REL Mid-Atlantic Event
Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making
Q&A with Sharnell Jackson
March 18, 2013

This event focused on the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making. During the event, the presenter, Sharnell Jackson, led school data teams in activities involving analysis of their own student data. This Q&A addressed the questions participants had for Jackson following the event. A PowerPoint presentation for this event is also available.

What systems do we have to give students immediate feedback about their work?

There are many adaptive systems that can give immediate feedback to students. They include:

- classroom response systems
- online surveys
- learning management systems
- cognitive development solutions
- simulations, educational gaming
- instructional apps
- data dashboards
- computerized adaptive testing
- visual data analysis tools, mobile technologies
- web-based tutoring tools, templates, rubrics, and exit tickets

Teachers can work collaboratively to develop their own tools that help students learn from feedback. These might include student electronic portfolios, interactive templates, reflective data tools, concept maps, grids, KWL e-sheets with embedded assessments, writers' workshop strategies, and student goal-setting strategies.

To find out more, read the *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* practice guide, pages 22–23 and 56–59.

You really stressed the importance of having a systematic process for dealing with data. Can you give us an example of a process?

Yes, here's an example:

1. Using a recently administered test, the school or district data team reviews:
   - test scores by teacher, class, and student
   - item analysis by school, teacher, and class

2. The school or district data team reviews school-wide assessment data and identifies:
- differences among student groups and individual students
- commonly missed items
- common wrong-answer choices

While paying attention to the variability in student scores, the team brainstorms explanations for the bottom one-third's performance.

3. The team brainstorms possible causes for the identified problems, including the:
- learners and the learning processes used
- teacher and the teaching process used
- content or the subject matter to be learned
- context or setting in which the learning is to occur

4. The rules are:
- Any team member can suggest one or more hypotheses.
- The team will consider all hypotheses if they can be corroborated by data to determine whether they are true.

5. For each hypothesis, the team lists supporting data and possible interventions, then chooses a hypothesis that has strong data support and implements the corresponding instructional intervention.

6. The team studies later data to determine if the instructional intervention for each student has had the desired effect.

You can find more information in the *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* practice guide, pages 10–18 and 55–56.

How do you get staff to truly "buy in" to the importance of using data? How do you overcome any fears they might have?

Establishing a schoolwide data team sets the tone for ongoing data use and staff "buy in." The team can define critical teaching and learning concepts. It can develop written action plans that articulate activities, roles, and responsibilities that are attainable, measurable, and relevant. And it can provide ongoing data leadership to support the school's vision to develop the capacity of all school staff to use data.

You can find a good discussion of data teams in the *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* practice guide, pages 27–32 and 59–61.