



## IES Practice Guide Summary

# Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

**Audience** Teachers and administrators.

**Grade level** K–12.

**Link** [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dddm\\_pg\\_092909.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf)

### Introduction

More data are available in schools, but the question of what to do with the data remains primarily unanswered. This guide provides a framework for using student achievement data to support instructional decision making. Data provide a way to assess what students are learning and the extent to which students are making progress toward goals. However, making sense of data requires concepts, theories, and interpretative frames of reference. Using data systematically to ask questions and obtain insight about student progress is a logical way to monitor continuous improvement and tailor instruction to the needs of each student. Armed with data and the means to harness the information data can provide, educators can make instructional changes aimed at improving student achievement, such as:

- Prioritizing instructional time
- Targeting additional individual instruction for students who are struggling with particular topics
- More easily identifying individual students' strengths and instructional interventions that can help students continue to progress
- Gauging the instructional effectiveness of classroom lessons
- Refining instructional methods
- Examining schoolwide data to consider whether and how to adapt the curriculum based on information about students' strengths and weaknesses

The guide also provides recommendations for creating the organizational and technological conditions that foster effective data use.

This guide focuses on how schools can make use of common assessment data to improve teaching and learning. Common assessments are those that are routinely, consistently

administered by the school, district, or state. They include annual accountability tests, end-of-course tests, and commercial- or district-produced interim or benchmark assessments. Assessments may be administered at multiple points to provide feedback on student learning or summatively assess learning at the end of the course or year. Although schools and districts may collect perceptual, behavioral, and administrative data, this guide is concerned with data that measures academic progress and achievement.

### Recommendations

#### 1. Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.

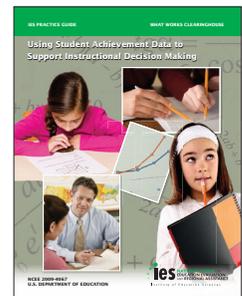
- Collect and prepare a variety of data about student learning.
- Interpret data and develop hypotheses about how to improve student learning.
- Modify instruction to test hypotheses and increase student learning.

#### 2. Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.

- Explain expectations and assessment criteria.
- Provide feedback to students that is timely, specific, well formatted, and constructive.
- Provide tools that help students learn from feedback.
- Use students' data analyses to guide instructional changes.

#### 3. Establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use.

- Establish a schoolwide data team that sets the tone for ongoing data use.
- Define critical teaching and learning concepts.
- Develop a written plan that articulates activities, roles, and responsibilities.
- Provide ongoing data leadership.



#### **4. Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.**

- Designate a school-based facilitator who meets with teacher teams to discuss data.
- Dedicate structured time for staff collaboration.
- Provide targeted professional development regularly.

#### **5. Develop and maintain a districtwide data system.**

- Involve a variety of stakeholders in selecting a data system.
- Clearly articulate system requirements relative to user needs.
- Determine whether to build or buy the data system.
- Plan and stage the implementation of the data system.

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