

# DOINGWHATWORKS



## Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

### Engaging Students in Data Use Through Student Portfolios

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, Massachusetts • April 2010

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

#### Highlights

- Fourth-grade teacher Connie Bunker describes the way that Jacob Hiatt Magnet School uses student portfolios to involve students in data analysis.
- The portfolios are organized as trifolds and contain assignments selected by both the students and the teachers from each of the core subjects as well as art, music, and other subject areas.
- Student and teacher reflection on the portfolios is a key component of the portfolio process. Teachers review each student's portfolio regularly, and a celebration of the portfolios is held with the students and their parents twice a year.

#### About the Site

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School  
Worcester, MA

#### Demographics

50% Hispanic

24% White

19% Black

3% Asian

67% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Jacob Hiatt's nearly eight-hour expanded school day has led to visible student academic growth. Its 2009 scores showed Adequate Yearly Progress in all subjects for the first time since 2002. The pillars of the school-day redesign approach taken by the school include the following:

- Implementing school-day redesign based on student assessment data,
- Individualizing and differentiating instruction based on student needs,
- Incorporating enrichment activities in academic classes,
- Facilitating collaborative planning meetings for teachers and program instructors,
- Fostering partnerships with local groups and organizations to provide extracurricular opportunities and resources.

### Full Transcript

Presentation Title: Engaging Students in Data Use Through Student Portfolios

Title slide text: Jacob Hiatt Magnet School in Worcester, MA, engages students in examining their own data through student portfolios. In addition to the students, teachers and parents explore the folders' contents regularly to keep track of students' academic progress.

Slide 1: What is a student portfolio?

Text: Fourth-grade teacher Connie Bunker describes the design and contents of the portfolios. Students may decorate the trifold portfolios to express their individual personalities.

Audio: The student portfolios are a trifold. They are folded in threes. It's a very large piece of oak tag. And we all set it up differently. I set it up for the first part to be a pass-along, things about the student, their reflections on their own writing, their own reading. In the middle part, I have math and science papers. And then in the third part, I have social studies and language arts papers.

Slide 2: Goals of the portfolios

Text: The portfolios allow students to reflect on the assignments they have completed and to assess their academic progress. They also allow students to look at several different assignments together to connect and compare their understanding of different concepts.

Audio: The goal is to have children looking at the work as a celebration of their work and to assess the work they have done. They can even look back on past pieces and see how much they have grown. They reflect on different pieces of paper: “I worked really hard on this,” “This was easy,” “I found this difficult.” But they can also reflect on their growth from one piece to another. And it’s fun for them to look back, and sometimes they even forget what they did. A few months ago, “Oh, I remember doing that” and “That was great.” So it’s a great reflection piece for them, an assessment tool for them.

### Slide 3: The pieces of a portfolio

Text: Children take an active role in completing the student portfolios. Students may include classroom assignments as well as materials from field trips or other school activities in their portfolios. In addition to the core academic areas, assignments from music, art, and physical education classes can also appear in the portfolios.

Audio: The children complete the portfolio in many different ways. I know in the portfolios that I have, we have a reflection on their reading, reflection on their writing. But then we have cultural partners who come in and work with us. And for instance, we just made totem poles from the Canadian Inuit. And so we have a picture of them making the totem poles, and then they reflect on the cultural partner. So we have those pieces in there also. If we go in a field trip, we reflect on that field trip and we put that in there: What did we learn from the field trip? So that’s in there. If we were studying about immigration, we have a folder all compiled of what we were doing throughout that process of immigration, and we will put that in there and then reflect on, in the end, what did we learn from this whole process. If we are doing magnets and electricity, we have those collections, those investigations, and then we look through that folder when the lesson is done, and we reflect on our learning about magnets and electricity. So we have writing pieces of their essays and their compositions, and they can compare what they did in the beginning of the year to what they are doing now, whereas we are getting towards the end of the year. So we have those kind of pieces.

### Slide 4: Portfolios for unit review

Text: Teachers at Hiatt use the portfolios to assess learning at the end of a unit of study. They will collect all assignments related to a given unit and review them along with the students, asking them to reflect on their learning.

Audio: You set up the goals beforehand when you are starting a unit with magnets or electricity or immigration. So at the end, we are more talking about, “Did we meet those goals? Did you learn from the goals that we set up in the beginning?” So as we finish a unit, they look through their folder about

everything they have collected, and we will put that folder in the portfolio with the reflection of their learning. So it's just an ongoing what we have done in that month, what we have learned in that month, what was the unit we were learning about, and then they reflect on that.

### Slide 5: The schoolwide table of contents

**Text:** Hiatt teachers developed a schoolwide table of contents as a guide for the types of assignments that should be included in the portfolios. The school emphasizes open-ended questions and reflective pieces for all subjects.

**Audio:** There are two table of contents. One will be about open-ended questions and reading pieces and math pieces and social studies and the science. It is a list that we should be looking at periodically to make sure, "Oh, I don't have any open-ended questions for that subject. I should be looking at that right now. I don't have a reflective piece about, say, an autobiography maybe they should have had in there also." And so it's almost a checklist for us to look through and make sure that we are including all the pieces that should be in there. I believe we developed that table of contents from looking at periodicals and what other people had done before us and what would be of value to put in there for the child.

### Slide 6: The portfolio review process

**Text:** A key component of the portfolio process is the regular review between the teacher and all students. Teachers allot a small period of time every couple of weeks to review the student portfolios. They may ask the entire class to reflect on a particular assignment or talk with individual students about their work.

**Audio:** For reviewing portfolio and for the collection pieces, we used to do it every Friday, but that was a lot of time spent on the portfolio. So we try to do it at least every few weeks, and we look at the collection pieces then. Now, as they pass in different papers or they finish different papers, they can just go put it in their collection folder. And then, like, every second or third week, we will look at their collection folder and see whether they think it's important to put in their portfolio, what pieces they really value. And then the other pieces can go home with them if they choose to. So it's their choice, and it's my choice too. There might be pieces that I value that I would like to see in the portfolio.

### Slide 7: Student reflection

**Text:** Teachers often ask students to write a reflection on an assignment that was included in the portfolio. Students may recognize how well they performed on a given assignment or note how they have grown in the work they have completed since then.

Audio: They'll reflect on the goal of that piece and do they think they met that goal and do they think the grade reflected how much work they put into it. And sometimes they can see that, "Yeah, I didn't really work hard on this piece. I could have worked harder" or "I did really great on this, on this writing piece. I used my office craft. I had a great beginning. I really followed along in sequence of the story I was writing." Or they can see the opposite of that. Math pieces, they can say, "Gee, I really didn't understand about these fractions, but now look how I have grown. I can do fractions and decimals, and I have really grown in that piece." So it's really a growth piece for them to look at.

### Slide 8: Portfolios for assessment

Text: In addition to formal tests, teachers also use the portfolios to assess student learning. Students may work with peers to review each other's work and offer suggestions.

Audio: I use a portfolio as another assessment, rather than just tests, to look at the child's growth and to see if he has a truly understanding of what was just taught. Children are all different and learn differently, and so there are so many varied pieces in there to show me what each child is learning and how each child is learning.

### Slide 9: The portfolio celebration

Text: The school holds portfolio celebrations twice a year to give students the opportunity to display their portfolios for parents, teachers, and peers. The celebrations allow all students, even those who may struggle to learn some skills or concepts, to recognize the progress they have made.

Audio: We usually have a portfolio celebration with the parents twice a year: midterm and then at the end of the year towards June. And so the parents come in a time frame, some afternoon from 1 to 3, and they celebrate their children's work by looking at it. And for the parents who can't make it, they can come in anytime and sit down with their child and look through their portfolio. But then we use that portfolio as a celebration with their parents, for the parents to come in and celebrate their work. Maybe their test scores weren't that good, and this portfolio is just a celebration of the wonderful work that they can do aside from taking a test. So what we do is, when they are all in the all-purpose room, we move from parent and child and we look at a few pieces with their child. But the child really walks the parents through that portfolio, and we will step in and we will talk about any pieces the parent might want to talk about. And as I said, it's a celebration. It's a celebration of their work.