



Direct Access to Achievement: The Oregon DATA Project



Timeline

1 Year 1: 2007-2008

Focus groups meet statewide to identify the needs of the field: a regional approach; integration with current initiatives.

2 Year 2: 2008-2009

Training rolls out statewide, in two-day sessions hosted by Education Service Districts. The Project's regional model ensures travel is limited, no matter how remote the district.

3 Year 3: 2009-2010

Focus moves to sustainability, with training now offered online and through job-embedded professional development.

4 Year 4: 2010-2011

Evaluation efforts ramp up, with an outside agency measuring the effectiveness of training. Two more strands of instruction roll out, and sustainability activities continue.

Systemic change through an integrated approach on how to use data to inform instruction

In June of 2007, the Oregon Department of Education received a four-year, \$4.7 million grant from the federal Institute of Education Sciences to develop professional development supporting a longitudinal data system. As we enter the fourth year, here's a look at what we've accomplished:

Year 1: We listened to the field. Before we built an action plan for the Project, we went to the people on the front lines. That meant 15 focus groups in eight locations all over our state. Here's what we discovered: In Oregon, we are collecting a lot of data—through more than 125 different assessment measures—but most of it is not being analyzed with the purpose of improving instruction. We also got the message that educators wanted the Project to offer a framework to help

A project of the Oregon
Department of Education,
with support from the EESC.

administrative support
technology
school improvement
special needs



www.OregonDataProject.org

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them integrate what they are doing now, whether it is PBIS, EBISS, RTI or Literacy Framework. And the focus-group sessions, besides driving the design of the project, also contributed to an unprecedented atmosphere of collaboration and grassroots support.

Year 2: We trained teams—lots of teams. Input from the field was used to develop two main tracks of training: instructional, for teachers and administrators; and technical, for data entry personnel.

Within the Instructional track, we developed three strands of training that addressed data use at the district, school

In Redmond, the results are compelling. Between the 2006-2007 and the 2008-2009 school years, OAKS data shows an 11.7% gain in language arts for all students. For students with disabilities, the numbers are even more dramatic: a 47% gain in both math and language arts. "We have teachers now who can't do their lesson plans without looking at their data," says Becky Stoughton, a teacher trainer. "They have to have the data to narrow in on what the kids need."

The Data Quality Work Group meets several times a year to chart the course of the Direct Access to Achievement Project



and classroom levels. (Two additional strands examining student-level data will roll out this year.) The focus of the sessions is on finding, organizing and analyzing data to inform instruction.

The Technical track provided districts with a model they can use to build a “culture of data quality.”

The Oregon School Board Association has embraced the project, and currently provides Project-sponsored training to school boards on the importance of data and how to use data to ask questions that matter.

Year 3: We planned for the future. Sustainability is now the focus of the Project, as it supports the work of seven regional centers as they use project training to build strong

data teams and professional learning communities in participating districts.

More than 200 educators from ESDs and K-12 districts have been certified to teach the training, which is also available on demand through the project website, www.oregondataproject.org and through instructional DVDs, about 1,000 of which have been distributed to date.

The Project is also supporting a deep implementation of the training in three regional locations (Western, Central and Eastern Oregon), with the goal of gaining detailed information about what is needed to create a data culture in large, medium and small districts.

Year 4: We are evaluating our



The Direct Access to Achievement Project has trained more than 2,000 teachers and administrators in how to access, analyze and use data to target instruction to the needs of individual students. School board members, state education officials, higher education representatives and members of the public have also participated.

results. Professional development is often cited as an effective way to effectively use data to improve student achievement, but Oregon is the only state to date with a comprehensive program. We want to know if it's working. An outside evaluator will study the activities of districts participating in the sustainability phase of the Project to determine their effectiveness.

Year 4: We are expanding our training. Year 4 will also see the roll out of two additional strands of training aimed at teachers and administrators. Strand 4,

"Essential Skills: Teaching and Learning," focuses on K-12 literacy and student-level data. It also introduces the Project's Toolkit for Accountability, a framework that supports districts' efforts to look at assessment in a focused and organized way. Strand 5, which rolls out in Spring 2011, focuses on leadership support of content areas and teacher understanding of depth of instruction.

Several certification and performance-coaching sessions are also scheduled.

Case study: Humbolt Elementary

At Humbolt Elementary, a K-5 school in the tiny Eastern Oregon town of Canyon City, teachers are harnessing the power of data to make informed decisions about what they teach.

After attending training through the Oregon DATA Project, district testing coordinator Susie Garrison began working with the elementary staff at Humbolt on writing. "We decided early on that we would let data drive all of our decisions," Garrison said.

She guided the team through a careful process of gathering and studying test results and other

data, and identifying the problem area (writing conventions). The data team set a goal of increasing the conventions score on writing samples, and strategies included writing in complete sentences and doing daily oral language at all grades.

At the mid-year data collection, teachers had already exceeded their yearly goals. "Administrators started seeing it as a way to make really good curriculum decisions," Garrison says.

"The things we are doing are really making a difference to our students – that is the bottom line."

Of note...

Key concepts addressed in DATA Project trainings include:

- The valid use of data to assess classroom strategies can increase teacher effectiveness and improve student achievement
- All teachers benefit when results of data analysis are shared within collaborative communities such as data teams or PLCs
- Accountability is essential and works best as a formalized system

Instructional Strand 2, teacher

"This has been the best opportunity to learn how to think deeply about improving student learning we have ever had!"

Instructional Strand 3, teacher

"I have felt my teaching to be much more focused and deliberate and I believe that this is what data collection is supposed to do for both myself and the students."

Instructional Strand 3, ESD

"This training puts the focus of school improvement exactly where it needs to be—off the shelves and into the classroom, with teachers for students."

Strand 2 certification, teacher

"The training provided us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the process while polishing our presentation skills. I left with some new ideas."

Instructional Strand 2, principal

"A great opportunity to learn together and figure out where we can change."

Instructional Strand 2, teacher

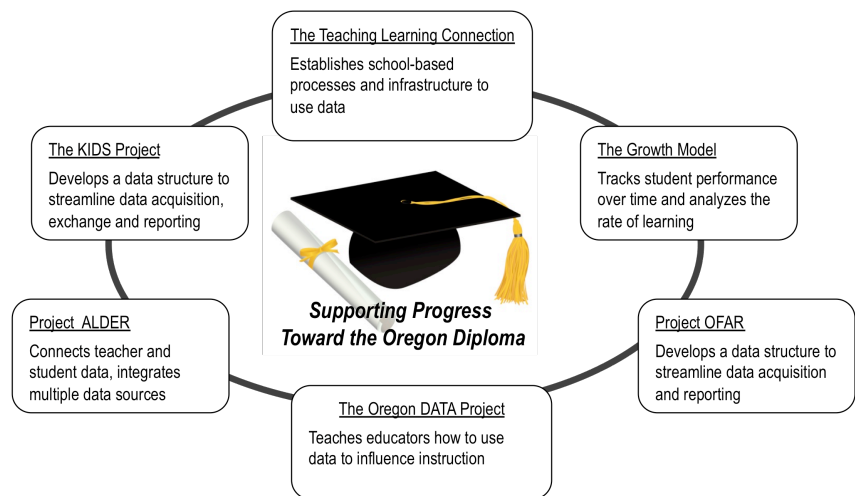
"For the first time, I understand data and how to use it to improve student learning."

Technical training, superintendent

"This very valuable self-analysis 'data discussion' was an opportunity for building secretaries, administrative assistants, and administrators to compare notes on current practices and explore methods of making our data systems maximally effective."

A collaborative approach

The Direct Access to Achievement Project is just one of several initiatives in Oregon, all of them working closely together to ensure the success of a statewide longitudinal data system.



Reset recommendation

"The state should expand, statewide, the DATA Project (Direct Access to Achievement), which is a significant effort underway in some Oregon districts, training school staff to analyze all available student data when developing individual classroom lessons or creating whole-school and district-wide improvement plans that address the particular needs of current students. DATA Project leaders are also preparing select educators to be "coaches" within their respective schools, helping to make the analysis and use of student performance data a systemic part of everyday practice. With adequate support, proactive training efforts such as the DATA Project could obviate more onerous interventions in low-performing schools if taken to a statewide level."

– Governor's Reset Cabinet Final Report, p47