



Everyone Counts: Data for Non-analysts

College of Letters & Science Student Academic Affairs,
Academic Information Management

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Welcome to “Everyone Counts”

Prep: have a piece of paper and a pen/pencil (or digital equivalents) handy for a participant activity

Icebreaker:

Think about a particular thing that you once found very difficult to do and is now easy for you.

If you feel comfortable, please share with the group.



3 Objectives

- Demonstrate: your expertise matters for data analysis
- Explain:
 - Why data landscape feels complicated
 - Where “data” comes in the decision-making process
- Explore (discuss): what data-related support you might need

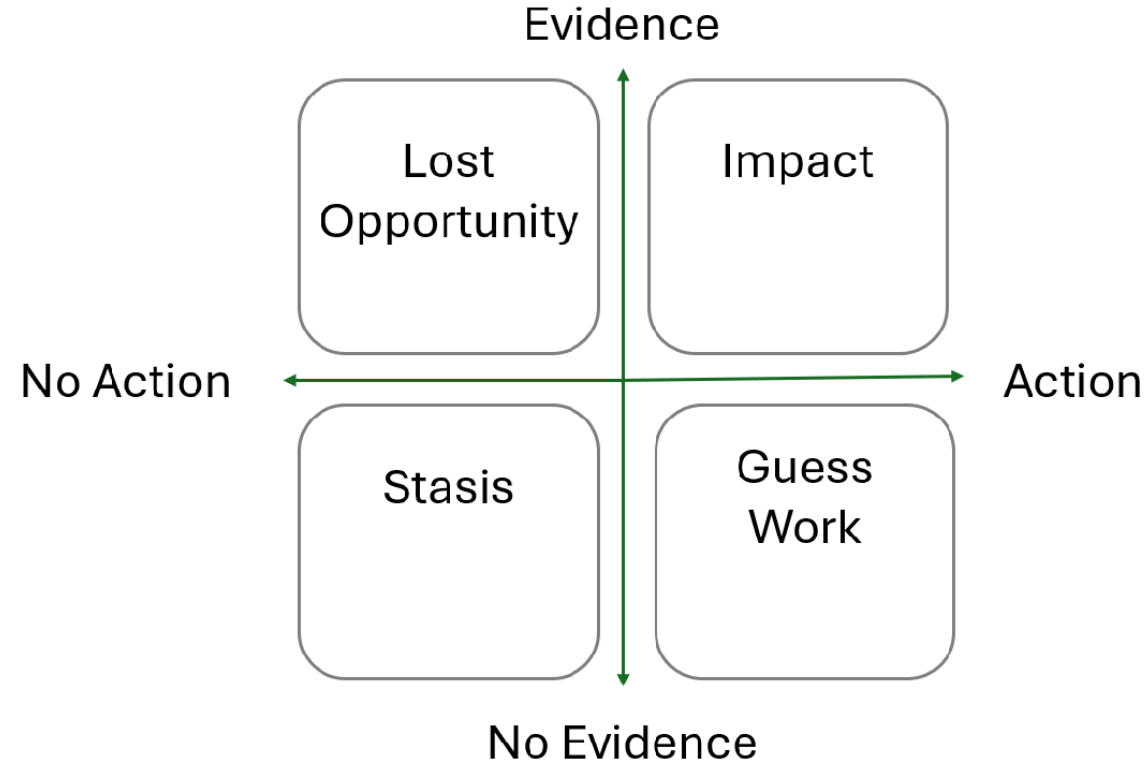


Preliminaries...

- Long or short “a” in the middle of data?
- Data: evidence, collection of facts, information
- Singular or plural usage of data?
- Data driven vs. data informed decision making?



Why data at all?



Recreated from Figure 1.3: Four categories of evidence versus action
From *I'm not a Numbers Person* by Dr. Selena Fisk



Curse of knowledge

- Think about your ice breaker response...
- Data analysts are experts in manipulating and interpreting data
- Non-analysts are experts in the domain of their roles



Context supplies meaning to data

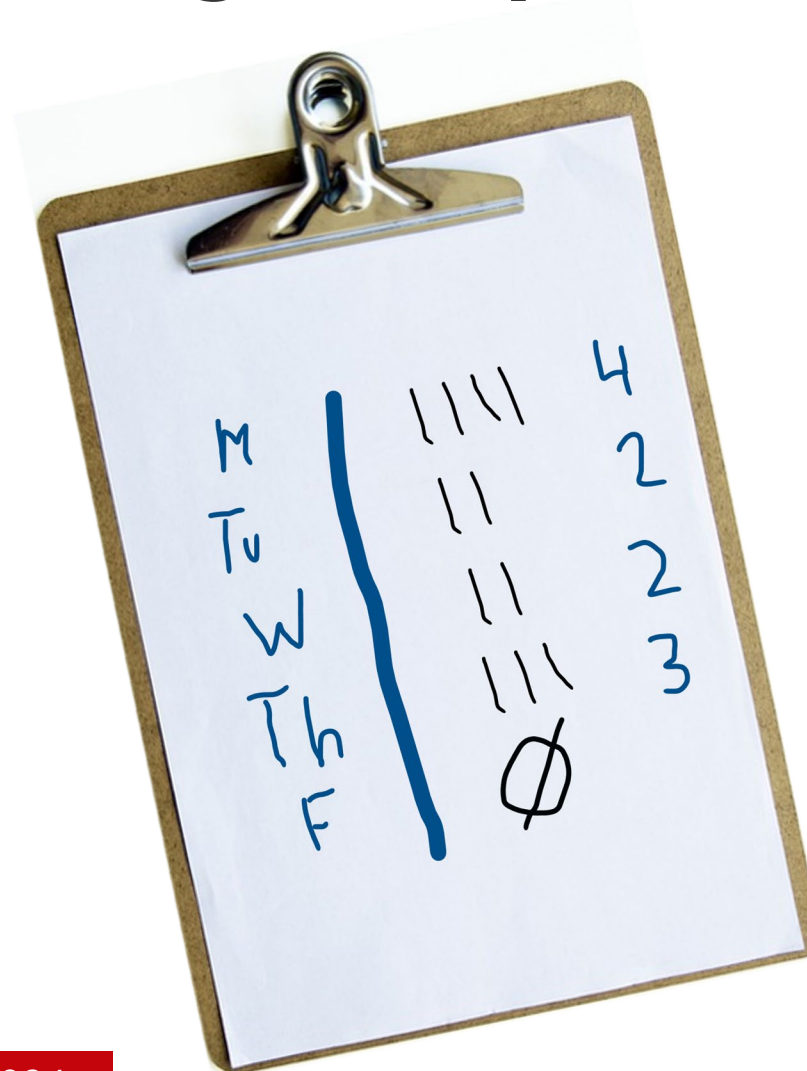
53
53%



- Context must be provided by your expertise
 - “53% of our employees...”
 - “53% of our students...”
 - Whether that is “good” or “bad” also requires contextual expertise
- Further, your curiosity provides the spark for analysis

Contrived counting example

You want to be “data informed” and are curious about how much time you spend doing certain tasks, so you decide to collect information about how many meetings you attend per day.



You feel satisfied until you think...

Is this week normal? Monday seemed “heavy” on meetings, but hmmm.... And, I had at least 3 unscheduled teams video chats during the week. Should I count those? But you can’t quite remember what day... Also, you wonder how/whether you should count that “pre-meeting” talk in the hallway that was about a totally different topic from the scheduled meeting. Should that be its own meeting?

You realize you want to capture some additional data...



Counting, cont.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Week	Day	Sched.	Ad Hoc	In person	Virtual	Total
2	1	M	4				4
3	1	Tu	2				2
4	1	W	2				2
5	1	Th	3				3
6	1	F	0				0
7	2	M	1	2	3		3
8	2	Tu	3		1	2	3
9	2	W	1	1	2		2
10	2	Th					0
11	2	F	1	1		2	2



“Just” counting is complicated

- Purpose matters
- Definitions matter
- Error and uncertainty
 - Counting inaccuracies
 - Relevant information not collected
 - Dynamic process captured at a single point



“Using data” can be complicated

- Data governance; access to data
 - Recommend <https://data.wisc.edu/data-literacy/>
- Ethics
- Multiple data sources
- Variety of tools for data manipulation and presentation
- Data is not the correct starting point



Data is the middle of data-informed decision making

- Step 1: what do I need to know to make this decision?
- Step 2: do we have the relevant data?
 - If yes, how can I get access?
 - If no, how can we collect it?
- Step 3: What action(s) can we take based on this information?
- “If I knew _____, I would do _____”.



Consult analysts when you...

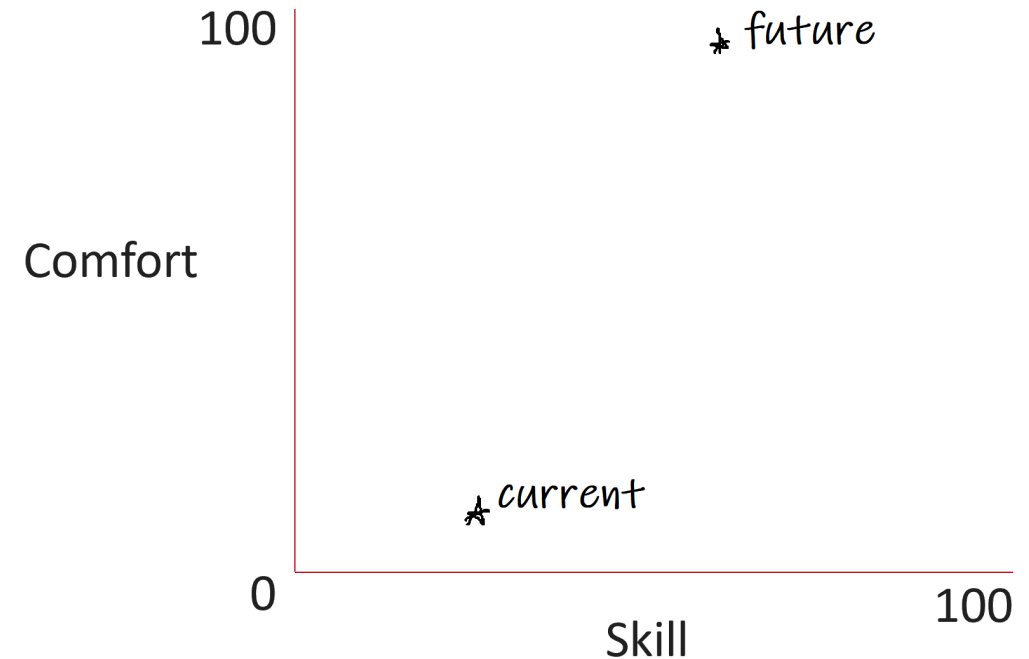
- Are uncertain about differences in data sources
- Can't find data that you want
- Need to make a data collection plan
- Want to make comparisons or generalizations



Activity

Scenario: You have been told you need to “use more data” in your professional role. On a scale of 0 (low) to 100 (high) rate your...

- **Current:**
 - Comfort level
 - Skill level
- Preferred **future:**
 - Comfort level
 - Skill level





Reflection

- To “use more data” in your work, would you need to adjust how you view your professional role?
- Does your comfort/skill data show gaps you’d like to address?
- What data-related support do you need?
 - Tools?
 - Training?
 - Other resources (e.g., time)?



Suggestions for future topics

- Topics for future SAA data-related training events?
 - Open for discussion...
- Also, general Q&A from this session