

Course Syllabus

Principal 2.0: More Than Counting: Using Data Effectively

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service school principals and other school leaders for grades K-12.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete assignments in this course, the learner must

- Have past experience using the computer
- Have past experience working with the Internet
- Be familiar with taking an online course

Course Description

Data is about more than percentiles and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). It's about using multiple sources of data to continuously improve the school environment as a whole. Principals must be able to infuse formative student assessment, teacher and parent attitudinal data, policy mandates, and budget information into the overall decision making process including informal conversations, staff meetings, etc. This course will examine the most important pieces of the data puzzle, and provide practical strategies for leaders wishing to examine their data-informed decision making efforts.

Goals

At the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Identify key elements in the data-driven decision making process
- Reflect on the extent to which data is used in a genuine way within the scope of school improvement
- Create a plan for enriching the use of data in the school community

Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to Course Content to complete the following sessions, working through each session in order.

Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms. They are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal. The discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners' experiences. As a final project, learners will develop their own vision related to the reflection of data usage and its role in the bigger picture of school improvement.

This course is designed to address ISTE's Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for School Administrators. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

This course specifically addresses the following NETS*A components:

1. Visionary Leadership

Educational Administrators inspire and lead development and implementation of a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology to promote excellence and support transformation throughout the organization. Educational Administrators:

- A. inspire and facilitate among all stakeholders a shared vision of purposeful change that maximizes use of digital-age resources to meet and exceed learning goals, support effective instructional practice, and maximize performance of district and school leaders.
- B. engage in an ongoing process to develop, implement, and communicate technology-infused strategic plans aligned with a shared vision

4. Systemic Improvement

Educational Administrators provide digital-age leadership and management to continuously improve the organization through the effective use of information and technology resources. Educational Administrators:

- A. lead purposeful change to maximize the achievement of learning goals through the appropriate use of technology and media-rich resources.
- B. collaborate to establish metrics, collect and analyze data, interpret results, and share findings to improve staff performance and student learning.

Course Outline

Principal 2.0 - More Than Counting: Using Data Effectively

Data is about more than percentiles and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). It's about using multiple sources of data to continuously improve the school environment as a whole. Principals must be able to infuse formative student assessment, teacher and parent attitudinal data, policy mandates, and budget information into the overall decision making process. This course will examine the most important pieces of the data puzzle, and provide practical strategies for leaders wishing to solidify their data-informed decision making efforts.

Session One: Reflecting on data in current decision making processes

The emergence of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures has brought data to the forefront of conversations more than ever. However, many principals will still suggest that much of what they do is pushed by other forces, and not necessarily 'data-driven.' This week, you'll reflect on decisions you've made recently, or are in the process of making, and consider the extent to which you have truly used data in that decision making process.

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Review critical elements in the data driven decision making process
- Reflect upon the role data plays in current decision making efforts
- Plan for improving the connections between data and decisions

Read:

- 9 Essential Elements of a Data-Driven Professional Learning Community - A framework (pdf file)

Participate in Online Discussions:

- Forum #1 – Introduce yourself to other participants
- Forum #2 – Share your thoughts on the data elements in the pdf file. In which areas do you feel you/your school excel? Which elements seem toughest to keep a handle on, and why?

Write in Online Journal:

- Describe your own comfort level with using data. Do you think beyond the test scores? Does this cycle, as presented, align with your current thoughts? If so, please elaborate. Do you feel that there are other elements that are a crucial piece to the data cycle? If so, please explain.

Session Two: Examining multiple sources of data

When asked to describe data in a school setting, many educators will immediately mention test scores. However, there are other sources of data that have an impact on the overall success of the school, especially in terms of school improvement. Thinking about test scores is crucial, but do we consider all the other forms of assessment? How do we consider community input and teacher attitudinal information? Combining these sources of information can provide a clearer and more accurate portrayal of information's usefulness in moving schools forward.

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Examine multiple sources of data that impact decisions
- Discuss the extent to which multiple sources of data are used in your school
- Reflect upon the tough decisions that might need to be explored in light of these additional data sources

View:

- Overview of multiple measures of data (pdf file)

Participate in Online Discussions:

- Forum – In which areas do you currently have the most data? Why is that? What would it take to get data from these other sources? Share resources you could use to collect data from these other areas.

Write in Online Journal:

- Describe the amount of *quality* data you have at your disposal in each of these areas. When you look at school improvement, is this data considered? Why or why not?

Session Three: Asking the right questions and understanding root causes

Once we begin to look at various layers of data, we must also start to dig deeper and ask the tougher questions. Why do my standardized test scores look this way? Why do I have certain issues that repeat year after year? What am I truly doing differently this year? How can I get help to teachers who need it? We'll talk this week about posing some questions about data that help get into the 'root causes' of issues you see.

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Overlay various sources of data to formulate more revealing questions
- Create questions to be asked of the school improvement committee (or whole faculty)
- Formulate a plan to act on any uncovered issues in light of this data exploration

Read:

- Root Cause Scenario – “What’s really happening here?”

Participate in Online Discussions:

- Forum – What are some specific issues you’d like to ‘get to the bottom of’ in your schools – (without revealing confidential data). Share issues, respond to others.

Write in Online Journal:

- If you’ve seen repeated performance issues in your building, what hard questions must you begin to ask to find the root cause of these issues? Who can you work with in your building (or district) to begin finding answers? Is there a process in place for these kinds of conversations? If not, how might you begin?

Session Four: Data Safety for Teachers

As much criticism as NCLB might have received, it's done one thing for sure. It's made us begin to look at data with a more critical eye. We've begun to dig into patterns that we once might not have looked at as much. However, we're in a tough position as leaders – how do we truly examine critical and sensitive data, without implying blame of some sort? Teachers must feel comfortable being open and honest about performance issues in their classrooms, but that's not something that comes easy. Leaders must set the stage for these 'safe' conversations.

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Review information on data safety and transparency
- Pose 'safe' questions that need to be addressed
- Consider ways to communicate data and data issues in a way that's non-threatening, yet still effective

Participate in Online Discussions:

- Forum –Are your teachers comfortable exposing their performance issues in a group setting? Share your thoughts on how you would model difficult data-related and performance discussion.

Write in Online Journal:

- Are your teachers really ready to examine data and talk about the difficult issues? If not, how might you begin those conversations? Once the talks begin, how will you ensure that participants don't play the blame game, yet focus on healing any issues? Finally, what's the best way to communicate these issues to the public and school community without exposing confidential information?

Session Five: Teachers role in ongoing data-informed communities

Moving toward a data-informed school community isn't a one-time staff meeting. It's an ongoing process in which grade-level meetings, faculty meetings, etc. are more focused, and address issues more intensely. This final session will ask you to make a brief action plan for how to get your faculty into a data-informed mindset.

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Share thoughts on data-driven teachers and teacher roles
- Plan activities and structures to make your school conversations more data-centric
- Reflect on day-to-day practical strategies for encouraging data-informed conversations

Read: Data-Driven Teachers (pdf file)

- Read the article on data-driven teachers, which shares the 'big picture' of a data-driven environment, and sheds light on what data-driven teachers do.

Participate in Online Discussions:

- Forum –Are your teachers comfortable exposing their performance issues in a group setting? Share your thoughts on how you would model difficult data-related and performance discussion.

Write in Online Journal:

- Create an informal plan in which you share your thoughts about what you will do to move data-conversations forward. Will you rethink faculty meetings? Will you provide a template to your teachers for their grade level or departmental meetings? Will you schedule periodic meetings in which you examine school data and plan for change?

Schedule

It will take about 10 hours to complete this course. Each session has been designed to take approximately two hours. If you find yourself spending several hours more than this in any given session, please contact your facilitator to make sure this is necessary to complete the given assignments.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge
- Be self-directed and self-motivated
- Ask for assistance when needed

Materials

Technical Requirements

- Word Processor
- PowerPoint
- Internet
- Email
- Adobe Acrobat Readers
- Windows Media Player or Quicktime

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be given for this class.

Performance Assessment: Your instructor will assess your performance using the following Assessment Rubric. In order to receive credit for this course, you must demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence for the course, which means a C average or better.

A=100-90%

B=89-80%

C=79-70%

You will receive feedback for each week's work, usually in narrative form through email. In addition, you can always go to "Grades" to monitor your progress. If you have questions about your participation, please communicate with your instructor.

Assignment	Unsatisfactory = 1 pt	Satisfactory = 2 pts	Exemplary = 2.5 pts
Discussion Board	Learner posts only a single entry, with no interaction with other learners' postings evident.	Learner's postings meet the minimum of 3 (one original thread answering the question and two responses to peers) but they do not go beyond the required scope or are all posted on the same day.	Learner's postings meet the objectives for the assignment in ways that demonstrate understanding, being reflective and extending beyond the assignment. There are more than 3 postings and they are posted throughout the week, rather than on one day only.
Online Journal Entries	The learner does not show any indication of having read any of the articles in the session. The entry does not reflect an understanding of the issues addressed in the session.	Although the learner addresses the issues from the session, the entry is lacking in details and depth. The entry shows only a superficial reading of the articles in the session.	The learner's response shows an in-depth understanding of the issues from the session. The entry shows detail and depth. Learner references readings from the session.
Final Project	Learner's response does not show an understanding of issues related to technology and education. Learner does not give actions to be taken in order to implement the vision. The response does not reference readings from the semester.	Learner's response shows some understanding of issues related to technology and education. Learner gives general actions to be taken in order to implement vision. The response references some readings from the semester.	Learner's response shows an in-depth understanding of issues related to technology and education. Learner gives specific actions to be taken in order to implement vision. The response references readings from throughout the semester.