

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Taking Ownership

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School, Washington, DC
December 2009

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making
Practice: Student Use of Data

Highlights

- Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School uses portfolios to help students learn how to analyze data, set learning goals, and track their own academic progress.
- To help students understand the expectations, teachers provide detailed rubrics on each component of the portfolios.
- Students give a presentation on their portfolios to a committee of two to three faculty and/or community members each semester.

About the Site

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School

Washington, DC

Demographics

99% Black

69% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School has established a strong culture of consistently using student achievement data to support instructional decision making through the following activities:

- Implementing a two-pronged assessment system
- Working collaboratively in subject-area teams to analyze data
- Providing data-based support to ensure the success of all students
- Engaging students in data use across grade levels

Full Transcript

Marielys Garcia: My name is Marielys Garcia. I have been at Thurgood Marshall for four years serving as a Spanish teacher at all levels.

Michael Somerville: And my name is Michael Somerville. I am also a teacher here at Thurgood Marshall Academy. I am a math teacher and I am also an 11th grade advisor.

Garcia: The portfolio process is something that our school takes a lot of pride in. The real goals for the students are articulation of the goals that they have set particularly in their academic achievement and also in their citizenship, their behavior at the school. Another part of it is really allowing them to reflect on what they have done, whether that be on the projects that they have completed, whether they have done well on them or not—giving them a chance to really think about how they are producing solid work, how they are progressing as an individual in the school building, and really getting them to see the correlation between the goals that they set and the goals that they can set in the future. So it really gives students a context to be able to do that. They are specifically trained in how to track their academic achievement via grade point average, so as a ninth grader they begin to learn how to track their GPAs and are really empowered by that information. And I would say that that's something very specific and tangible that students learn how to do. In addition, to really be successful in portfolio, we really need the community to be on board, and I think that that is something that portfolio allows the school to do. The entire school community is very much involved in the portfolio process. Students have the support of an advisor from the beginning of the school year in September throughout the year. The way that portfolio works is that students are presenting to a panel of at least two faculty or school community members; they present for about 10 to 15 minutes, after which that panel deliberates over how they have done on the particular areas of portfolio, which is looking at academic achievement, citizenship, project work. For seniors we are also looking at their college work and their resumes, and for all students they are either working on a cover letter or an executive summary of what they have done in addition to community service hours.

Somerville: Data is an extremely important aspect of the portfolio. One of the areas in which data is used is tracking and calculating GPA. So each time a student receives a progress report, which occurs twice each quarter, and then a final report card at the end of the quarter, students will get a copy of that in their

advisory time and their first activity would be to calculate their specific GPA. Once the first quarter ends, they will take their GPA and they will look at a chart that's already been decided ahead of time to see where they are currently and what would be a good goal for them.

Garcia: The portfolios impact student achievement in several ways, but particularly it gives students a very clear awareness of what it takes to show a holistic understanding of the content area. And in that project they really take a lot of ownership on what it is they know that they need to not only know what the project is about but they need to show a level of mastery in that project. They have a rubric, they know very specifically what a teacher wants and what it's going to take to reach that. And it allows students to set high goals for themselves because they know very clearly what it is that it's going to take for them to get an A on a project, if that is their goal that they are setting, or to get a B—what that's going to look like compared to an A project.