

BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

HELPING TEACHERS INTERPRET AND USE STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

Teachers have access to a lot of student performance data, but they often lack the training and support they need to accurately interpret and apply those data to make a difference in children's lives.

THE CHALLENGE: HOW TO HELP STRUGGLING STUDENTS

Teachers do not lack for student performance data. They have benchmark assessments, screening and diagnostic tests, and various standardized measurements to call upon to assess student needs and progress. But in many cases, teachers do not receive the ongoing professional development or school support they need to accurately interpret the data and be able to provide the instruction that children need—particularly those who are struggling with math and reading in early elementary grades. “We need to do better at giving all children opportunities to do well in school, which gives them that much better of a chance to do well in life,” says Jennifer Greene, a professor in quantitative and evaluative research methodologies in the College of Education at the University of Illinois. Greene, along with fellow College of Education Professor Thomas Schwandt, received a \$300,000 grant from the Spencer Foundation to study elementary school teacher

collaborative data use. Greene and Schwandt oversaw four graduate students who observed six teacher teams in three schools over a two-year period. Most of the literature in this area is based on teacher interviews, but Greene and Schwandt wanted direct observations of the teacher teams and of the teachers in action in the schoolroom.

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— Jennifer Greene

TEACHERS NEED MORE TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO INTERPRET AND USE DATA

It was through that observation that they discovered issues with the training, support, and preparation that teachers receive. In addition, some of the data teachers receive are limited and not very helpful in determining the help students need. Greene and Schwandt also found that a



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school's system for processing the data makes a big difference. They observed three very different systems in the three schools they were in.

“We like data,” Greene says. “We believe that it can help teachers better understand each child's skill profile. But it needs more support and assistance or instruction for teachers in order for them to do this in a way that can make a difference for kids.” Teachers sharing experiential knowledge with each other is also key, Greene says, as is supporting them in having strategies to choose from once the data are interpreted. This enhanced support and professional development, she says, would result in “meaningful, sustainable progress by some of the children who struggle.”

LEARN MORE

To learn more about Greene's and Schwandt's study, contact Greene at jcgreene@illinois.edu.



EDUCATION AT ILLINOIS

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Jennifer Greene, along with fellow College of Education professor Thomas Schwandt, received a **\$300,000 grant** from the **Spencer Foundation** to study elementary school teacher collaborative data use to improve use, training, and understanding.

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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