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# Highlights from the ALN Event 2, February 13, 2017

Dear ALN members,

It was great to see most of you in Washtenaw County on February 13, 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.

# New at aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org

1. Video library
2. Survey results
3. Member toolbox
4. Expanded public page
5. Extensive resources related to presenter’s topic

# Margaret Heritage featured learning:

## What is formative assessment?

* Focus is on informing learning, rather than measuring it or summing it up.
* Happens day-by-day in classroom as learning is taking place
* Purpose is to move learning forward from its current status
  + More than “checking for understanding”
  + Answers: “Where are students in their evolution of understanding?”
* What’s in a name?
  + Educators in U.S. refer to “Formative Assessment”
  + Many others around the world refers to “assessment for learning”
* CCSSO SCASS definition (2007)
  + Available in the [ALN Learning Point on Formative Assessment](http://aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/files/resources/2017_Feb_FormativeAssessment.pdf)
  + *“The formative assessment process is used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes.”* (CCSSO SCASS, 2007)
  + Watch for future adjustments to this definition, placing more emphasis on student role; and about learning
* Third International Conference on Assessment for Learning definition (2009):
  + *Assessment for Learning is part of everyday practice by students, teachers and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning.*

## Why should we care about FA?

* *“Good teaching is forever being on the cutting edge of a child’s competence.”* -Jerome Bruner
* Formative assessment:
  + Helps build a stronger foundation for learning, formed on bedrock rather than on sand.
  + Is an equity issue—every student has the chance to grow from where they are to where they need to go next.
  + Keeps students in their “learning zone” (between the comfort zone and panic zone)
  + Is one big key to student engagement and motivation
* Slides 9-10 features a side-by-side chart of what FA IS, and what it is NOT

## Where does formative assessment fit into a comprehensive assessment system?

* Slide 14 illustrates a “Nested Assessment System” that includes assessment at every level:
  + State
  + Local school district
  + Schools
  + Classroom
* Slides 15-17 illustrate Assessment Cycles (Wiliam, 2016)
  + Long-cycle= long term goals
  + Interim=medium term goals
  + Short-term=short term goals, immediate action
* Slides 18-24 illustrate the assessment/learning cycle relative to an individual student

## How should formative assessment work in the classroom?

Slides 25-37 illustrates the feedback process that formative assessment can enable by answering three key questions: Where am I going? Where am I now? Where to next?

* Where am I going?
  + Goal—any assessment is connected to a goal
  + Progression—string goals together in logical pattern
  + Success criteria—how to you know if you’ve learned the goal?
* Where am I now?
  + Eliciting and interpreting evidence
* Where next?
  + Taking responsive action

## Teachers and students—both have roles to play in a healthy formative assessment process

* Students do the actual learning, so their role is critical
* Slides 40-49 describe the role students can and should play in their own learning.
* Slide 50 links to the video clip that shows a teacher using formative assessment practices in a seamless way.

## Formative assessment works best within a safe classroom culture that reflects social and emotional well-being.

* Learner and learning centered
* Routines, participant structures, expectations
* Respect and sensitivity
* Appreciation of differences
* Slide 53 illustrates the characteristics of positive classroom culture

## Formative assessment: National and International perspective

Margaret’s experience suggests that many countries are way ahead of the United States in formative assessment practice. New Zeeland is a notable example. Nations in the forefront take a systemic approach and embed formative assessment practice into public policy.