Providing Professional Learning on Formative Assessment Methods for Educators
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March 2014

Overview

This activity, entitled the Formative Assessment Methods for Educators (FAME) program, is designed to help classroom teachers, school administrators and others learn to use formative assessment practices in classrooms to guide student learning and teachers' instructional practices on an on-going basis.

While the specific activities to be used and the delivery mechanisms for providing this professional learning have yet to be finalized, the goal of the activities is to increase the assessment literacy and skills of teachers and administrators across WIDA states.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a vision for the FAME program. It is hoped that such work, carried out collaboratively over several years with support from WCER, from WIDA member states, and Federal and grant resources, will result in improved student learning, achievement, and attitudes.

Background to the Work on Formative Assessment

Over the past two decades, national and state policymakers have increased the amount and consequences associated with large scale, summative assessments. While such assessments are useful to identify students, schools, and districts that need assistance to improve their learning, these summative assessments provide little guidance to teachers to understand how to do so. For this, assessment practices closer to the classroom are needed.

Yet, many teachers are essentially assessment illiterate. Specific professional learning opportunities are needed for educators to learn about the formative and summative assessment practices that they need in order to teach and assess in a manner to help *all* students learn and achieve up to their potential. To improve this situation, several states and organization have identified assessment literacy standards and are carrying out strategies to improve the assessment literacy of educators and others. See, for example, *Assessment Literacy Standards* (Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2014).

The result of increased statewide assessment, combined with assessment illiteracy, is that our assessment systems are out of balance—too much assessment *of* learning (when learning is completed) and too little assessment *of* learning (assessment that occurs while students are learning and can be used to change teachers' instruction and students' learning tactics).

Our solution to this is to develop ways to bring balance to K–12 assessment systems. This includes putting in place a program that provides all educators with the knowledge and opportunity to bring effective formative assessment practices into their classrooms. WIDA's vision is to introduce teachers to "real" formative assessment practices and corresponding strategies and tools, as borne out by prevailing research, rather than "silver bullets"—off-the-shelf assessment products, such as item banks or interim benchmark tests that are marketed as "formative assessments" but are which not. WIDA has launched a new program titled *Developing and Implementing Formative-Assessment*

Methods for Educators (FAME) program.

There is a body of research and of practice relative to formative assessment practices, starting with the landmark meta-analysis of the field (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; 1998b). Others have written critiques on the overall quality of the research in this area, including Bennett (2011), and Kingston and Nash (2011).

The work on helping educators learn about and learn to use formative assessment practices is based on the definitions of formative assessment practices from Popham (2008) and CCSSO (2007). Each of these definitions with explanations is given below:

> "Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics." (Popham, 2008)

The Popham definition offers three key features. Namely, formative assessment

- *Is a planned process*—the formative-assessment process involves a series of carefully considered acts on the part of the teacher and student
- *Uses assessment-elicited evidence*—teaching or learning adjustments must be based not on whim but on *evidence* of the students' current level of mastery
- *Encourages teachers to make instructional adjustments based on the assessment information*—teachers will *change* their *current* instructional activities soon after the assessment (and before they go on in the lesson or unit)
- *Encourages students to adjust their learning tactics*—students will also look at their achievement and change how *they* are learning the new material, soon after the assessment.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has prepared a similar definition. It is:

> "Formative assessment is used by teachers and students during instruction to provide feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes." (CCSSO, 2007)

This definition also has some key features. Namely, formative assessment:

- *Is a process, not a "thing"*—It is the formative assessment *process*, not a test or a checklist.
- *Is used by both teachers and students*—Both teachers and students should engage in formative assessment and use the information from it.
- *Occurs during instruction*—The process of formative assessment literally occurs as frequently as instruction occurs.
- *Provides immediate feedback*—The assessment-based feedback to teachers and students is immediate after formative assessment.
- *Helps teachers and students make immediate adjustments in instruction and learning*—The feedback provided is intended to improve students' achievement of the intended curricular aims, not make summative judgments about students' performance.

The focus on formative-assessment practices has grown over the past decade or more, as educators and policymakers discover the power of using data to inform instruction and

school planning. For example, Frohbieter, Greenwald, Stecher, and Schwartz, H. (2011) indicate that

> ... formative assessment is getting a boost from policymakers who seek to make education more effective by drawing on lessons from the business sector. These advocates of data-driven decision making argue that educators are not making effective use of the evidence they have regarding student performance. Certain policymakers point to a variety of models for adapting production processes based on information about performance outcomes (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006). Assessments should be used *formatively*, they argue, to monitor student performance and permit teachers to adapt instruction to address identified deficiencies (Hamilton et al., 2009; Massell, 2001). This confluence of recommendations has boosted the number of districts that have adopted new assessment systems, which are designed to improve instruction (Stein & Basset, 2004a; 2004b). There has also been rapid growth in the number of commercial products available for this purpose. (Burch, 2006) (pg. 2)

These authors go on to cite several key characteristics of formative assessment. These are:

- Purpose—"formative assessment in an education setting is one whose primary purpose is ongoing instructional improvement. In other words, assessment is formative when it is implemented to provide information teachers can use to change the way they teach" (p. 3).
- Cycle of use—"assessment for formative purposes occurs more frequently, as new content is encountered and insights are needed quickly to inform decisions about how to best teach..." (p. 4–5).
- Planned integration with instruction**—**"... formative assessment [includes] assessment activities designed or selected in order to provide information for instructional improvement and embedded to some degree in instructional activities)" (p. 5).

Chappuis (2009) and Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis (2004) have characterized the planning and execution of formative assessment by classroom teachers as responses to several questions, couched in terms of Sadler's three basic questions:

Seven Strategies of Assessment *for* Learning[1]

Seven strategies fulfill Sadler's three conditions, phrased as questions from the student's poi of view:
- *Where am I going?*
- *Where am I now?*
- *How can I close the gap?*

Where Am I Going?
Strategy 1: Provide students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.

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[1] *Source:* Adapted Chappuis, J. Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2009) and from R. J. Stiggins, J. A. Arter, J. Chappuis, and S. Chappuis, *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well* (Portland, OR: ETS Assessment Training Institute, 2004), p. 42.

Motivation and achievement both increase when instruction is guided by clearly defined targets. Activities that help students answer the question, "What's the learning?" set the stage for all further formative assessment actions.

Strategy 2: Use examples and models of strong and weak work.
Carefully chosen examples of the range of quality can establish and refine students' understanding of the learning goal by helping students answer questions such as:
"What does high quality work look like?"
"What defines quality work?"
"What are some problems to avoid?"

Where Am I Now?
Strategy 3: Offer regular descriptive feedback.
Effective feedback shows students where they are on their path to attaining the intended learning. It answers for students the questions:
"What are my strengths?"
"What do I need to work on?"
"Where did I go wrong and what can I do about it?"

Strategy 4: Teach students to self-assess and set goals.
The information provided in effective feedback models the kind of evaluative thinking we want students to be able to do for themselves. Strategy 4 teaches students to identify their strengths and weaknesses by themselves in order to set goals for further learning. It helps them answer the questions:
"What am I good at?"
"What do I need to work on?"
"What should I do next?"

How Can I Close the Gap?
Strategy 5: Design lessons to focus on one learning target or aspect of quality at a time.
When assessment information identifies a need, we can adjust instruction to target that need. In this strategy, we scaffold learning by narrowing the focus of a lesson to help students master a specific learning goal or to address specific misconceptions or problems.

Strategy 6: Teach students focused revision.
This is a companion to Strategy 5—when a concept, skill, or competence proves difficult for students, we can let them practice it in smaller segments, and give them feedback on just the aspects they are practicing. This strategy allows students to revise their initial work with a focus on a manageable number of learning targets or aspects of quality.

Strategy 7: Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning.
Long-term retention and motivation increase when students track, reflect on, and communicate about their learning. In this strategy, students look back on their journey, reflecting on their learning and sharing their achievement with others.

The seven strategies are not a recipe to be followed step by step, although they do build

on one another. Rather, they are a collection of actions that will strengthen students' sense of self-efficacy (belief that effort will lead to improvement), their motivation to try, and ultimately, their achievement. They represent a use of assessment information that differs from the traditional practice of associating *assessment* with *test*, and *test* with *grade*. These assessment practices will not result in more grades in the grade book. Rather, they ask us to think more broadly about what assessment is and what it is capable of accomplishing.

Thus, if the planned professional learning program is successful, educators will be able to assess students frequently (e.g., daily) and use the information to improve teaching "in the moment," in order to impact student learning and student achievement. However, the question remains as to which are the best methods for providing the types of professional learning educators need to effectively use instructionally embedded formative assessment practices in their classrooms.

Theoretical Framework for Educator Learning About Formative Assessment Practices and Strategies

While formative assessment is one of the crucial teaching practices emphasized in reform documents and has been shown to be important for improving student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998), teachers at all levels struggle to implement formative assessment practices effectively (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2001; Daws & Singh, 1999).

Research on the FAME model draws on and expands Desimone's (2009) model for examining professional development. Figure 1 outlines the basic features of the proposed model.
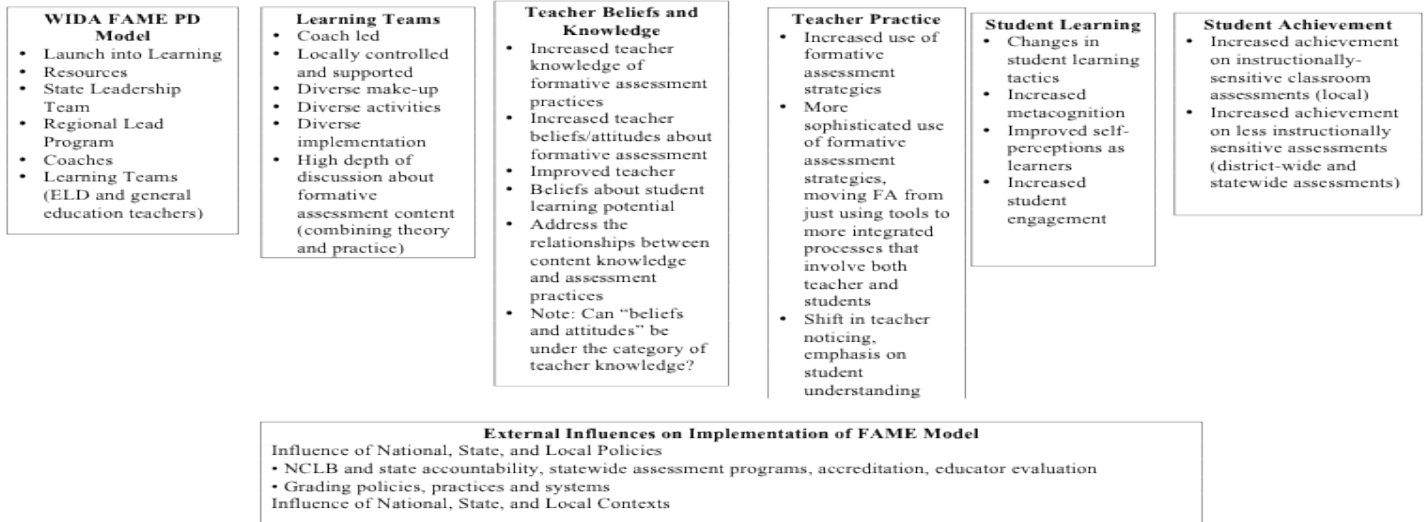
Basic Fame Research Model

WIDA FAME PD Model	Learning Teams	Teacher Beliefs and Knowledge	Teacher Practice	Student Learning	Student Achievement
• Launch into Learning • Resources • State Leadership Team • Regional Lead Program • Coaches • Learning Teams (ELD and general education teachers)	• Coach led • Locally controlled and supported • Diverse make-up • Diverse activities • Diverse implementation • High depth of discussion about formative assessment content (combining theory and practice)	• Increased teacher knowledge of formative assessment practices • Increased teacher beliefs/attitudes about formative assessment • Improved teacher • Beliefs about student learning potential • Address the relationships between content knowledge and assessment practices • Note: Can "beliefs and attitudes" be under the category of teacher knowledge?	• Increased use of formative assessment strategies • More sophisticated use of formative assessment strategies, moving FA from just using tools to more integrated processes that involve both teacher and students • Shift in teacher noticing, emphasis on student understanding	• Changes in student learning tactics • Increased metacognition • Improved self-perceptions as learners • Increased student engagement	• Increased achievement on instructionally-sensitive classroom assessments (local) • Increased achievement on less instructionally sensitive assessments (district-wide and statewide assessments)

External Influences on Implementation of FAME Model
Influence of National, State, and Local Policies
• NCLB and state accountability, statewide assessment programs, accreditation, educator evaluation
• Grading policies, practices and systems
Influence of National, State, and Local Contexts

Figure 1. Model for studying the FAME PD model.

The manner in which teachers learn professionally has been the subject of considerable study. For example, professional development that supports teachers' learning has been shown to be a key factor in improving the quality of schools (e.g., Borko & Putnam, 1995; Desimone, 2009). It has also been shown to be a factor in improving student learning (Desimone, Smith, Hayes, & Frisvold, 2005).

Effective professional development should focus on instruction and student outcomes (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000); be sustained over a long period (at least two years); engage teachers in a community that supports their learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Wenger, 1998); and engage teachers in authentic problems within their professional practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Webster-Wright, 2009; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

These characteristics are similar to optimal professional development programs in formative classroom assessment (Schneider & Randel, 2009) which have emphasized models based on different types of communities of practice (Webb & Jones, 2009; Willie, Lyon, & Goe, 2009; Schneider & Randel, 2009).

Research on professional development to support teachers' formative assessment knowledge and practice faces the challenge of determining the effectiveness of their implementation (Schneider & Randel, 2009) especially in terms of quality instruction and

student learning. Lessons learned from this research are used to shape the FAME professional development program.

Proposed Work on Formative Assessment

The work in implementing FAME across WIDA states is planned to be hierarchal in nature, starting with the WIDA staff, moving out to state FAME leadership teams, from there to regional leaders across each of the member states, to district leaders/program leaders, and finally to schools with administrators and teachers.

It is anticipated that teachers, administrators, and specialists in English language development and content curricula will form into FAME learning teams, seeking to learn about formative assessment practices and strategies in order to learn to incorporate these practices into their instructional planning and delivery. It is also anticipated that these teachers will assist their students to learn to use formative assessment strategies to foster their learning and achievement. These learning teams should commit to a minimum of 3 years of study of formative assessment (and teams will be encouraged to remain intact and working on formative assessment practices even past these 3 years).

Learning Teams are volunteers who are:
- At the same school or multiple schools within a district or multiple schools in multiple districts or even multiple districts across one or more regional educational agency
- From the same or multiple content areas
- At the same or different grades or grade ranges.

Each learning team will be supported and led by a coach, who will serve as a facilitator of the professional learning activities of their learning team, however, not necessarily an expert on formative assessment practices.

Coaches are self-selected volunteers who are:
- Teachers in the same or different school(s) as the learning team, or
- School administrators (building or district level) in the same or different school(s) as the learning team, or
- District administrators from the same district(s) as the learning team, or
- Regional educational agency administrators from the same regional educational agency as the learning team, or
- Retirees
- Others

The goals of the coach-facilitated learning teams are several-fold:
- Help educators learn about formative assessment practices and how they might be applied in their classrooms. This introduction serves both to inform them about what research says about such practices and how they can use them.
- Plan for the use of formative assessment strategies and tools while they are making plans for the instruction that they will provide.
- Encourage and support educators in trying specific formative assessment strategies with their class(es) and/or specific students.
- Learn how to use key formative assessment tools in order to improve their instruction and student learning.

Learning teams will probably be comprised of between five to eight teachers, administrators, and specialists, from a single school building, from multiple schools in the same district, from multiple schools from multiple school districts or even multiple intermediate school districts. Teams will be comprised of individuals who teach a single subject area or those who teach multiple subjects. Most teams will meet monthly, typically for 1, 2 or 3 or more hours, although this is the choice of the team. Each team is free to form as it sees fit, meet as often as it desires, and work on topics and processes that it desires to talk about and work on.

Learning teams are encouraged by MDE to stay engaged in the formative assessment activities for at least a 3-year period. While there are trainings specifically provided to 1st-year coaches, and launch events provided to 1st-year teams, there are other types of materials, activities, and supports provided for 2nd and 3rd-year teams (both coaches and the learning teams themselves). These include printed materials, articles, and resources available electronically, and a project website that provides additional resources and a vehicle for learning teams to communicate with one another.

The regional leads will serve to support the coaches and learning teams within their region of their state. These individuals will carry out "launches into learning" periodically, to start new learning teams and coaches on their multi-year journey to learn about and learn to use formative assessment practices. Because coaches may feel ill-prepared to sustain the learning of their learning team, the leads will be someone who can provide resources for use in learning team meetings, who can problem-solve with coaches when issues arise, and who can gather feedback from coaches and learning teams to share at the state and national levels.

Regional Leads are individuals who are:
• District administrators from different regions of the state
• Regional educational agency administrators from different regions of the state
• Retired educators
• Others

The state leadership team will adapt the specific learning plan and program for their state, based on resources provided by WIDA staff and consultants. This will include the contents of the statewide program, the role of the state team and the regional leaders, how coaches and their learning teams are to be formed and how they are recruited, how the content of the "launches into learning" will be adapted to the state context, and how the leads, coaches and learning teams will be supported over the multi-year program.

It is anticipated that the state leadership team will be comprised of state education agency staff from:
• Curriculum staff in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts
• Title I, Title II and Title III staff
• English language development staff

WIDA staff and consultants will be tasked with developing the super-structure for this on-going professional learning program. This includes the basic program design, the resources to be created for state, regional lead, and coach use (written, video, and other).

It is anticipated that the WIDA leadership team will be comprised of:
- Content assessment staff
- Assessment staff with formative assessment experience
- Language development researchers
- Academic language and literacy staff
- Professional learning staff
- Teaching and Learning staff

These may be WIDA staff, consultants, and/or contractors.

Proposed Activities for the 3-Year Period

As mentioned above, it is anticipated that FAME teams will be recruited with the idea that they will work over a 3-school year period of time to learn about and use formative assessment practices in their schools and classrooms. The proposed activities for the 3-year period are as follows.

Note: this is not a rigid schedule that must be adhered to slavishly, since learning teams come to FAME with different backgrounds, assessment-related experience, and interests. Instead, this 3-year plan should be thought of as a menu of offerings for potential work by the learning teams, with the coaches and teams selecting topics that are of greatest interest and highest need to them.

Each learning team will be asked annually to complete a Learning Team Learning Plan document to state in advance which formative assessment topics will be addressed and by when in the school year. This plan should provide some guidance for the team but should remain flexible if plans change during the school year. At the end of each school year, each learning team will be asked to revisit the Learning Team Learning Plan to indicate what topics on it were actually addressed and plans for the following year (e.g., continuing membership of the coach and learning team members; topics addressed; topics planned for the subsequent year; overview of the perceived success of the learning team; areas of needed of the learning team; and areas where the FAME program could be improved). The regional leads can assist coaches to select the topics and the materials to address these topics for their learning team meetings.

Year 1—Several activities are anticipated for the first year of participation by FAME learning teams, supported by coaches and regional leads. These include:

- **State Leadership Meetings**—The FAME Leadership teams should meet to lay out the FAME program as it will occur in the state. This team should meet regularly and WCER staff should meet with the leadership team often (ideally, at all initial meetings and less often as they implement their planned work). The goals of these quarterly meetings are to establish the overall parameters for the program, to determine how regional leads will be recruited and trained, to determine ways that the leads should recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leadership team to learn more about formative assessment strategies, and to select the resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of leads and the coaches and learning team members in learning about formative assessment.

- **Regional Lead Meetings**—The state leadership team should plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the individuals serving as regional leads. The goals of these quarterly meetings are to encourage the leads to recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leads to learn more about formative assessment strategies, and to provide the leads with resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of local coaches and learning teams.
- **Launch Into Learning Sessions**—The goal of this initial session is for new coaches and learning team members to meet (since some team members may not know others because of the way the learning team was established) and for the team to be given an overview of formative assessment. The learning team can also define what they know and want to learn during the initial year of the project and beyond. This will be recorded on their Learning Team Learning Plan. Finally, the coach and learning team should plan the dates and times for their meetings for the remainder of the year. Launches will be conducted in both the fall (October) and the winter (January) for interested coaches and learning teams.
- **Coach Meetings**—The leads should plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the coaches in their area of the state. Depending on the size of the region, coaches may meet in one central location or in two or more places. The goals of these meetings are to encourage the work of the coaches and to discuss and resolve issues that have arisen in learning teams. These meetings will also serve to provide new information to the coaches that they can use with their learning teams.
- **Learning Team Meetings**—Teams will be encouraged to meet monthly, for at least one hour, in order to learn new information, discuss new strategies to be tried, and the results of new strategies tried out.
- **Individual Teacher Work**—Learning team members will be expected to try out new instructional and formative assessment strategies after learning team meetings, bringing their feedback, samples of student work, and other reactions to future learning team meetings for discussion and refinement.
- **Research on Implementation**—Learning teams are expected to participate in on-going research efforts such as surveys, and if selected, more intense observation of learning team meetings and classroom instruction and assessment activities related to the learning team topics and collaborative work. This research will be conducted on FAME participants who volunteer and who sign an informed consent agreement.
- **Program Refinement**—At the end of the first year of implementation, each state leadership team will be encouraged to conduct a 2-3–day retreat to thoroughly review the FAME program in their state and to plan Year 2 activities. The data collected in the research process should be used in this planning activity, as well as more qualitative data collected from regional leads and from their interactions with coaches. State leadership teams may wish to include their regional leads in this program review and refinement activity.

Year 2—During the 2nd year of FAME, the following activities will occur:

- **State Leadership Meetings**—The FAME Leadership Teams should continue to meet to lay out the refined FAME program as it will occur in the state. This team should meet regularly and WCER staff should meet with the leadership team often (ideally, at all initial meetings and less often as they implement their planned work). The goals of these quarterly meetings are to establish the overall parameters for the program, to determine how regional leads will be recruited and trained, to determine ways that the

leads should recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leadership team to learn more about formative assessment strategies, and to select the resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of leads and the coaches and learning team members in learning about formative assessment.

- **Regional Lead Meetings**—The state leadership team should plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the individuals serving as regional leads. The goals of these quarterly meetings are to encourage the leads to recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leads to learn more about formative-assessment strategies, and to provide the leads with resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of local coaches and learning teams. The leadership team may choose to add new leads to their cadre of regional leads.

- **Launch Into Learning Sessions**—The goal of this initial session is for new coaches and learning team members to meet (since some team members may not know others because of the way the learning team was established) and for the team to be given an overview of formative assessment. The learning team can also define what they know and want to learn during the initial year of the project and beyond. This will be recorded on their Learning Team Learning Plan. Finally, the coach and learning team should plan the dates and times for their meetings for the remainder of the year. Launches will be conducted in both the fall (October) and the winter (January) for interested coaches and learning teams. In most states, on-going learning teams will not participate in these launches.

- **Coach Meetings**—The leads should continue to plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the coaches in their area of the state. Depending on the size of the region, coaches may meet in one central location or in two or more places. The goals of these meetings are to encourage the work of the coaches and to discuss and resolve issues that have arisen in learning teams. These meetings will also serve to provide new information to the coaches that they can use with their learning teams.

- **Learning Team Meetings**—Teams will be encouraged to continue to meet monthly, for at least 1 hour, in order to learn new information, discuss new strategies to be tried, and the results of new strategies tried out.

- **Individual Teacher Work**—Learning team members will continue to be expected to try out new instructional and formative assessment strategies after learning team meetings, bringing their feedback, samples of student work, and other reactions to future learning team meetings for discussion and refinement. Hopefully, this will expand the array of strategies used in the past.

- **Research on Implementation**—Learning teams will continue to be expected to participate in on-going research efforts such as surveys, and if selected, more intense observation of learning team meetings and classroom instruction and assessment activities related to the learning team topics and collaborative work. The same participants from the past year will be recruited to continue, and some new participants will be added, in cases where learning teams or teachers choose to drop out of the research program. This research will continue to be conducted on FAME participants who volunteer and who again sign an informed consent agreement.

- **Program Refinement**—At the end of the first year of implementation, each state leadership team will be encouraged to conduct a 2-3–day retreat to thoroughly review the FAME program in their state and to plan Year 2 activities. The data collected in the research process should be used in this planning activity, as well as more qualitative data collected from regional leads and from their interactions with coaches. State

leadership teams may wish to include their regional leads in this program review and refinement activity

Year 3—During the 3rd year of FAME, the following activities will occur:

- **State Leadership Meetings**—The FAME Leadership teams should continue to meet to lay out the refined FAME program as it will occur in the state. This team should meet regularly and WCER staff should meet with the leadership team often (ideally, at all initial meetings and less often as they implement their planned work). The goals of these quarterly meetings are to establish the overall parameters for the program, to determine how regional leads will be recruited and trained, to determine ways that the leads should recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leadership team to learn more about formative assessment strategies, and to select the resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of leads and the coaches and learning team members in learning about formative assessment.
- **Regional Lead Meetings**—The state leadership team should plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the individuals serving as regional leads. The goals of these quarterly meetings are to encourage the leads to recruit coaches and learning teams, to help the leads to learn more about formative assessment strategies, and to provide the leads with resources (and to discuss how to use these) that can be used in support of local coaches and learning teams. The leadership team may choose to add new leads to their cadre of regional leads.
- **Launch Into Learning Sessions**—The goal of this initial session is for new coaches and learning team members to meet (since some team members may not know others because of the way the learning team was established) and for the team to be given an overview of formative assessment. The learning team can also define what they know and want to learn during the initial year of the project and beyond. This will be recorded on their Learning Team Learning Plan. Finally, the coach and learning team should plan the dates and times for their meetings for the remainder of the year. Launches will be conducted in both the fall (October) and the winter (January) for interested coaches and learning teams. In most states, on-going learning teams will not participate in these launches.
- **Coach Meetings**—The leads should continue to plan and conduct periodic meetings (e.g., quarterly) with the coaches in his or her area of the state. Depending on the size of the region, coaches may meet in one central location or in two or more places. The goals of these meetings are to encourage the work of the coaches and to discuss and resolve issues that have arisen in learning teams. These meetings will also serve to provide new information to the coaches that they can use with their learning teams.
- **Learning Team Meetings**—Teams will be encouraged to continue to meet monthly, for at least one hour, in order to learn new information, discuss new strategies to be tried, and the results of new strategies tried out.
- **Individual Teacher Work**—Learning team members will continue to be expected to try out new instructional and formative assessment strategies after learning team meetings, bringing their feedback, samples of student work, and other reactions to future learning team meetings for discussion and refinement. Hopefully, this will expand the array of strategies used in the past.
- **Research on Implementation**—Learning teams will continue to be expected to participate in on-going research efforts such as surveys, and if selected, more intense observation of learning team meetings and classroom instruction and assessment

activities related to the learning team topics and collaborative work. The same participants from the past year will be recruited to continue, and some new participants will be added, in cases where learning teams or teachers choose to drop out" of the research program. This research will continue to be conducted on FAME participants who volunteer and who again sign an informed consent agreement.

- **Program Refinement**—At the end of the first year of implementation, each state leadership team will be encouraged to conduct a 2-3–day retreat to thoroughly review the FAME program in their state and to plan year two activities. The data collected in the research process should be used in this planning activity, as well as more qualitative data collected from regional leads and from their interactions with coaches. State leadership teams may wish to include their regional leads in this program review and refinement activity.

Materials to be Developed to Support the FAME Program

Materials for Regional Leads and Coaches—The following materials will be created for use by the regional leads and their coaches:

1. A list of topics, about ten in number, for learning team discussion over the 3-year period. This will not be a rigid schedule of activities, but instead, a suggested order of presentation and discussion in order to assure coverage of each of the topics sometime during the 3 years committed to this project.
2. Resources materials related to each of these topics. These materials may include:
    a. Video related to each topic, to show the strategy in use, to describe it in greater detail, and provide additional suggestions of work in the area.
    b. Proposed resources related to the topics, such as readings, research reports, and so forth, for coaches (and perhaps the more avid learning team members) to use to prepare the work of the learning teams and for individual teacher use in trying the strategies in their classrooms.
3. The planning template (Learning Team Learning Plan document) will be created for the coaches to use to plan the activities for the learning team for the year.
4. Webinars (live and recorded) will be provided to convey information to leads, coaches and learning teams periodically throughout the 3-year period.

Materials for Learning Teams—The following materials are to be created for the use of the learning teams, with support from the coaches:

1. Learning team launch agendas and meeting materials, to provide the initial presentation about formative assessment processes to start learning teams on the right path.
2. The Learning Team Learning Plan template for the learning teams to use to lay out a discussion plan for the school year.
3. A resource guide to formative assessment, with written materials related to each of the topics listed in Number 1 above. The goal of this guide is to introduce each topic and provide some initial descriptive information about each, along with some suggested strategies and tools. Related research will also be summarized.
4. Handouts for use with each topic that is selected for use by the learning teams.
5. Access to a FAME website, containing resources for learning team, teacher, and student use.

Materials for Researchers—The following materials will be developed for use in conducting research on the implementation of FAME in states and classrooms in the states:

1. Survey instruments for use in the fall or in the spring with regional leads, coaches, and learning teams to measure their knowledge and their use of formative assessment practices.
2. Instruments to measure the breadth and depth of knowledge of educators about formative assessment practices.
3. Instruments to measure students attitudes towards learning, their achievement, and their use of formative assessment practices.
4. Observation protocols for use in coding the interactions of learning teams and the instructional practices of individual teachers.

Implementation Process

The processes of implementation will include the following:

- WCER will recruit states that wish to provide this FAME professional learning program for the states' districts and educators. These states will be encouraged to form a state leadership team comprised on interested SEA employees and consultants who will manage and direct the FAME program in the state.
- WCER will meet with the state leadership teams monthly at the state and then less often as the state leadership team assumes direction of the FAME activities in the state.
- WCER and its partners will create the materials listed above for use in the project.
- State leadership teams will convene regional coaches at a central site in order to provide them with the initial information about FAME and formative assessment, as well as to suggest how they can recruit coaches and learning teams.
- Each learning team will meet plan for the Year 1 FAME activities, schedule, and to collect information on desired knowledge and skills. This information will be submitted through the regional coaches to the state leadership team, to the WCER researchers, and to the WCER professional learning program.
- The Launches Into Learning for Year 1 learning teams and their coaches will take place, provided by the regional leads. This will be the 1-day FAME kickoff meeting.
- The learning teams and coaches will meet on their own. The regional leads should periodically "check in" with coaches to see how the work is progressing and what (if any) additional resource materials are needed. Regional leads should also assist teams that are faltering to make progress.
- Regional leads should meet with the coaches from their region periodically to determine the status of each of the teams, to determine issues that have arisen, the work that is planned, and what resources are needed.
- The state leadership team should convene the regional leads periodically during the school year, as well as at the end of the school year. These meetings should inform the leadership team about issues and needs among the coaches and their learning teams, to encourage regional leads to recruit additional teams, for the state leadership team to provide additional resources on formative assessment practices, and respond to issues that have arisen among one or more of the learning teams.
- Regional leads should meet with the coaches from their region at the end of Year 1, and Years 2 and 3. The purposes of these meetings are to determine the status of each of the teams, the issues that have arisen, the work that is planned, and the resources that are

needed. The meeting should also serve to encourage teams to continue to work on incorporating formative assessment practices in their classrooms.

- In subsequent years, the regional leads will recruit new Year 1 learning teams, while encouraging and supporting Year 2 and Year 3 Teams. The steps listed above should continue.

Research on Formative Assessment

During each year of the FAME program, research activities will be conducted by WCER researchers and others, designed to investigate the increase in teacher knowledge and understanding, their use of the information transmitted to change instructional practice, and the extent of change in the instructional practices related to the use of formative assessment practices. This research will be comprised of several components:

- Annual surveys of all educators participating on local learning teams (a separate survey for coaches and learning team members)
- Annual surveys of regional leads in all participating states
- Annual surveys of the persons who serve on state leadership teams. This will consist of both written survey and in-person interviews.
- Observation and videotaping of a small sample of learning teams at each of their meetings (selected as randomly as possible from among all participating learning teams)
- Observation and videotaping of a small number of classroom teachers using formative assessment practices, selected from the small sample of learning teams selected for videotaping. These teachers will be observed on several consecutive days on 2–3 occasions during the school year.

The video collected from learning teams and from classroom teachers will be rated on multiple dimensions related to the knowledge and use of formative assessment practices, using predefined rubrics. The goal is that the learning teams selected for observation and videotaping will be following for 3 or more years, so that their progress in learning and using formative assessment practices can be tracked, since immediate change is not expected.

All of these data will be used to carefully analyze the impacts of the program, to spot areas where state leaders, regional leads, coaches and/or learning team members need additional information or assistance, so that the FAME program is enhanced as needed each year. In addition, it is hoped that the data obtained from these studies will be published in teacher education, professional learning, and assessment academic journals, since so little of what is done currently at the state and local levels is subject to critical examination and review. It is hoped that this project will contribute significantly to the research literature on formative assessment practices and professional learning.

Summary

The goal of the FAME project for 2014–15 and beyond is to recruit as many learning teams as possible for participation in the 3-year process of learning about and using formative-assessment practices in their classrooms. A support structure of state leadership teams, regional leads and local learning teams and coaches, supported by WCER and others, will be used to enable to change processes to occur throughout member WIDA states. The overarching goal is to help teachers and students learn to use formative assessment

strategies that will enable improved teaching, increased student learning, and higher student achievement to occur.

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