ED 695: Research and Educational Practice  
Fall 2014, Educational Leadership and Policy Section

Credits: 3  
Days/Times: Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Location: 2229 School of Education Building  
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Email: mareneo@umich.edu  
Phone: 734-647-2476  
Twitter: @MarenOberman  
Office hours: 4033 School of Education Building, by appointment

Course Overview
Today, in the United States and much (but, not all) of the world, test scores are more prominent than ever as a tool for judging quality in education. Policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and parents turn to test scores as evidence about the effectiveness of education. But patterns of student achievement, which can (and should) be measured in multiple ways, also serve as a critical tool for diagnosing problems of skill and understanding, comprehending the instructional dynamics underlying those patterns, and exploring instructional practice. This course is designed to introduce graduate students to key issues in research and educational practice, with special attention to the analysis and use of multiple sources of student learning and achievement data to develop strategies for improving learning and teaching.

This course focuses on the habits of mind that best support using evidence about educational practice to shape the development of school-level improvement efforts. The practice of continuous improvement requires that a school's leadership team, in collaboration with teachers, triangulate evidence when examining student work and instructional practice and establishing goals for improvement. The course will support students to: 1) develop and articulate their vision of high-quality instruction, 2) deepen their understanding of testing and assessment; 3) learn to analyze student work, and 4) observe teacher practice and instruction using an evidence base.

Required Texts

All other readings will be posted on CTools under the Resources section or occasionally given as a class handout. Based on class interests, I may adjust the required readings. Please see CTools for the current syllabus and readings.
Primary Learning Outcomes and Learner Objectives
The objective of ED 695 is for students to develop the knowledge and capabilities needed to:

- Establish a vision of ambitious instructional practice and outcomes.
- Approach school leadership and improvement using the Data Wise “ACE Habits of Mind” (Boudett, et al., 2013), committing to Action, Assessing & Adjusting; intentional Collaboration; and a relentless focus on Evidence.
- Identify patterns of student achievement using state assessments, school-based assessments, and other evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and, then, establish achievement goals based on that analysis.
- Identify patterns of instructional performance using classroom observations, videos, and artifacts and, then, establish instructional improvement goals based on that analysis.

ED 695 addresses the elements of MDE Standards that are focused on establishing vision, distributing leadership, analyzing the performance of students and teachers, and establishing goals for performance.

- 1.1: Candidates understand and can collaboratively develop, articulate, implement, and steward a shared vision of learning.
- 1.2: Candidates understand and can collect and use data to identify school goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and implement plans to achieve school goals.
- 2.1: Candidates understand and can sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning through collaboration, trust, and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students.
- 2.2: Candidates understand and can create and evaluate a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular and instructional school program.
- 3.4: Candidates understand and can develop school capacity for distributed leadership.
- 3.5 Candidates understand and can ensure teacher and organizational time focuses on supporting high-quality school instruction and student learning.

Correspondence and Attendance
All course communications will be sent through your U-M email address. You are responsible for everything sent to that address. I expect that you will check your U-M email daily (excluding weekends). If you use another email address, you can configure your U-M account to forward all emails to that address.

Excellent attendance is assumed. More than one absence (planned or unplanned, excused or unexcused) risks receiving no credit for the course. Excused absences are granted for illness and family emergencies. The same holds for chronic lateness. For planned absences, contact me as soon as possible in advance of the class session (via e-mail or phone). For unplanned absences, if at all possible, contact me that day to let me know that you will not be in class (via e-mail or phone).
Assignments
The assignments and weighting of grades for the course is as follows:

1. **Instructional Vision and Improvement Memo** 15%
   Students will prepare a memo for staff and faculty to read and prepare to discuss prior to a staff meeting. The memo will: (a) propose a common vision of instructional growth and a shared set of instructional values; (b) use an analysis of school-level data to launch an inquiry process that includes the entire staff; (c) solicit staff feedback on the analysis and proposed vision. **DUE: OCTOBER 15, 2014**

2. **Analyzing Student Work Activity** 15%
   Students will be given a packet of student work to analyze, using Data Wise strategies and an “analyzing student work” protocol we will review in class. The task is to identify a learner-centered problem and use low-inference evidence to justify conclusions. More details will be provided on October 22, 2014, when the assignment is distributed. **DUE: NOVEMBER 12, 2014**

3. **Revision Assignment** 20%
   For this “final” assignment, students will be given a choice to iterate on either Assignment #1 or #2, based on both feedback from the teaching team and new learnings in the course (specifically AFTER we have learned much more about examining instruction and identifying problems of practice). **DUE: DECEMBER 17, 2014**
   If you choose to revise assignment #2, you will be given a new and wholly different packet of student work.

4. **Instructional Vision Presentation** 25%
   Student teams will design a 15-minute technology-mediated presentation for staff, parents, and community members that proposes a vision for instructional practice based on the team’s inquiry process. The presentation should include the team’s focus area (something in either Math or English Language Arts), and priority question; and should propose action items and outcomes for improving instruction. Your “Instructional Vision and Improvement” memos may serve as a foundation for this project. All team members are expected to participate in the presentation. **TEAMS WILL PRESENT EITHER ON DECEMBER 3, 2014 OR DECEMBER 10, 2014.**

5. **Participation in Class Discussion and Peer Feedback Teams** 25%
   You’ll notice that class participation is worth quite a lot in this course. In addition to whole group learning, you will be assigned to a 4-person team with whom you will complete many in-class activities and your Instructional Vision Presentation. Your engagement and participation in the whole group as well as in your teams are crucial to your success in this course. Completion of assigned readings is key to the exchange of ideas and new ways of thinking that lead to an engaging and stimulating course. You are expected to have carefully read the assigned readings before class. I encourage you to take notes on the main ideas and arguments, as well as connections you see with your own experiences. You will receive feedback at mid-semester on your class participation (including your engagement in class, active-listening skills, problem-solving efforts, and participation in your teams).
Unless arrangements are made in advance, late work will receive no credit.

**Representing Others’ Research**
As part of engaging with the readings and the core themes of this course, I expect you to explicitly draw on ongoing conversations in academic and public discourse in our discussions and in your writing. When you draw on ideas in others’ research in your written assignments, please be sure to attribute that work correctly. For guidance about how to do this, please see the American Psychological Association’s *Publication Manual*. For some of the assignments, you may make “practitioner-based” choices on how to cite work in a real-world setting. We will discuss these issues as they arise.

**Grading**
Consistent with Rackham guidelines, all coursework is graded with a letter system (A, B, C, D, or E), with the use of “+” or “-” to add shades of grey. Letter grades are converted into "points" as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Outstanding work nearly free of critique; completes all the challenges of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good quality work absent systematic inadequacies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Sub-standard worked marked by systematic inadequacies in content, structure, and/or writing mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Unacceptable quality of work with significant, systematic inadequacies in content, structure, and writing mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**University Policies**
All university policies hold, including (and especially) those pertaining to academic integrity. See the following for the UM student handbook, which details students’ rights and responsibilities: [http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_policies/). If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; [http://www.umich.edu/sswd](http://www.umich.edu/sswd)) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
Semester Calendar – Fall 2014

Session 1 (9/3/14) Welcome and Introduction
Required reading:
- “The Work of Teaching” on the TeachingWorks website, including the following sections: Overview, Responsible Teaching, Origin & Evolution, High-Leverage Practices (make sure to click on “Expand all High-Leverage Practices”), High-Leverage Content, Collaboration & Adoption, and Assessments.  
http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching
- Measuring up, Chapter 1: “If only it were so simple”
- Measuring up, Chapter 2: “What is a test?”

Session 2 (9/10/14) Being Visionary and Data “Wise”
Required reading:
- Data Wise, “Introduction”

Session 3 (9/17/14) Organizing Our Classroom Community for Learning & Collaboration
Required reading:
- Data Wise, Chapter 1: “Organizing for Collaborative Work”
- Measuring Up, Chapter 3: “What we measure: just how good is the sample?”

Session 4 (9/24/14) Assessment Literacy Part I
ASSIGNMENT #1 DISTRIBUTED AT THE END OF CLASS, DUE 10/15/14
Required reading:
- Measuring up, Chapter 5: “What test scores tell us about American kids”
- Measuring up, Chapter 7: “Error and Reliability: How Much We Don’t Know What We’re Talking About”
- CHOOSE ONE:
  o Measuring up, Chapter 9: “Validity” OR
Session 5 (10/1/14) Assessment Literacy Part II
Required reading:
- *Measuring up*, Chapter 10: Inflated Test Scores
- *Measuring up*, Chapter 11: Adverse Impact and Bias
Browse:
- *Data Wise*, Chapter 2: “Building Assessment Literacy”

Session 6 (10/8/14) Displaying Student Assessment Data
Required reading:
- *Data wise* Chapter 3: “Creating a data overview”

Session 7 (10/15/14) Creating Data Overviews and Identifying Priority Questions
 ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
COME WITH YOUR TEAM’S FOCUS AREA DETERMINED
Required reading:
- *Data wise*, Chapter 4: “Digging into data”
Optional reading:
- *Measuring up*, Chapter 8: “Reporting performance: Standards and scales”

Session 8 (10/22/14) Analyzing Student Work
 ASSIGNMENT #2 DISTRIBUTED AT THE END OF CLASS, DUE 11/12/14
Required reading:
- *Data wise*, Chapter 4: “Digging into data”

Session 9 (10/29/14) Observing Instruction Part I
Required reading:
- *Data wise* Chapter 5: “Examining Instruction”
Session 10 (11/5/14) Observing Instruction Part II
Required reading:

Session 11 (11/12/14) Instructional Vision Revisited
ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
Required reading:

Session 12 (11/19/14) Challenges of Implementation
Required reading:

Optional reading:

11/26: Happy Thanksgiving! No class meeting
Session 13 (12/3/14): Session 13: Instructional Vision Presentations & Implications for Policy
Required reading:

Optional reading:

Session 14 (12/10/14): Instructional Vision Presentations & Closure
Required reading:

12/17/14 Final Due
- Revision Assignment Due
- 11:59 p.m.
- See # 3 on page 3 of this syllabus for more information