

Services and Areas of Expertise
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In my consulting practice, I offer expertise in a variety of areas that can help educators use data more effectively. In offering these services, I work with schools, districts, and organizations that work with schools and districts. The following descriptions provide more detail about these services.

Data system training and application.

My approach to “training” for data systems is that it should be done on the *work*, not the system. Thus, I think we should never train directly on the system and its functions. Examples:

- System rollout: implementing and introducing a new system.
- Training to help users get more out of their system.
- Training to help users apply data (and the data system) in their practice.
- Helping a district study their data system use to determine future directions.

Data system acquisition.

Most districts buy a systems and say, “now, what will this system let us do?” Districts make better decisions when they understand how they use data in practice and specify a system that fits these uses. Examples:

- Writing an effective RFP that thoroughly describes how data use happens in the district.
- Interpreting vendor presentations during the RFP process.
- Working with system vendors at any point in the process.
- Working internally with staff on all of these issues (including locally-built systems).

Audit/evaluation of data practices throughout a district.

Most district leaders have a sense of how they use data, but thoroughly examining it throughout the district – particularly in schools – often yields a different picture. This “true” picture informs how districts may become data-informed learning organizations. Examples:

- Thorough, “deep-dive” throughout the district.
- A less deep, but still effective examination of district practices.

Helping principals and administrative teams lead teachers in using data.

Data use lives and dies in the principal’s office. Unfortunately, most districts ignore principal leadership strategies for *leading teachers* in using data, implicitly assuming it just happens. Examples:

- Helping principals define how data use will support educational improvement and teacher practice.
- Helping principals learn and apply concrete strategies for leading teachers.
- Helping principals leverage administrative teams and instructional support staff in leading teachers.

Integrating data-related professional learning.

Most data-related professional learning occurs separately from other professional learning and practice. Data-related professional learning should directly relate to the issues in which educators are immersed and should be linked to other professional learning. Examples:

- Helping districts identify which data-related professional learning is most relevant to educators.
- Helping districts identify methods for delivering practice-based data-related professional learning.
- Vertical alignment: aligning data-related professional learning with other professional learning.
- Horizontal alignment: linking data-related professional learning coherently to future and past professional learning.

Culture-building.

Culture is built by creating structures, processes, and habits that fit how the school or district wants to use data for improvement. From these, a culture is organically built that is a unique fit for that organization. Examples:

- Organizational analysis to determine structures, processes, and habits.
- Activities conducted within everyday work that implement structures, processes, and habits.

Building common understandings.

Common understandings about data use are critical. Common understandings aren't just about a shared language, but about understanding each other's perspectives on teaching, learning and how data serve these. Examples:

- Helping leaders understand how building common understandings fits their leadership practice.
- Activities and exercises that build common understandings throughout a school or district.

Communicating with data.

Data are a powerful communication tool that help schools and districts communicate what they do and what they are about – both internally and externally. Examples:

- Helping leaders learn the importance of using data to tell their stories, guided by the aphorism, “tell your story or someone else will.”
- Helping leaders use data to communicate internally – to their own teachers, administrators, and staff – about problems, practice and educational improvement.
- Helping leaders use data to communicate externally – to parents, press, public – about problems, practice and educational improvement.

Surveying teachers about data use.

I led a research team that developed the Teacher Data Use Survey for the U. S. Department of Education. The TDUS surveys teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff about teachers' uses of data and attitudes toward data. Examples:

- Helping district leaders administrate the survey.
- Strategies for promoting survey participation.
- Interpretation of results.
- Developing actions based on results.

Creating teacher feedback loops.

Schools and districts need to establish methods for listening to teachers about current practices, existing barriers, and teacher attitudes regarding data. Examples:

- Interviews with teachers and interpretation of their answers (i.e., reading between the lines).
- Helping schools/districts consider how teacher experience fits organizational data use initiatives.
- Establishing processes for creating teacher feedback loops.

Other relevant areas (these are important, they just need less description).

- Keynote addresses.
- Workshops and workshop sessions.
- Grant-writing support.

General areas. These pretty thread through all the above, but are worth mentioning.

- Aligning data use processes throughout a district or school.
- Strategies to infuse data into everyday work and reduce “event-based” data use.
- Social processes involved in using data – collaboration, feedback, connection.
- Data use in the service of larger goals of teaching and continuous improvement.