Step B. Reach Agreement on Instructional Priorities or Critical Content for Each Course

An important responsibility of the DDM team will be to identify the CVTE stakeholders who are most qualified to specify the content that should be assessed by a measure in order for the measure to meet an essential criterion for use as a DDM: strong alignment to the core content for each classroom or course. These individuals likely will include educators who teach in that program or similar programs and who can work together to identify common content that is covered in all classrooms or courses. School and district administrators also may see value in asking curriculum developers and other experts to join educators in this work.

These experts will be charged with systematically determining those elements of content that will best represent a meaningful learning experience for a student during a course or school year. In a recent resource,¹ ESE explains why this step is so essential to the usefulness of the Student Impact Rating:

> A DDM that does not measure important content cannot provide useful information to educators about student learning. The selected content does not need to be a comprehensive collection of every learning goal covered in a year but instead must be a representative sample of the knowledge and skills taught by an educator. (p. 4)

Identification and documentation of the content intended to be measured by the emerging DDMs provides schools and districts with CVTE programs with a key opportunity to engage educators in the DDM development and implementation process and to build local capacity in terms of assessment literacy. It reminds all stakeholders of what educators of a particular classroom or course expect students to be able to do following their instruction. It also clarifies the important learning objectives and the desired learning goals for each educator and indicates what most students cannot do when they enter a classroom but can do after a year or course of instruction. In all cases, the sample of the full content domain to be measured by each DDM should reflect school and program values and instructional priorities.

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¹ Using Current Assessments in District-Determined Measures: Leveraging the Curriculum-Embedded Performance Assessments from the Model Curriculum Units.

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Key ESE-Developed Resources to Support Step B

- Technical Guide A (see especially pp. 11, 20, and 22)
- Technical Guide B (see especially Appendix B, p. 4)
- Using Current Assessments in District-Determined Measures: Leveraging the Curriculum-Embedded Performance Assessments from the Model Curriculum Units (see especially examples on pp. 2, 4, and 10)
- Webinar Series #7 (slides 17–24)
Members of the CVTE DDM team will want to consider whether they will be focusing on general employability skills (e.g., time management), technical skills, or academic content (e.g., algebra or geometry). Some teams may conclude that identifying distinct measures of each area of focus is the best approach, while others may recommend identification of those assessments that measure some combination of technical competencies and academic content. At the January and February 2014 meetings, a number of educators and administrators expressed interest in focusing on employability skills, as doing so would ensure that at least one measure could be adopted for use as a DDM by all CVTE educators.

While working with Commonwealth educators in the academic content areas, WestEd developed a protocol for identifying core content that the CVTE educators at the January 2014 meeting found useful (see Appendix D-4). This protocol provides step-by-step recommendations for collecting relevant resources, using professional judgment, and reaching consensus on the content that should be assessed by DDMs for particular classrooms or courses in an area. At the January 2014 meeting, CVTE educators identified core content standards from the CVTE Frameworks to support the development of DDMs in particular programs; their recommendations are included in Appendix D-3.

The anticipated outcomes from Step B are as follows:

- Documentation of the content to which a promising measure must align in order to be considered as a promising candidate for use as a DDM
- Documentation of the resources used to complete this step (e.g., relevant Massachusetts frameworks, pacing guides, curriculum materials, Model Curriculum Units, industry standards, licensing/certification requirements).