

Data Identity Worksheet

This worksheet explores the Data Identity Framework from Amelia Parnell's book, *You Are a Data Person: Strategies for Using Analytics on Campus*. While her framework was developed specifically for a higher education context, it is adapted here to be applicable to the social sector more broadly.

Book Citation: Parnell, A. (2021). *You are a data person: Strategies for using analytics on campus*. Stylus.

A. Data Identity Framework

This asset-based framework allows a person, team, and organization to locate pre-existing strengths as well as areas for growth in working with data.

Too often, working with data is seen as the purview of data analysts or those who are trained as “data people.” The Data Identity Framework rests on the assumptions that 1) every person, regardless of role, can find a use for data in their daily work, and 2) successful data work promotes and relies on open communication, supportive sharing of progress and results, and ongoing collaboration across roles.

Any given person will have different levels of experience and knowledge, and therefore come to the table with different strengths. The following six components represent data-related strengths. These are listed neither sequentially nor by significance. Instead, each is necessary for a collaborative data culture. The components are as follows:

- 1. Curiosity and Inquiry:** The ability to formulate and ask clear questions. This strength may focus on issue clarity, question formation, historical context, and stakeholder impact.
- 2. Research and Analysis:** The ability to select and use appropriate methodologies. This strength may focus on methodology, technical expertise, data integration, and computation.
- 3. Communication and Consultation:** The ability to clearly discuss findings with multiple audiences. This strength may focus on delivery type, audience interpretation, and follow-up.
- 4. Organization Context:** The knowledge of current issues and trends within the organization. This strength may focus on community, consumer, or client information, programs and initiatives, strategic plans, and organization (or agency) mission.
- 5. Industry (or Sector) Context:** The knowledge of current issues and trends in the sector. This strength may focus on relevant news and events, sectoral knowledge, and service trends.
- 6. Strategy and Planning:** The ability to select and execute a course of action. This strength may focus on project management, role alignment, resource allocation, and progress monitoring.

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B. Data Identity Activity

In this activity, you will be surveying your own data identity. Consider each strength as it relates to your engagement with data.

Consider each of the following knowledges and abilities. How would you measure each of these as strengths (e.g. “This is a new (or challenge) area,” “Developing,” “Achieving (or honing)”? If you are unsure, consider how often you engage in each of these areas in your daily work.

1. Curiosity and Inquiry _____
2. Research and Analysis _____
3. Communication and Consultation _____
4. Organization Context _____
5. Industry (or Sector) Context _____
6. Strategy and Planning _____

Next, consider members of your team. What strengths are well-represented on your team already? What areas could be better represented?

Consult with your team about your collective team’s data identity. Consider the following questions:

- Are you asking equity-related questions of and with your data? Is your data work grounded in a pursuit of promoting equitable outcomes?
- Paying particular attention to areas for growth—what and who do you need in order to strengthen your data culture and collaboration?
- Who has these strengths, but is not at the table when you talk about data?
- Where can you make a greater role for community members, stakeholders, and those with domain expertise in all six components?
- What needs to be in place in order to grow and hone these strengths?

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