

Corollary Questions and Collaborative Common Assessments

Corollary Questions of Effective Teaching Teams	Connection Between the Question and the Practice of Common Assessments
1. What do students need to know and be able to do?	Effective teams identify the essential knowledge and skill expectations for their learners based on required standards and in advance of any instruction. Teams backmap their assessment plans to align with their standard expectations (see figures 1.3 and 1.4 in chapter 1 as an example). Valid and reliable common assessments are contingent upon a team's ability to develop congruence with required expectations that are answered by corollary question 1.
2. How will we know when they have learned it and can do it?	Teaching teams can only answer this question through the work of common assessments. When teachers review their data in isolation, they frame their experiences and opinions, but the variables that lead to their results cannot be compared in a manner that helps them create information regarding what works and what doesn't work instructionally. Data can only provide information when reviewed in comparative ways against a valid benchmark; otherwise, they are simply random data points. Common assessments provide teams with the evidence needed to help teams answer corollary question 2. Collaborative common assessments are the engine of a PLC because they can drive teams to make more informed decisions regarding their practice.
3. How will we respond when students don't learn it?	Teams require the data and evidence generated from common assessments to answer corollary question 3. Reflection and analysis regarding their individual and collective results combined with collaborative problem solving provide the only means to help teams find the best way to target exact learning needs and demystify complex learning issues.
4. How will we respond when they already know it?	<p>Enrichment, extension, and advancement are proving harder to address than interventions. In all of these activities, educators must help learners who have mastered content and skills to extend their learning. Enrichment does not mean doing more work, helping others to learn something they have <i>not</i> yet mastered, or moving to the next chapter. When teams design their common assessment products and processes, they plan for what a true enrichment might look like—one that is engaging and fun while building upon current learning targets that have been newly mastered in challenging ways. When teams design the enrichments in advance of instruction, they can increase motivation and understanding in the following ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They clarify even further their own understanding (and that of their learners) of what mastery will need to look like. • They pique interest in advance of instruction by showing learners the possibilities that lie before them if they master the expectations in a timely manner.