mastery of essential outcomes in project-based classrooms.

**How Do We Turn Failures Into Learning Opportunities?**

Over the past five years, the notion of learning from failure has become widely embraced. Businesses tout the importance of failing fast and failing often to succeed sooner. Educators argue that failure helps students learn to be resilient and determined and that failure is the first step towards building a growth mindset in students. However, no matter how well-intentioned we are, failure in schools still carries negative connotations and incredibly high stakes—fail a test and your grade suffers; fail too many district benchmarks and you are assigned to remedial classes; fail an end-of-grade exam and you are held back; fail to earn a very high GPA and your college and career choices are limited. The truth is that no matter how intimidating failure can be, it can also be turned into a positive learning experience as long as teachers help students analyze their performance and make plans to move forward—a process William Ferriter introduces in this session.

Participants are called on to:
- Discuss the four main reasons people fail at important tasks.
- Examine the differences between learners who see failures as dead ends and those who see failure as a starting point for new learning.
- Examine the role that carefully structured feedback can play in helping students turn failures into learning opportunities.
Using Digital Portfolios in Grades 5–12 to Create a Culture of Feedback

Research on the characteristics of effective feedback to learners reveals one simple truth repeated time and again: Feedback that is gathered by learners is more powerful than feedback that is given to learners. That means our primary role in promoting learning in our classrooms should be to develop students who are constantly reflecting on what they know and what they don't know—behaviors that can be encouraged through the regular use of digital portfolios in the classroom.

Participants in this session:
- Discuss the role that reflection can play in developing independent, self-directed learners.
- Examine the role that blogs—simple Web 2.0 tools—can play in digital portfolio projects.
- Learn more about the steps that teachers can take to launch digital portfolio projects in their own classrooms.

Thomas R. Guskey

[KEYNOTE] The Dos and Don’ts of Grading Reform

What makes grading reforms successful? What typically leads to problems and difficulties? In this session, Dr. Guskey describes factors that research and evaluation reports have shown to contribute to implementation success—and failure. Keeping in mind the challenges teachers and school leaders face, he discusses the “non-negotiables” of grading reform that ensure meaningful communication between school and home. Dr. Guskey outlines procedures for implementing new reporting structures, including standards-based grading as well as specific policies and practices that should be avoided because of their negative consequences for students, teachers, and schools.

Participants in this session:
- Gain knowledge about the advantages and shortcomings of different grading methods and their implications for classroom policy and practice.
- Explore strategies for using professional judgment to ensure grades are fair, accurate, meaningful, and educationally sound.
- Prepare to develop guidelines for implementing effective standards-based grading policies and practices at all grade levels.

Chris Jakicic

Writing Quality Constructed-Response Items

If teachers are making decisions about what to do next in their classrooms based on the assessments they give students, how do they know the assessment items they're writing are giving them the right information? Participants in this session learn how to write constructed-response items that translate into better information about student learning. In particular, they explore strategies for assessing more rigorous learning targets from their more rigorous standards.

Participants at this session:
- Consider effective constructed-response questions that provide teachers with more accurate information about what students need next.
- Explore ways to choose or develop stimulus information to increase the rigor of an assessment item.
- Examine ways to develop and use quality rubrics to score questions in a way that provides information to the teacher, collaborative team, and students.
Getting Started With Common Formative Assessments
Many people call common formative assessments the "tipping point" in PLC practices that helps teams move from "collaboration lite" to true collaboration. It's also one of the hardest practices for teams to embrace. This session is designed for teams just beginning their PLC journeys. Participants start with the "why" behind common formative assessments, investigate how and what teams learn from this practice, and examine ways to build a culture to support data sharing and learning. This session also explores ways to effectively write assessments and respond to their data.

As a result of this session, participants:
- Better understand why common formative assessments are a critical part of the PLC process by exploring the compelling research that supports them.
- Develop clarity around the difference between formative and summative assessments and their use in a balanced assessment system.
- Consider how leaders can build a systematic culture of collaboration to support this work.
- Explore ways to more effectively use time—one of the major barriers to this work.

Simplifying Assessment Design
Formative and common formative assessments written, administered, and used by individual teachers and collaborative teams can have a significant impact on student achievement. This session helps participants avoid making the most common mistakes in assessment design that often lead to misusing data to respond to students. Participants learn how to develop standards into learning targets and how to write an assessment plan to gain reliable data.

As a result of this session, participants:
- Understand how developing standards into learning targets improves the quality of formative and common formative assessments.
- Learn how to choose the right type of assessment to match the rigor of the learning targets.
- Understand how to create an assessment plan that leads to a more valid and reliable assessment.

Too Much to Teach, Too Much to Learn
What do we want our students to know and do? This question serves as the foundation for the work of a PLC and guides teams on what to assess and respond to. Participants learn why identifying essential standards is necessary to having a guaranteed and viable curriculum and to increasing student achievement. Participants also explore strategies teams can use to select essential standards and ways to use them in their work.

As a result of this session, participants:
- Understand why identifying essential standards leads to a guaranteed and viable curriculum and increased student achievement.
- Investigate ways for teams to do this important work.
- Discuss how high-performing teams use essential standards to assure that all students learn at high levels.
Assessing Reading With Rigor in Secondary ELA and Content-Area Classrooms
To meet college- and career-readiness standards, secondary teachers in ELA and content-area classrooms are choosing increasingly complex texts to use with their students because they are now considered equal partners in this work toward disciplinary literacy. This session explores ways to increase the validity of assessments by identifying the proficiency level of the learning target and investigates the idea of using learning progressions to more accurately understand what a student knows and has yet to learn. This session aims to address how teachers can assure their assessments are designed and written to provide accurate feedback about student learning with complex texts.

Participants in this session:
- Understand how the process of unwrapping standards is vital to quality formative assessment and how studying DOK levels of learning targets helps teams understand proficiency.
- Consider how learning progressions can help teams write a more diagnostic assessment.
- Explore ways to choose an appropriate text stimulus and write reliable items to determine what students have learned and what they still need support to learn.

Robert J. Marzano
[KEYNOTE] The New Paradigm for Classroom Assessment
This session begins with a brief description of the current paradigms for validity and reliability that are the focus of large-scale assessments. Next, the session demonstrates the pitfalls of using the paradigms for large assessment with classroom assessments. Dr. Marzano presents new paradigms specifically designed for classroom assessments. These paradigms allow teachers to measure students’ status and growth on specific topics with a level of precision that currently is not possible. Topics to be addressed include: the nature of parallel assessments and how to design them; the many different ways of assessing students; the new view of formative and summative assessment; record keeping in the new system; and grading and reporting using the new paradigms.

Learning objectives include obtaining:
- A deeper understanding of reliability and validity of classroom assessments
- An expanded view of collecting more assessment data while administering fewer tests
- A broader outlook of formative and summative scores that generate more precise estimates of students’ status and growth

Douglas B. Reeves
[KEYNOTE] The Mythbusters’ Approach to Grading
The Mythbusters are famous for challenging urban legends and, in the process, generating a lot of explosions. While he promises not to break anything during this interactive keynote, Dr. Reeves will help participants to move the conversation about grading from the traditional context of professional development to the broader context of parents and community members. Dr. Reeves explains that research is not enough to engage in improved grading practices but that progress depends on building broadly based community support, challenging myths about grading reform, and providing critical reassurances to parents and other key stakeholders.

Next-Generation Performance Assessment
Performance assessment has been challenged as being too time-consuming, too inconsistent, and too subjective to be worthwhile in the classroom. This interactive presentation considers the myths and
realities of performance assessments and provides practical steps for teachers, collaborative teams, and instructional leaders to apply performance assessment in the classroom at every level.

Learning objectives include:

- Synthesizing the latest and best research on performance assessment
- Applying principles of effective performance assessment to each participant's individual subject matter and grade level
- Developing a working model of performance assessment directly relevant to the needs of each participant

**Focused Assessment: The Power Standards Method for Focused Teaching and Learning**

In this session, Douglas Reeves undertakes three learning objectives: 1) to synthesize the latest and best research on focused teaching and learning; 2) to apply the principles of power standards to the individual professional responsibilities of each participant; and 3) to develop a systematic approach to focused assessment in each participant’s school or district.

**How to Be Creative in a Standards-Based Environment**

Schools have become places with extraordinary amounts of tension. Educators must balance addressing Common Core content with the demand for 21st century skills, the latter of which includes creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. Teachers who find the sheer volume of Common Core content overwhelming may ask, Where do we find time for creativity? If standardized tests fail to assess creativity, why bother making time for creativity in the classroom?

With compelling evidence, Douglas Reeves resolves this dilemma with practical counsel about nurturing and encouraging creativity—from the classroom to the boardroom.

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Understand the latest and best research in the relationship between Common Core content mastery and 21st century skills.
- Analyze elements of the Common Core directly related to each participant’s individual professional responsibilities.
- Apply a metarubric—a rubric for rubrics—in a way that allows educators to make immediate improvements in standards-based learning activities.

**Assessing Creativity: A New Approach for Students, Teachers, and Educational Leaders**

A great myth about creativity is that it is immune from objective assessment. Creativity can be assessed—indeed, assessment is an essential element of any educational environment that seeks to foster creativity.

The challenge is that most assessments for creativity are dead wrong. These assessments are not only inconsistent with the best research on the subject, but actually stifle risk, error, and failure which are essential to creative endeavor.

Douglas Reeves provides practical guidelines about best and worst practices in assessment. He offers participants the opportunity to apply these principles to their professional responsibilities.
Tom Schimmer

**KEYNOTE** Essential Assessment: Building Hope, Efficacy, and Achievement

To maximize its efficacy, assessment must build hope and achievement. In this session, based on his recently coauthored book of the same title, Tom Schimmer emphasizes why, more than ever, teachers’ most vital professional investment is developing assessment fluency and capacity. He outlines the six assessment tenets that allow teachers to create a culture that leaves learners optimistic about their success. This session also focuses on how these tenets transfer seamlessly to assessing student attributes as well as cross-curricular competencies.

As a result of this session, participants understand:

- The professional value of assessment fluency and capacity
- The interconnectedness of the six essential tenets of assessment
- The correlation of assessment tenets to student attributes and cross-curricular competencies

**Instructional Agility**

Being instructionally agile means making seamless instructional adjustments at a moment’s notice. In this session, Tom Schimmer reestablishes the core fundamentals of classroom assessment. Rather than creating assessment events that require teachers to stop teaching to conduct formative assessments, the focus is on the more organic process of infusing assessment experiences into any activity or strategy. Participants come to know the three, non-negotiable characteristics that transform any activity into an assessment as well as several practical strategies that blur the lines between assessment, instruction, and feedback.

The outcomes of this session include:

- Identifying and exploring the three essential aspects that can transform any activity into an assessment
- Exploring what instructional agility entails and what it looks like in a classroom
- Examining several practical strategies that blur the lines between assessment, instruction, and feedback

**Grading From the Inside Out**

A standards-based mindset is often overlooked, but its development is an essential first step for long-term grading reform. Tom Schimmer shows participants how to take a standards-based approach, even when a traditional grading and reporting paradigm exists. He emphasizes “true north”—non-negotiable grading for accuracy and confidence—and explores three essential practices that serve as the cornerstone of standards-based assessment and reporting.

Participants explore the faulty logic behind many traditional grading practices. They identify replacement routines that establish a standards-based mindset and approach to grading, independent of changes to school or district policy.

As a result of this session, participants:

- Understand how to audit any grading practice with accuracy and confidence.
- Explore the faulty logic behind many of our traditional grading practices.
- Identify replacement routines and practices in standards-based grading that are immune to changes in school or district policy.
Redefining Student Accountability
The need for students to be held accountable is often cited as a reason why some teachers hesitate to implement more sound grading practices. This session focuses on the systems, structures, and routines that can redefine accountability and reshape a school’s culture. Participants learn that rather than using zeros, late penalties, and other traditional punitive grading practices, real accountability can be achieved without compromising the integrity of a student’s proficiency grade.

In this session, participants:
- Identify the perils of punitive grading and the resulting inaccuracies that compromise the integrity of what is ultimately reported about student proficiency.
- Understand an alternative, more productive definition of accountability within the context of learning.
- Explore the multiple systems required to create a culture of real accountability that leaves students’ optimism and hope intact.

Grading for Accuracy: Most Recent or Most Frequent?
Sometimes, the most recent evidence of learning is the most accurate; sometimes, it’s the most frequent evidence. This session explores the standards and circumstances that lead to the most accurate determination of student proficiency and how to most effectively gauge proficiency by considering the depth, breadth, and adequate sampling of what is being assessed. Tom Shimmer also shares some important guidelines for best determining an accurate overall grade.

As a result of this session, participants understand:
- When the most recent evidence is the most accurate
- When the most frequent evidence is the most accurate
- The role adequate sampling plays in determining proficiency

Effective Leadership in Assessment and Grading
This session explores the steps leaders can take to transform grading and assessment practices within any context. Highlights include effective leadership strategies, mindsets, and practices that maximize the potential success of any implementation effort. Participants also examine how to encourage the natural evolution of new ideas, ways to plan for short-term wins, and ideas for handling inevitable challenges and roadblocks. This session brings together concepts that make assessment transformations more possible and sustainable.

Learning objectives include:
- Identifying ways leaders cultivate the conditions to support grading reform
- Understanding the natural evolution of new ideas in any organization
- Exploring ways for leaders to manage inevitable hurdles in implementing assessment and grading practices

Sarah Schuhl
So Much to Cover—What Do We Teach and Assess?
Students must learn many important standards in each grade level and subject. Which standards are more important than others? How can we make a plan to focus instruction and assessment unit to unit to
account for all standards? How will students articulate and reflect on the learning within each unit? This session shares protocols for identifying priority standards; creating a proficiency map to identify the focus of instruction and assessment in each unit; and unwrapping standards so that everyone is clear about what students must know and be able to do.

In this session, participants:
- Learn a process for identifying priority standards.
- Understand the purpose of a proficiency map to guide instruction and assessment.
- Unwrap standards to create student-friendly learning targets for use during instruction and assessment.

Analyzing Student Formative Assessment Work Products
The formative assessment process occurs naturally and often within each lesson taught throughout the day. Teachers can collect observational data to recognize strategies students use to complete a task and common misconceptions students have about material. Additionally, common formative assessments provide numerical data and examples of student work. When analyzed by a team, these items offer insights into the extent in which students learned essential standards and next steps to help them grow. Each plays a role in helping teachers match instructional interventions to the needs of their students.

In this session, participants can expect to:
- Explore ways to collect meaningful data related to student learning.
- Analyze student work to discover levels of proficiency and identify interventions needed to achieve mastery.
- Identify ways to build time for analysis into the regular professional practice of collaborative teams.

Investing Students in Their Learning
Too often, adults take ownership of having all students learn but fail to bring students into the process. How can students articulate what they are learning, their strengths, and their next steps? How do students learn from and act on specific feedback given during instruction and on assessments? How do students track their progress on essential standards? For student reflections on learning to be most meaningful, educators must consider how the classroom culture positively influences students’ dispositions and beliefs about how they can learn. Teachers can help students understand why they need an intervention and how they learn best when they are invested in the process.

In this session, participants:
- Identify characteristics of a classroom culture focused on learning.
- Recognize powerful feedback processes with students.
- Explore ways for students to reflect through self-regulation and tracking.

Quality Common Assessments in Your K–5 Mathematics Classroom
Next-generation assessments reflect the critical thinking required of students learning mathematics. How do educators ensure that students meet learning expectations? How are students involved in the process? How do they use assessments as learning tools? This session explores how collaborative teams create a balanced assessment system to prepare all students in grades K–5 for success in mathematics.
In this session, participants:

- Learn criteria essential to quality mathematics assessment design.
- Understand the purpose of various assessments used in class.
- Explore ways to use common assessments to promote student learning.

**Quality Common Assessments in Your 6–12 Mathematics Classroom**

Next-generation assessments reflect the critical thinking required of students learning mathematics. How do educators ensure that students meet learning expectations? How are students involved in the process? How do they use assessments as learning tools? This session explores how collaborative teams create a balanced assessment system to prepare all students in grades 6–12 for success in mathematics.

In this session, participants:

- Learn criteria essential to quality mathematics assessment design.
- Understand the purpose of various assessments used in class.
- Explore ways to use common assessments to promote student learning.