

AGS 735: Data-Informed Educational Leadership

Fall 2019

Professor: James Noonan, Ed.D.

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“Maybe stories are just data with a soul.”

-- Brené Brown

Course Description

Using data to inform one’s leadership is crucial for aspiring educational leaders. This course will support future educational leaders in understanding how data can play a generative role in the work of instructional change and school improvement. In particular, candidates will gain knowledge about how collaborative processes, when paired with careful data collection and analysis, can lead to improved outcomes for students.

Global Goals

1. To understand the key role that data plays in the work of educational leadership.
2. To develop familiarity with many different types of data in educational settings.
3. To discover ways to both use existing data and to create opportunities to gather data to answer pressing questions.
4. To develop familiarity with and skills in collaborating with other educators in the use of data to drive school improvement.

Objectives:

1. Analyze the current sources of data available at teacher’s school site.
2. Evaluate the utility of data in developing instructional plans.
3. Prepare instructional plans based on a specific set of data (from student work).
4. Assess and evaluate multiple models for analyzing student data.
5. Engage in multiple, structured conversations about student achievement data and reflect on this work via journal responses.
6. Prepare and lead a collaborative data team meeting using data from a school context. Reflect on this work through a written review.
7. Relate course content to a particular data-related project.

Instructional Objectives

1. Students will explore a number of different types of data that they may encounter in schools.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative data and to discern when different types of data are necessary in order to more fully understand various problems of practice.

3. Students will develop skills that allow them to generate data to answer pressing educational questions.
4. Students will develop familiarity with and the processes for engaging faculty in collaborative work that includes the use of data in order to make informed decisions to drive school change.
5. Students will practice facilitating professional conversations with colleagues, as part of collaborative processes that use data to make informed decisions to drive school change.
6. Students will demonstrate their ability to display and synthesize data and to use data to plan for instructional change initiatives.

Required Text

Boudett, K. P., City, E. A., & Murnane, R. J. (2013). *Datawise: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning*. Revised and expanded edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

All additional readings can be found on the class Canvas site or through linked sources. Most will be in PDF form. You will be able to print them or read them on your computer.

Course Requirement Categories

While I believe that grades tend to carry too much importance when it comes to the formal assessment of learning, the requirements for this course are still weighted to reflect the value I place on them for your learning and development:

50%	Weekly online work and class participation	(Obj. 1-6 above)
5%	Data Tour Reflection	(Obj. 1-2 above)
45%	Data-Informed Needs Assessment	(Obj. 1-6 above)

No final exam will be given in this course.

Grades¹

In this course – as with all courses in this program – the focus of your efforts should be on *your learning* (and not just your grade). In our in-class discussions and your assignments, I want you to take chances, to be unsure and uncomfortable (and to be okay with that), to challenge what you may have previously thought, to challenge what I think and what the authors we read may think, and to struggle when using new ideas for the first time. And so while this is a graded course, I will provide you with clear assignment guidelines and rubrics to give you a picture of what is expected. I will also give you substantive feedback on your work in many forms throughout the course. Your final grade is based on accumulated points on assessments (weighted as described in the previous section), using the following scale:

A = 94-100 % *	B = 83-86 %	C = 73-76 %
A- = 90-93 %	B- = 80-82 %	C- = 70-72 %
B+ = 87-89 %	C+ = 77-79 %	F = 69% or below

* Note that all grade ranges include a calculation to the nearest hundredth. Thus, a grade of 93.99 would be an A- while a grade of 94.01 would be an A. Please note, too, that I reserve the right to use discretion when calculating your final grade, beyond what can be found on Canvas. If you have questions about the grading policy, please talk to me.

¹ Some of the language about grades and grading is borrowed from Dr. Chris Buttimer.

Course Requirement Details

Weekly Engagement

Our work in this course is driven by participation. Whether engaging in online discussions or small group conversations during class, your participation is vital to your learning and the learning of others in the class. Please be sure to bring your “whole self” to your work. Participation does not mean knowing the answer or putting only fully polished thoughts on the table. It means bringing conundrums, worries, partially-shaped ideas, and dilemmas to the conversations – both in person and online – in order for the group to ponder and collectively consider.

Data Tour

It is important not only to explore the role of data in relation to your own leadership work (current and/or future) but also how data are used at the school and/or district level as a whole. In your data tour, you’ll be asked to set up a time to sit alongside someone who is a “next-level data expert” in order to learn about how data are used in your school/work context. If you are familiar predominantly with data at a classroom level, this could mean sitting with a coach or administrator to learn about how data are processed and used at the school level. If you are familiar predominantly with data at a school level, this could mean sitting with a district coach or administrator to learn how data are processed and used at a district level (perhaps across multiple schools of the same level).

Data-Informed Needs Assessment (DINA)

The main work of this course involves the development of a needs assessment and initial plans, informed by data, to address an area of need within your school. The area of need you identify should be one that you feel strongly about and that you are able to influence in some way. This process will be collaborative and guided by the Datawise process, scaffolded across the arc of the course. This assignment also serves as Core Assessment #1.

Course Hashtag (#AGS735)

Increasingly, educators are finding community and opportunities for deeper learning through online social media platforms like Twitter. For this reason, in addition to posting on the course site, I encourage you to post reflections, resources, or questions related to course material on Twitter. Unlike the posts on the course website, posts to Twitter are not required. But if/when you do post something, don’t forget to include the course hashtag (#AGS735)! I will be doing the same ([@_jmnoonan](#)), as will students in other AGS735 cohorts.

Course Rhythms

The online portion of this course will be run using learning modules on Canvas (our course website will be [AGS735, Noonan, Fall 2019](#)). Modules will open on Thursday, with work due the following Wednesday (occasionally there may be intermediary deadlines). Recognizing your busy lives as educators, please be in touch ahead of deadlines if you require an adjustment. I am always happy to flex with your schedule as needed. Overall, however, staying on track with the course is vital, particularly given our compacted schedule. Also, please note that, for the final assignment, no late work will be accepted, except through prior arrangement due to unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances.

For each online week, I will post an overview of the week's work. This will serve as a guide for the work you will undertake, and you should read this document first. As online learning can be a new modality for some, please be in touch if and when any questions arise. My goal is for you to optimize your learning during our online weeks, and frequent communication, particularly about any confusion that might arise, is vital for this process.

A Note on Technology (for our in-person sessions)²

Technology—including laptops, iPads, or smartphones—has tremendous potential to deepen our engagement with content, discussions, and each other. For example, technology may be used to more efficiently take notes or look up information to supplement your understanding or contribute to the discussion. But these benefits—especially in a course that depends on group learning and shared expertise—must be balanced with their equal or greater potential to disrupt our engagement. The question, then, is whether using technology is *drawing you in* or *pulling you out* (e.g. through distractions such as email, social media, readings/assignments for other courses, etc.). And the answer is usually apparent to you as a thoughtful student, as well as to your peers and often to me as the facilitator.

Please keep this in mind and be judicious and conscientious in your use of technology. Also, consider the abstract of Mueller & Oppenheimer's (2014) study of university students³:

Even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. In three studies, we found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. We show that whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers' tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning. (p. 1159)

Notably, instructing students not to transcribe verbatim did not mitigate these effects.

² This advice about technology use is adapted from the [syllabus](#) for Dr. Eve Ewing's course on racism and educational inequality at Harvard University. The language on being *drawn in* or *pulled out* is borrowed from Dr. Steve Seidel.

³ Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159–1168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>

PROPOSED SCHEDULE (FALL 2019)

Please note that this syllabus is a guide for the semester. It represents the core work and readings for our time together. I will be adding readings or potentially adjusting the syllabus in order to respond to your needs across the semester. Please stay up-to-date via Canvas for these changes.

Rows shaded grey in the table below represent online modules when we will not meet in person.

Date	Guiding Questions/Session Focus	Readings for this Class Session	Assignment(s) for this Class Session
Session 1: Oct 24	What assumptions or anxiety do we carry about data? How can we begin to think about data through a leadership lens?	<p><i>To be handed out and read in class:</i></p> <p>Case: Magnolia High School (pp. 102-108)</p> <p>Safir, <i>The Listening Leader</i>, “Key Challenge 4: Disconnected Data” (pp. 16-20)</p>	
Session 2: Oct 31 (online)	What counts as data? What is hard and soft data? How will I use these in my work to learn about adult and student outcomes?	<p>James-Ward, Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, <i>Using Data to Focus Instructional Improvement</i>, chapters 2 & 3</p> <p>Browse, for other ideas on data sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davies, chapter 7 • Landrigan & Mulligan, chapter 3 (literacy) • William, chapter 4 (math) • Shea, Murray, & Harlin, chapters 3 and 4 • Tovani, chapter 5 (literacy, middle grades) • Paley, chapters 1 & 5 (SEL, early childhood) • Zager, chapter 3 (math) 	Reading Reflection #1

Date	Guiding Questions/Session Focus	Readings for this Class Session	Assignment(s) for this Class Session
Session 3: Nov 7 (online)	How can I use data in order to help me understand areas of need at my school? How can we engage in conversations about data without reifying stereotypes about students?	Boudett, City, & Murnane, <i>Datawise</i> , Data Inventory (pp. 25-28) Safir, “Street Data: A New Grammar for Educational Equity” Optional: Irby, “Mo’ data, mo’ problems”	Data Inventory Reading Reflection #2
Session 4: Nov 14	How do we develop assessment literacy in ways that are tailored to our work and our roles (current or future)?	Boudett, City, & Murnane, <i>Datawise</i> , chapters 2 and 3	DINA Update #1 Reading Reflection #3
Session 5: Nov 21	How can I use concepts from a data-driven approach to professional learning and improvement to shape my own work in this domain?	Boudett, City, & Murnane, <i>Datawise</i> , chapters 4-6 In class: Stoelinga & Mangin, <i>Examining Effective Teacher Leadership: A Case Study Approach</i> , “The case of Janie”	DINA Update #2 Reading Reflection #4
<i>No class due to Thanksgiving</i>			
Session 6: Dec 5	How can I begin to lead a data-driven implementation process? What are the different types of data (across multiple timeframes) that will inform this work?	Boudett, City, & Murnane, <i>Datawise</i> , chapters 7 and 8	Data Tour
Session 7: Dec 12 (online)	How can I lead and facilitate with data in mind?	Excerpts from <i>Meetingwise</i> on managing conflict (pp. 108-118 and pp.129-139)	Feedback for partners
Dec 19	Final Papers due by 6pm		

MORE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Equity Statement

“Salem State University is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids and adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid or adjustment should speak with the instructor immediately. Students with disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities and obtain appropriate services.”

Emergency Statement

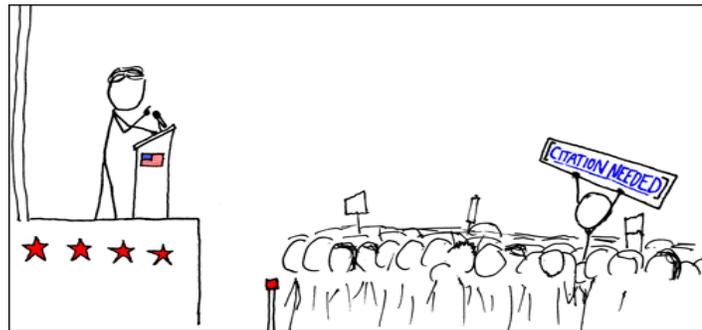
“In the event of a college declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to their college email for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a college declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course located in course handouts. Students should review the plans and gather all required materials before an emergency is declared.”

Additional Emergency Statement

In the event of a University declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to www.salemstate.edu for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a University-declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course, which will be posted on Canvas. Students should review the plans and stay up to date via Canvas.

Citations and Attribution

Please ensure that all work you submit is your own, and cite your sources when you use them. The work of education involves creativity and being resourceful. Often, this means looking elsewhere for ideas. That is encouraged in this course. However, you must attribute those ideas to the original authors when you use them. Failure to do so, in the form of plagiarism (even if unwitting) can result in a grade of 0 or further action with the SSU administration. Please visit this site for further information about citation and attribution: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>



Source: <https://xkcd.com/285/>

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