



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Start With the Data

Shotwell Middle School, Texas • December 2009

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support  
Instructional Decision Making  
Practice: Cycle of Improvement

### Highlights

- Skills specialists at Shotwell Middle School support teachers by helping them plan lessons, providing curriculum training, and meeting weekly to discuss data.
- By looking at the data, teachers can analyze and discuss why they think students may be having trouble in certain areas.
- After they examine the data and identify areas of concern, teachers and skills specialists at Shotwell come together to discuss how to approach the individual student concerns. This way, they can plan focused interventions targeted toward specific skills in the identified areas of need.

### About the Site

**Shotwell Middle School**

**Houston, TX**

**Demographics**

61% Hispanic

32% Black

4% Asian

2% White

78% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

At Shotwell Middle School, the entire school staff uses data regularly for collaboration and instruction. Additionally, students learn to monitor their progress and set learning goals accordingly. A coordinated set of actions guides the use of data:

- Establish a clear vision for using data to support instructional decision making
- Provide support through skills specialists, professional development, and a testing coordinator
- Use common planning time to analyze data
- Assess the progress of each subgroup through the subgroup master system

## Full Transcript

Dominique McCain, Shotwell Middle School, science skill specialist, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

As a skill specialist, I provide a tremendous amount of supports to the teachers. One of the things that I do to provide support is I actually sit down and lesson-plan with the teachers. As we go throughout the course of the school year, I train them on how to break the curriculum down into student language. We talk about what are some of the things that we need to do to get the students to master this objective. So we look at the objective as the finish line, and I am the coach on the sideline getting them to that finish line.

Each week, we as a science department meet and have a data meeting, and during that time the expectation that I have presented to the department is for them to come up with professional theories concerning the areas where students have not been successful. When we sit as a team and we talk about that, it gives them an opportunity to discuss why do they think the student wasn't successful. Sometimes it's the approach we took overall; maybe we didn't have a hands-on activity or maybe we didn't provide enough practice for the student. But we start with the data piece because it helps us to identify where do we need to focus our intervention. And so the teachers, once we discuss the data, they give me their theories, we talk about what could have been the problem. Then we are able to go into Phase 2, which is, what interventions will we implement, which students will we need on our tutorial list, how are we going to approach those individual student concerns?

As a skill specialist, the impact that I feel that I have had the most is changing the culture of the campus in terms of how they perceive science education. The confidence that the teachers have now because of the extra support, the confidence that the students have because they have seen a measure of success has really changed how our entire campus approaches science, how the entire campus even feels about science.

And so that extra support has really compelled everybody to see the importance of science in education, and it's compelled the students to try harder. It has compelled the teachers to work harder. And I tell them all the time, if their knees are dirty, mine would be, if their nose is dirty, mine would be, because it really is important for me to be right there with them in the trenches digging and working just as hard as they do.