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# Highlights from the ALN Event 3, May 9, 2017

Dear ALN members,

It was great to finish out our first year with you in Lansing on May 9, 2017. We hope you enjoyed the learning and networking that occurred and are eager to share some key points with the colleagues you represent.

In order to assist with your own communications, we are listing some highlights from the day and a summary outline of the featured presenter. We hope that this, along with the Learning Points, handouts, and program notes provided at the event will add value to your own take-aways and make it easier for you to spread the learning within your own networks.

# Summer Learning Challenge: Explore at least 3 resources at aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org

1. Video library
2. Communications templates
3. Member toolbox
4. Extensive resources related to presenter’s topic

# Susan Brookhart featured learning: *Helping Michigan Become the State of Assessment Literacy*

## Key Points from ALN 2016

### Slides 3-22 Points from Jim Pellegrino (Dec 2016)

* Expanded the three-level “pyramid” graphic used by Dr. Pellegrino
* Offered a 4-quadrant view of assessment relationship that is useful for practitioners
* Quadrants defined by:
  + extent of formative vs summative purpose
  + proximity to the classroom vs more large scale
* Proposed a “Better Balance” in a system as devoting more time, money, and commitment to the assessment that is more formative in purpose and closer to the learning in the classroom.
* Examined what “assessment literate” educators would do with that data in order to improve student outcomes
  + Assessment literate policymakers and educators know that interpreting change in percentages in categories is misleading
* Assessment literate educators know that in a typical U.S. class grade distribution, C is not the “average” grade
  + Assessment literate educators know the characteristics of effective feedback
  + All these factors need to work together to shape better instruction and outcomes
  + Principals need to drive the data analysis process (but ~~hand off~~ include ~~to~~ others who have a talent or desire to work with data)
  + In summary: In order to truly have a “system” of assessment, you need to know how to use the data you get from each type of assessment:
    - Use large-scale data to pose questions about instruction, professional development, and resource allocation
    - Use classroom-level data to suggest tentative answers and plan trial next steps
    - Involve EVERYONE in the process (including students)

### Slides 23-31 Points from Margaret Heritage (February 2017)

* Reinforced the idea that formative assessment should inform what teachers know about what students are thinking and understand.
* Reinforced the role of a student in formative assessment. “It’s not assessment unless you are interpreting evidence…and the quality and strength of the evidence makes all the difference.”
* Extended the thinking about the learning process with a table of the variables at play: Phases, Cognition, Motivation/Affect, Behavior/Context
* Examined what “assessment literate” educators do around formative assessment:
  + Assessment literate teachers know that formative feedback should aim to describe and interpret student thinking
  + Assessment literate teachers know that formative assessment must be based on student learning intentions

### Slides 32-Assessment Literacy Needs of Key Groups: Dispositions, Understanding, Performance

* Described specific AL Standards for each key group:
  + Local and state policymakers
  + District administrators
  + Building administrators
  + Teachers
  + Students and their familes
* Identified existing assessment learning resources for each group named above
* Provided examples of key resources in four categories:
  + Books—useful for sharing practical knowledge
  + Academic Journal Articles—drives new research in the field
  + Videos: participants viewed an example from the Expeditionary Learning channel (free PD materials on Vimeo)
  + Websites: called out Michigan Assessment Consortium; states of North Carolina and Ohio

## Some key takeaways

* Assessment literacy is not a strategy; it’s a broad set of knowledge and understanding
* Strategies lead to better practice, but arise from deeper understanding about how students learn and assessment’s role in that process

### Invited participants to a game of “Stump Sue,” in which she identified existing resources to answer real questions from the ALN members present. *(Hint: Many of the resources she identified can be found in the ALN resources under one of the three events for 2016-17. Contact an ALN project team manager at the Michigan Assessment Consortium for help if needed.)*

Q: How do I know if I should opt my child out of testing?

A: NCME has policy guidance on this, and explains the impact opting out has

Q: How can I rank my top-10 graduates if I move to standards-based grading?

A: Books by Gusky, Shimmer, show not only HOW to move to standards-based grading, but also how to handle all the ancillary issues that surround it.

Q: If you could give one resource to a state legislator, what would it be?

A: Any undergrad text book meant for educators (college level) would do the trick, but impractical. Harvard Datawise project has some good resources.

Q: How do you get administrators to buy in to observational assessments?

A: Brookhart or other book on the use of rubrics. They don’t have to be able to do it; they just need to know that you are using a valid process to observe and score students.

Q: How do you respond to teachers or administrators who want to record formative assessment data?

A: Any formative assessment book that describe formative assessment as a *process* will answer people who think FA should be graded. Recording it for your own reminders and notetaking would be fine.

Q: What resources exist to improve attitudes toward assessment?

A: Lorraine McDonald’s article on why culture needs assessment. Better yet, improve practices so there is less to be angry about.

Q: Why isn’t my child graded?

A: State of Hawaii has some parent education videos that explain formative assessment. Other little videos would be helpful.

Q: How do we explain to principals what we should look for in the classroom (quick and dirty; no time to read a book).

A: Formative Classroom Walkthroughs; NWEA is putting together a series of PD on that.

Q: Where in the Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment triangle does formative assessment fall?

A: Read the book *Knowing What Students Know* or watch the Jim Pellegrino video on the ALN website.

Q: Why does my student take so many tests…sometimes every day?

A: Parent education videos; read whitepapers or journal articles on the reasons for multiple measures.

Q: What is the best way to switch the culture of learning in secondary schools to be more accepting and proficient in assessment practices?

A: Brookhart, Kappan, Ed Leadership articles that talk about shifting school culture.

Q: What is the best resource to explain different types of assessment?

A: Lower graduate level education textbooks should have informed any upper level administrator; Stiggins’ books for teachers; for parents/students, the best resource is a skilled teacher; National PTA.