

Working With Your *DESSE* Data

BUILDING A DATA NARRATIVE

1 Identifying a Data Focus Area

- » Examine the survey results by focus areas in the *DESSE* All-Student Frequency Report.
 - NOTE: Please see the [Appendix on pages 5–11](#) for focus areas and corresponding survey items.
- » What focus area or focus areas have particular pertinence to the college's work with its dual enrollment population? *Note that what you select might overlap with other areas of focus; therefore, it might be useful to review data from multiple focus areas to deepen your understanding of the survey results.* What specific findings in these focus areas point to potential new priorities for college action?
- » For the various breakout findings (grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity) within these focus areas, what captures your attention/concern? Where do the data demonstrate that different groups of students are having very different experiences?

2 Sharing the Data

In Step One, you identified a data focus area or multiple data focus areas. The data narrative approach described in the following paragraphs will help frame the discussion with others about the data focus area(s).

Sharing data in a meaningful way—a way that promotes positive change—can be a challenge, especially when the dataset is large and the audience diverse. A data narrative approach encourages deeper, more meaningful data-driven conversations. This approach uses data to tell a story—a story that develops and takes shape as data are shared and discussed.

The data narrative exercise is designed to be conducted in small groups, followed by a facilitated discussion with the larger group. During each session, groups are presented with a series of simply stated, related data points, with each data point being shared one at a time. After each data point is revealed, groups spend time discussing what the data point means to them in terms of their own work at the college. As group members talk about the meaning behind the data, a storyline develops, making the data more relevant and more relatable.

Selecting Key Data Points:

Each data point should build on the previous one, enabling the group to develop a clearer understanding of the issue and to formulate meaning around the issue, making the discussion more salient and tangible.

If, for example, a strategic goal of the college is to ensure that your dually enrolled students are receiving and benefitting from comprehensive advising services, you will likely want to select data points that highlight advising specifically (e.g., Item #27, Item #28a, Item#28a1, Item #29a).

Or, if the session's focus is about barriers to persistence for dually enrolled students, and the data show that transportation makes it difficult for a quarter of your students to take dual enrollment classes, you might also want to explore the others barriers outlined in Item #36. You may also want to look at these data broken out by student characteristics such as grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. Considered individually, these data points should be meaningful, but should be even more compelling when considered in conjunction with other relevant data.



Presenting the Data:

The data narrative exercise is conducted first in small groups. After the audience has been split into small groups, the data are presented. The objective is to share each data point one at a time and to allow discussion after each data point is revealed.

EXAMPLE DATA SET #1 // BARRIERS TO PERSISTENCE

1st data point: *Twenty-five percent of our dually enrolled student respondents reported that transportation issues made it difficult for them to take courses. Forty percent of our dually enrolled students reported that cost made it difficult for them to take courses.*

- Groups should discuss the implications of these data. What do they mean? What questions do they raise?

2nd data point: *Only 15% of our dually enrolled students have discussed basic needs assistance such as transportation and only 25% have discussed financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) with someone who works at our college.*

- Groups should discuss how these data points inform the first one. What additional questions do these data points raise?

3rd data point: *Our 9th and 10th grade students were more likely to report that transportation is a barrier to persistence for them than were our older students. There is not much difference by grade level, gender, or race/ethnicity among the students who said that cost is a barrier for them.*

- Groups should discuss how these data points inform the first two. What new dimensions does this information bring to the data narrative? What are the implications now?

EXAMPLE DATA SET #2 // ACADEMIC CHALLENGE/USE OF SUPPORT SERVICES

1st data point: *Forty percent of our dual enrollment students said they have struggled in the dual enrollment classes they are taking.*

- Groups should discuss the implications of this data point. What does it mean? What questions does it raise?

2nd data point: *While half of our dual enrollment student respondents said they met with an advisor, only 15% said they discussed with an advisor how college courses differ from high school courses.*

- Groups should discuss how this data point informs the first one. What additional questions does this data point raise?

3rd data point: *Sixty-five percent of our dual enrollment respondents said they were aware of tutoring services. But 75% of students reported never using them.*

- Groups should discuss how this data point informs the first two. What new dimensions does this information bring to the data narrative? What are the implications now?

Large Group Discussion:



After small groups have had time to discuss the data and formulate a clearer understanding of the issues, each group should share their thoughts — their version of the “story.” The objective is to meld each group’s story into a larger discussion on the topic. Some stories may align, while others may challenge the group to take an even closer look at the issue. The data narrative exercise is designed to encourage discussion among diverse audiences about specific issues of focus for the college. This tool, while designed for sharing results with a larger group, can be adapted for data sharing among specific areas of campus—within academic departments, student services units, student groups, etc.

3

Next Steps

- » **Priority Focus Area:** What is the data focus area(s) your college has selected?
- » **Strategies:** Identify three strategies that will improve results in this area.
- » **Key Players:** Who are the key players who will need to be involved to implement these strategies?
- » **Resources:** What college resources (time, people, facilities, money, etc.) will need to be allocated/reallocated to implement these strategies?
- » **Challenges:** What are some challenges that may prevent progress in implementing these strategies?
- » **Measure Improvement:** How will you measure improvement in the focus area(s) other than administering the *DESSE* again in spring 2027?

Appendix

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Academic Advising and Planning	<p>14. During the past year, how often have you been to the college campus for any dual enrollment-related reason (e.g., classes, meetings, advising, tutoring, events, or any other activities)?</p> <p>25. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college?</p> <p>a. Academic advising/counseling</p> <p>26a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services?</p> <p>26a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss? (<i>Mark all that apply</i>)</p> <p>(a) Developing an academic plan that specifies which courses you are required to take to complete a college certificate or degree</p> <p>(b) Which courses will transfer toward your intended program or major at a 4-year college</p> <p>(c) How college courses are different than high school courses</p> <p>(d) How well you are doing in your dual enrollment courses</p> <p>(e) Academic support services (tutoring, writing center, math skill lab, etc.) available to you at the college</p> <p>(f) Your commitments outside of school (work, family obligations, extra-curricular activities, etc.) to determine how many dual enrollment courses to take</p> <p>(g) When your next advising session should be</p> <p>(h) Your career interests</p> <p>(i) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested</p> <p>(j) Entering the workforce after high school</p> <p>(k) Other (please specify)</p> <p>27a. How satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising/counseling services during the last year?</p>
Academic Challenge	<p>22. Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term expect less, about the same, or more than the instructors of the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken?</p> <p>23. Are the assignments in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term less challenging, about the same, or more challenging than the assignments in the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken?</p> <p>24. Have you struggled academically in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term?</p>
Active and Collaborative Learning	<p>16. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <p>16a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions</p> <p>16c. Worked with other students on projects during class</p> <p>16d. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Barriers to Persistence	<p>31. Which of the following have you discussed with someone who works for this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) b. Financial assistance for college after high school graduation (help paying for college after graduating high school) c. Basic needs assistance (help with food, housing, transportation, child care, etc.) d. Mental health services e. None of the above <p>32. Which of the following make it difficult to take dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Access to technology b. Accessing information or resources on college website c. Being academically underprepared d. Cost e. Scheduling conflicts f. Where the courses are offered g. Transportation h. Balancing workload between dual enrollment and non-dual enrollment courses i. None of the above j. Other (please specify)
Career Counseling	<p>9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> l. To explore potential careers or college programs/majors <p>16. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <p>16g. Talked about career plans with an instructor</p> <p>25. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Career counseling <p>26a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services?</p> <p>26a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Your career interests (j) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested <p>26b. During the past year, how often have you used career counseling services?</p> <p>27b. How satisfied have you been with your use of career counseling services during the last year?</p>
Course Taking	<p>13. In which of the following subject areas have you taken or are you currently taking dual enrollment courses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Humanities (English, arts, foreign languages, communications, journalism, etc.) b. Social Sciences (history, psychology, economics, criminal justice, government, etc.) c. Science (anatomy, biology, biotechnology, chemistry, physics, etc.) d. Technology (animation, computer science, robotics, nanotechnology, digital communications, etc.) e. Engineering f. Math (algebra, statistics, calculus, etc.) g. Business (entrepreneurship, accounting, etc.) h. Career and Technical Education/CTE (agriculture, information technology, health sciences, culinary, law enforcement, automotive technology, skilled trades, etc.) i. College Success/First-Year Experience (FYE) Course j. Other (please specify) <p>14. During the past year, how often have you been to the college campus for any dual enrollment-related reason (e.g., classes, meetings, advising, tutoring, events, or any other activities)?</p> <p>33. How do you prefer to take your dual enrollment courses?</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Getting Started	<p>7. From what source did you first learn about the opportunity to take dual enrollment courses?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who works for this college Someone who works for your middle or high school Friends, peers, or classmates Family members Digital or print materials from the college (college website, social media, billboards, advertisements, etc.) Digital or print materials from your middle or high school (middle or high school website, social media, billboards, advertisements, etc.) Other (please specify) <p>8. Who most encouraged you to start taking dual enrollment courses?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who works for this college Someone who works for your middle or high school Friends, peers, or classmates Family members Self Other (please specify) <p>9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a boost to your high school grade point average or class rank To take courses for Career and Technical Education (CTE) training (agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health sciences, law enforcement, skilled trades, etc.) To earn credit toward a certificate or industry credential To earn college credit To earn an associate degree while in high school To save money on college To take more challenging courses To take more interesting courses To take courses that are not available at your high school To take courses that better fit your schedule To see what it is like to be a college student To explore potential careers or college programs/majors Other reasons not listed above (please specify) <p>10. Did you participate in an orientation for dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <p>11. How was the process to initially sign up for dual enrollment courses offered through this college?</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Goals	<p>9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a boost to your high school grade point average or class rank To take courses for Career and Technical Education (CTE) training (agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health sciences, law enforcement, skilled trades, etc.) To earn credit toward a certificate or industry credential To earn college credit To earn an associate degree while in high school To save money on college To take more challenging courses To take more interesting courses To take courses that are not available at your high school To take courses that better fit your schedule To see what it is like to be a college student To explore potential careers or college programs/majors Other reasons not listed above (please specify) <p>36. What do you plan to be doing 6 months after you graduate from high school?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attending a community or technical college Attending a 4-year college or university Working for pay Being in the military Undecided Other (please specify) <p>36a. Which community or technical college do you plan to attend? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 36 is A)</i></p> <p>36b. Which college or university do you plan to attend? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 36 is B)</i></p> <p>36c. What are your reasons for planning to attend a 4-year college or university instead of a community college? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 36 is B)</i></p>
Instructor Expectations	<p>17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provided a syllabus on the first day of class Clearly explained class grading policies Clearly explained the class attendance policy Clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college <p>22. Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term expect less, about the same, or more than the instructors of the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken?</p>
Motivation and Preparedness	<p>19. I am motivated to do what it takes to succeed in my dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>20. My academic background has prepared me to succeed in my dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>34. While in high school, have you taken any of the following types of courses?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Placement (AP) International Baccalaureate (IB) Cambridge (AICE) None of the above <p>37. Has taking dual enrollment courses through this college made you less confident or more confident that you could be successful in college after high school?</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Sense of Belonging	<p>17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <p>17a. Learned your name</p> <p>17b. Had activities to introduce students to one another</p> <p>18. I feel like part of the community at this college.</p> <p>28. Because you are currently taking or have taken dual enrollment courses, have you participated in any college-sponsored activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, intramural sports, etc.)?</p>
Stigma	<p>29. Prior to taking dual enrollment courses, what was your opinion of attending a community college after high school?</p> <p>30. Has your dual enrollment experience changed your perception about attending a community college?</p> <p>a. It made my perception worse</p> <p>b. It made my perception better</p> <p>c. No</p> <p>30a. What about your dual enrollment experience changed your perception about attending a community college for the worse? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 30 is A)</i></p>
Student Effort	<p>16. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <p>16a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions</p> <p>16b. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources</p> <p>16h. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations</p> <p>16i. Come to class without completing readings or assignments</p> <p>16l. Not turned in an assignment</p>
Student-Faculty Interaction	<p>15. Who teaches the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now?</p> <p>16. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <p>16e. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor</p> <p>16f. Asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class</p> <p>16g. Talked about career plans with an instructor</p> <p>16h. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations</p> <p>16j. Communicated with an instructor through the course website or email</p> <p>16k. Received timely feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance</p> <p>17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <p>17a. Learned your name</p> <p>21. I know how to get in touch with my dual enrollment instructors outside of class.</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Support Services	<p>17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <p>17f. Clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college</p> <p>24. Have you struggled academically in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term?</p> <p>24a. Has someone from this college contacted you when you have struggled academically with your dual enrollment coursework to help you get the assistance you need?</p> <p>25. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Academic advising/counseling b. Career counseling c. Tutoring d. Writing, math, or other skill lab e. Transfer counseling to a 4-year college or university f. Services for students with disabilities <p>26a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services?</p> <p>26a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss? (<i>Mark all that apply</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Developing an academic plan that specifies which courses you are required to take to complete a college certificate or degree (b) Continuing your degree at this community college after graduating high school (c) Which courses will transfer toward your intended program or major at a 4-year college (d) How college courses are different than high school courses (e) How well you are doing in your dual enrollment courses (f) Academic support services (tutoring, writing center, math skill lab, etc.) available to you at the college (g) Your commitments outside of school (work, family obligations, extra-curricular activities, etc.) to determine how many dual enrollment courses to take (h) When your next advising session should be (i) Your career interests (j) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested (k) Entering the workforce after high school (l) Other (please specify) <p>26b. During the past year, how often have you used career counseling services?</p> <p>26c. During the past year, how often have you used tutoring services?</p> <p>26d. During the past year, how often have you used writing, math, or other skill lab services?</p> <p>26e. During the past year, how often have you used transfer counseling services?</p> <p>26f. During the past year, how often have you used services for students with disabilities?</p> <p>27a. How satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising/counseling services during the last year?</p> <p>27b. How satisfied have you been with your use of career counseling services during the last year?</p> <p>27c. How satisfied have you been with your use of tutoring services during the last year?</p> <p>27d. How satisfied have you been with your use of writing, math, or other skill lab services during the last year?</p>

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Support Services <i>(continued)</i>	<p>27e. How satisfied have you been with your use of transfer counseling services during the last year?</p> <p>27f. How satisfied have you been with your use of services for students with disabilities during the last year?</p> <p>31. Which of the following have you discussed with someone who works for this college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) b. Financial assistance for college after high school graduation (help paying for college after graduating high school) c. Basic needs assistance (help with food, housing, transportation, child care, etc.) d. Mental health services e. None of the above