



## Activity 9.2

### Dipping Into Data

#### Learning Target for the Activity

- Become more conversant with a process for problem solving based on data.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this activity depends on the will of the group. At a minimum, they will become conversant with the process for problem solving based on the data described in this chapter, so that they can use the process more fluently when the occasion arises in their building/district. However, if the group would like, they can use this activity as an opportunity to begin a “real” application of the process in their work as school leaders.

#### Time

45 minutes to one hour

#### Materials Needed

- Student assessment data source—the group may use the data supplied for this exercise, in Figure 9.7, or authentic local data
- Laptop or tablet with spreadsheet capabilities (at least one) and projector
- Chart paper and markers

#### Suggested Room Setup

Arrange tables and chairs for small-group work. Arrange for projection capability for one of the devices.

#### Directions

Complete each step in the order below:

1. Re-read the section “Using Data to Identify and Address Problems” in this chapter.
2. In this activity you will do the first step (ask a question, and organize data) of the process, then conduct a brainstorming in anticipation of the second step (get more data, and identify a “students” problem). The group should decide whether they want to do this activity as a practice exercise, using the data provided, or as the beginning of an authentic process for your building/district, using local data.
3. For the first step (ask a question, and organize data) examine the data (either provided here or local to your building/district) in spreadsheet or report form. Create a question you want your data to answer. Write the question on chart paper.

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4. Summarize the data in a form that focuses on that question, using some sort of visual display or data overview (e.g., a line or bar graph, or a chart). Use a spreadsheet to do this, and project the results for the group to see.
5. Discuss the data overview. What, if anything, can you conclude? Can you refine your question or ask a further question? Can you float some hypotheses about the answers to your questions that you could investigate? Typically, these further questions and hypotheses would be about the reasons underlying what you see in the “big data” and would require additional classroom-level data to answer. Record the results of your deliberation on the chart paper.
6. The second step in the data-use process is to get more data and identify a “students” problem. At this point, since you will not have additional data at the ready, the activity continues as a thought experiment. This is the case whether you are using the furnished data or your own local data.
  - What additional data would be required to answer the new question? Include classroom-level data sources.
  - How would you identify, locate, and get the additional data?
  - How would you analyze the additional data? What would you be looking for?

## Closure

Facilitate a discussion based on these questions:

- What did you learn from trying out the beginning of the data-use process?
- How will this new knowledge be useful to you as a school leader?
- For those using their own local data for this activity: make plans to continue the data-use process through the rest of the steps to action.
- For those using the data provided as an exercise: make plans, as appropriate, to use this process in your building/district.