

National School Reform Faculty—Data Driven Dialogue

Phase I—Predictions

- Surfacing perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, predictions, possibilities, questions and expectations.
- Sentence starters like, I assume I predict I wonder My questions/expectations are influenced by ... Some possibilities for learning that this data may present

Phase II—Observations

- Analyzing the data for patterns, trends, surprises, and new questions that jump out.

Phase III—Inferences

- Generating hypotheses, inferring, explaining and drawing conclusions. Defining new actions, interactions, and implementation plan.

Answering the Questions That Count ASCD December/January p 18-24

“When important questions drove the dialogue about school effectiveness, school staff quickly learned how to identify and use different types of data to answer those questions. (Lachat & Smith, 2004)

Organizing data around essential questions about student performance is a powerful strategy for building data literacy.

- How do student outcomes differ by demographics, programs, and schools?
- To what extent have specific programs, interventions, and services improved outcomes?
- What is the longitudinal progress of a specific cohort of students?
- What are the characteristics of students who achieve proficiency and of those who do not?
- Where are we making the most progress in closing achievement gaps?
- How do absence and mobility affect assessment results?
- How do student grades correlate with state assessment results and other measures?
- What percent of the students improved, stayed the same or declined from last years achievement?
- Are students making sufficient grade-to-grade progress?
- How many of the lower performing students in grade 4 are still lower performing students in grade 5.
- What is the variation in students’ scores within each course or grade.

“Asking questions such as these enables administrators and teachers to focus on what is most important, identify the data they need to address their question, and use the questions as a lens for data analysis and interpretation.” P 18 Limit the number of questions to no more than five or six crucial questions that get at the heart of what they need to know.

What is needed?

- Time to look at data, analyze data and ask more questions.
- Time to look at the data rather than time spent creating the graphs and charts.
- Teachers need opportunity and support to plan and implement improvement strategies and then collect data to see if the strategies work.
- Opportunity to ask questions and then find data to answer the question.
- Data that is sufficiently disaggregated
 - By broad categories, male, female, economic status, programs
 - Combinations of categories ie female and low SES