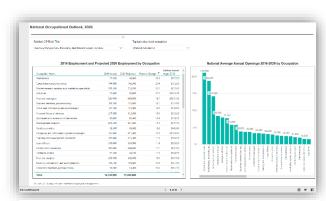**Why English Majors Make Great Data Analysts**
by Jason Morales

Summary

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that the number of Data Analyst jobs will grow significantly over the next 10 years.[1]

A typical response to this projection may be to promote the Sciences to fulfill the demand for these jobs. Business Leaders and Academics may determine that Data Science and Computer Science Program should expand at a higher growth rate than other Higher Education programs.

Degrees Conferred by Job CIP Code : US BLS 2016-2026

But to dismiss Arts and Humanities students for these jobs is short-sighted and incomplete.

In this article, I refer to my experiences as an English Major and as a Data Analyst. I refer to characteristics of English Majors I've learned from and studied with, and those I've worked with since.

Non-English Majors often assume that English Majors are good Writers and that their writing skills are what might-be valued in a business environment. But we should consider some of the other learned skills that English Majors develop during their studies that are remarkably business-relevant.

English Majors are trained to continually ask questions in order to derive Context and Meaning,
- *to think critically about everything written and presented,*
- *to think creatively in pursuit of new ideas and genuine surprise,*
- *to exercise curiosity and imagine new ideas, new findings, new approaches,*
- *to test alternative approaches that may not have been attempted before,*
- *and to document their perspectives, insights, references and expressions.*

Great Data Analysts share common traits with Great English Majors. Both are…
- *adept at Qualifying Assumptions and willing to explore difficult questions,*
- *inherently suspicious of easy or obvious answers,*
- *inclined to leverage the analyses and approaches of others,*
- *capable of making sense out of perceived chaos and variant signals,*
- *and aware that culture, situation, and behavior are interrelated and impact decision-making.*

At best, Data Analyses provide Clarity, Context and insightful details that supplement and demonstrate Understanding. At worst, data points are interpreted literally, or perceived as Truth, or catalyze decisions and actions before they are comprehensively qualified within Context.

If we believe that Humanizing Data Analysis can generate more considerate personalization, more inclusivity, better differentiation, and greater efficiencies, then it makes sense that we broaden our searches for excellent Data Analyst job candidates beyond the Sciences.

[1.] Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics website, Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2017 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm ; for additional context :: http://bit.ly/degreesbyCIP