Meet your presenters

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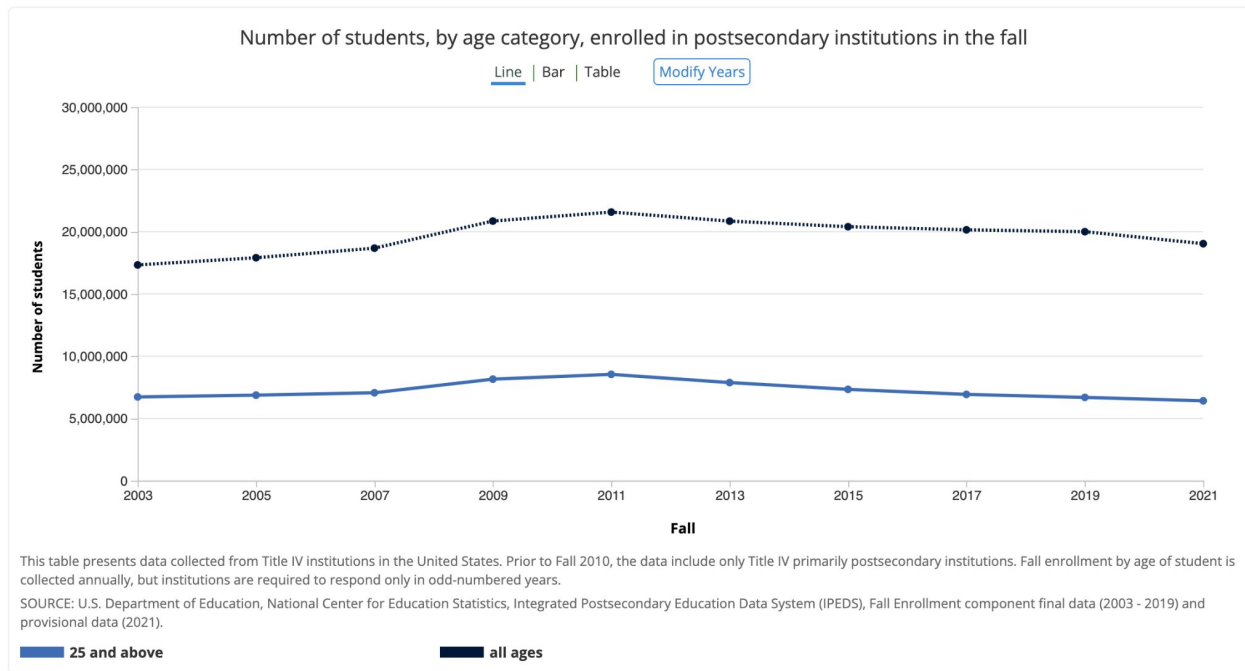
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Understanding and Using Your Data on Adult Learners

Presented by CAEL and eLumen

Overview ALLIES Framework

Data and how to make sense of it

Outcomes and hidden equity gaps

Higher Education Enrollment

- Adjusting Trends
- Identifying Adult Learners
  - Data
- Different Needs
  - Adjust the model

Number of students, by age category, enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the fall

Line | Bar | Table   Modify Years

This table presents data collected from Title IV institutions in the United States. Prior to Fall 2010, the data include only Title IV primarily postsecondary institutions. Fall enrollment by age of student is collected annually, but institutions are required to respond only in odd-numbered years.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Enrollment component final data (2003 - 2019) and provisional data (2021).

25 and above   all ages

The ALLIES Framework

Adult **L**earner **L**eaders
for **I**nstitutional **E**ffectiveness

LEVEL 1 • DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING

LEVEL 2 • ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND POLICY

LEVEL 3 • STUDENT EXPERIENCE

ADULT LEARNERS

A Culture of Change and Adaptivity

Adult and Equity-Focused Strategic Plan

Student and Labor Market Data

Inclusive Policies and Governance

Faculty and Staff Professional Development

Impactful Partnerships

Career Relevance and Connections

Academic Empowerment

Student Support, Particularly at the Front End of the Student's Journey

Affordable Programs

cael

Level 1:
Data-Driven Planning

Domain 1:

Student and Labor Market Data

Domain 2:

Adult and Equity-Focused

Strategic Plan

Domain 3:

A Culture of Change and Adaptivity

Note the ALLIES model has *directionality* - the three "levels" occur in sequence.

Level 2: Organizational Capacity and Policy

Domain 4:
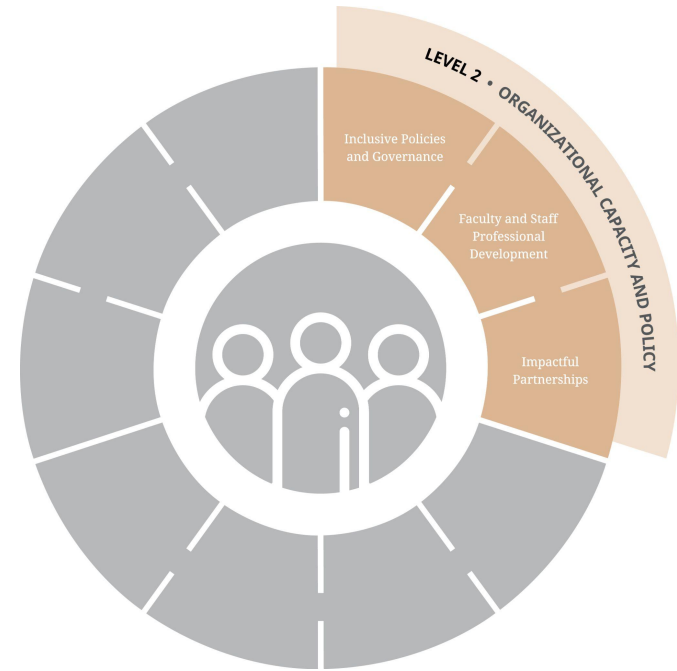
Inclusive Policies and Governance

Domain 5:

Faculty and Staff Professional

Development

Domain 6:

Impactful Partnerships

Note the ALLIES model has *directionality* - and everything builds on data-driven decision making!

Level 3:
The Student Experience
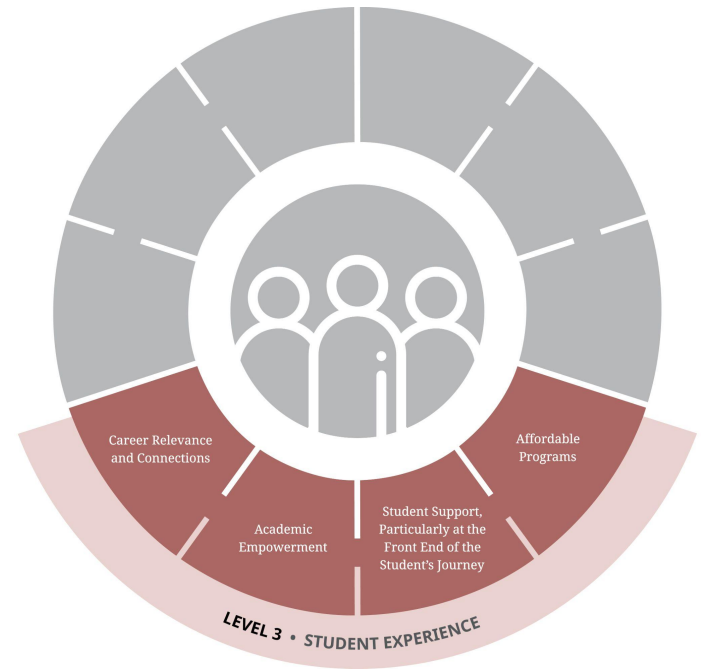
Domain 7:

Affordable Programs

Domain 8:

Student Support*

Domain 9:

Academic Empowerment

Domain 10:

Career Relevance and Connections

Career Relevance and Connections

Affordable Programs

Academic Empowerment

Student Support, Particularly at the Front End of the Student's Journey

LEVEL 3 • STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Note the ALLIES model has *directionality* - and robust adult learner programs are built on the other levels.

Data... and how to make sense of it

LEVEL 1 • DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING

Foster a Culture of Change and Adaptivity

Adult and Equity-Focused Strategic Plan

Student and Labor Market Data

What Kinds of Data Do You Collect?

- Market research

- Labor market information

- Enrollment data (inquiries, attempts, acceptance, matriculation)

- Retention data

- Grades and GPA across time

- Student satisfaction and course evaluations

- Engagement

- Completion and post-completion outcomes

What Can the Data Tell Us?

- Market research → **Recruitment opportunities & strategies**
- Labor market information → **Career connections, curriculum relevance, internships**
- Enrollment data (inquiries, attempts, acceptance, matriculation) → **Process effectiveness and advisor performance; financial aid uptake**
- Retention data → **Understanding student personas more or less likely to persist**
- Grades and GPA across time → **Bottleneck courses; building confidence and competence in critical academic skills (critical thinking, writing, mathematics)**
- Student satisfaction and course evaluations → **Faculty and support staff evaluation**
- Engagement → **Student events effectiveness, belongingness**
- Completion and post-completion outcomes → **For many learners, this is ROI**

What Does Data Typically Look Like?

- Anonymized

- Aggregated

- Stored across multiple information systems

- Incomplete

- Mutated across time to suit grant reporting and accreditation requirements

The Challenge of Incomplete Data

- Students self-report much of the data
    - Demographic data not often collected
    - Not tied to student IDs or personas, so difficult to know who succeeds or does not, and why
    - Alumni research focuses on likely donors - many achievements get missed
- Too many information systems
- Underutilization of case management-style software
    - Part-time instructors may not know
    - Advisors may not have time
    - Faculty with multiple, conflicting priorities
    - Institutional Research (or equivalent) do not have time to crunch every data point

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

- Darnell University, located in St. Louis, Missouri

- 5,000 undergraduate students

- Hispanic-Serving Institution (30% Hispanic/Latino/-a/-x/-e)

- 30% of learners over the age of 24

- 750 undergraduates in the "Adult Degree Completion" program

- Adult learners are significantly less likely to move from "intended major" to "major" in Education. Why?
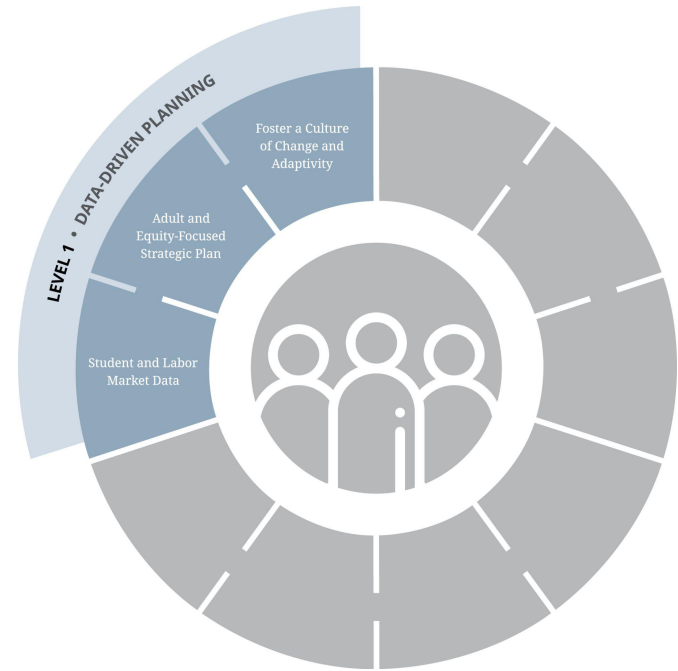
REMINDER: Level 1: Data-Driven Planning

Domain 1:

Student and Labor Market Data

Domain 2:

Adult and Equity-Focused

Strategic Plan

Domain 3:

A Culture of Change and Adaptivity

LEVEL 1 • DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING

Foster a Culture of Change and Adaptivity

Adult and Equity-Focused Strategic Plan

Student and Labor Market Data

Note the ALLIES model has *directionality* - the three "levels" occur in sequence.

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

Likely Gaps in Data

- Course evaluations outside of the Adult Degree Program

- Satisfaction with academic and other student support

- Incomplete and unsuccessful attempts at earning credit for prior learning

- Data around why adults are not using student support systems designed for them

- Assessment of academic skills gaps for previously enrolled students

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

What questions could you instead ask?

- What do you know about adult learners *in general*?
- Are student records flagged as "adult learners"?
  - Do you know who is a parent learner? A *single* parent learner? Using on-campus childcare?
  - Do you know who is working full time?
- What are the differences in adult learner persistence, GPAs, and course success on the basis of who is in the Adult Degree Program (50% of adults) versus the general student population (other 50%)?
- Does financial aid eligibility (e.g., Pell Grant) predict GPA?
- Are the outcomes of Hispanic adults similar to non-Hispanic adults?
- Are the outcomes of BIPOC adult learners similar to non-Hispanic adults?

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

New Case Study Notes

- All adult learners complete prerequisites at a similar, and at times, greater level than traditional peers
- Adult learners' GPAs are similar across race, ethnicity, and gender
- Adult learners are less likely to withdraw from their courses - up until "Education 261"

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

- What Is Education 261?
  - Foundations course for moving into the "true major" for education – the methods courses and advanced theory
  - At least a B- required to be admitted to School of Education
  - Includes a "service learning" component
- Adult learners are more likely to withdraw from the course
- Adult learners receiving Pell Grants and in ZIP codes primarily populated by People of Color are more likely to withdraw from the course
- **Does this sound familiar?**

Disaggregating Incomplete Data: A Case Study

What questions could you instead ask?

- Is childcare a barrier to the additional "service learning" component of the course?

- Is transportation a barrier to this?

- How about our learners who work full-time, multiple jobs, or "in the industry" with unpredictable hours?

Some Common Hidden Equity Gaps

- Course scheduling versus public transportation schedules
- Competitive course registration cycles that disadvantage working and parenting learners
- Academic pathways that disadvantage students with a significant gap since high school, or attended an under-resourced high school (e.g., aggressive, first-semester lab sciences)
- Child care that does not work for neurodiverse children
- Quantitative surveys and assessments that do not allow for students to elaborate on their experiences - and do not capture socioeconomic gaps

Data Makes a Difference!

- "Adult learner persistence is low."
- "Adult learners are not completing Education 261 at a rate similar to traditional students."
- "Adult learners in ZIP codes where many of our public transit-using learners live are not completing Education 261 at the expected rate. These are predominantly students of Color."
- "Many adults are stopping out of their education program because **they lack transportation to pre-assigned school sites** to complete the mandatory service learning requirement for a prerequisite course."

Data Makes a Difference!

- When data is disaggregated and critically questioned, more concise problems can be identified

- Institutions can *do something about* a concise program, while vague problems based on incomplete data are difficult to act upon

- Some data gaps can only be filled in by gathering student stories as evidence and looking outside the confines of the institution for factors that could predict different and inequitable student outcomes

Data Makes a Difference!

Questions for Consideration
- What is the "lift" required to address the institutional shortcoming in serving a group of learners?
- Will faculty or staff professional development help?
- How will the institution reassess - to truly know a proposed change is working?
- What additional support is needed to ensure faculty and staff have the time and resources to monitor student success - and communicate their observations?

Resources

Adult Learner Framework (CAEL)