

Position paper on Assignment #3: Using Data: Two Wrongs and a Right

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EDU 5650: School Based Data Analysis

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## Using Data: Two Wrongs and a Right

How true it is that to avoid commonplace errors when using data, collect direct data with a plan. I found Marzano's article to be very informative with many valid points. His article opens up with the use of data by both the world of education and the world of business. Holding a business degree myself, I intuitively use data in everything I do.

Marzano points out there are two mistakes often made by districts in their efforts to be data-driven. First is the use of indirect measure of learning which I agree is far too common. It is easy to measure a school's success by test scores but they are inconclusive. I agree that neither a single test nor a set of tests can address all the content that is taught within a given subject at a given grade level. I enjoy his analogy of using data as compared to physical fitness. How true is it that we get on the scale and think we are physically fit when we may be a walking time bomb when it comes to our blood pressure or cholesterol?

He continues to discuss the second mistake which is when a school has no system or plan for interpreting and using the data in place. I agree, how ridiculous. What good is all of the data without a plan to use it? Marzano continues his article by discussing rubric assessment for five or six standards as opposed to a single overall grade. Although the theory is sound, I feel it is impractical. As a high school math teacher my load was approximately 150 students. If I had to assess my students on a rubric basis I would not have any time to teach – and there was never enough time to do that anyway! In my own defense however, my tests were scored in a way that I was able to have a good handle on the concepts that a student excelled in and was weak in.

The factors for "what works" are practical and I think the survey sample is an excellent tool for a school or district to use in planning. By measuring the extent that behavior is being addressed currently, the reflection on how much a change in practices will increase the academic achievement and how

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much effort will it to take to change the current practices are all valid questions and worth the time to reflect upon.