



***EDLR 5405: Instructional Leadership - Creating & Sustaining Instructional Improvement***  
**UCAPP**  
**Spring Year 1**

Syllabus information may be subject to change.

**Course and Instructor Information**

**Course Title:** Instructional Leadership - *Creating & Sustaining Instructional Improvement*  
**Credits:** 2  
**Format:** In Person  
**Professors:** Instructor(s)  
**Email:**  
**Mobile:**  
**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Required Texts**

Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, *Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation*. Corwin.

*Additional course readings and media will be available within HuskyCT*

**Course Description**

This course addresses instructional leadership with particular attention to how principals create and sustain systems for instructional improvement with a strong focus on the relationship between the three elements of the instructional core to increase student learning and performance. In so doing, the course builds the competencies of instructional leaders in using various systems and structures in building educator data literacy, deepening instructional data-driven decision making, and the importance of collaborative teams and ongoing leadership coaching to promote school wide change that positively affects school culture and student achievement. Aspiring leaders are provided structured learning opportunities to reflect on the intersection between instructional and equity-oriented leadership.

**Course Objectives**

In this course, aspiring leaders will gain the knowledge and skills to:

- ensure the success and achievement of all students by developing a shared vision, mission and goals focused on high expectations for all students through an equity lens;
- understand the relationship among the three elements of the instructional core and know how to collect reliable evidence from each element to effectively determine teaching and learning improvement needs;
- monitor and support continuous improvement efforts through the use of culturally relevant learning experiences defined within the curriculum, instructional learning experiences, and assessment practices; and
- build capacity and capability of educators' use of data/evidence by developing data literacy across the entire education organization.

UCAPP is committed to developing and preparing transformational school leaders with the competence and disposition to effect school policies and practices that realize equitable **achievement, participation, service, and support outcomes** for every student.

Through strategically aligned coursework and practicum experiences, UCAPP graduates will enter schools ready to:

- Lead with an anti-racist and equity driven perspective,
- Lead by listening to and working collaboratively with all constituencies -- teachers, students, families, and communities -- which they serve, and
- Lead with honesty and courage to confront and disrupt systemic policies and practices which have perpetuated disparate achievement, participation, service, and support outcomes.

Course Outline and Calendar

**Session 1: Creating a culture of data literacy**

Objectives:

- Define data literacy for all educators emphasizing the importance of building teacher knowledge and practice in using data to improve student outcomes.
- Understand the role of the leader in the ongoing process of building data literate educators through collaborative teams that will positively drive equitable learning opportunities for all students, reducing achievement gaps for special populations.
- Consider how ongoing professional learning around data literacy reinforces and matches the principles of adult learning theory.
- Gain an understanding of systems, routines, and norms to develop and sustain an inclusive school.

Standards:

1b) In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.

3g) Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice, always focused in the three elements of the instructional core.

3h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

4d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.

10d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation. Corwin. Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2
- Causton, J. & Theoharis, G. (2013). *The Principal's Handbook for Leading Inclusive Schools*, Chapters 1, 5, & 6
- Why everyone should be data literate | Jordan Morrow | TEDxBoise, 2019 (12:36min.): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ovyQZ\\_Z8Xs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ovyQZ_Z8Xs)
- City, E.A., Elmore, R.F., Fiarman, S.E., & Teitel, L. 2009, Instructional Rounds in Education. Harvard Educational Press. Chapter1  
[http://www.fpsct.org/uploaded/Teacher\\_Resource\\_Center/Instructional\\_Practices/Resources/20091124152005.pdf](http://www.fpsct.org/uploaded/Teacher_Resource_Center/Instructional_Practices/Resources/20091124152005.pdf)

## **Session 2: Guiding teachers to understand and assess multiple sources/evidence of student performance**

### Objectives:

- Identify qualitative and quantitative data indicators that are the most appropriate to use in measuring the ongoing progression of student learning
- Develop skill in how/where to collect 'appropriate' student data—attendance, grades, test scores, behavior, social emotional well-being, etc. to analyze, describe, and justify the root cause(s) to identify area(s) of need and/or focus for instructional improvement initiatives
- Evaluate the accuracy of data gathered, outline actionable data-driven decisions, and use data evidence in ongoing efforts to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Gain an understanding of the tenets of instructional/leadership coaching to improve the elements of the instructional core

### Standards:

2c) Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.

3b) Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.

4d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.

10d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

10g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.

### Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, *Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation*. Corwin. Prologue, Chapters 3 & 4
- Boudett, City, & Murnane. (2010). *Data Wise*, Introduction
- Mandinach, E.B., Parton, B.M., Gummer, E.S., & Anderson, R. (2015). Ethical and appropriate data use requires data literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96 (6), 25-28.
- *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools through Student-Engaged Assessment*. Copyright 2014 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Chapter 4 [Models, Critique, and Descriptive Feedback - Chapter 4 of Leaders of Their Own Learning | Models of Excellence \(eleducation.org\)](#)
- [What Are Student Centered Approaches? - Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents \(CAPSS\)](#)

### ***Session 3: Employing effective analysis strategies for instructional improvement.***

#### Objectives:

- Understand how to lead the process for teachers to analyze various forms of student data in order to use the evidence to provide valuable insights into all student learning, ensuring positive outcomes for special populations and students with disabilities.
- Discuss the leader's role in building teacher capacity, individually and collaboratively, around data-based decision-making at the classroom, grade, department, and school levels.
- Understand how to engage educators in a cyclical cycle of problem-solving (PDSA) to analyze data around student needs and how to make decisions in adjusting instructional practices using student performance data to improve teaching and learning.
- Examine how leadership coaching is a purposeful, targeted, and effective way in which to continually improve instructional practices while maintaining a focus on the instructional core.

#### Standards:

3h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

4g) Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction

7c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement

10d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

10g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.

#### Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, *Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation*. Corwin. Prologue, Chapters 5 & 6
- Boudett, City, & Murnane. (2010). *Data Wise*, Chapter 3
- [Answering the Questions That Count - ASCD](#)

#### **Session 4: Building dynamic collaborative teams and teacher leadership skills**

##### Objectives:

- Acquire an understanding of leadership strategies to create and enable effective collaborative teams around the use of performance evidence to guide instructional improvements in an inclusive learning environment
- Identify ways to equitably share and distribute leadership by empowering teachers
- Practice analyzing multiple forms of data focusing on how to identify students falling through the cracks, identify gaps in curriculum coverage, and how to better align curriculums across departments and grades

##### Standards:

3h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

7c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement

7f) Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.

10d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

10g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.

##### Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, *Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation*. Corwin. Prologue, Chapters 7
- Spillane, J.P. (2006). *Distributed Leadership*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA. Chapters 1 & 2
- *Transforming Schools: How Distributed Leadership Can Create More High-Performing Schools*  
<https://www.bain.com/insights/transforming-schools>
- The Power of Team Norms: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-power-of-team-norms>

**Session 5: Supporting data-driven decision-making skills to positively impact the learning environment and transform culture**

Objectives:

- Explore different applications of data, from its capacity to help diagnose root causes of inequity, to its potential to transform learning, and its power to reshape adult learning culture
- Understand the various purposes of instructional rounds to systematically sustain high expectations for teaching practices and student learning performance
- Explain how principals will have significant influence on teacher practice, rigorous curriculum, and student learning through effective collaboration and strategic coaching

Standards:

6c) Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.

7c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement

7f) Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.

10d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

10j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation, and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation. Corwin. Prologue, Chapters 8
- How leaders can support teachers with data-driven decision making: A framework for understanding capacity building. [Microsoft Word - Supporting teachers in DDDM EMAL FINAL with cover \(usc.edu\)](#)
- Aguilar, E. (2013). The art of coaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (Ch. 1-5)
- Moving From Compliance to Agency: What Teachers Need to Make Professional Learning Work (Calvert, 2016)
- City, E. Learning from Instructional Rounds. 2011. Educational Leadership. [Unknown \(ucdavis.edu\)](#)

## **Session 6: Building teacher and student agency**

### Objectives:

- Identify the key roles of the instructional leader to utilize performance data to build data literacy, inform instructional practices, and ongoing adult learning
- Reflect on the role of the instructional leader leading a learning community where educators meet regularly to discuss instructional practices, share data and evidence of students learning, collaborate to problem solve student learning issues, define action steps to address gaps and inequalities, while sharing a common goal of meeting the needs of all learners
- Revise leadership theory of action to incorporate ongoing learning around the role of the instructional leader

### Standards:

3h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

4a) Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.

10j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation, and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

### Readings to be completed before class:

- Safir, S. & Dugan, J., 2021, *Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation*. Corwin. Prologue. Chapters 9
- Khalifa, M. A., Mark, A. G., & James, E. D. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272-1311.
- Theoharis, G. (2010). Disrupting injustice: Principals narrate the strategies they use to improve their schools and advance social justice. *Teachers College Record*, 112(1), 331-373.
- Administrator Data Literacy Fosters Student Success: [DQC-Admin-Data-Literacy-08102018.pdf \(netdna-ssl.com\)](https://netdna-ssl.com/DQC-Admin-Data-Literacy-08102018.pdf).

**Summary of Course Grading:**

Course Components	Weight
<i>Data Use Actions</i>	30%
<i>Theory of Action</i>	20%
<i>Instructional Leadership Reflection</i>	25%
<i>Participation and Engagement</i>	25%

Data Use Actions (30%)

As a school leader, you will be asked to participate in a simulated interview experience where you will respond to questions regarding data use in schools that promotes adult learning; increases student voice, agency, and ownership of learning; increases the quality and rigor of the curriculum; decreases student achievement gaps; and guides improvement efforts. The interview will be conducted one-on-one with the instructor by session 4 or 5 (schedule a 15-minute recorded Zoom session with your instructor).

Questions included in your 15-minute interview will address the following. As a school leader:

- What is the purpose of using data in schools and what data are important to review?
- Describe how to use data and observable evidence collected to better analyze problems and to identify promising ways to address a Problem of Practice (POP) to create improvement.
- Describe how you will create a culture of using multiple types of data on student performance in your school that will empower all students, support excellence in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and build teacher practice.
- What is your plan for sharing data with all stakeholders, including how to help staff understand the data, what you expect staff to do with the data, and how student achievement will be monitored to measure growth?

Theory of Action (20%)

Based on your learning as an instructional leader, revisit and update your developing leadership theory of action using the content and experiences from this course. Make sure to speak to instructional leadership and leadership for equity.

Instructional Leadership Reflection (25%)

Summarize (2-3 pages) your understanding and thinking about instructional leadership. Questions to consider include:

- Why is developing a shared vision, mission, and goals focused on high expectations to continuously improve teaching and learning important to school culture and the learning environment?
- What is the importance of understanding the elements of the instructional core to determine improvement efforts that promote equitable learning opportunities for all students?
- Why is building educator data literacy and deepening instructional data-driven decision making a key driver in strengthening school culture and improving student performance?
- What are the effective types/methods to engage adult learners in professional learning?
- Why should a school leader find ways to equitably share and distribute leadership by empowering teachers in implementing school improvement efforts?
- Why is instructional coaching and leadership modeling important in building teacher skill?
- What are the key values that you, as the school leader, will emulate in your work as an instructional leader?

Participation and Engagement (25%)

Readings completed before class, participation in class discussions



## Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

## Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
  - Academic Integrity
  - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Credit Hours and Workload
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

You are also responsible for abiding by the expectations and policies defined the UCAPP Student Handbook.

## Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.” (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#))

## Software/Technical Requirements (with Accessibility and Privacy Information)

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

- HuskyCT/Blackboard ([HuskyCT/ Blackboard Accessibility Statement](#), [HuskyCT/ Blackboard Privacy Policy](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) ([Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement](#), [Adobe Reader Privacy Policy](#))
- Google Apps ([Google Apps Accessibility](#), [Google for Education Privacy Policy](#))
- Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended).
- WebCam

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University's Privacy page](#).

**NOTE:** This course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices.

## Help

[Technical and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, you have access to the in person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the [Help Center](#). You also have [24x7 Course Support](#) including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

## Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the [Computer Technology Competencies](#) page for more information.

## Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.