

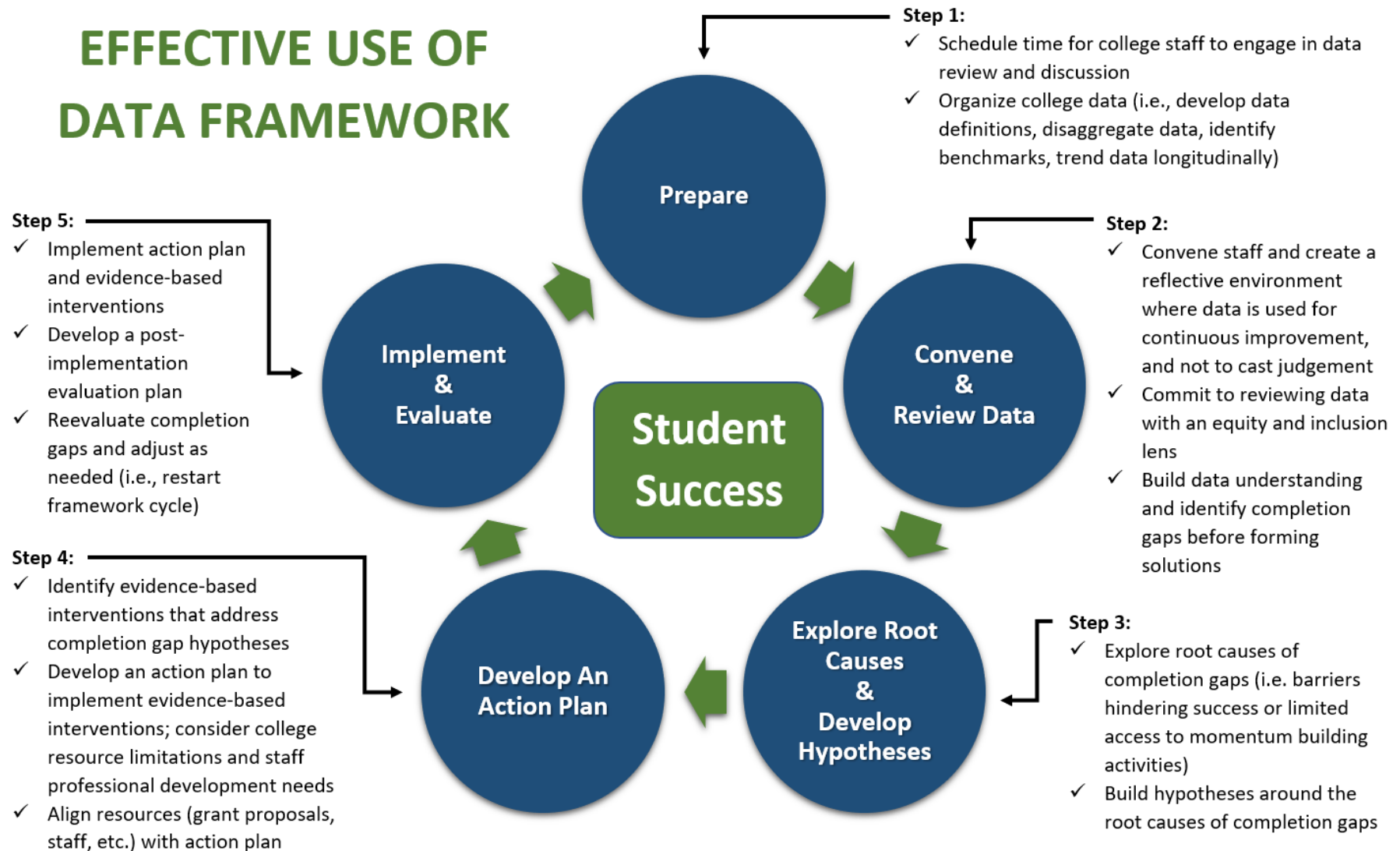
# RESOURCES TO SUPPORT DASHBOARD DATA USE: Effective Use of Data Framework



**WTCS**  
**Student Success Center**



## EFFECTIVE USE OF DATA FRAMEWORK



## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT DASHBOARD DATA USE: Notes on Effective Use of Data Framework

**STEP 1 - PREPARE:** Step one requires establishing a commitment to improvement through staff and time resources. Schedule time with a group of college staff who will engage in reviewing data and strategizing around continuous improvement interventions. In support of this stage, Institutional Research or other continuous improvement staff should organize data that will be accessible for college staff to review. It is important that the data is easily digestible. This can be accomplished by providing strong definitions for the data being presented and by reporting the data through simple scorecards or visually appealing graphics. It is also important to disaggregate the data by confounding variables. For instance, if you are interested in analyzing course success within a program, it will be important to disaggregate the data by courses within the curriculum to pin point what courses appear to have strong success rates in order to identify best practices as well as the courses with lagging success rates in order to target continuous improvement efforts. It is also valuable to benchmark data – this can be done at the college level, system level, or national level as available. Looking at data longitudinally will also be valuable to discern if educational outcomes are consistent or if a specific academic year proved to be an anomaly. Finally, in an effort of looking at data through an equity and inclusion lens, it is valuable to desegregate educational outcomes by a series of student characteristic variables such as low-income status, gender, race-ethnicity, or first-generation status for example.

**STEP 2 – CONVENE & REVIEW DATA:** With your college staff organized into continuous improvement teams, time scheduled for reviewing educational outcomes, and your data organized and disaggregated, the next step is to convene and begin reviewing your college student outcomes. During this data review stage, it is important to establish an environment of reflection that does not use assessment results and data in a punitive or judgmental fashion. Staff should feel comfortable to let their guard down and feel open to identifying opportunities that elevate student success at their college. Within the data review stage, staff should focus their efforts on first identifying differences or completion gaps in the available data rather than jumping directly to solutions. Reflect on the data and develop summarizing statements through guided exercises or open discussion. This step will help to develop data literacy skills. In simple terms, describe what you are seeing and identify completion gaps.

**STEP 3 – DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES & CREATE HYPOTHESES:** With completion gaps identified and summarizing statements development, college teams should begin exploring root causes and develop hypothesis around the data. Root causes should be thought of as the barriers hindering student success or limited access to opportunities that promote student success. These might be societal or economic related, or educationally related such as the delivery method of a specific course. It will be important in this stage to reflect on evidence-based root cause research that might be institutionally driven or gleaned from published external research.

**STEP 4 – DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN:** Once you have explored hypothesizing around root causes to completion gaps, teams should begin thinking about interventions or practices to address the root cause. Again, colleges can reflect on evidence of proven high impact practices within their institutions or reflect upon practices vetted through external higher education research. With the intervention identified, teams should form an action plan for implementation. Within this action plan, it is important to address college resource availability, staff time, and the professional development needs of staff. It will also prove to be valuable for teams to connect these action plans to future grant applications to the WTCS or other grant awarding organizations.

**STEP 5 – IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION:** Finally, the last step in the process is taking action to implement the team action plan. It is important for teams to couple this implementation with an evaluation plan. This will help to address and measure the success of the implemented practice or intervention. As time goes on, it will be important for the team to evaluate the effectiveness of the process and action plan. Evaluations should be done regularly to ensure the implementation of the action plan is still working. Having the team revisit the evaluation process and action plan will help the team members assess if the intervention was a success and adjust the action plan as needed.