

Using Data to Drive Instructional Decisions: A Four Step Student Success Model



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Schools are in many ways successfully implementing progress monitoring tools and successfully identifying and grouping students according to the need of intervention; but using the data to make instructional decisions and implement intervention that meets the needs of each student has proven a daunting task for many educators implementing a school literacy plan.

Many teachers and administrators are asking themselves, “I have spent time and money identifying my struggling students, now what do I use in the classroom to help them succeed?” These schools have found a diagnosis for the illiteracy in their school. Now they are looking for a prescription; a methodology that helps them meet the identified needs of each student. This crucial element has been discussed in many meetings across the country including a “Development Forum” December 7-8, 2004 in which thirty-three organizations participated. Dr. Vinita Chhabra has published a summary of the symposium in which it was ultimately decided: *“It is not enough that instruction be both evidence-based and data-driven; teachers must also be able to understand and use the data gathered through the ongoing monitoring of students performance, in order to be able to tailor instruction to the student’s specific needs and in order for RTI to be successful,” (Chhabra, 40, 46).*

The Response To Intervention (RTI) framework has been created to help school personnel understand the deficiencies of their students and provide a process that focuses on identifying their deficiencies, intervening with tools that address specific deficiencies, and moving students to more intense intervention, if the assessment data says that it is necessary. RTI has grown in popularity because the general framework is easily understood by all levels of school personnel. However, understanding the framework and real world implementation of the framework are decidedly different tasks.

Winsor Learning has found that schools implementing this popular RTI strategy face a few challenges as they make decisions about implementation:

Schools Understand:

The importance of gathering data using Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBM).

The Challenge:

Is the data coming from Curriculum-Based Measurements accurate? Do teachers implementing assessments understand the tools well enough to obtain accurate data?

Schools Understand:

The importance of using a data management tool that helps organize and report CBM data.

The Challenge:

Are they sure they are using the reports from the data management system to help teacher and administrators make accurate instructional decisions.

Schools Understand:

The importance of convening a school-based reading team that uses the data to discuss a course of action for each student.

The Challenge:

Are they able to use this valuable reading team's time to make data-driven instructional decisions that will give each student the best chance to succeed?

Schools Understand:

The importance of implementing intervention strategies with each student based on the data.

The Challenge:

Are they able to provide teachers with the appropriate instructional tools for each students needs? Are they confident that each teacher is well trained to use these tools effectively?

A Solution to the Challenges: Four Steps to Student Success

Winsor Learning believes in creating a partnership for student success with its clients. We have found there are four steps that need to be in place and working in concert for students to succeed. As a result of its work with school districts throughout the country, Winsor Learning has developed a methodology that helps schools implement a successful literacy program. The methodology relies on four steps that, we find, need to be in place and practiced well for students to be successful. We find it to be an iterative and cyclical process.

The Four Steps to Student Success (Fig. 1)

1. Gather Enter and Analyze Data

Use assessment and data management tools to enter, report and analyze data.

2. Plan the Intervention

Use Data to make instructional decisions and allocate resources.

3. Implement the Intervention

Provide tools and training to help teachers address student needs.

4. Evaluate its effectiveness.

Is it working? Process starts again.

Figure 1 found on page 4...



(Fig. 1) The Four Steps to Student Success.

Gather, Enter and Analyze the Data:

Gathering and Analyzing data on student performance is an essential element that, when used effectively, can lead to sound instructional decisions and extraordinary student performance. If a client has not chosen a testing and data gathering tool, our consultants can assist in evaluating an efficient and worthy tool for the job. If a client has chosen a progress monitoring tool and data management system, it needs to be used effectively to deliver data that is meaningful and accurate. Then they must ensure the Data is accurate and valid. Once data is gathered it needs to be organized and reported in a way that makes sense to administration and instructors. Our experts consult with teachers and administrators on how to gather good data, organize and report the data, and analyze the data so that it guides effective instruction. Our consultants can help clients use their Curriculum-Based Measurement tools effectively so data is accurate and helps drive instruction efficiently.

Data entry and creating reports are essential but time consuming. Even when time is taken to enter data, that data needs to be reported in a way that makes sense to administration and instructors so good instructional decisions can be made about each student. We find that even when data is present and reports are generated, student grouping remains a daunting task for educators. Winsor Learning experts advise our clients how to use the leading data management systems to enter student data, analyze the data and create necessary reports. Some of the data management systems provide thousands of reports. Our experts will guide our clients toward the appropriate reports so that quick but precise conclusions can be reached. Our experts also provide student grouping advice that leads to better instructional decisions and, ultimately student success.

Plan Intervention:

Creating an Intervention Plan for each student and allocating resources to meet the needs of that student is a task that is perfected with experience. When the reading team gathers to discuss the deficiencies of each student, those decisions are more efficient and accurate when data from assessments and data management reports are on the table. Winsor Learning experts work with reading teams and administrators to help plan their intervention strategies, and allocate resources, (employees and monetary) so schools can take their existing staff and realign them to meet student needs. This process sets instructors and students up for success.

Implement Intervention:

Once the Intervention Plan has been set, the most important part is yet to come – instructors working with students to improve deficits. Instructional materials that are easy to use, effective and are able to be implemented immediately are the key to success. Professional support on the use of the tools leads to enhanced use and improved results. The intervention process is a Winsor Learning core competency. Our roots are in reading intervention. All of the experts that visit with instructors and administrators have worked with students in an intervention setting, so they can look school staff in the eye and say, “I’ve been where you are. Trying to help struggling students succeed and I will show you how to help these students.” Professional Development for administrators and instructors focuses on training that is useful in the short term, but is essential that it is implemented throughout the school year. We have found that ongoing coaching leads to better instructional fidelity as instructors’ knowledge and skills improve and students’ success increases. Winsor Learning’s coaches spend time with instructors in their setting to help foster this all important fidelity.

Evaluate Effectiveness:

Once instruction is happening, the cycle starts over by evaluating the student progress. We ask, “Is it working?” Real student success happens when student data and implementation data, i.e. delivery records and coaching reports, are used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention plan. Schools must periodically gather and analyze data on student performance and view reports on the literacy program to gauge the success of the interventions being used on each student. Adjustments to the teacher’s instructional materials and training, as well as, student grouping are all essential to the continued success of each student. Winsor Learning experts assist administrators and teachers make these adjustments based on the student data and reports.

Winsor Learning provides schools and districts with expert training that supports the use of the Souday System product line. The goal of every meeting and training session is to instill a sense of confidence in the educator that the task of providing reading intervention in their setting is possible and rewarding for the student and teacher. Schools have gone to great lengths to evaluate every student in every school. With this data, schools are able to group students by achievement. Winsor Learning specializes in helping schools improve the students identified for

intervention. Our experts will give each educator specific lesson plans to improve the test scores of each student.

Winsor Learning's Options for Custom Consulting Services:

The Winsor Learning training program allows educators to make use of a short, intense training session and immediately start working with their students. This introductory training gives teachers hands-on use of the materials, practical strategies to use with struggling students and how to use the instructional materials to apply these strategies in the classroom. On-going training continues from there. Winsor Learning experts visit educators in their classrooms to provide advice and coaching to optimize the use of the instructional materials.

The materials and training together enable teachers to correctly identify and deliver effective intervention to students and all level of achievement. The goal is for teachers to gain practical knowledge of how to apply intervention with the right student at the right level. Educators are also shown how to use progress monitoring tools to guide intervention.

Winsor Learning provides its clients with a plan to assist in the goal of increasing student achievement in literacy. Our consulting services support the Response to Intervention (RTI) process at the following levels:

District Level: Our consultants gather information about current programs within the District, than assist administrators with creating and communicating an RTI plan with all stakeholders and setting attainable goals for the year.

School Level: Our services focus on implementation, replication and supervision of RTI at the school level. We are involved in coordinating resources and managing logistics for a measurable outcome.

Teacher Level: Our consultants provide coaching sessions both one-on-one and small group with classroom teachers, tutors and literacy coaches to assist with translating RTI research into practice that can be used in the classroom.

Program effectiveness improves when district leaders and administrators vocally commit to improvement of reading instruction, promote the use of science-based reading research practices, set appropriate goals, and provide the resources necessary to ensure that students make adequate progress. Winsor Learning experts assist administrators communicate and implement these objectives in their schools. One effective way to do so is to schedule workshops for schools and districts.

Analysis Workshops

Assessment Design: Understanding assessments and their use is critical to data driven reform. We can help analyze your assessment needs and make recommendations that meet the goals of your literacy plan.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) Training: Winsor Learning offers training in the most popular CBM data management systems. In this workshop our experts show instructors: 1) how to use these tools for proper screening, benchmarking and progress monitoring; 2) how to administer CBM's to get reliable data; 3) how to effectively administer tests to students.

Managing the Assessment Process: Our consultants help clients use their Curriculum-Based Measurement tools effectively so data is accurate and helps drive instruction. This workshop informs administrators and literacy coaches how to plan for the assessment process, from determining the assessment model and scheduling to choosing assessment management systems and summarizing reports.

Screening Data Analysis: Our clients rely on Winsor Learning experts to enter student data, create necessary reports, analyze data, and provide student grouping advice that leads to better instructional decisions. This workshop helps instructors analyze screening data, group students by skill set, and design instructional plans to meet student needs.

Planning Workshops

Intervention Design: Setting goals for the literacy program, using the data to identify which students to serve and allocating resources for implementation. Subjects include: how to use personnel, time, curriculum and assessments to meet the needs of your students. These workshops are designed for literacy coaches and administration.

Communicating the Plan: Student success depends upon clear communication of the plan to all stakeholders. Winsor consultants will share insight into how data is informing and guiding student instruction, and how the intervention plan will respond to student needs, and then create a concise presentation to inform all users.

Implementation Training

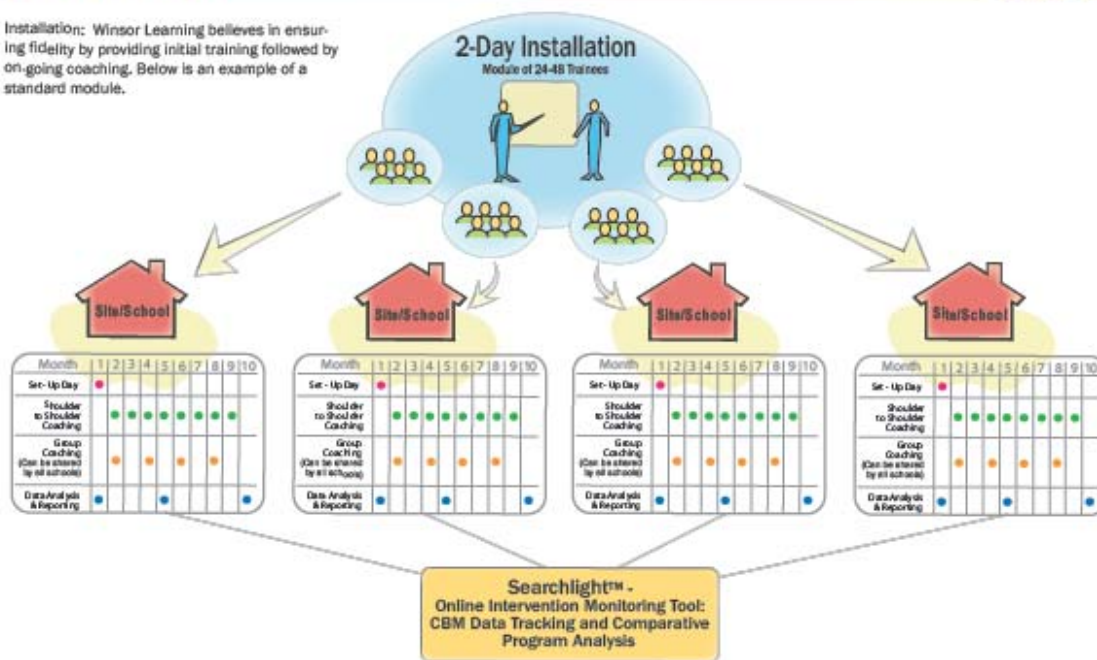
Installation: The Winsor Learning Installation allows educators to make use of a short, intense training session and immediately start working with their students. This introductory training (fig. 2, p.8) gives teachers hands-on use of the materials, practical strategies to use with struggling students and how to use the instructional materials to apply these strategies in the classroom. This workshop is an introduction to the Multisensory Teaching Methodology and a detailed look at the implementation of Sonday System Reading Intervention Program.

Instructional Materials & Product Installation
Let's Play Learn® – Early Childhood Program for Early Reading
Sonday System 1® – Beginning Reading and Intervention
Sonday System 2® – Intermediate Reading and Intervention

Winsor Learning, Inc.
 Standard Training Module

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Installation: Winsor Learning believes in ensuring fidelity by providing initial training followed by on-going coaching. Below is an example of a standard module.



Above is an example of a standard module. The numbers and structure represented are subject to change depending on district/school needs.

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(Fig 2) Standard Training Installation.

Set-Up Day: The Set-Up Day follows the installation. A Winsor Learning training expert works in the classroom with identified learner groups and the trained teacher to ensure successful transition and implementation.

Ongoing Coaching: Ongoing training continues after Installation. Winsor Learning experts visit educators in their classrooms to provide advice and coaching to optimize the use of the instructional materials. A Winsor Learning Coach visits each school to help answer teacher questions and model teaching methods. In-Class or Group coaching sessions ensure higher success rate for program implementation (1 day/6 hours). Coaching can be delivered in groups or in-class.

Shoulder-to-Shoulder Coaching: Districts producing a high level of student success are providing shoulder-to-shoulder coaching for teachers to reinforce the use of the instructional materials. To be most effective, each session should be approximately four weeks apart.

Group Coaching: All trainees meet with a Winsor Learning coach for teacher-to-teacher practicum with Winsor supervision and implementation modeling, teacher-to-student practicum with Winsor supervision and a question and answer session to debrief and address specific student situations. The day also includes discussion about using data analysis to drive instruction.

This series of workshops bridges the gap between what is being taught and why it needs to be taught:

Phonemic Awareness & Phonics Workshop

Fluency Workshop

Vocabulary Workshop

Comprehension Workshop

Replication of Program (Train the Trainer): To assure continuity of successful programs, site-based staff must be able to maintain the training and professional development. Winsor Learning knows the reality of budget, resources, time and teacher turnover so there is a plan in place to enable districts to replicate this program. During follow-up in-class coaching and in regular training workshops, lead teachers may have the opportunity to shadow Winsor Learning experts to observe how a coach interacts with teachers, demonstrates strategies with students, and provides corrective, non-intimidating guidance to build teacher knowledge and confidence. It should also be noted here that the video tutor that accompanies each instructional package offers correct sound production, student demonstration and teaching strategies for the teacher/user to see and hear before working with the students.

Data Analysis and Reporting: Each site/school is serviced with a minimum of three Data Analysis visits by a Winsor Learning expert. These sessions help administrators use data and online tools to make instructional decisions and allocate resources to promote success.

Searchlight™: An online intervention monitoring software created for educators who are gathering data on student performance and have multiple schools to administer. By implementing these tools it is easier to make adjustments in grouping and instruction, increasing student achievement and freeing up valuable teaching time.

Evaluation Workshops

Grade Level Meetings: Winsor Learning experts facilitate meetings between classroom teachers, tutors and literacy coaches with data on the table to interpret student mid-year data and make decisions about re-grouping and intervention instruction.

Tutor Observation: Along with the site literacy coach, Winsor Learning experts observe intervention instruction and provide reports of program fidelity.

District Wide Evaluation: Our experts help all stakeholders gather to determine intervention program efficacy and set goals for the following school year.

A Partnership With Winsor Learning:

Winsor Learning clients having the most success increasing achievement with struggling students are taking advantage of the expertise of Winsor Learning trainers and coaches. All of our experts have extensive, practical, in-class experience helping struggling students succeed at various levels of intervention.

References:

Chhabra, Vinita. (2006). Building Capacity to Deliver Multi-Tiered Reading Intervention in Public Schools and the Role of Response to Intervention (RTI). *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, Volume 32, No. 5, Special Edition 2006, 40-46.