Data Use Toolkit
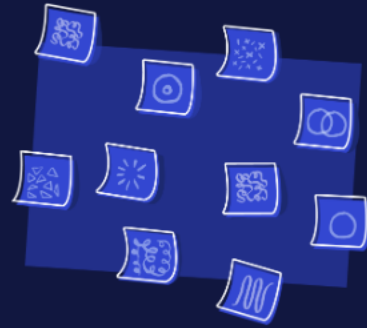
Purpose

Guide supporting pre-initiative problem exploration, effective data collection and use, and assessment

Who this is for

- Project Leads
- Team Members (use for research, data management, or evaluation)

When to use

Identifying problems

Considering renewal or scaling

Researching and learning

Assessing the initiative

Closing the initiative

Introduction | **Data Exploration Guide** | Data Collection Guide

Data Exploration Guide

Why is this tool important?

Already existing information such as anecdotal observations, student feedback, or collected data help you drive problem identification. Approach any problem from all of these angles as you identify and try to deepen your understanding of problems that could be the target of an initiative. After identifying what data to explore, plan for data collection using the Data Collection Guide.

💬 Considerations

The following considerations are important to help you understand and establish a data baseline. A baseline is a point of reference against which future performance can be measured. It involves collecting and analyzing data at the beginning of a process or project to understand the current state or starting point.

1

What have you noticed?

For example, "I noticed students are struggling with…"

These are anecdotal observations from faculty and staff.

2

What are students saying?

For example, "Students are saying…"

Student feedback can be explored from many sources, including:

- Discussions with advisors
- Student counseling centers
- Program lead conclusions
- Focus group findings

3

What is existing data saying?

For example, "I have data that suggests…"

Other preexisting data that builds on or clarifies what you have from sources like survey results. See the Resource—Data Types section below for more information.

📄 **Resource**   Download resource ↓

Data Types

The following list is a helpful resource for team members to converse with data people (e.g., institutional research, team members). This resource will help you ask practical questions like, "Do we measure this?" "How?" "How often?" "What exactly gets measured?" "Who has this data?" "Who needs it?" "How can I access it?" "Do you see trends?". Further down the line of data literacy, your questions might be, "How can I see trends? "Is there additional data we need?" and "How/if we cross-reference data to identify intersectional issues?".

To consider based on your research or initiative focus

- Student persistence
- Student engagement
- Student progression (time to credential or degree)
- Curricular complexity
- Student course completion
- Graduation rates

- Ambient data (not intentionally collected)- existing data we can explore
- Sense of Belonging (Surveys)
- What students do after graduation (Equifax/DES data)
- Student success gaps

Disaggregation options to explore or track

- Race/Ethnicity
- Pell grant status

- Student parents
- International students

- First generation
- Economic status
- Gender and gender identity
- Cohort year
- Student success gaps
- Academic factors
- Full/part-time status
- Age (e.g., adult learners)
- Veterans and active duty service members
- Areas of study/majors connected to Career Pathways
- Students taking courses in a particular modality or on a specific campus
- Transfer students
- For DFWI rates
- Zip code
- Disability
- Language and parent's language

✏️ **Activity**   Download activity ↓

Data Exploration Activity

What is driving your problem identification? Try supplementing whatever led you there first with other information to identify a potentially rich target for intervention.

Guiding Questions

1 **What do you know?**
Anecdotal observations, student feedback, existing data.

2 **What do you not know?**
Is there any data that you are missing?

3 **What conclusion can you draw from your exploration?**
Is there a clear need for intervention or to collect more information?

Template   Download template ↓

Project Title

1 **What do you know?**

Answer

2 **What do you <u>not</u> know?**

Answer

3 **What conclusion can you draw from your exploration?**

Answer