We hope you will refer to this booklet of data analysis and discussion activities to energize the work of Data Teams and other collaborative sessions at your institution. Each of the activities require less than two hours to complete with your team. While some require much more organization and planning behind the scenes, all of the activities are intended to streamline the time debating and analyzing data in exchange for more actionable next steps.

What happens when you invite a team to make a data-driven decision or a data-informed recommendation?

Inviting a broad spectrum of team members is essential when analyzing data from all angles, but oftentimes presents a set of challenges for moving work forward to collaborative strategies and next steps. Exclamations like, "When we look at the data, everyone is pulling out what we don't have or what's wrong with the data" and "Anytime we answer one question we just come up with five more questions to answer," are not uncommon when working in teams of stakeholders to discuss and analyze data.

Are you still in the planning stages and have not yet assembled your team?

There are a few hurdles that you can overcome in the organizational stage rather than later in the review. While it may be uncommon for a lead stakeholder to direct a review, by establishing co-chairs where the project director serves alongside an evaluative administrator (from areas like Institutional Assessment, Institutional Effectiveness, or Institutional Research) you get the speed that comes with thorough knowledge of the initiative and the neutrality necessary for an accurate review. In addition, consider roles for representatives external to your institution. You may have this automatically built in if you are evaluating for a grant or other project that has coaches or external evaluators. Consider also collaborating with research entities or inviting consultants who are already involved in ongoing research and implementation of initiatives similar to the one you are reviewing.

What is your biggest challenge when reviewing initiatives at your institution?

We suspect it may fall into one of the categories in this book. The activities included are intended as guides. You may find them valuable as step-by-step procedures, or you may see them more as templates within which to develop activities most applicable to your institution.

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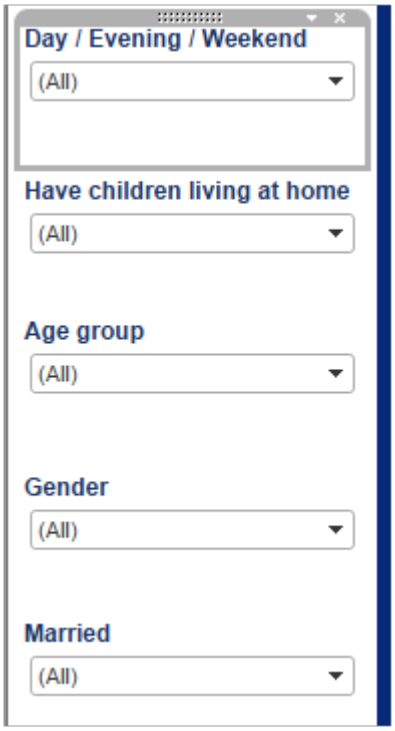
Challenge # 1: Unbiased Interpretations

Haven't we always done it that way? This isn't what we expected to see?

Team members who have years of experience with an initiative bring strong views and layers of expectations to the review – pairing team members from different areas and with different levels of experience maintains an open review with a focus on next steps.

1. Gather team members and divide into preassigned pairs representing different roles from different areas, divisions, and locations.
2. Give team members data already pre-filtered to disaggregate by several characteristics. For example, when evaluating a Student Success initiative disaggregate by gender and race/ethnicity, financial aid eligibility (Pell eligible), college readiness level (test scores or exempt from placement testing as with FL SB 1720), and main location of courses.
3. Ask each pair to take less than an hour to produce a list of findings from their data sets.

TIP: Avoid requests for additional "iterations" of data that may be narrowing to show favor on a single aspect of the initiative by brainstorming all necessary data early and setting dates and times during the review after which there will be no further reports to draw from.



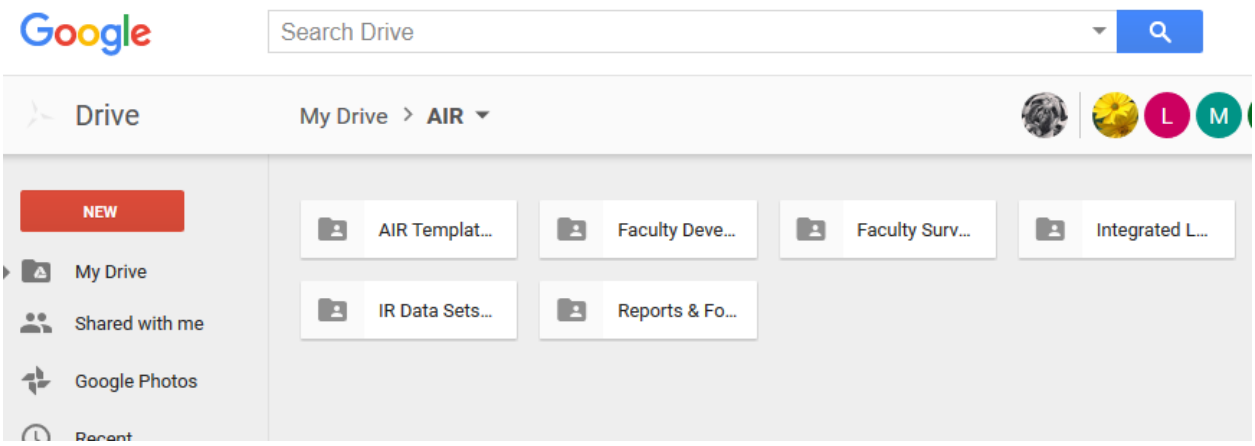
Challenge # 2: Sharing Mass Amounts of Data

Do we need to print all these reports? How is anyone going to make sense of all this data?

There is usually a tremendous amount of data available in a variety of formats – a simple shared digital storage space can put a team at ease about how to proceed through it all.

1. Select data from national reports, institutional reports, previous evaluations, outcome and success data, and any other forms of feedback that are related to the implementation or impact of the initiative under review.
2. Organize a single location to sign in once and access all the reports and data.
   For example, create a shared Google folder and upload reports and data sets as Google Docs and Google Sheets.
3. Schedule an event in several rooms where team members each bring their digital device to access the data for themselves.
4. Groups breakout into different rooms to answer a designated set of questions using the data available on their mobile device.

TIP: Save time collecting the answers and reporting back among each group by having a single live document where all groups type their answers as soon as they are discussed.



Challenge #3: Volumes of Open-Ended Responses

What do we do with all these text responses? Is there going to be anything common in the answers?

Survey responses with open-ended options can often get left out of data reviews because categorizing and reading takes too much time – scheduling a review and discussion is an efficient way to use all responses.

1. Distribute the full set of text responses to team members in advance for them skim and make initial reactions.
2. Gather team members together in a space where you can display the text responses on screen.
3. Progressively scroll through the data allowing team members opportunities to explain what patterns they notice, and which comments stand out against other sets of data. For example, when evaluating a Learning Community initiative that incorporates a student affairs staff member as a coach for the community the team may notice these coaches are not mentioned in any of the responses.

TIP: Expand the perspective by inviting someone external to the team who has a comfort level with analyzing data, but has not yet seen the responses.

Text Response	
	Only showing first 100 rows. Click here to view all responses
View	absolutely nothing
View	All the different strengths
View	a lot
View	Another view point to look at when discovering yourself
View	Ask others about there strengths.
View	Connecting with different themes
View	Connect with others
View	Different strenghts
View	Diversity
View	Engage with others.
View	Fun and interactive.
View	How to be possitive
View	how to deal woth people and more about myself
View	How to not give someone a label and accept people and have an open mind.

Challenge #4: Analyzing In-depth Feedback

Have we accounted for negative perceptions? Is there enough time to analyze natural responses?

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews contain layers of information – trained notetakers can streamline the analysis.

1. Get recommendations for facilitators and notetakers who are available for training prior to leading a focus group.
2. Construct a list of directed questions that will provide information relevant to review.
3. Train the facilitators and notetakers using scenarios that require the facilitator to prompt participants to focus on the initiative being reviewed so that the notetaker can capture the most relevant feedback.
   For example, draft role playing scenarios that exhibit how the data is less useful when there are dominant speakers or volleying between just two participants.
4. Gather 5-8 participants in the initiative under review for a focus group.
5. Notetakers write brief accounts of each response, organized by question with characteristics and temperament of the participant, but with little extraneous information.
6. Use intended outcomes of the initiative as the basic categories for analysis and combine like responses into emerging themes.
7. Prepare a single page table of themes and selected quotes sorted by outcome for quick use of the feedback in reports.

TIP: Add depth to the analysis by pairing the focus group results with individual interviews of constituents whose see the initiative from a different angle than the focus group participants.

Challenge #5: Capturing Real-time Insights

Do we know what the current experience is? What if our data is all outdated?

When the initiative you are assessing was designed to meet needs rising from a specific event or has been around a long time—video interviews can provide up-to-date context.

1. Invite participants from the initiative to answer a few short questions on video, especially questions not answered by other sources of data.
2. Organize the video clips by topic or theme.
   For example, when evaluating a first-year initiative like the New Student Experience, you might arrange the video into sections about expectations before enrolling, what they actually experienced, and what will be different going forward.
3. Gather a team to view the video collection.
4. Invite the team to respond verbally or react to the videos since part of the analysis is their interaction, and allow time to pause between segments for discussion.

TIP: Save time by recording quick videos on your phone and store in a cloud space. Save time analyzing by having an evaluator in the room documenting the varied constituents' reactions and responses to the videos.

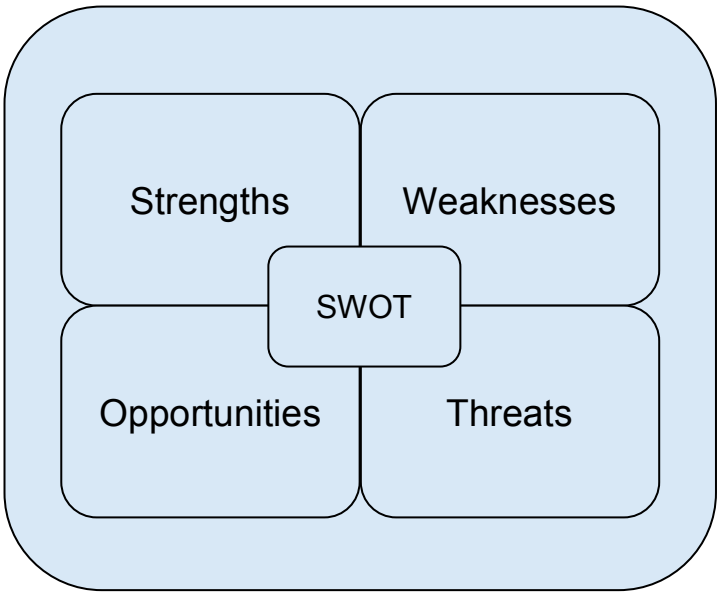
Challenge #6: Missing Data

Did we ever assess that? Isn't this too complex to assess?

When aspects of the initiative you are evaluating have not been assessed, or are complex in ways that any direct measure does not give a clear picture—a SWOT analysis is a valuable data collection.

1. Gather a team in a room with one or more facilitators. Display a visual with four sections for data entry (digitally, or on large paper, etc…)
2. Define the aspect of the initiative you are trying to assess giving clear parameters. For example, when evaluating the effectiveness of a peer-tutoring initiative like Supplemental Learning, you may not yet have data on direct benefit to the tutors having spent most of your time assessing the benefits to students receiving the tutoring.
3. Describe the internal and external stakeholders of the initiative and the expected outcomes.
4. Begin the analysis by documenting all the possible strengths coming from within the initiative.
5. Continue the internal analysis by documenting all the possible weaknesses.
6. Document all the possible opportunities that are associated with things outside the initiative.
7. Finish the external analysis by documenting all the possible threats.

TIP: Broaden the data collection by inviting representatives who encounter or interact with the aspect you are evaluating, but do not have first-hand knowledge of the expectations or procedures associated with that aspect.



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