

## Spotlight Strategy: Use Assessment Results to Target Instructional Strategies

### *SUN Area Technical Institute*

In 2008, in response to low NOCTI scores (standardized tests for technical skill attainment), the administrators at SUN Area Technical Institute (SUN Tech) developed a detailed plan to rapidly improve the school average.

In order to achieve this goal, the leadership team and staff took the following steps:

- Used tracking data to identify weaknesses. The data is color-coded so that it is easily analyzed. Those that fall below the national and state levels are coded in red. Yellow is used for students who score “adequate” and green is used for those who score “high.”
- Issued NOCTI pre-tests on computers. In order to do this, SUN Tech increased its inventory of computers to allow more students to test at once.
- Purchased NOCTI study guides.
- Trained instructors on how to use and teach the NOCTI study guides. These guides are used throughout the year, but they are referenced more frequently during the time before NOCTI exams are taken.
- Required instructors to conduct class-wide debriefings with students after NOCTI pre-tests to identify weaknesses and areas that need additional training. During this time, instructors identify which competencies were covered on the test.
- Changed the way the student's cooperative education experience (co-op) is operated. SUN Tech participates in a co-op with local businesses that provides students internship and work-study opportunities to further their studies. Previously, students in their third quarter of studies would leave for the entire portion of the school day allocated for studies at SUN Tech to participate in their co-op. Now, students must come back to the school twice a week to receive in-class training for the NOCTI test.
- Purchased headsets to have tests read to IEP students in need of this service. These students are separated from the other students so that they do not feel awkward.

In the short time since these changes have been in place, SUN Tech already has seen a dramatic increase in student NOCTI scores. In 2007-2008, the average number of students who scored proficient was 62.7 percent. In 2008-2009, the average rose to 76 percent.

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SUN Area Technical Institute is located in New Berlin, Pennsylvania. As a part-time career and technical center, it enrolls approximately 240 students in grades 9 through 12 and provides 19 career and technical education programs. Programs are for one year of study. SUN Area Technical Institute serves five school districts.