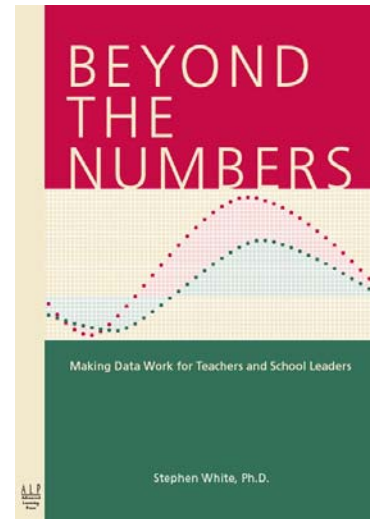


Study Guide for:

Beyond the Numbers

Making Data Work for Teachers
& School Leaders

By Stephen White, Ed.D.



Suggestions for effective book studies:

1. Set the dates with specified readings well in advance.
2. Ensure that participants have a personal copy of the book.
3. Provide the book study guide before starting to read the book.
4. Select a location that allows for the participants to be able to spread out books and writing materials.
5. Provide a comfortable meeting place with plenty of light.
6. Beverages and snacks are always welcome.
7. The role of the facilitator is to ask open-ended questions and stimulate discussion, not to lecture. Consider changing the role of facilitator and being very clear about norms for participants and facilitators.

Advanced Learning Press provides study guides to complement your comprehensive professional development plan. These guides represent the author's suggested questions and activities to lead to full comprehension and implementation of the ideas in the publication. Focused group discussion leads to individual reflection as well as having the group develop common understandings and language regarding the book's content. For additional insights or questions, please email the author at info@MakingStandardsWork.com. You will receive a response within two business days.

This guide and other study guides are available as a free download at <http://www.makingstandardswork.com/ResourceCtr/index.php>

This book study is designed for a collaborative and reflective effort by teams of professionals who meet periodically to review *Beyond the Numbers* chapter by chapter. The elements of the book study lend themselves to a three-credit semester-long undergraduate and upper division course.

Chapter 1: Beyond the Numbers: The Rearview-Mirror Effect

1. Critique the rearview-mirror effect or bureaucratic creep. Provide evidence that mitigates against the basic premise of either concept (rearview-mirror effect: After the fact is too late to act; bureaucratic creep: Legislation spawns regulations which spawn complexity).
2. Compare assessments used in your organization with the rearview-mirror effect. What elements of this insidious reality are evident? Which have been avoided and how?
3. Identify actions to reduce the likelihood of bureaucratic creep in your organization. Specify ways to prevent, substitute, or subtract existing instances of bureaucratic creep.

Chapter 2: Analysis: Key to Data Management and Decision Making

1. Describe as many benefits of a continuous improvement cycle as your group can generate. Why is it so critical in terms of data analysis?
2. Provide examples from your own experience where data is collected and reviewed without adequate analysis or reflection.
3. Provide examples from your collective experience where data is collected, reviewed, analyzed in part, and reflected upon without subsequent decisions that led to changes (action) in how instruction was delivered. Deliberate on these examples until satisfactory explanations for failure to act emerge. (Hint: what is it about our profession that lends itself to endless discussion, but reluctance to act upon data presented to us?).
4. Describe the value to teachers who “unwrap” standards and draw similarities or distinctions with the unwrapping of data.

5. Share elements of the assessment calendar that are in place in your system. Discuss the benefits to your organization they afford.
6. Discuss the ten components of the Assessment Calendar, justifying their distinct components or suggesting whether some of the components can be combined.

Chapter 3: Antecedents of Excellence

1. Examine the Leadership-Learning Matrix and describe in your own terms its basic premise. Have each member of your book study group contribute their own description, then record and distribute all responses for discussion.
2. Discuss the definition of antecedents and distinguish between those that are conditions and structures for learning, teacher behaviors that do not qualify as instructional strategies, and instructional strategies. Refer to the examples in the text during your discussion.
3. What is common about all three types of antecedents? Discuss their relative value in terms of improving student achievement. Is one type more powerful than another? What evidence in the literature would support your position?
4. Did the Hishakawa Fishbone example in the text help illustrate those factors that led to improved student achievement at Woodside Elementary? Develop at least one fishbone on the basis of a positive outcome in your group. Develop a second fishbone that identifies causes of a selected negative outcome.
5. Complete the following: All antecedents are _____
6. Apply the seven tests for antecedents “to bank on” from the text to antecedents you would like to introduce into your work setting. Again, discuss the benefit of the seven tests among your book study group.

Chapter 4: The Power of Collaboration

1. Examine the quote from Proverbs that opens the chapter in your book study group. Ask every participant to contribute an explanation that would warrant the Proverb's conclusion.
 2. Discuss the seven antecedents that require collaboration to be effective. Is it possible to implement any of them effectively without collaboration? Instructional Calendars? Continuous improvement cycles? Program Evaluation? Why or why not?
 3. Seven collaborative structures are recommended in the text for candor and team thinking. Select one to defend as essential with book study group, then record your responses and insights.
 4. Examine Exhibit 4.4 Methods of Integrating Collaboration into Data Systems and identify novel ways to integrate collaboration into procedures and systems that exist in your school, system, or classroom.
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Chapter 5: Accountability

1. Comment on the expanded definition of accountability in the text and describe the importance of results, authority to act, and permission to subtract. How does this definition apply to your current work situation?
 2. Respond to the scenario at Colson Independent School District. What went wrong? Were schools expected to achieve specific results? Were they given authority to take action or commit resources? Were they given permission to eliminate inefficient or ineffective practices? What should have been done to achieve a positive outcome in Colson ISD?
 3. What are the common characteristics of the ten actions of accountability in Exhibit 5.2? Describe how the quotation from Dr. Deming applies to accountability. Draw inferences from the text.
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Chapter 6: Canaries in the Coal Mine: Get There Before the Results Do!

1. Exhibit 6.1 integrates the emphasis of data teams on evidence for student achievement and evidence for teaching practices with S.W.O.T. analysis. List as many insights and observations as you can make from this limited and focused piece of data. Then, discuss the value of the S.W.O.T./Data Team analysis in your current work situation.
2. Describe how the following antecedents provide a “canary in the coal mine” for teachers:
Scoring Guides
Performance Assessments
Unit Assessments
Corrective Feedback
Data in a Day
3. What is the relationship, if any, between “canaries in the coal mine (classrooms)” and the rearview-mirror effect?

Chapter 7: Triangulation

1. Examine the triangulation efforts of the mariner and the surveyor. What is the basic premise of triangulation? How does it apply to education and data analysis?
2. A recommended strategy in the text is the use of antecedent data, collaboration data, and accountability data as a routine form of triangulation. Is there additional value to using this approach over triangulation using three forms of student achievement data? Why or why not? Describe the advantage of triangulation of data using either approach over a simple examination of one student achievement assessment.
3. What inferences can you draw from Exhibit 7.3 Timberline Data Triangulated: Unit Assessments (Six per Year) about teaching and learning in this hypothetical school?

4. Conduct at least one multi-variate analysis using the Wagon Wheel triangulation tool.

Chapter 8: The Environmental Scan

1. Apple Blossom Unified School District had a stellar reputation for excellence in the scenario provided in the text. Given the fact that the events that transpired were factual in high-performing districts, what lessons can we learn from this scenario? Be specific.
2. Environmental scans have several benefits. Can you identify three? Please describe here.
3. Describe each of the seven characteristics of an environmental scan. Are there characteristics that are not present in classrooms? Schools? Districts? Why were these seven selected?
4. KWL is a reading strategy first introduced in the primary grades. What benefit, if any, does it provide to an effective environmental scan?
5. Apply at least two characteristics of a comprehensive environmental scan to your work situation, using KWL to respond in terms of programmatic, instructional, and organizational factors.
6. Reflect as a book study group on the application completed in the preceding question. What did you learn from the process? Record all responses and disseminate to the group.

Chapter 9: Replication: Sharing the Wealth

1. Why is replication so important to education, K-12? Why has replication been so difficult to achieve successfully?

2. What are the characteristics of an effective recipe for replication? What is required in terms of generating sufficient commitment from teachers for it to be successful?
3. Examine Exhibit 9.4 and apply at least four strategies to your current or future work situation. Include at least one strategy for a level outside of your experience (classroom if administrator or board member; school or district if you are a classroom teacher).

Chapter 10: The Teacher as Expert

1. What is the basic premise of this chapter? What changes does it suggest are needed in how data are collected, reported, and analyzed in your current or future work setting?
2. What are the key elements of expertise discussed in the text?
3. What was missing for the two teachers in the scenario? What changes would you make in terms of the course content?
4. The author contends that knowledge and application of data can only be advanced when teachers and school leaders are involved in that analysis, and that schools need to expect and require teachers and school leaders to function in an expert role regarding data analysis. Support or challenge that premise with evidence from your experience and/or educational research.
5. If teachers need to see themselves as experts in data analysis, what changes will be necessary to make that a reality in your current setting?

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- *Show Me the Proof: Tools and Strategies to Make Data Work for You*
- *“Unwrapping” the Standards: A Simple Process to Make Standards Manageable*

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