

## **EDUC 522: Challenges in Urban Education: Accountability Summer 2017**

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course focuses on the domain of accountability, a concept critical to leaders of educational organizations at all levels. Traditionally, in education, accountability and assessment were only loosely connected. Assessment was used mainly for diagnostic purposes or for dividing students into ability groups. Accountability, on the other hand, was of the political sort as reflected in elected boards' accountability to local constituents. In K-12 education, schools were accountable to district administrators who, in turn, were accountable to the elected boards. Now, since the advent of standards-based reform, *No Child Left Behind* and *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* federal legislation, states have developed new types of accountability systems. These systems feature the use of student testing to measure school performance in order to reward schools achieving standards or to sanction schools that fall short.

Compared to K-12, accountability in higher education faces different challenges and is less standardized. It is also less influential in decision-making, the allocation of resources, curriculum design, the determination of institutional effectiveness, and evaluation of teaching effectiveness. The majority of states have systems of accountability that require public institutions of higher education to report outcomes such as enrollments, graduation rates, and student performance in licensing exams. Increasingly, states are connecting funding to institutional performance. As state budgets for higher education shrink, accountability is playing a more central role in the evaluation and funding of higher education. In addition, the federal government is playing a greater role in regulation and compliance that increase accountability measures in both public and private universities.

This core course on accountability traces the evolution of the accountability concept with an emphasis on emerging accountability issues in urban schools and colleges that serve large numbers of low-income and racial/ethnic minority groups. Special attention will be given to helping leaders understand, analyze, and cope within the context of increased demands for accountability. We will also consider the connections between accountability and the creation of evidence-based school and academic cultures. While most of the examples discussed in this course are in the K-12 or higher education context, students are encouraged to apply the models and theories to other settings (business, health professions, etc.). In fact, much of the course content originated in the private sector over the last 25 years.

### **COURSE PROFICIENCIES**

1. Establish measurable goals and strategies that support improved learning within the organization. (S)
2. Apply data driven decision making to generate consistent and measurable outcomes that are responsive to established standards and the needs of students, community and society. (K)
3. Demonstrate the belief that accountability and communication to all stakeholder groups leads to transparent and equitable educational outcomes that are responsive to all learners. (D)

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the current policy environment for accountability in educational settings (K-12 and higher education) and be able to compare that to accountability mechanisms in other settings.
2. Each student will get practice providing the empirical basis for a specific theory, or practice by applying research through analysis of an accountability problem in an educational or training environment.
3. Each student will develop skills in reading and understanding research on accountability, and how to apply that research to solving challenging educational problems in urban settings.
4. In addition to these general goals, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
  - a. The measurement issues involved in the development of accountability systems.
  - b. How accountability mechanisms are developed and used in the policy environment.The impact that accountability programs have on educational programs in various settings.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Class attendance.** Each student enrolled in this course is required to attend *all* class meetings, read *all* assignments by the date when they will be discussed in class, and participate in discussions and group exercises.

**Reading.** To facilitate the learning process, students are expected to read the assignments in advance of each class period and to actively participate in class discussion and activities.

## TEXTBOOK, READINGS & BLACKBOARD

The syllabus and other course information will be posted on Blackboard. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion based on the articles assigned that week.

Required text: American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Articles available online at USC ARES website, Blackboard, or online.

## COURSE GRADING

### Graded Assignments

The first paper focuses on identifying the types of accountability that you are encountering or might encounter in your professional life and some of the challenges involved. The second paper focuses on the use of benchmarks as assessment tools to determine how the organization compares to similar organizations in the identified specific areas. The third paper asks you to identify ways to improve accountability within your organization. In all three papers you will be asked to draw on the concepts and issues of accountability discussed in class and expanded on in the assigned readings. All assignments must follow APA style. Students will also make a 7-minute oral presentation on their projects at the end of the term.

Graded assignments are not eligible for revision and regrading. Once an assignment is submitted, it cannot be revised for a higher grade.

There are three papers due for this class focused on:

1. Understanding what types of accountability apply to the organization in which you currently work (or might encounter in an expected workplace)
2. Using benchmarks to assess an accountability problem
3. Improving accountability in your workplace.

For all assignments, please include a cover page with the title and date of the assignment (as listed in the syllabus) your institutional affiliation (i.e., University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education), the title of the course, name of the professor, your name, and the date.

You are advised to seek feedback on your papers before you turn them in to your instructor. This is a service the Doctoral Support Center will provide for you if you plan ahead and give them enough time to respond before the paper is due.

Your Writing Advisor at the Doctoral Support Center (DSC) can review your assignments for clarity and logic. Check the due dates for your assignments in this syllabus and schedule reviews in advance by calling or emailing at the start of the semester to request a review time. The review will consist of the Writing Advisor providing feedback by email, or in person when requested. Remember to give yourself time to address the feedback provided. Please submit your writing draft well in advance of your scheduled review.

The final course grade will be computed from the assignments listed in table below. Late assignments will receive a 10% reduction in points per day past the due date.

Assignment	Total Points for Assignment Category	Weight (Percentage of Final Grade)	Unit Assignment Is Due
Three Papers	75 (25 points/paper)	75%	Week 4 Week 8 Week 12
Oral Presentation	10	10%	Week 12
Class Participation	15	15%	Week 12
Total	100	100%	

*The final grade for this course will be awarded using the following point scale:*

A 100–95%	B+ 89–86%	C+ 79–76 %	D+ 69–66%	F 59–0%
A– 94–90%	B 85–83%	C 75–73%	D 65–63%	
	B– 82–80%	C– 72–70%	D– 62–60%	

### Late Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted, except in the case of serious personal emergencies. If serious circumstances arise that hinder you from meeting the deadline, you must contact the instructor by e-mail **before** the deadline in order to be given consideration. No assignments may be turned in after the last class meeting. Assignments turned in after the last class will not be graded.

### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the university will continue to provide reasonable accommodation for academically qualified candidates with disabilities so that they can participate fully in the university’s educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the “fundamental nature or essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled candidates,” the university will provide reasonable academic accommodation. It is the specific responsibility of the university administration and all faculty serving in a teaching capacity to ensure the university’s compliance with this policy.

Any candidate requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. The e-mail address is: [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu). The website for DSP has additional information regarding accommodations and requests ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability)).

## EMERGENCIES AND COURSE CONTINUITY

In case of emergency and when travel to campus is difficult, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. For additional information about maintaining classes in an emergency, please access <https://learningdesign.usc.edu/emergency-preparedness/>

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### **Support Systems:**

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255**

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### **Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call**

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

### **Sexual Assault Resource Center**

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

### **Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086**

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

### **Bias Assessment Response and Support**

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

### **Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710**

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

### **Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>**

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

## INCOMPLETES

An incomplete (IN) is given when work is not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency occurring after 80% of the course has been completed. Arrangements for the IN and its removal should be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final exam. The university policy on incompletes is as follows (from the USC Catalogue):

*Conditions for Removing a Grade of Incomplete:* If an incomplete is assigned as the student’s grade, the instructor will fill out the Incomplete (IN) Completion form, which will specify to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date, and the weight to be assigned to work remaining to be done when computing the final grade. A student may remove the IN by completing only the work not finished as a result of

illness or emergency. Previously graded work may not be repeated for credit. It is not possible to remove an IN by reregistering for the course, even within the designated time.

*Time limit for removal of an incomplete:* One calendar year is allowed to remove an IN. Individual academic units may have more stringent policies regarding these time limits. If the IN is not removed within the designated time limit, the course is considered “lapsed” and the grade is changed to an IX and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis or taken on a Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of Incomplete is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

## OVERVIEW OF PAPERS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

Regardless of your current or future position, it is likely that accountability will be a problem you will face. For this term project, you are asked to apply the concepts and issues of accountability discussed in class and expanded on in the assigned readings to the organization where you work (or in the case of those not currently working, a place of employment you either worked in previously or expect to work in the future). Students can think about accountability of the organization as a whole, as well as the individuals within the organization. No original data collection or outside research is required.

Students will also make a **7 minute oral presentation** on one or more of their papers on **JULY 20, JULY 27, or AUGUST 3, 2017**. The papers, which will be developed over the duration of this course, will be completed in three sequential phases. The papers should be tied together dealing with one accountability issue:

1. **Accountability types due: (Week 4 – June 8, 2017).**
2. **Benchmarking due: (Week 8 – July 6, 2017).**
3. **Improving accountability due: (Week 12 – August 3, 2017).**

The intent with the papers is to provide an opportunity for you to apply new knowledge about accountability theory and practice toward addressing real-world situations. The writing assignments also provide an opportunity for you to develop writing skills. Page limits are provided below; learning to write succinctly is an essential leadership skill.

### **Paper #1 : Accountability Types**

***Due Date: (Week 4 – June 8, 2017)***

For this assignment, you will need to consider the types of accountability (e.g., professional, bureaucratic, market) you are encountering (or expect to encounter/have encountered) within the organization in which you work and critically analyze some of the challenges or problems associated with this accountability.

For Paper #1, you should do the following:

1. Provide a one page or less description/overview of the context of the organization. Use a pseudonym for your organization, if appropriate.
2. Answer the following questions:
  - a) To whom is your organization accountable and for what? Describe at least two types of accountability (e.g., professional, bureaucratic, market) discussed in the readings and in class that are most relevant to your organization's performance. Be specific and provide examples. Be sure to describe all aspects of the definition of accountability that have been discussed in class: the parties involved in this relationship, the goals/expectations, the performance assessed, and the consequences.
  - b) Is your organization currently succeeding at achieving these accountability goals/expectations?
  - c) What are some of the challenges or problems your organization or individuals within the organization face in meeting these accountability goals/expectations? Be specific and provide examples. These can apply to either accountability problems within the organizational or external accountability issues.

Length: 4-6 pages, double-spaced, excluding references.

**Paper #1 Grading Criteria** - This assignment is worth 25 points towards the final grade.

In order to receive full credit, the paper must demonstrate a clear understanding of the types of accountability, and the accountability problem that you have proposed needs to be reasonable and described clearly. In addition, your assignment must:

1. Be uploaded to Blackboard before midnight on the due date;
2. Not exceed 4-6 double spaced pages, excluding references;
3. Cite appropriate and relevant readings from the course, following APA style guidelines;
4. Be written coherently, with a well-developed argument, including an introduction and conclusion;
5. Identify at least two types of accountability to which the organization is subject and includes all four parts of the definition in the description of these accountability types;
6. Critically analyze some of the challenges or problems the organization faces in meeting these accountability goals.

## **Paper #2: Setting a Benchmarking Problem**

**Due Date: (Week 8 – July 6, 2017)**

For this assignment, consider this scenario: you have been asked to put together a team to tackle a performance problem in your organization through a benchmarking analysis.

Please respond to the following prompts to describe your benchmarking process. You are not being asked to actually conduct the research in these other organizations, but instead describe the process you would undertake.

1. You can use one of the problems identified in paper #1 or you can identify a different performance problem in your organization. It could relate to outcomes (e.g., low student test scores, low graduation/drop out/completion rates), low retention or completion rates, staff (e.g., satisfaction, retention/turnover, quality of instruction), or the overall organization (e.g., poor climate, inefficient or ineffective structures). Briefly (in less than one page) describe this problem and indicate how it is a problem tied to accountability.
2. Identify at least 3 peer organizations that you want to include in this benchmarking analysis and the criteria you have used to identify these organizations. Are they similar or aspirational, and why?
3. What are the specific performance measures or indicators you want to analyze in your organization compared to the peer organizations? Identify at least two indicators.
4. Before you can understand how and why another organization is getting particular outcomes, you need to thoroughly understand your own practices. What are some of the policies, procedures, methods, structures, etc. that might be contributing to your performance problem and that you would like to compare to these other organizations? Recall Clark & Este's gap analysis to identify some potential categories of practice around motivation, knowledge/skills, organizational context. Identify at least 4 specific practices that you would like study in these other organizations.

You might consider whether knowledge and skills, organizational issues, and political issues influence the problem. Describe how the proposed performance measures (indicators) will inform your analysis; use real-world examples and include enough details so that the reader understands the situation and the various stakeholders.

Length: 4-6 pages total, double-spaced, excluding references

### **Paper #2 Grading Criteria**

This assignment is worth 25 points toward the final grade. In grading this assignment, your professor will be looking for:

- a) A well-defined problem;
- b) A clear rationale for selecting the benchmarking organizations;
- c) Proposed performance measures that are clearly defined and reasonable;
- d) A paper that is coherent and clearly written, including an introduction and conclusion, and using APA style.

In addition, your assignment must:

1. Be uploaded to Blackboard before midnight on the due date;
2. Not exceed 4-6 double spaced pages, excluding references;
3. Cite appropriate and relevant readings from the course;
4. Include a description of the problem, the benchmarking process, how the organizations used in the benchmarking are identified, and measures to be used, and at least 4 practices you would like to study in these organizations. These indicators must be reasonable and well defined. The indicators help inform the accountability problem;
5. Include real-world examples and enough details so that the reader understands the situation and various stakeholders.

**Paper #3: Improving Accountability**  
**Due Date: (Week 12 – August 3, 2017)**

For this assignment, you will devise a plan of action which would lead to improved accountability within the organization or with the outside agencies monitoring the organization's performance. Be sure to draw from the readings as you address this external or internal problem. In order to meet accountability goals and expectations, what is needed (e.g., leadership, resources, ethical codes of conduct) in the organization? In other words, how can the problem be ameliorated while insuring that no violations are taking place. Describe in detail an action or set of actions (at least three) needed to improve accountability in the organization.

Cite specific concepts, models, and theories from the readings in this course, and be sure to explain how your proposed plan of action reflects what you have learned in class. What were the characteristics of the accountability problem that justified your proposed action plan? How do the concepts, models and theories help explain the outcomes of the action you would take? In other words, *use the material from the course* as predictors of what would happen if all goes as theory would suggest.

Length: 4-6 pages, double-spaced, excluding references

**Paper #3 Grading Criteria** - This assignment is worth 25 points toward the final grade.

The main criterion in grading the paper will be how well you have applied and integrated the course readings and class discussion toward developing feasible solutions to real-world accountability problem. Use of evidence and illustrations to support your statements also will be important. As with all your graduate work in Rossier, you are expected to use APA style when you cite journal articles, personal communications, news stories, and other references.

In addition, your assignment must:

1. Be uploaded to Blackboard before midnight on the due date;
2. Not exceed 4-6 double spaced pages, excluding references;
3. Cite appropriate and relevant readings from the course;
4. Be written coherently, with a well-developed argument, including an introduction and conclusion;
5. Include an action plan that outlines a feasible, coherent, and detailed set of actions that respond to the problem analysis;
6. Explain how the characteristics of the accountability problem justify the proposed action plan.

**ORAL PRESENTATION**  
**Due Date: (Week 12 In Class – August 3, 2017)**

For this assignment, you will create a 7-minute PowerPoint presentation for class. In your presentation, review the main points of the final paper. Please time your talk to ensure that your presentation does not exceed the time limit.

Length: 7-minute PowerPoint presentation - 10 slides

**Oral Presentation Grading Criteria** - This assignment is worth 10 points toward the final grade.

Your presentation must

1. Be uploaded to Blackboard by 4 pm on the due date
2. Not exceed 10 slides
3. Cover paper #3 and address the following:
  - Background/context of accountability problem
  - Identification of accountability problem
  - Type or category of accountability
  - Who is being held accountable, and for what
  - The reasons why this is an accountability problem
  - Analysis of the problem
  - Benchmarks considered
  - Performance measures (indicators) used to assess the accountability problem.
  - Action plan that outlines a detailed set of actions to respond to the problem

## UNIT SEQUENCE

<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit # and Title</i>	<i>Assignment Due</i>
Week 1 May 18, 2017	NO CLASS	
Week 2 May 25, 2017	1. Introduction; Definition/History of Accountability 2. Types of Accountability	
Week 3 June 1, 2017	3. Using Benchmarks to Drive Performance	
Week 4 June 8, 2017	4. Equity, Diversity, and Accountability	Paper #1
Week 5 June 15, 2017	5. Learning, Assessment and Accountability 6. Holding Organizations Accountable	
Week 6 June 22, 2017	NO CLASS	
Week 7 June 29, 2017	7. Individual and Organizational Accountability	
Week 8 July 6, 2017	8. Accountability and Resource Adequacy	Paper #2
Week 9 July 13, 2017	9. Leadership and Accountability 10. Building Internal Capacity for Improvement and Accountability	
Week 10 July 20, 2017	11. Ethics and Accountability	
Week 11 July 27, 2017	Oral Presentations on Paper 3	
Week 12 August 3, 2017	Oral Presentations on Paper 3	Paper #3

## Unit 1: Definition and History of Accountability

### Introduction

This initial class will introduce students to each other, the instructor, and the intellectual content of the course. The first part of the class will be devoted to describing the syllabus and course project. The remainder of the class will focus on how accountability has been defined in a variety of contexts (e.g., K-12, higher education, business and industry, and the health professions).

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Define the concept of accountability and give examples of its use in various contexts, both in education and beyond.
2. Compare and contrast the evolution of accountability in K-12 and higher education, including the social and political pressures that have influenced trends.
3. Begin to identify major accountability issues and challenges encountered in your workplace.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Conner, T. W., & Rabovsky, T. M. (2011). Accountability, affordability, access: A review of the recent trends in higher education policy research. *Policy Studies Journal*, 39(s1), 93–112.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Snyder, J. (2015). Meaningful learning in a new paradigm for educational accountability: An introduction. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 23(7).

Dubnick, M. (2014). Accountability as cultural keyword. In M. Bovens, R. E. Goodin, & T. Schillemans (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of public accountability* (pp. 23–28). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hentschke, G. C., & Wohlstetter, P. (2004). Cracking the code of accountability. *USC Urban Ed*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California: Rossier School of Education. [http://www.edsource.org/pub\\_new-fed-policies.html](http://www.edsource.org/pub_new-fed-policies.html)

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 2, 2006, from [www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/pre-pub-report.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/pre-pub-report.pdf) (**Optional**)

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. How is the concept of accountability defined in your workplace?
2. How has the definition of accountability changed over time in education, and what factors have led to those changes?
3. What are some of the current challenges to accountability?
4. How does the definition of accountability introduced in this unit align with and differ from your previous professional experience working with this topic?
5. Based on Hentschke and Wohlstetter, how can the contractual agreements between directors and providers in your profession or specific work setting be leveraged to increase desired outcomes and equity?

## Unit 2: Types of Accountability

### Introduction

Organizations are subject to various forms of accountability, often at the same time. Leaders of organizations are faced with both internal and external accountability demands. Moreover, leaders of schools and universities are currently coping with bureaucratic accountability, professional accountability, and market accountability. Depending on the context in which an organization is located, there may be more of one type of accountability than another.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Distinguish between various types of accountability (e.g., bureaucratic, professional, community) and how you as a leader can most effectively respond to them.
2. Continue to identify major accountability issues and challenges encountered in your workplace.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Burke, J. C. (2004). Achieving accountability in higher education: Balancing public, academic, and market demands. In J. C. Burke (Ed.), *The many faces of accountability* (pp. 1-24). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Firestone, W. A., & Shippy, D. (2005). How do leaders interpret conflicting accountabilities to improve student learning? In W. A. Firestone & C. Riehl (Eds.), *A new agenda for research in educational leadership*. New York: Teachers College Press (pp. 81-91).

Lee, M., Walker, A., & Ling Chui, Y. (2012). Contrasting effects of instructional leadership practices on student learning in a high accountability context. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(5), 586–611.

Romzek, B. S., & Dubnick, M. J. (1987). Accountability in the public sector: Lessons from the

Stecher, B., & Kirby, S. N. (2004). Introduction. In B. Stecher & S. N. Kirby, *Organizational improvement and accountability: Lessons for education from other sectors* (pp. 1-7). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation. Retrieved November 14, 2005, from <http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG136/>

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. What types of accountability exist in education?
2. Which types are most/least effective in creating organizational improvement?
3. What types of accountability exist outside education?
4. How do they fit/not fit with realities of education in urban settings?

### Unit 3: Using Benchmarks to Drive Performance

#### Introduction

Setting goals and targets to drive organizational performance is a common problem solving strategy in both the private and public sectors. Although setting “stretch goals” has been shown to work in a few isolated cases, data driven benchmarking is the preferred and more common approach. A benchmark is a reachable, objective, and reliable categorization *or* numerical scale by which organizational performance is assessed. There are two ways to benchmark organizational performance: peer-based benchmarking and standards-based benchmarking. In peer-based benchmarking, similar or aspirational peer organizations are used as performance benchmarks. For example, a private research university such as USC might benchmark its student retention rate to that of peer institutions such as Stanford, Harvard and Yale. The second way to benchmark is to use objectively determined standards of performance. For example, a Title I school might target resources to assure that 100% of its students meet the “basic” level on the standardized tests.

#### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Use peer-based benchmarking to solve a variety of accountability problems in K- 12 education, higher education and industry.
2. Use standards-based benchmarking to solve a variety of accountability problems in K-12 education, higher education and industry.

#### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Bogue, E. G., & Hall, K. (2003). College rankings and ratings: The test of reputation. In E.G. Bogue & K. Hall (Eds.), *Quality and accountability in higher education: Improving policy, enhancing performance* (pp. 51-75). Westport, CT: Praeger.

College Scorecard. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>

Dowd, A. C., (2005). *Data don't drive: Building a practitioner-driven culture of inquiry to assess community college performance*. Boston: University of Massachusetts, Lumina Foundation for Education.

Gladwell, M. (2011). The order of things. *The New Yorker*, 69-75.

Marsh, J. A. (2012). Interventions promoting educators' use of data: Research insights and gaps. *Teachers College Record*, 114(11), 1–48.

#### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. Use both peer-based benchmarking and standards-based benchmarking to begin to solve an accountability problem that you have identified.

## Unit 4: Equity, Diversity, and Accountability

### Introduction

Equity, diversity and access are key goals in both private and public settings. In K-12 education, equity is a key aspect of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Schools are increasingly being held responsible for addressing the performance of particular subgroups of the population and closing achievement gaps. In business and industry, “equal opportunity” has been a theme for nearly 50 years. How can accountability be used to promote equity and diversity?

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Understand how the disaggregation of data by a subgroup can be used as a vehicle for closing achievement gaps.
2. Understand issues of fairness and bias involved in the assessment of English language learners and members of racial minority groups.

### Readings and assignments to complete before class

Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). Race, inequality and educational accountability: The irony of "No Child Left Behind". *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 10(3), 245-260.

Dowd, A. C., & Bensimon, E. M. (2014). *Engaging the "race question": Accountability and equity in US higher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lang, D. W. (1999). *Similarities and differences: A case study in measuring diversity and selecting peers in higher education*. Société canadienne pour l'étude de l'enseignement supérieur.

Rueda, R. (2005). Student learning and assessment: Setting an agenda. In P. Pedraza & M. Rivera (Eds.), *Latino education: Setting an agenda* (pp. 185-204). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

### Question to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. How can accountability promote diversity?
2. When does accountability hinder equity?
3. What indicators can be used in your workplace to assess progress towards equity?

## Unit 5: Learning, Assessment and Accountability

### Introduction

One of the major challenges in conducting research in learning, whether in schools, colleges/universities, or other work settings, is the measurement and assessment of learning. Learning is both cognitive and affective. This class will address this issue. In most accountability applications in education, and in many applications in business and industry, learning is the primary institutional goal. However, the line between the learning that can be assessed and the learning that takes place is often blurry.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Define and give examples of key accountability concepts in learning.
2. Use assessments to drive instruction.
3. Connect the learning that has taken place to the learning that is being assessed for accountability purposes.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Black, P., & William, D. (1998, Oct.). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80, 139-148. <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm>

Conley, D T. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2013) Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning. Stanford Center for opportunity Policy in Education, Stanford, CA

Dowd, A. Tong, V.P., (2007) Accountability, Assessment, and the Scholarship of Best Practices, Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, p57-90

Golden, D. (2006, November 13). Colleges, accreditors seek better ways to measure learning. *The Wall Street Journal*, pp. B1, B2.

Marsh, J. A., & Farrell, C. C. (2015). How leaders can support teachers with data-driven decision making: A framework for understanding capacity building. *Educational Management Administration Leadership*, 43(2), 269–289. doi: 10.1177/1741143214537229

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. How can learning and accountability be linked for accountability purposes?
2. How does measurement support decision making?
3. What is formative assessment?

## **Unit 6: Holding Organizations Accountable**

### **Introduction**

Organizations in all work sectors are held accountable for their performance. This unit applies accountability measures and approaches used for organizational accountability in the business, education, and health care sectors. In particular, this unit focuses on the process institutions use to assess organizational performance.

### **Unit learning goals:**

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Establish goals and indicators to reflect various measures of performance in your workplace.
2. Create a balanced scorecard.

### **Readings and assignments to be completed before class**

Baur, D., & Schmitz, H. P. (2012). Corporations and NGOs: When accountability leads to co-optation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 106(1), 9-21.

Bensimon, E. M., Hao, L., & Bustillos, L. T. (2007). Measuring the state of equity in higher education. In P. Gandara, G. Orfield, & C. Horn (Eds.), *Leveraging promise and expanding opportunity in higher education*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Ebrahim, A. (2010). The many faces of nonprofit accountability. In D. O. Renz & associates (Eds.), *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management* (pp. 101–123) (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons/Jossey-Bass

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2010). Accountability for community colleges: Moving forward. In K. Carey & M. Schneider (Eds.), *Accountability in American Higher Education* (pp.273-293). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan

### **Question to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:**

1. How would you create a balanced scorecard for your organization?
2. How would you create a diversity scorecard for your organization?

## Unit 7: Individual and Organizational Accountability

### Introduction

The capacity of the K-16 education system to adapt to a complex and turbulent external environment requires the reconceptualization of faculty, teacher, and leadership roles. Accordingly, institutions of higher education and schools face two challenges: (1) the creation of performance and productivity standards that are aligned with the changing purposes, roles, and expectations of K-12 and postsecondary education; and (2) the creation of a system of rewards and incentives that will motivate faculty members, teachers, and administrators to develop new practices.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Develop strategies to align institutional purposes with individual practices.
2. Differentiate among different types of reward systems.
3. View reward systems through the lens of professional cultures.
4. Argue the advantages and disadvantages of performance-based pay.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Corts, K. S. (2007). Teams versus individual accountability: Solving multitask problems through job design. *The RAND Journal of Economics*, 38(2), 467–479.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. (2007). The state of cooperative learning in postsecondary and professional settings. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19(1), 15–29.

Marsh, J., Springer, M., McCaffrey, D., Yuan, K., Epstein, S., Koppich, J., Kalra, N., DiMartino, C., Peng, A. (2011) A Big Apple for Educators: New York City's Experiment with Schoolwide Performance Bonuses: Final Evaluation Report. Rand Corporation, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1114.html> (Summary p. 1-20)

Milanowski, A. T., Kimball, S. M., & Odden, A. (2005). Teacher accountability measures and links to learning. In L. Steifel, A. E. Schwartz, R. Rubenstein, & J. Zabel (Eds.), *Measuring school performance and efficiency: Implications for practice and research* (2005 American Education Finance Association yearbook) (pp. 137–162). New York: Taylor & Francis.

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. What are the underlying assumptions about individual motivation in performance-based reward systems?
2. What objections might faculty members and teachers have to performance-based reward systems?
3. How does the faculty or teacher evaluation system in your campus or school compare to the models presented in the readings?
4. In what ways could information gathered through faculty and teacher evaluation be useful to administrators, e.g., a principal or a department chair? In what ways is this information used in your campus or school?
5. Are there other ways of evaluating faculty or teacher performance that were not mentioned in the readings?

## Unit 8: Accountability and Resource Adequacy

### Introduction

Ascertaining how much money is needed and how it can best be utilized to improve learning is the focus of this unit. Financing education is the single largest expenditure made by all 50 states. Today, there is a growing concern over how much is spent for education, and how well those funds are used to meet the educational goals and standards we discussed in earlier classes. Particularly in the K-12 environment, current efforts to insure “adequate” school funding have moved researchers to look at the link between resources and student outcomes, and to estimate how much is needed to insure that all—or almost all—students are able to meet today’s achievement standards. Institutions of higher education face similar cost pressures as tuition increases have exceeded the rate of inflation for over a decade. Finally, private firms continue to devote large sums of money to education and training programs for their employees.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Understand the role of fiscal considerations in the design and implementation of accountability systems, including:
  - a. how states are working to understand what an adequate level of funding for schools should be;
  - b. linking funding to student outcomes.
2. Describe why financial accountability is often separated from performance accountability.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

California Department of Education (2014) Local Control Funding Formula Overview, CDOE, Sacramento, CA

Dowd, A. C., & Grant, J. L. (2006). Equity and efficiency of community college appropriations: The role of local financing. *The Review of Higher Education: 29*, 167-194.

Hillman, N. W., Tandberg, D. A., & Fryar, A. H. (2015). Evaluating the impacts of

Rabovsky, T. M. (2012). Accountability in higher education: Exploring impacts on state budgets and institutional spending patterns. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 22*(4), 675–700.

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. Organizations (business, nonprofit, schools, universities) are guided by a specific set of goals, or mission. What is the relationship between organizational mission, finance, and accountability?
2. Apply the concept of resource adequacy to three different organizational contexts. Discuss how the concept of “adequacy” may be applied differently. Provide examples.

## Unit 9: Leadership and Accountability

### Introduction

This class will focus on leadership accountability issues in urban schools, institutions of higher learning, and other work settings. Leaders of such institutions must understand themselves, the organizations that they head, and the complex social and political environments that represent such institutions. Accountability is a major mechanism to achieve these goals.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit, you will have learned to:

1. Analyze the interrelationships or connections between accountability and leadership.
2. Define a set of practical skills leaders need to encourage accountability within their organization and improve organizational performance.
3. Develop strategies for holding others accountable for results.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Bok, D. (1995). A matter of accountability. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 48(4), 31-39.

Childress, S., Elmore, R., & Grossman, A. (2006). How to manage urban school districts. *Harvard Business Review*, 55-68.

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect on leadership on student achievement.

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. What are the key accountability issues facing educational leaders?
2. What workplace conditions hinder accountability?
3. What can leaders do to counteract these conditions and create an organization that is more prepared for accountability?
4. What is the role of the leader in managing different types of accountability?

## Unit 10: Building Internal Capacity for Improvement and Accountability

### Introduction

Educational institutions that are strong in internal accountability and those that can be described as “learning organizations” tend to respond better to the demands of external accountability. It is advantageous for universities, districts, or schools to be engaged in knowledge development and capacity building as this in turns leads to improvement. This unit examines how internal and external accountability are related, or what can be done internally in an organization in order to lead to improvement on external measures.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit you will have learned to:

1. Define a learning organization and how it relates to accountability.
2. Identify the central features of an accountability system.
3. Critically examine the assumptions upon which external accountability systems are built.
4. Understand the relationship between accountability and organizational capacity.
5. Identify the ingredients of an accountability system that is likely to lead to school improvement.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Elmore, R. F. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement*, Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved July 12, 2003, from <http://www.nsd.org/library/results/res11-02elmore.html> (focus on pp.1-5; 19-24)

Marsh, J. A., Pane, J. F., & Hamilton, L. S. (2006). *Making sense of data-driven decision making in education*. RAND Education Occasional Paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available at: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/OP170.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP170.html)

New England Association of Schools and Colleges. (2015). U.S. regional accreditation: An overview. Retrieved from <https://cihe.neasc.org/about-accreditation/us-regional-accreditation-overview>

Grubb, W.N., Badway, N., (2005) From Compliance to Improvement: Accountability and Assessment in California Community Colleges. Higher Education Evaluation and Research group  
[http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/EWD/CTE/core\\_indicator/core\\_indicator\\_reports/Compliance\\_to\\_Improvement.pdf](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/EWD/CTE/core_indicator/core_indicator_reports/Compliance_to_Improvement.pdf)

O’Day, J. (2002). Complexity, accountability, and school improvement. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72, 293-329 (Optional)

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. What is the relationship between accountability and organizational capacity?
2. What is a “learning organization”?
3. What are the ingredients of an accountability system that are likely to lead to organizational improvement?

## Unit 11: Ethics and Accountability

### Introduction

The units in this Accountability course have tended to gloss over one topic that has received increased recent attention—the abuse of information. As you will read, a number of publications have carried stories documenting how institutions manipulate their reporting of data in order to make themselves look better in the eyes of others. These stories raise the issues of ethics and data integrity. The problem of misleading information has led to policy changes designed to minimize the abuse of statistics; in this unit you will consider such issues.

### Unit learning goals

When you finish this unit, you will have learned to:

1. Identify the key ethical issues associated with an accountability system, and give examples in various contexts, both in education and beyond.
2. Compare and contrast the ethical issues in K-12, higher education, and business and industry to ascertain similarities/differences in the root causes of information abuse.
3. Develop strategies about what various organizations might do to overcome ethical challenges to accountability.

### Readings and assignments to be completed before class

Dubnick, M. J. (2003). Accountability and ethics: Reconsidering the relationships. *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior*, 6(3), 405–441.

Hallak, J., & Poisson, M. (2005). *Academic fraud and quality assurance: Facing the challenge of internationalization of higher education*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Murdock, T. B., & Anderman, E. M. (2006). Motivational perspectives on student cheating: Toward an integrated model of academic dishonesty. *Educational Psychologist* 4(13), 129-145.

Strike, K. A., Haller, E. J., & Soltis, J. F. (2005). *The ethics of school administration*. New York: Teachers College Press, 93-126.

Velasquez, M., Andre, C., Thomas Shanks, S. J., & Meyer, M. J. (2011). Thinking ethically: A framework for moral decision making. Available at <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/thinking.html>

### To be read in class

USC Board of Trustees. (2004). *Code of ethics of the University of Southern California*. Available at: [http://www.usc.edu/about/core\\_documents/usc\\_code\\_of\\_ethics.html](http://www.usc.edu/about/core_documents/usc_code_of_ethics.html)

The National Education Association. (1975). Code of ethics of the education profession. Available at: <http://www.nea.org/home/30442.htm>

### Questions to answer before class as you complete your reading assignment:

1. Give various illustrations of how the concept of ethics is defined in your workplace.
2. Have new demands for accountability led to greater concern for ethical issues—either increases in information abuse or heightened concern for data integrity?
3. What are some of the current ethical challenges facing accountability systems and how can they be overcome or at least minimized?