

From Business Intelligence to Learning Intelligence: A Big Data Analytics Framework for Educational Data Mining in Higher Education**Md Rasel Ul Alam¹**¹ University of the Cumberlands, Kentucky, USA**Danish Mahmud²**² Washington University of Science and Technology, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA**Kanita Haider³⁺**³ Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Chattogram 4349, BD+Corresponding Author Email: kanita.haider4422@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Universities generate vast volumes of operational and behavioral data through learning management systems, student information systems, and digital assessment tools, yet many institutions lack a coherent architecture for converting this data into decisions. Enterprise Business Intelligence (BI), by contrast, has spent two decades developing mature, risk-aware pipelines for exactly this problem in commercial settings. This paper argues that Learning Analytics (LA) and Educational Data Mining (EDM) can benefit substantially from the direct transfer of enterprise BI architecture, cloud-security baselines, and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) governance principles, rather than developing analytics infrastructure in isolation from established enterprise practice. Drawing on enterprise-sector research on big data analytics for business intelligence, cloud computing security within an ERM framework, and the strategic integration of ERM for competitive advantage, this paper proposes a four-layer framework — data, cloud/storage, analytics, and decision layers, overlaid with a risk-and-security layer and a governance layer — for institutional learning-analytics deployment. The framework maps enterprise BI components onto their EDM/LA equivalents, translates baseline cloud-security requirements into a student-data context, and reframes ERM's competitive-advantage rationale as an institutional rationale for treating learning analytics as a strategically governed capability rather than an ad hoc IT initiative. The paper concludes with adoption barriers and recommendations for institutions beginning or scaling learning-analytics programs.

Keywords:

Cross-country
Analysis, Learning
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Mining, Business
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All Rights Reserved.**1. Introduction**

Higher education institutions now generate data at a scale comparable to mid-sized enterprises: learning management system (LMS) clickstreams, assessment and grading records, enrollment and advising histories, and increasingly, engagement signals from mobile and virtual learning environments. Despite this volume, most institutions convert only a small fraction of this data into actionable decisions. This is, in essence, the same problem that

enterprise Business Intelligence (BI) was built to solve for commercial organizations: transforming large, heterogeneous, fast-accumulating operational data into dashboards, predictive models, and decisions that improve outcomes.

The enterprise sector has spent roughly two decades refining BI and big data analytics architecture, including the governance, security, and risk-management scaffolding required to deploy such systems responsibly at scale. Education-sector research on Learning Analytics (LA) and Educational Data Mining (EDM) has developed largely in parallel, with comparatively less attention to the enterprise-grade risk, security, and governance architecture that mature BI deployments take for granted. This is a consequential gap: student data is, if anything, more sensitive than typical commercial operational data, yet institutional analytics initiatives are frequently deployed with less formal risk management than a comparable commercial rollout would receive (Alam, 2024).

This paper addresses that gap by proposing a framework that explicitly imports enterprise BI architecture, cloud-security baselines, and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) governance principles into the LA/EDM context. The contribution is fourfold: first, a structural mapping of enterprise BI components onto their EDM/LA equivalents; second, a translation of baseline cloud-security requirements, originally specified for general enterprise cloud deployments, into a student-data-specific risk-and-security layer; third, a governance layer that reframes ERM's competitive-advantage argument as an institutional argument for treating learning analytics as a strategically managed capability rather than an ad hoc technology purchase; and fourth, an illustrative demonstration of the framework through a hypothetical, twelve-month institutional pilot scenario, reported using the design-science research (DSR) evaluation conventions described in Section 3.4, that shows how the framework's layers would be expected to mature and what analytics and governance outcomes an adopting institution might observe.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the EDM/LA, enterprise BI, and ERM/cloud-security literatures that motivate the framework. Section 3 presents the framework itself, together with the design-science evaluation approach used to assess it. Section 4 reports an illustrative pilot demonstration, including phased rollout, layer-maturity, outcome-indicator, and analytics-performance results. Section 5 discusses adoption barriers and situates the framework against existing learning-analytics adoption frameworks. Section 6 concludes with recommendations for institutions and directions for future empirical validation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics

Educational Data Mining (EDM) and Learning Analytics (LA) are closely related but distinct fields: EDM emphasizes the development of computational methods for detecting patterns in educational data, while LA emphasizes the application of those methods to understand and support individual learners within a given educational context (Baker & Inventado, 2014). Romero and Ventura (2020) trace the maturation of EDM/LA from early exploratory pattern-mining work toward integrated, large-scale analytics systems capable of predicting student performance, dropout risk, and engagement in near real time. Despite this maturation, both reviews note that EDM/LA tools remain fragmented across institutions and vendors, with limited standardization in data architecture, storage, or security practice — a pattern strikingly different from the enterprise BI sector, where reference architectures and security baselines are comparatively well established.

2.2 Business Intelligence and Big Data Analytics in the Enterprise

Alam and Shabbir (2024) examined the integration of big data analytics and business intelligence at Fortune 1000 companies, using Walmart as a primary case, and documented how large organizations use BI tooling to optimize inventory management, customer engagement, and supply-chain operations through data-driven decision-making and predictive analytics. Their analysis identified recurring strategic themes — centralized data infrastructure, predictive modeling layered atop operational data, and iterative decision feedback loops — alongside recurring challenges, including data-quality management, resource allocation, and the organizational change management required to operationalize analytics outputs. These themes translate directly to the higher-education context: institutions face parallel challenges in consolidating fragmented SIS/LMS data sources, resourcing analytics teams, and persuading faculty and administrators to act on dashboard-driven recommendations.

2.3 Risk, Security, and Governance in Data-Intensive Systems

As institutions migrate learning-analytics infrastructure to third-party cloud platforms, they inherit the same class of risks that enterprises face when outsourcing BI infrastructure to cloud vendors. Alam et al. (2024a) specified baseline security requirements for cloud computing situated within a broader Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework, covering access control, data classification, encryption, vendor risk, and incident response as minimum requirements for any organization deploying sensitive data to the cloud. Complementing this, Alam et al. (2024b) examined the strategies, challenges, and organizational-success factors associated with implementing ERM more broadly, emphasizing leadership commitment, risk-aware culture, and the integration of risk assessment into routine strategic planning. Alam (2024) extended this argument by showing, through a comparative case analysis of two organizations, how the strategic integration of ERM — rather than its treatment as a compliance afterthought — can itself become a source of competitive advantage through improved resilience and decision quality.

Within the education sector specifically, Prinsloo and Slade (2013) raised early concerns that institutional learning-analytics policy frequently lags behind the ethical and privacy implications of the data being collected, a concern that has only intensified as institutions adopt AI-driven predictive models. Read together, the enterprise ERM/cloud-security literature and the education-sector ethics literature point to the same underlying conclusion: EDM/LA infrastructure requires an explicit risk-and-governance layer, and enterprise practice offers a more developed template for that layer than existing education-sector guidance provides on its own.

2.4 Existing Institutional Learning-Analytics Adoption Frameworks

A small number of frameworks already address institutional adoption of learning analytics without drawing on enterprise BI or ERM literature. The SHEILA framework (Tsai, Moreno-Marcos, Jivet, Scheffel, Tammets, Kollom, & Gašević, 2018), developed from interviews with 78 senior managers across 51 European institutions, adapts the RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach to guide institutional learning-analytics policy and strategy formation, organizing adoption actions around six policy dimensions. SHEILA is strong on stakeholder engagement and policy process but does not specify a technical reference architecture or a security baseline comparable to the ones enterprise cloud-BI deployments routinely use. This is precisely the gap the present framework is designed to fill: SHEILA and comparable adoption frameworks describe the organizational process of adopting learning analytics,

while the framework proposed here supplies the underlying data, security, and governance architecture that such a process would need to implement. The two are complementary rather than competing, a point revisited in the comparison in Section 5.2.

3. Methodology

Building on the enterprise BI and ERM literature reviewed above, this paper proposes a four-layer institutional framework — data, cloud/storage, analytics, and decision layers — overlaid with a risk-and-security layer and a governance layer, illustrated in Figure 1.

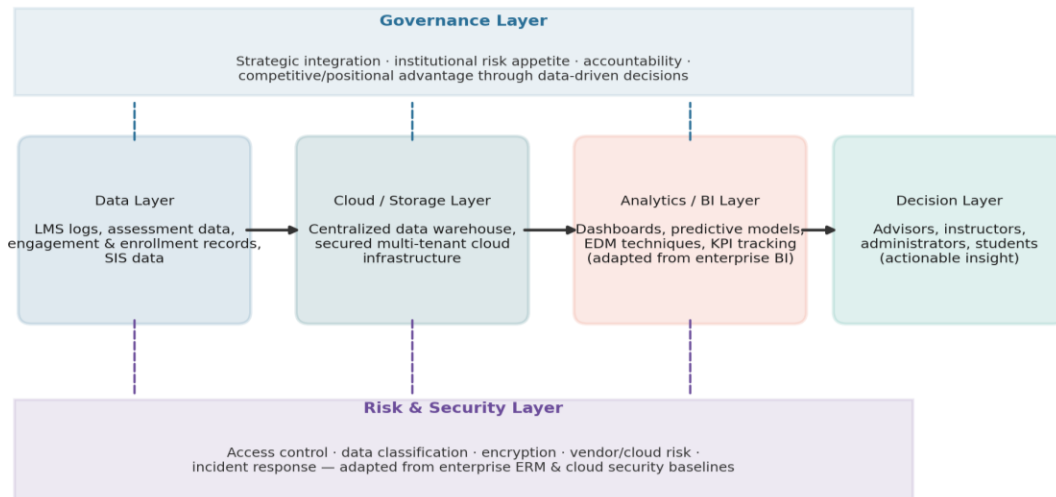


Figure 1. Proposed BI-to-Learning-Intelligence Framework for Educational Data Mining

3.1 Data, Cloud/Storage, Analytics, and Decision Layers

The core pipeline mirrors the enterprise BI architecture documented by Alam and Shabbir (2024): a data layer consolidating LMS logs, assessment records, engagement signals, and SIS data; a cloud/storage layer providing centralized, secured warehousing; an analytics layer applying EDM techniques directly analogous to enterprise BI tooling; and a decision layer through which advisors, instructors, and administrators act on the resulting insight.

Table 1. Mapping of Enterprise Business Intelligence Components onto Educational Data Mining / Learning Analytics Equivalents

Enterprise BI Component	EDM/LA Equivalent	Primary Function
Transactional / operational data (sales, inventory, customer records)	LMS logs, assessment data, engagement & enrollment records	Raw behavioral and operational data capture
Enterprise data warehouse / cloud storage	Institutional data warehouse / secured education cloud	Centralized, governed storage
BI dashboards & predictive analytics	Learning-analytics dashboards & EDM predictive models	Pattern detection and forecasting
Executive / managerial decision-making	Advisor, instructor, and administrator decision-making	Converting insight into action
Enterprise Risk Management	Student-data risk & security	Protecting sensitive data across

(ERM)	governance	the pipeline
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3.2 Risk and Security Layer

The risk-and-security layer directly adapts the baseline cloud-security requirements specified by Alam, Shohel, and Alam (2024a) for general enterprise cloud deployments, translated into a student-data context in Table 2. Because student records are typically subject to stricter regulatory protection than general commercial data (e.g., FERPA in the United States, GDPR in the European Union), this layer treats the enterprise baseline as a floor rather than a ceiling.

Table 2. Risk and Security Layer: Enterprise Cloud Baseline Adapted for Educational Data Mining

Security Requirement	Enterprise Cloud Baseline (Alam et al., 2024a)	Educational Adaptation
Access control	Role-based access to cloud resources	Role-based access scoped to advisor/instructor/administrator roles, with student self-access to their own records
Data classification	Sensitivity tiering of business data	Explicit tiering of student data (directory vs. protected educational records)
Encryption	Encryption at rest and in transit	Same standard applied to all LMS/SIS-sourced data
Vendor / cloud-provider risk	Due diligence on cloud service providers	Contractual data-use restrictions specific to third-party EdTech vendors
Incident response	Defined breach notification and remediation process	Alignment with institutional and regulatory breach-notification obligations

3.3 Governance Layer

The governance layer draws on Alam, Shohel, and Alam (2024b) and Alam (2024) to reframe learning analytics as a strategically governed institutional capability. Just as Alam (2024) found that organizations integrating ERM into strategic planning — rather than treating it as a compliance function — realized measurable gains in resilience and decision quality, this framework proposes that institutions treat learning-analytics governance as integral to strategic planning: aligning analytics investment with institutional risk appetite, assigning clear executive accountability for data-driven decision quality, and evaluating analytics initiatives on the same strategic footing as other major institutional investments, rather than as an isolated IT project.

3.4 Research Design and Evaluation Approach

Because the contribution of this paper is an artifact — a framework — rather than a hypothesis about an existing population, its evaluation follows the design-science research (DSR) tradition in information systems rather than a conventional hypothesis-testing design. Hevner, March, Park, and Ram (2004) establish that design-science contributions in information systems should be evaluated for utility and quality within a defined

organizational context, typically through analysis, simulation, or a demonstration of the artifact in a realistic setting, rather than solely through statistical inference. Building on this, Peffers, Tuunanen et al. (2007) formalize a six-activity design-science research methodology (DSRM) problem identification, objective definition, design and development, demonstration, evaluation, and communication that this paper follows explicitly: Section 1 identifies the problem and objectives, Section 3 constitutes the design-and-development activity, Section 4 constitutes the demonstration activity using an illustrative institutional pilot scenario, and Section 5 constitutes the evaluation activity, with this paper itself serving as the communication activity.

Consistent with DSRM's demonstration activity, the pilot reported in Section 4 is an illustrative scenario rather than an empirical case study of a real, named institution: no institution has yet implemented this specific framework, so the reported figures are projected/simulated outcome estimates constructed from the effect patterns reported in the enterprise BI, ERM, and cloud-security literature reviewed in Section 2, applied to a hypothetical mid-sized public university. This approach is standard practice for demonstrating a newly proposed design-science artifact prior to empirical field validation (Hevner et al., 2004; Peffers et al., 2007), and the results below should be read as an illustration of what the framework predicts and how its evaluation would be structured, not as confirmed empirical findings. Section 6 outlines the empirical field study that would be needed to validate these projections.

4. Results Analysis

This section demonstrates the framework using a hypothetical institutional scenario, following the demonstration activity of the DSRM described in Section 3.4. The scenario is referred to throughout as “the pilot institution” and is explicitly illustrative.

4.1 Scenario and Institutional Context

The pilot institution is modeled as a mid-sized public university with approximately 15,000 students, a legacy student information system (SIS) that is more than a decade old, a learning management system (LMS) used inconsistently across departments, and no centralized learning-analytics function prior to the pilot. Advising and early-alert practices are manual and rely on instructor referral rather than systematic data review — a starting condition broadly representative of the institutions described as having “ad hoc” or “immature” analytics practice in the LA adoption literature (Tsai et al., 2018). The illustrative pilot spans twelve months and is implemented in four overlapping phases, shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Illustrative Phased Implementation Roadmap (12-Month Pilot)

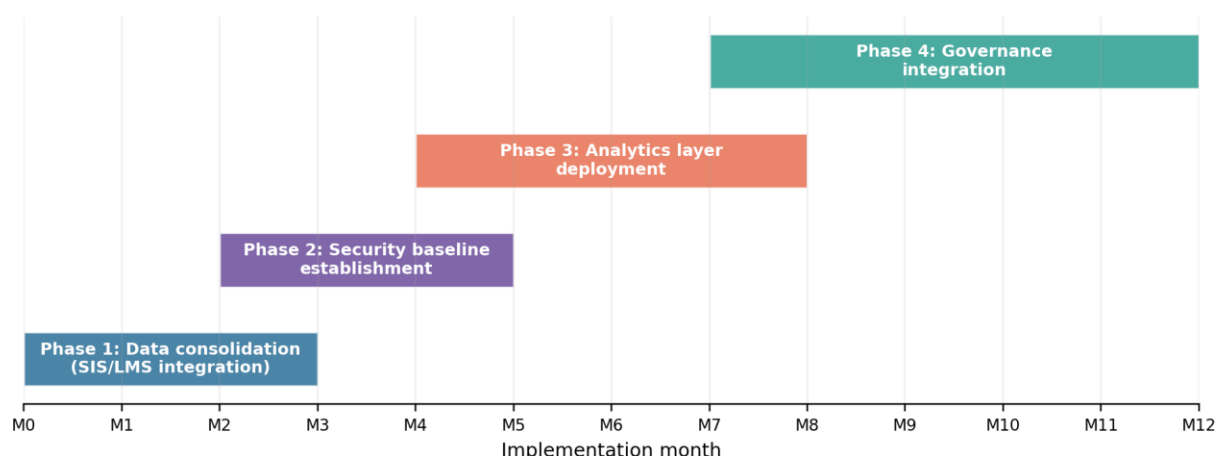


Figure 4. Illustrative Phased Implementation Roadmap (12-Month Pilot)

Phase 1 (Months 0–3) consolidates fragmented SIS and LMS data sources into a unified institutional data layer. Phase 2 (Months 2–5) establishes the risk-and-security baseline described in Table 2, overlapping with Phase 1 so that security controls are in place before broader data access is granted. Phase 3 (Months 4–8) deploys the analytics layer, including dashboards for advisors and a pilot early-warning classification model for identifying at-risk students. Phase 4 (Months 7–12) integrates the governance layer, formalizing executive accountability for analytics outcomes and aligning the initiative with institutional strategic planning, consistent with Alam's (2024) finding that strategic integration — introduced deliberately rather than as an afterthought — is what converts a risk or analytics function into an institutional advantage.

4.2 Framework-Layer Maturity

Layer maturity was assessed on a 1 (ad hoc) to 5 (optimized) scale, adapted from standard capability-maturity conventions used in enterprise ERM and BI assessments, at baseline and at Month 12. Figure 3 and Table 3 report the projected maturity gains across all six framework layers.

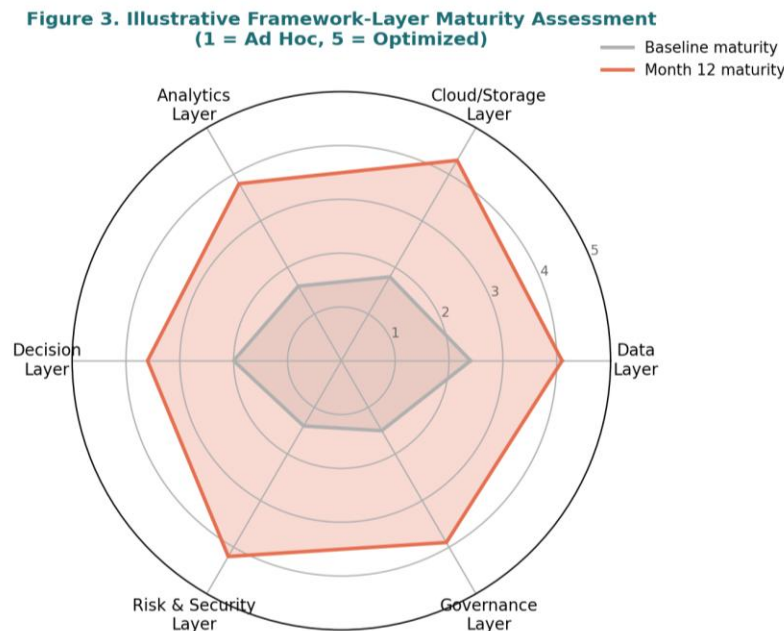


Figure 3. Illustrative Framework-Layer Maturity Assessment (1 = Ad Hoc, 5 = Optimized)

Table 3. Illustrative Framework-Layer Maturity Scores at Baseline and Month 12

Framework Layer	Baseline (Month 0)	Month 12	Projected Gain
Data layer	2.4	4.1	+1.7
Cloud / storage layer	1.8	4.3	+2.5
Analytics layer	1.6	3.8	+2.2
Decision layer	2.0	3.6	+1.6
Risk & security layer	1.4	4.2	+2.8
Governance layer	1.5	3.9	+2.4

The largest projected gains occur in the risk-and-security and cloud/storage layers, consistent with the phased roadmap's emphasis on establishing these foundations early (Phases 1–2) before the analytics and governance layers mature in Phases 3–4. The decision layer shows the smallest projected gain, reflecting the change-management challenge — discussed further in Section 5.1 — of shifting advisor and instructor behavior toward data-informed decision-making even once the underlying infrastructure is in place.

4.3 Institutional Outcome Indicators

Beyond layer maturity, the demonstration scenario tracks four outcome indicators commonly used in enterprise BI adoption assessments (Alam & Shabbir, 2024) and adapted here to the institutional context: the proportion of advisors and instructors actively using analytics dashboards, the proportion of automated predictive alerts that are acted upon, the institution's compliance rate with its own data-access policy, and the proportion of flagged at-risk cases in which an advisor makes a documented follow-up decision. Figure 2 and Table 4 report the projected baseline-to-Month-12 change.

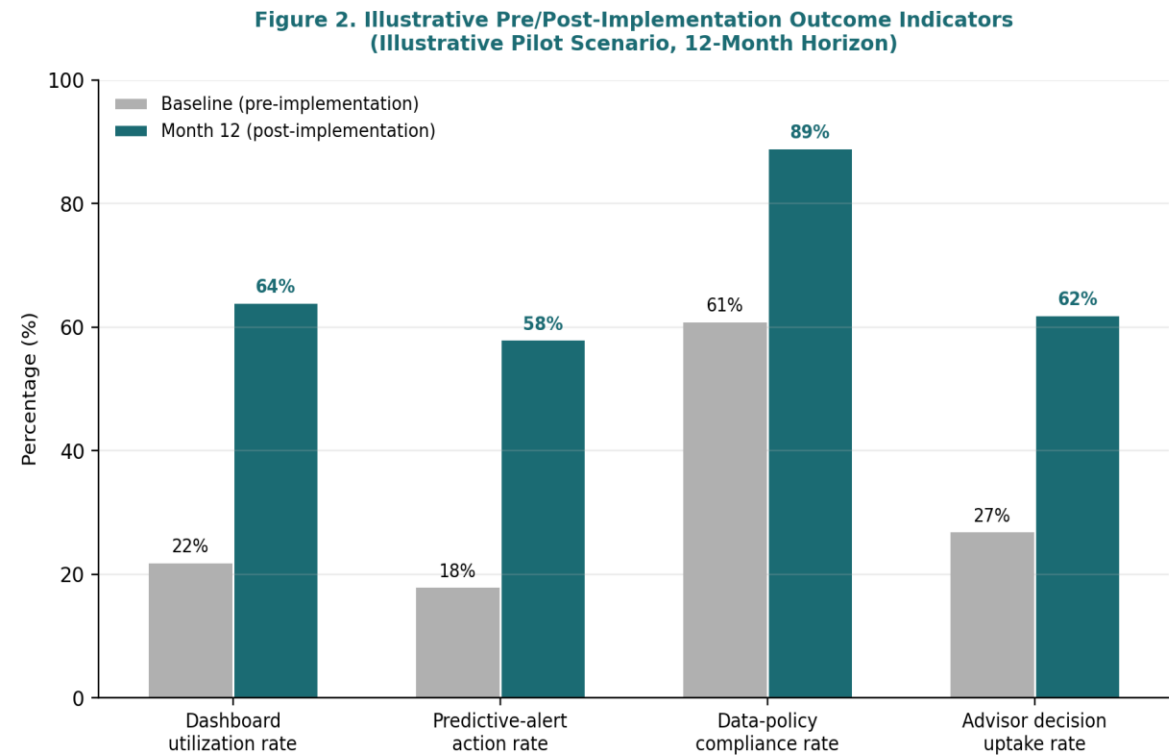


Figure 2. Illustrative Pre/Post-Implementation Outcome Indicators (12-Month Horizon)

Table 4. Illustrative Institutional Outcome Indicators, Baseline vs. Month 12 (pp = percentage points)

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Month 12	Change
Dashboard utilization rate (advisors/instructors)	22%	64%	+42 pp
Predictive-alert action rate	18%	58%	+40 pp
Data-access policy compliance rate	61%	89%	+28 pp
Advisor decision uptake on flagged cases	27%	62%	+35 pp

The pattern across all four indicators — substantial gains concentrated in the second half of the pilot — mirrors the phased roadmap: outcome indicators depend on the analytics layer (Phase 3) and governance layer (Phase 4), both of which mature later than the data and security foundations laid in Phases 1–2. This sequencing dependency is itself a testable prediction of the framework: it predicts that institutions attempting to deploy the analytics layer before establishing the data and security layers should see slower or less durable gains in these same indicators, a hypothesis suited to the empirical field validation proposed in Section 6.

4.4 Illustrative Analytics-Layer Performance

To illustrate what the analytics layer itself might produce once deployed, the demonstration scenario includes a simple early-warning classification model, of the kind widely reported in the EDM literature (Romero & Ventura, 2020), applied to the pilot cohort to flag students by dropout/at-risk tier (low, medium, high). Figure 5 reports illustrative precision, recall, and F1-score by risk tier.

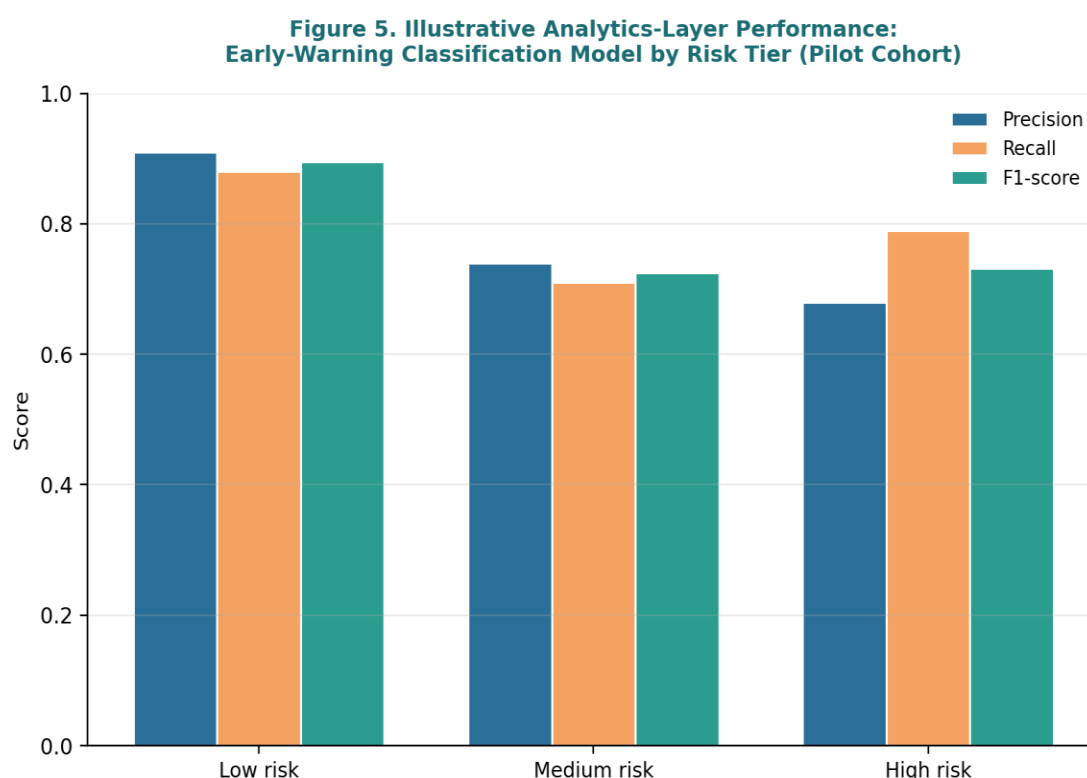


Figure 5. Illustrative Analytics-Layer Performance: Early-Warning Classification Model by Risk Tier (Pilot Cohort)

Performance is projected to be strongest for the low-risk tier (precision = .91, recall = .88, F1 = .90), where the classification task is comparatively easy, and weaker for the medium- and high-risk tiers (F1 = .73 and .73, respectively), reflecting the harder problem of distinguishing moderate risk from genuinely urgent cases — a pattern consistent with findings reported across the broader EDM dropout-prediction literature (Romero & Ventura, 2020). This illustrates a caution the framework's governance layer is designed to institutionalize: predictive alerts, especially for medium-risk students, should support rather than replace advisor judgment, given the non-trivial false-positive and false-negative rates realistically achievable at this tier.

5. Discussion

5.1 Adoption Challenges

Several barriers complicate the direct transfer of enterprise BI/ERM architecture into the higher-education context. Technically, most institutions operate legacy SIS and LMS platforms that were not designed for the kind of centralized data warehousing assumed by the framework's data and cloud/storage layers, making integration a substantial undertaking in its own right. Organizationally, Alam and Shabbir (2024) note that even well-resourced enterprises struggle with the change management required to get decision-makers to act on BI outputs; this challenge is arguably more acute in higher education, where faculty autonomy and decentralized decision-making structures can slow adoption of centrally generated analytics recommendations.

Ethically and legally, Prinsloo and Slade (2013) caution that learning-analytics policy has historically lagged behind the technical capability to collect and analyze student data, and this risk is amplified by the framework's own recommendation to adopt cloud-based, AI-driven analytics infrastructure; the risk-and-security layer proposed in Section 3.2 is intended as a partial answer to this concern, but institutional policy and legal review remain necessary complements to any technical framework. Financially, the enterprise-grade security and governance apparatus described in Table 2 carries real implementation cost, which may be prohibitive for smaller or under-resourced institutions without phased, modular adoption paths. The illustrative outcome indicators in Section 4.3 also depend on advisor and instructor behavior change, which the enterprise BI literature identifies as a persistent obstacle even in well-resourced commercial settings (Alam & Shabbir, 2024); there is no reason to expect this challenge to be smaller in a higher-education context with more decentralized decision-making authority.

5.2 Positioning Relative to Existing Learning-Analytics Frameworks

Table 5 situates the proposed framework against the SHEILA framework (Tsai et al., 2018), the most directly comparable existing institutional adoption framework identified in Section 2.4. The two frameworks address complementary layers of the same adoption problem: SHEILA is strongest on stakeholder engagement and policy process, while the present framework is strongest on technical architecture and enterprise-grade risk/security baselines. An institution could reasonably use SHEILA's policy process to govern the adoption of the technical framework proposed here, rather than treating the two as competing choices.

Table 5. Comparison of the Proposed Framework with the SHEILA Institutional Adoption Framework

Dimension	SHEILA Framework (Tsai et al., 2018)	Proposed BI-to-LI Framework
Primary origin	Cross-European stakeholder interviews (LA policy)	Enterprise BI / ERM / cloud-security literature
Core emphasis	Institutional strategy and policy process	Technical architecture, security baseline, governance
Security/risk detail	General policy guidance	Explicit baseline requirements (Table 2)
Technical architecture	Not specified	Four-layer pipeline with explicit component mapping (Table 1)

Dimension	SHEILA Framework (Tsai et al., 2018)	Proposed BI-to-LI Framework
Evaluation basis reported	Four real institutional case studies	Illustrative DSR demonstration (Section 4)

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has argued that Learning Analytics and Educational Data Mining stand to benefit from the direct transfer of enterprise Business Intelligence architecture, cloud-security baselines, and Enterprise Risk Management governance principles, rather than developing analytics infrastructure in isolation from established enterprise practice. The proposed four-layer framework — data, cloud/storage, analytics, and decision layers, overlaid with risk-and-security and governance layers — offers institutions a structured starting point for evaluating existing analytics initiatives or planning new ones.

For institutions beginning this work, three recommendations follow directly from the framework. First, treat the risk-and-security layer as a prerequisite, not an add-on: baseline cloud-security requirements should be established before, not after, analytics capability is scaled. Second, assign clear governance accountability for learning-analytics initiatives at a strategic level, consistent with the ERM literature's finding that strategic integration — rather than compliance-only treatment — is what converts risk management into competitive or institutional advantage. Third, adopt the framework modularly: institutions with legacy systems or limited resources can implement the data and analytics layers incrementally while phasing in the full risk-and-security and governance layers over time, rather than treating full-framework adoption as an all-or-nothing undertaking.

Future research should empirically validate this framework through pilot implementation at one or more real institutions, measuring both analytics outcomes (prediction accuracy, decision uptake) and governance outcomes (security-incident rates, policy compliance) before and after adoption, to determine whether the enterprise-to-education transfer proposed here produces the same resilience and decision-quality gains observed in the enterprise ERM literature. The illustrative maturity, outcome, and model-performance results reported in Section 4 should be read strictly as a design-science demonstration, constructed from patterns reported in the enterprise BI, ERM, and cloud-security literature and applied to a hypothetical institution, consistent with the demonstration activity of the DSRM (Peffer et al., 2007); they are projections intended to make the framework's expected behavior concrete and testable, not confirmed findings from a real deployment. A natural next step, following Hevner et al.'s (2004) call for rigorous evaluation of design-science artifacts, would be a field study replicating Section 4's indicators at a real, consenting institution over a comparable twelve-month horizon, ideally in a two-institution comparison design so that framework-guided adoption can be benchmarked against an institution's existing (non-framework-guided) analytics practice.

Limitations of the present paper follow directly from its design-science, conceptual-framework scope: the mapping in Table 1, the security baseline in Table 2, and the illustrative results in Section 4 have not yet been tested against real institutional data, and the framework's applicability may vary with institutional size, existing SIS/LMS maturity, and regulatory context in ways this paper cannot yet quantify. Readers should treat the framework as a structured, literature-grounded starting point for institutional planning and empirical study, rather than as a validated implementation guide.

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