



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Ed.D. in School Improvement

Course	EDSI 6311: Data-Driven Planning for School Improvement
Instructor	Dr. Yanira Oliveras
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Phone Number	903.565.5639
Term	Fall 2026
Last Day to Withdraw from this course:	October 30, 2026

Course Description

This course employs an interdisciplinary approach to examine how educational leaders can determine, promote, support, and achieve successful, systematic school improvement through the use data and meaningful feedback, and the implementation of systems to monitor the teaching and student learning.

Course Purpose and Role in the Ed.D. Program

Students enter EDSI 6311 with an established Problem of Practice (PoP) developed through prior coursework, dissertation work, and summer residency.

The course uses that established PoP as the context for evaluating the organizational system currently in place related to the problem. Students examine how the organization collects and uses data, implements programs and processes, monitors performance, responds to variation, and engages in continuous improvement.

As students analyze evidence, they may refine the wording, scope, boundaries, or supporting evidence of the PoP when warranted by the data. Any substantive refinement should be discussed with the dissertation chair and committee.

Because EDSI 6311 is taken during Fall of Year 2, the course also supports students in strengthening the evaluation design they will use in subsequent dissertation work.

Course and Dissertation Boundaries

EDSI 6311 supports dissertation development but does not replace the dissertation course, dissertation chair, committee, methodologist, or Institutional Review Board process.

Students may use course activities to:

- examine public or existing organizational data;
- analyze appropriately authorized or de-identified records;
- evaluate current surveys, assessments, and instruments;
- identify gaps in existing data;
- refine constructs and evaluation questions;
- consider participants, sampling, access, and feasibility;
- draft or refine potential instruments;
- and plan future data collection.

Students may not begin formal dissertation data collection involving human participants until all required approvals have been obtained.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate whether an educational organization uses data primarily for compliance or continuous improvement.
- Evaluate the relevance, quality, limitations, and organizational use of demographic, perception, student learning, school process, artifact, accountability, and predictive data.
- Critique whether an educational organization collects and uses the types of data needed to understand the system related to an established PoP and refine the PoP when warranted by the evidence.
- Evaluate the implementation and performance of existing programs, processes, policies, and organizational routines related to the PoP.
- Analyze variation in system performance across people, groups, settings, roles, and time using multiple sources of evidence.
- Evaluate alignment among evaluation questions, constructs, measures, data sources, participants, instruments, and proposed analysis.
- Evaluate whether a School or District Improvement Plan supports systematic monitoring, meaningful feedback, organizational learning, and continuous improvement.
- Defend a feasible, ethical, and coherent approach to collecting strong evaluation data during subsequent dissertation work.

Central Course Questions

Throughout the semester, students will return to five questions:

- What does the organization currently know about the system related to the established PoP?
- Does the organization collect and use the right types of data?

- What do the data suggest should be clarified or refined about the established PoP?
- How well are current programs, processes, and routines being implemented?
- What evidence will be needed to evaluate the current system credibly?

Required Textbooks and Course Resources

All required course materials can be accessed at no additional cost through:

- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- UT Tyler Library resources
- Open-access scholarly articles

Required Text

Bernhardt, V. L. *Data Analysis for Continuous School Improvement*. Course-approved edition.

This text is required. **Students do not need to purchase a copy unless they prefer to do so. The UT Tyler Library provides online access to enrolled students at no additional cost.**

Approach to Data in This Course

A central premise of EDSI 6311 is that being “data driven” does not mean accepting whatever data happen to be available.

Students will be expected to question:

- What is being measured?
- Why is it being measured?
- Who decided it matters?
- Whose experience is represented?
- What is not being measured?
- Does the measure match the intended construct?
- Is the evidence timely enough to support improvement?
- Does the evidence describe an outcome, a process, implementation, perception, or context?
- Is the organization collecting the data because they are useful or because they are required?
- What conclusions can and cannot reasonably be made from the evidence?

This critical examination of school data remains a central thread throughout the course.

Course Organization

The course is organized into four extended learning phases rather than a sequence of unrelated weekly assignments. Students will engage with readings, reflection, analysis, collaboration, and application every week. However, not every learning activity is submitted for a grade.

Course Content

Phase	Dates	Focus	Guiding Questions
1	Aug. 24– Sept. 20, 2026	Current-System Context, Evidence, and Data Use	What does the organization currently know about the system related to the established PoP, and how is that evidence being used?
2	Sept. 21– Oct. 18, 2026	Types of Data, Measurement Quality, and Data Gaps	Does the organization collect the types of data needed to understand and evaluate the current system, and do those data measure what matters?
3	Oct. 19– Nov. 22, 2026	Programs, Processes, Implementation, Variation, and Systems	What is the organization currently doing to address, monitor, or respond to the PoP? How consistently is the current system operating? What evidence will be needed to evaluate implementation and variation?
4	Nov. 30– Dec. 11, 2026	Evaluation Readiness and Improvement Planning	How can educational leaders evaluate current-system evidence responsibly and prepare to collect strong data in the spring?

Grading Criteria

This course uses a traditional grading approach designed to assess students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply data and school improvement frameworks at a doctoral level.

Students will be evaluated based on:

- Depth of analysis and evaluation of evidence
- Critical examination of data quality, relevance, and limitations
- Application of school improvement and systems frameworks
- Use of evidence to support claims and recommendations
- Quality of writing and organization of ideas
- Engagement with feedback and revision

- Timely submission of assignments

All assignments are expected to reflect doctoral-level thinking and professional communication.

Grading Scale

A 90–100% of points

B 80–89% of points

C 70–79% of points

D 60–69% of points

F below 60% of total points

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Assessment	Weight
Current-System Evidence and Continuous Improvement Analysis	15%
Current Data System and Measurement Critique	15%
Current Program and Process Implementation Analysis	15%
Cross-Data Group Case Study and Appendix H	10%
System Variation and Evaluation-Planning Analysis	15%
Predictive Analytics and System Evaluation Critique	10%
Final School or District Improvement Plan Evaluation	20%
Total	100%

Detailed assignment descriptions, expectations, and the assignment schedule will be posted on Canvas.

Doctoral-Level Expectations

Students are expected to demonstrate doctoral-level analysis, evaluation, writing, and professional judgment.

Course submissions should:

- move beyond summary;
- evaluate evidence and competing interpretations;
- use appropriate scholarly and professional literature;
- distinguish evidence from assumption;
- avoid unsupported causal conclusions;
- acknowledge limitations;
- demonstrate critical use of data;
- use professional and scholarly language;
- follow APA 7th edition when appropriate;
- and be carefully edited and proofread.

The Ed.D. handbook expects professional-quality writing, appropriate use of research literature, and APA formatting in doctoral coursework.

Time Commitment

Students should plan for sustained weekly engagement even when no major assessment is due.

Coursework may include:

- reading;
- viewing instructor materials;
- analyzing organizational data;
- completing private reflection activities;
- using course frameworks and tools;
- collaborating with peers;
- developing major assessments;
- and connecting course learning to dissertation work.

The Ed.D. handbook indicates that students should devote approximately three hours each week to online course engagement and up to six additional hours to readings, projects, papers, and other course activities.

COURSE POLICIES

It is my goal for each of you to benefit and grow professionally throughout this course. I value open communication and encourage you to reach out via email, phone, or Zoom to discuss course concepts, assignments, or your progress.

Participation

- Participation is defined by your consistent engagement with course materials, assignments, and learning activities. As doctoral students, you are expected to engage deeply with scholarly literature, think critically, and apply course concepts to data use, organizational systems, and school improvement.
- You are responsible for completing assignments on time and maintaining consistent engagement throughout the week.
- Because course readings are complex and require analysis, work should be distributed across multiple days rather than completed in a single session.

Written Assignments

Specific requirements and guidelines will be provided in Canvas. All assignments must reflect doctoral-level thinking and meet the following criteria:

- Submitted on time
- Clearly organized and professionally presented
- Free of typographical and grammatical errors
- Demonstrates depth of analysis and application of data, systems thinking, and school improvement concepts.
- Follows APA 7th edition formatting when applicable

Written assignments must be submitted as a **Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF** file unless otherwise specified in Canvas.

Assignments are due by **11:59 PM Central Time on the due date** and must be submitted through Canvas. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made due to emergencies or significant health concerns.

Academic Integrity

- Academic integrity is essential in this course. Submitted work must represent your own analysis, judgment, and authorship, and all sources or outside contributions must be acknowledged as required.
- Canvas will process submissions through **Turnitin**. You are encouraged to review similarity reports and address any issues before final submission.
- Unauthorized collaboration is not permitted unless explicitly stated. Violations will be addressed according to University Policies and the Student Standards of Academic Conduct.
- Submitting the same assignment, in whole or in substantial part, for credit in multiple courses is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by the instructor. When prior work is appropriately reused, it must be substantially developed for the current course and acknowledged when appropriate.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

UT Tyler supports the responsible use of AI tools. AI may be used to assist with writing, organization, and revision, but it should not replace your own thinking or analysis. You are responsible for evaluating the accuracy and appropriateness of any AI-generated content. Inaccurate or unsupported information will impact your work. If AI tools are used in a manner requiring disclosure under course or APA guidance, their use must be acknowledged appropriately.

AI should be used as a support tool, not a substitute for engaging with course readings, conducting research, or developing your own analysis.

APA Style Citation Information:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Code of Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves as doctoral-level professionals by engaging actively in course learning, meeting assigned deadlines, communicating appropriately, and maintaining academic integrity. Violations of course or university policies will be addressed in accordance with applicable course and university procedures.

Communicating with Dr. Oliveras

My email address is yoliveras@uttyler.edu. Please note that this is not a Patriots email address. My cell phone number is posted in Canvas.

Feel free to text or email. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours during the week and within 36 hours on weekends.

Professional Learning Environment

This course is a professional space for scholarly engagement. Students are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally in all interactions.

Discussions should remain focused on course concepts and supported by evidence. Academic dialogue should reflect respect for differing perspectives and maintain a focus on ideas rather than individuals.

Digital Library Resources

Students enrolled in the doctoral program have online access to the UT Tyler Robert R. Muntz Library (<http://library.uttyler.edu>). Library databases provide access to scholarly literature and other resources needed for course assignments and dissertation-related work. Students should ensure that their library accounts are active and become familiar with available databases and services early in the semester. If a needed resource is not immediately available, students should contact the Education Librarian, Vandy Dubre.

[University Policies & Information](#)