Understanding the “Why”:
MAKING THE CASE FOR QUALITATIVE EVALUATION METHODS IN A STEM (QUANTITATIVE) WORLD

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- National Vice President and Superintendent of Schools, Catapult Learning
- Assistant State Superintendent and Deputy Chief State School Officer, District of Columbia Public Schools
- Senior leadership roles (CEO, Provost/VPAA, VPIA) at colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states
- Echoing Green public service fellow ‘96
- Assistant/Visiting Professor, College of Education, Delta State University

Education
  - Doctor of Education, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
  - Master of Education from Harvard University
  - Master of Science from Clark Atlanta University
  - Bachelor of Science from Edward Waters College
My Family
HERO
(S)HERO
Echoing Green

- http://www.echoinggreen.org/fellowship
- Counselor: Mr. Evanson (Carpentry, Brick Masonry...for future Harvard/MIT graduates)
- Awareness would increase access to 4-yr universities (top tier)
- This would produce highly passionate/skilled leaders
- Work to end poverty
- Followed a cohort of 35 students for 4 years (grades 9-12)
- Emphasis on Algebra/Geometry (100% passage), ACT (22 avg), and college tours (60 institutions including Harvard, Dartmouth, Rice, Fisk, Spelman, JCSmith)
- Lots of tutoring and mentoring
- 28 enrolled in college (generally same as before), 5 military, 1 Sonic, 1 Casino
- Stories: “Play the piano”.....Yale/Car
- Fast Forward: Vandy doctorate (ABD 4 yrs)...perplexing question (goal was college prez)
Quantitative

- Focus on numbers/numeric values
- Who, what, where, when
- Match with outcomes about knowledge and comprehension (define, classify, recall, recognize)
- Allows for measurement of variables
- Uses statistical data analysis
- May be generalize to greater population with larger samples
- Easily replicated

Qualitative

- Focus on text/narrative from respondents
- Why, how
- Match with outcomes about application, analysis, synthesis, evaluate
- Seeks to explain and understand
- Ability to capture “elusive” evidence of student learning and development
What are Qualitative Data?

- Interviews
- Documents
- Observations
- Focus Groups
Group Activity

Don’t Miss the Train!
Don’t Miss the Train

Culture Matters

Context Matters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dsi_ltK-j30