

S.J.U. EDU 5650 Planned Change in Education – Course Synthesis, Fall 2010

Prof. Jonathan Hughes

Cohort 11 Collaboration

“It’s not about what you know, or what you don’t know, it’s about what you don’t know you don’t know”(Hughes, 2010)...Thus the journey into school based data analysis under the guidance of Dr. Hughes began.

Objectives of this course were to effectively synthesize a target school district’s data, compare the data to similar schools and successfully identify and implement appropriate strategies that will ultimately lead increased student achievement. Additionally, the cohort reviewed data educational leaders apply to pertinent issues surrounding the uses of school district databases established to achieve increased student learning. In analyzing and sifting through a plethora of data from Budget Pulse, Data Points, Geo-Tracks, Mapinfo Geographic, and Vital Signs we were able to use data to frame the problem.

The 5 C’s: content, compare, contrast, context, and construct (Hughes, 2010), was the framework applied by the cohort to gain a deeper understanding of the data and its impact on the districts studied. After deeply examining the “root causes” behind the target district’s areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, we were able to create an accountability plan to aid the target district move toward its aspiration. By carefully studying trends and relationships between and among the districts, we were

able to make informed decisions to improve student performance and ensure optimal results.

The culminating project required the cohort to work collaboratively to construct the framework to present data. The data was then presented through individual power point presentations. The overwhelming consensus of the cohort was that these data are invaluable to all educational leaders in order to plan effectively and meet the needs of their districts.

EDU 5650-School Based Data Analysis was an extremely worthwhile course in every sense of the word. Data-based decision making is at the forefront of educational reform in the United States. In order to make informed decisions which will enhance student learning and ensure optimal results for all students, educators must be savvy, astute, and wise when using data to improve our schools for the future. Throughout the course, Dr. Hughes recommended a wealth of professional resources, including, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, by Diane Ravitch, *Getting Excited about Data* by Edie Holcomb, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, by Edgar Schein, and *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.