Beyond Numbers: Assessment-driven Instructional Improvement

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The **important** question is not how assessment is **defined** but whether assessmet **information** is **used...**

\- Palomba and Banta

Think about how teachers would answer these questions

- When you hear the word 'data', what ideas come to mind?

- What do standardized tests mean to you?

- What ideas do you relate with student performance?

+

Why focus on data?

Changing notions of instructional leadership

- The roles of principals, superintendents, and other education leaders have expanded during the past decade to include a larger focus on teaching and learning, professional development, data- driven decision making, and accountability (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Why focus on data?

Changing notions of instructional leadership

- In the current context of performance standards and accountability, instructional leaders know they must develop the skills to collect and use data from a variety of sources to inform school improvement decisions. (King, 2002. The changing shape of leadership. Educational Leadership, 59, 8, 61-63.)

What are some key instructional improvement initiatives?

A data-driven assessment process will fuel student success by empowering all educators to:

- Identify students with specific needs early
- Adjust instruction and set appropriate goals to close their learning gaps
- Track the effectiveness of their intervention and instruction
- Monitor student progress
- Report responsiveness to intervention
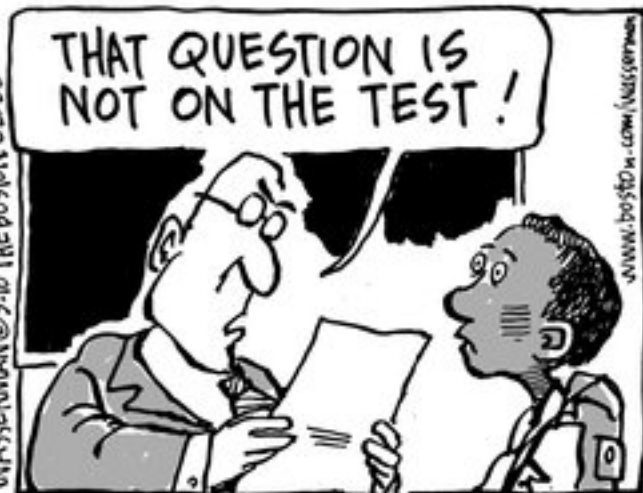- Predict performance on key indicators
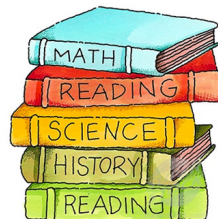
Old Tools vs. New Tools in Educational Decision-Making

Reference: Mertler, C. (2014). The Data-driven Classroom. ASCD.

Old Tools

New Tools

Inquiry-based and systematic decision making

Intuition, Teaching philosophy, personal experience

Standardized test and other assessment results
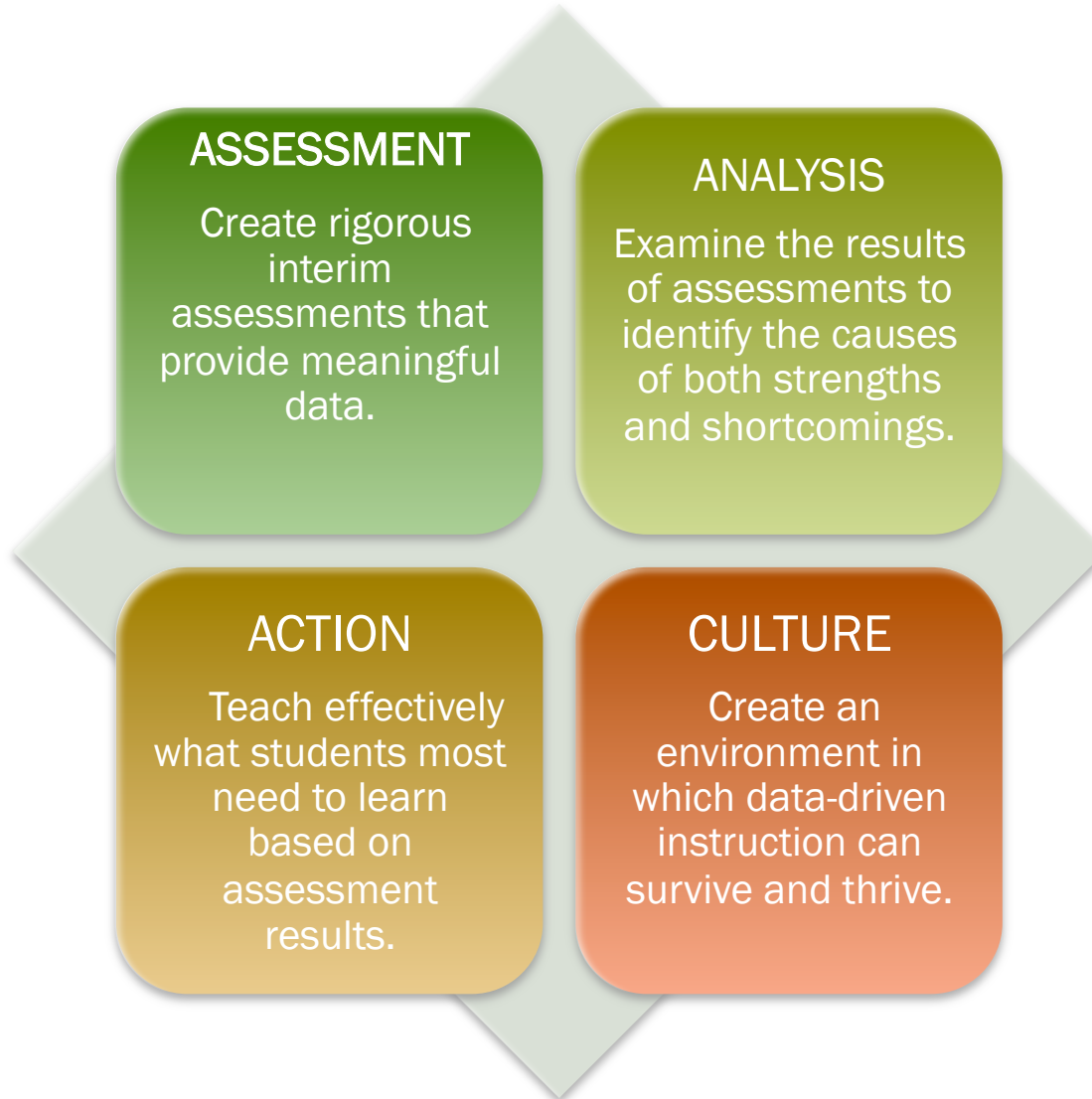
Art of teaching

Science of teaching
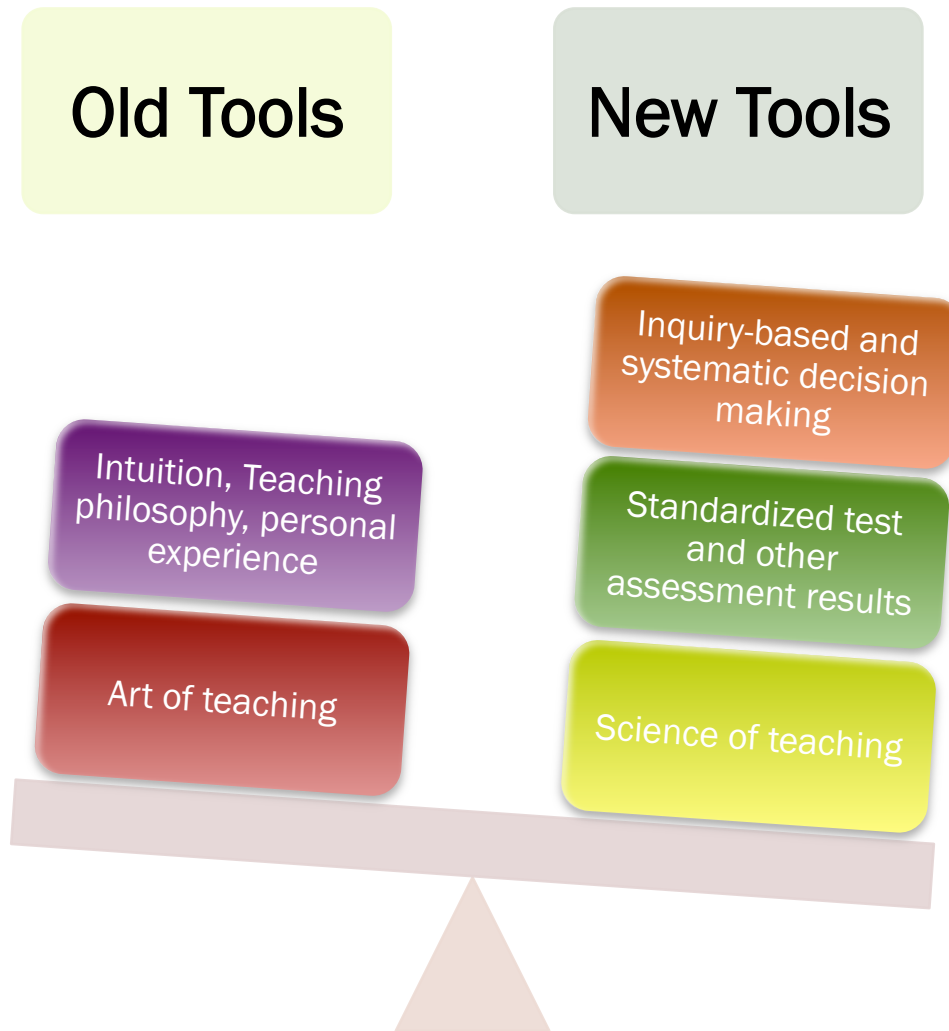
Data-driven educational decision making

- refers to the process by which educators examine assessment data to identify student strengths and deficiencies and apply those findings to their practice. This process of critically examining curriculum and instructional practices relative to students' actual performance on standardized tests and other assessments yields data that help teachers make more accurately informed instructional decisions (Mertler, 2007; Mertler & Zachel, 2006).

What Is Data-Driven Instruction All About?

ASSESSMENT
Create rigorous interim assessments that provide meaningful data.

ANALYSIS
Examine the results of assessments to identify the causes of both strengths and shortcomings.

ACTION
Teach effectively what students most need to learn based on assessment results.

CULTURE
Create an environment in which data-driven instruction can survive and thrive.

Model of data-driven instruction

A Data Analysis Framework for Instructional Decision Making

Reference: Mokhtari, K., Rosemary, C. & Edwards, P. (2007). Making instructional decisions based on data. The Reading Teacher, 61, 4, 354-359.

Classroom Data

Professional Devt Data

Student Data

School Improvement plan
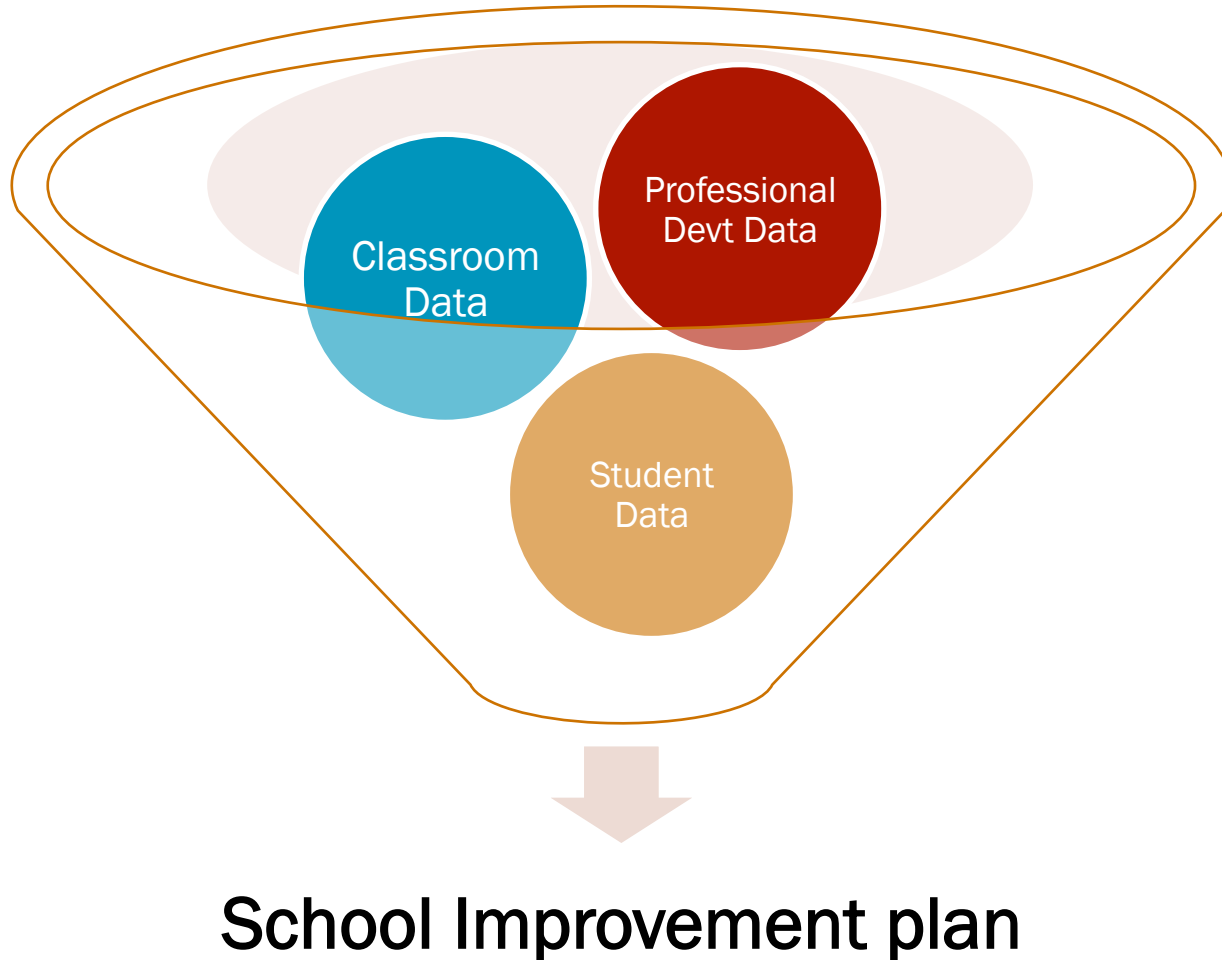
A Data Analysis Framework for Instructional Decision Making

Professional Development Data

1. What patterns do you observe in the professional development data?

2. How do you explain the patterns you see in the data?

Classroom Data

1. What are some instructional strengths?

2. What aspects of instruction show a need for improvement?

3. What content and strategies are emphasized in the instruction?

4. What content and strategies are not emphasized?

5. How do you explain the patterns you see in the data?

+ A Data Analysis Framework for Instructional Decision Making

Reference: Mokhtari, K., Rosemary, C. & Edwards, P. (2007). Making instructional decisions based on data. The Reading Teacher, 61, 4, 354-359.

■ Student Data

1. What patterns do you observe in the student data at the school level, grade level, and the classroom level?

   a. Where is growth demonstrated?

   b. Is the growth equal across grades?

   c. Is the growth equal for all students?

   d. What are specific areas of strength?

   e. What are specific areas that need improvement?

2. How do you explain the patterns you see in the data?

A Data Analysis Framework for Instructional Decision Making

■ Putting it all Together

1. What connections can you make between professional development data, classroom data, and student data?

2. What are the strengths and needs?

3. What do the patterns mean for you in your role (e.g. teacher, principal, Coordinator)?

4. What are the implications for change as you see them in your role?

5. Overall, based on the analysis and findings, what are the professional development and school improvement goals?

6. What actions steps will you take to meet the goals?

7. How will you communicate the improvement plan to other school personnel and stakeholders?

"I have some paperwork to catch up. If I'm not back in two days, organize a search and rescue team!"

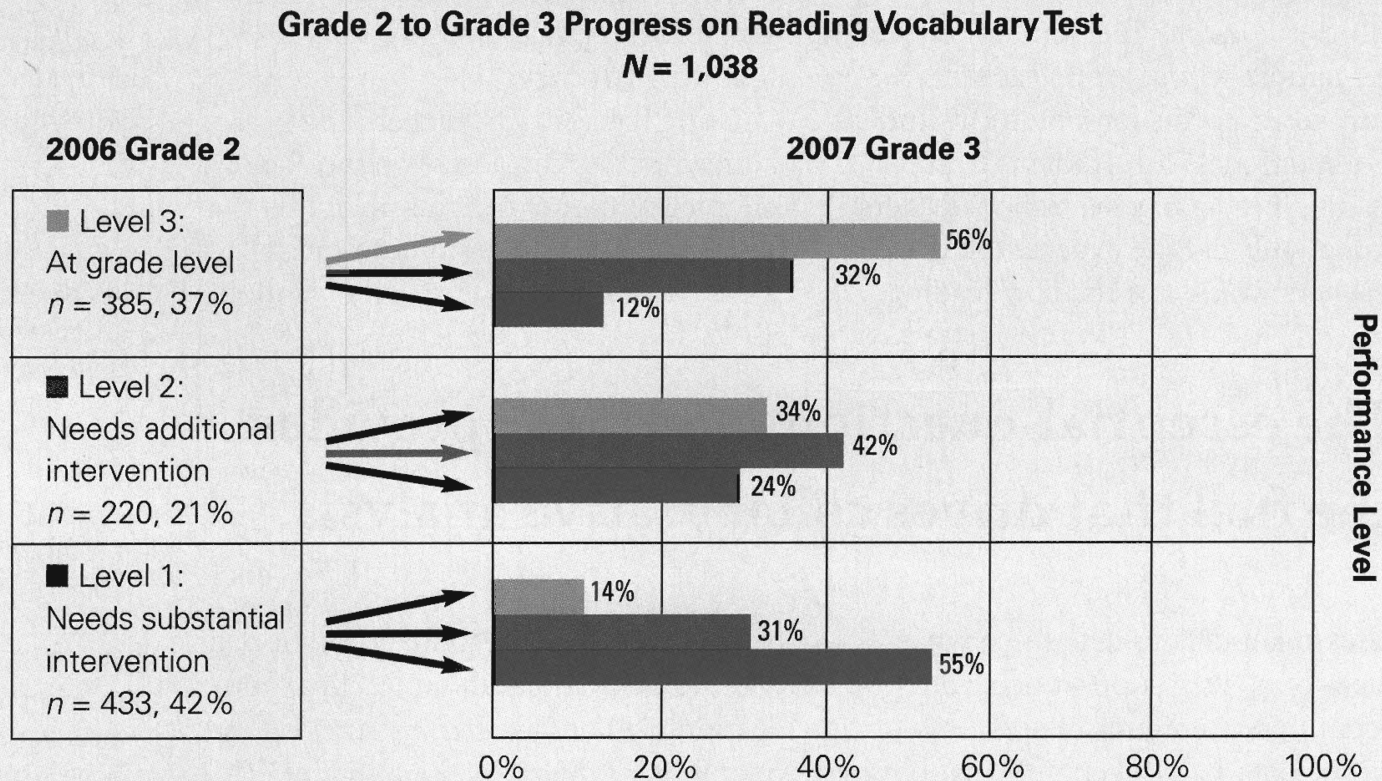# + Essential Questions approach: A School Example

- Are our students making sufficient grade-to-grade progress in vocabulary development?

- How many of our lowest-performing students on last year's vocabulary assessment improved their proficiency level on this year's assessment?

- What are the characteristics of students who made progress and of those who did not?

- What percentage of students at grade level on a previous year's assessment declined in their performance?

- Do the data indicate that teachers need more training to improve students' vocabulary skills?

+ Organizing data to address an essential question

Question 1: Are our students making sufficient grade-to-grade progress?

FIGURE 1. Are Our Students Making Sufficient Grade-to-Grade Progress?

Grade 2 to Grade 3 Progress on Reading Vocabulary Test
N = 1,038

2006 Grade 2

2007 Grade 3

- Level 3:
At grade level
n = 385, 37%

  56%
  32%
  12%

- Level 2:
Needs additional
intervention
n = 220, 21%

  34%
  42%
  24%

- Level 1:
Needs substantial
intervention
n = 433, 42%

  14%
  31%
  55%

Performance Level

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

On the vocabulary assessment, 55% of students at Level 1 stayed at this level, and 45% improved; 42% at Level 2 stayed at this level, 34% improved, and 24% declined; 56% at Level 3 stayed at this level, and 44% declined.

Getting the Faculty involved

- "The idea of data-driven decision making is not new, but incorporating data into instruction does take some practice on the part of the classroom teacher." (Mertler, 2014)

+ Focus on assessment literacy

What do I <u>know and understand</u> about assessment and testing?

What do <u>I do with</u> what I know and understand about assessment and testing?

What do I <u>do to improve what I do</u> with what I know and understand about assessment and testing?

Assessment Literacy

Without data, all we have is an opinion.

-Edward Deming