



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION (EDI) DATA COLLECTION AT POST-SECONDARY ADMISSIONS

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Lack of appropriate disaggregated demographic data at PSIs and at the system level to assess EDI goals in admissions policies and practices
- ❖ Project fills this void in information by reviewing data collection practices regarding race, ethnicity, and ancestry (RAE) in Canadian PSIs and in other relevant sectors
- ❖ BC Human Rights Commissions' Disaggregated demographic data collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective
- ❖ Based on information collected, a framework has been developed for the collection and use of student demographic data in BC

DATA COLLECTION

- ❖ Review of peer-reviewed and grey literature
- ❖ Systemic website review
- ❖ Key informant interviews
- ❖ Focus groups
- ❖ Workshops

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

	Interviews - Phase 1	Interviews - Phase 2	Focus Groups	Workshops
Groups	Admissions, registrar's office, and institutional research representatives, as well as a few representatives from student affairs or equity offices	Government representatives; Leaders in sectors other than PSE; Other PSI in Canada; Representatives of community organizations, Indigenous leaders	Students	Students Government representatives Indigenous leaders
Participation	27 interviews 52 participants	11 interviews 18 participants	5 sessions 22 participants	2 sessions 14 participants
Institution	9 colleges 12 universities		1 college 3 universities	

RACE, ANCESTRY, AND ETHNICITY (RAE): WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Race	Ethnicity	Ancestry
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social construct, dynamic and evolving• However, phenotypical traits are often used• Race-conscious societies• Significant consequences on the individual• Exclude indigenous communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-identification / shared cultural affiliation• Emphasis on “otherness” and power relations with what is considered “normal”• Often connected to nationality, although it is multifaceted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural heritage or “origin”• Self-assessment• Unreliable when used as single variable• Ambiguous concept – what is the reference point?

CURRENT DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

PSIs in BC

- Gender, age, Indigeneity – MAEST reporting
- Point of admission / stored in SIS
- Also: citizenship status, country of citizenship, country of origin, languages spoken at home, ability/disability status, regional and/or geographic backgrounds
- No RAE questions at time of admission or registration
- Lack of evaluation processes for data collection practices
- Data governance policies – data storage, protection, and levels of access
- Some existing policies may be deemed outdated
- Centralized and decentralized approaches

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COLLECTING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- “You get one shot at building trust”: transparency, data usage and trust
- “More is better than less”: participation, diversity, and representation

CURRENT DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

Other Canadian PSIs

- Data collected varies
- Employee data for Federal Contractors Program* - four designated groups: women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, members of *visible minorities* / racialized groups
- Several PSIs initiated EDI related data collection efforts in 2020/2021

*Institutions that have 100 or more employees and that received an initial federal government goods or services contract valued at \$1 million or more belong to the Federal Contractors Program and follow the federal mandate to collect and report on employment equity data. Source: Employment and Social Development Canada (2022). *Federal Contractors Program*.

LESSONS LEARNED AND KEY DECISIONS

- **Centralized Data Collection** - Store information in the SIS – ask once / not mandatory – choose not to disclose / self-identify and change info any time
- **Consider evolving language** – assess language used and reduce confusion / e.g., race + ethnicity combined
- **Build on experience collecting faculty/staff data** – combine student and employee questions
- **Incorporate intended use in the way the data are collected** – provide a rationale as to why these data are being collected and how they will be used

CURRENT DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

Other sectors – health and K-12 education

- Alignment with Stats Canada / compare diversity of particular groups with reference populations
- Canadian Health Institute for Health Information (CIHI) resource*

LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

- **Involve relevant communities and stakeholders in the full process** – engagement contributes to buy-in and helps justify decisions. Intensive process, will take time. Involvement starts at design phase.
- **Use accessible language** – prevents data quality issues (different interpretations). Language can be adapted to context.
- **Consider training in the implementation plan** – to prepare staff that manage and report on these data.

HOW ARE THE DATA BEING USED?

- ❖ Reporting – strategic plans and operational goals
- ❖ Assessment – evaluate operations and identify areas for improvement (e.g., representativeness of student population or biases in admission processes)
- ❖ Planning – new programs and services for particular student populations
- ❖ Communications - ensure eligible students are aware of programs and services available and how to access these programs and services
- ❖ Support EDI strategies or policies – current review or development of new EDI strategies/policies. Address institutional racism and discrimination / understand achievement gaps among student groups.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

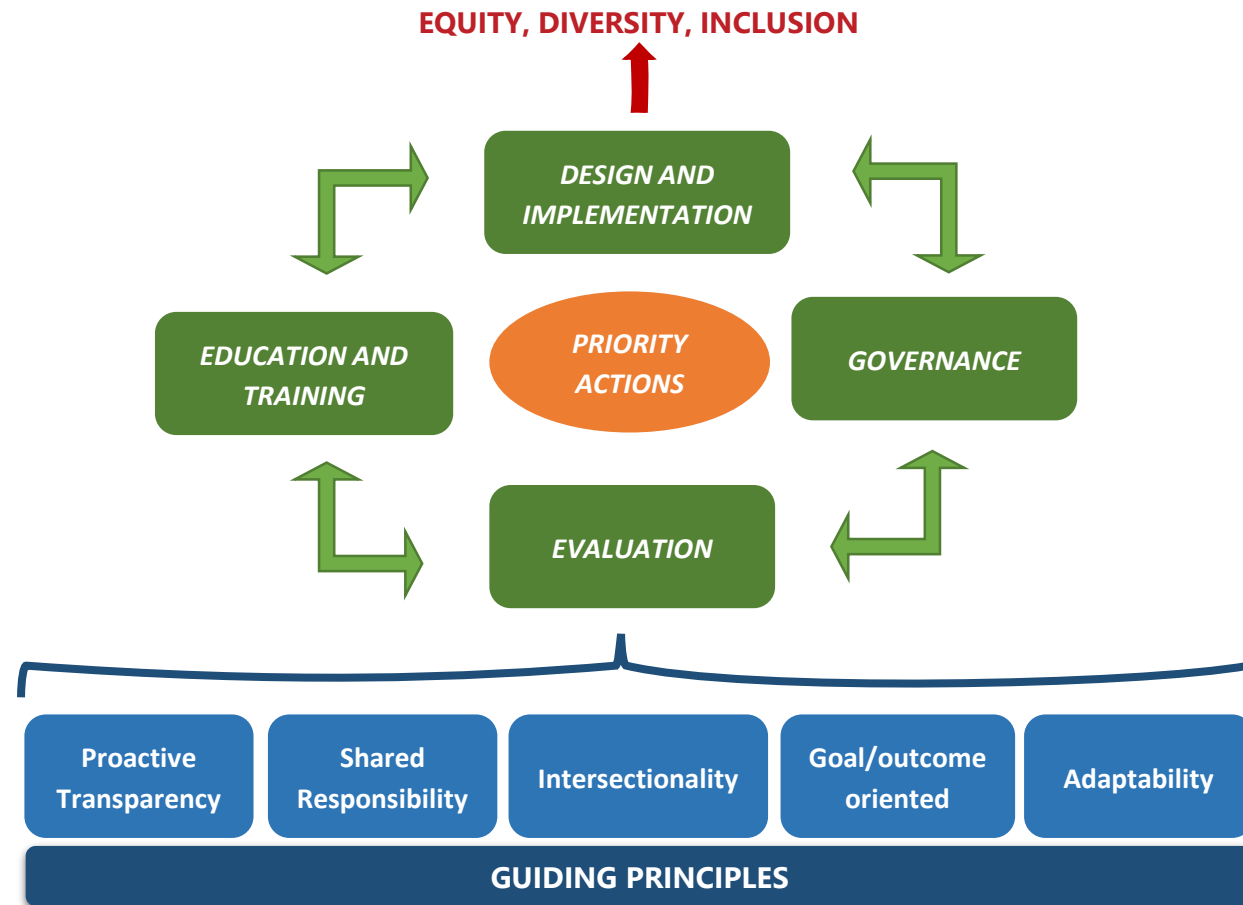
Many institutions struggled to elaborate on the specifics of how demographic data collection efforts would translate into concrete benefits to students

- ❖ Better targeting student services to ensure access
- ❖ Provide opportunity for students to express their identities
- ❖ Anti-racism commitments made in 2020
- ❖ “*We need to know because we care*” (Gwen Phillips) - Mindful not to do harm and consider unintended consequences of using these data that could be detrimental

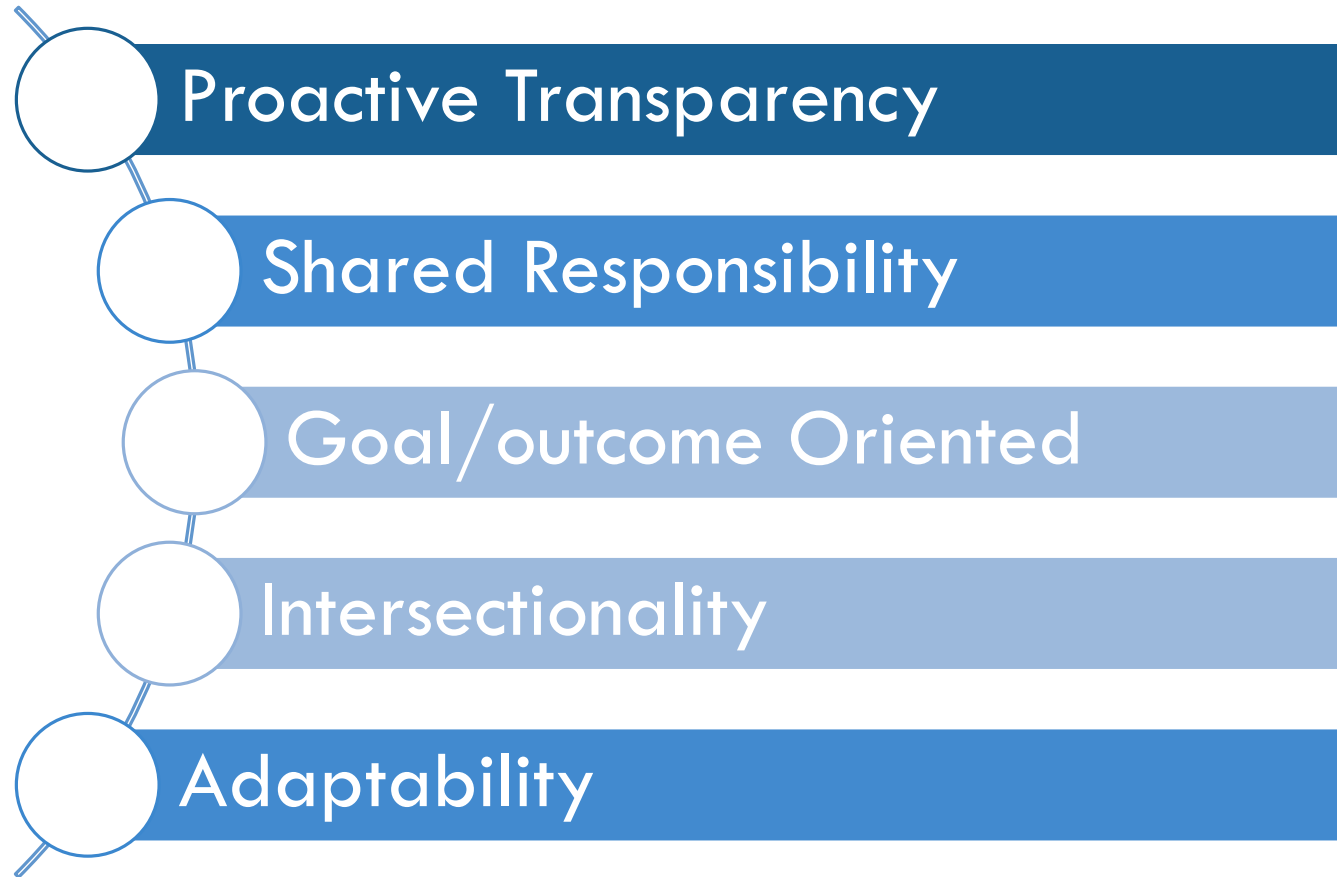
GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Data can be collected by BC PSIs but must ensure compliance with FIPPA and the Human Rights Act
- ❖ Mindful of BC's Anti-Racism Data Legislation and Data Standards
- ❖ Legal requirements: ensuring there is legal authority for the collection of personal data / providing a notice of collection rationale or statement and they are not collected needlessly / appointing someone who will respond to questions about the data collection

AN EDI FRAMEWORK FOR THE COLLECTION AND USE OF STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA



PRINCIPLES



PROACTIVE TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is fundamental in the building of relationships between institutions and students. Populations that have been subject to discrimination and racism often mistrust individuals and institutions in positions of power. Being transparent about the processes for collecting data and their intended use will contribute to creating a relationship based on trust. Lack of transparency, and the resulting lack of trust, would inhibit the collection of representative information about relevant communities in PSIs.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A relationship-based approach, rather than a top-down approach, calls for shared responsibility. Shared responsibility is reflected in a participative and reflexive approach, from the collaborative design of specific questions to the identification of data ownership, access, and usage policies, to the co-development of solutions that are vetted by stakeholders. There is no presumption on the part of institutions of what is needed or how it should be done. Issues are identified together, solutions are developed jointly, and decisions are made collaboratively. In addition, PSIs acknowledge that the collection of demographic data and the actions and outcomes that may be informed from these activities, are a shared responsibility with community impacts that may transcend the post-secondary experience.

GOAL/OUTCOME ORIENTED

A “commitment to action” will ensure that the data are not collected for data’s sake. The collection of personal information is on a “need to know” basis rather than a “nice to know basis”. Data collection efforts should explicitly outline the goals or objectives for which the data will be used, how it will inform outcomes, and how those outcomes will be assessed. This is both an ethical consideration and a legal obligation that PSIs must respect. The intended use will also have an impact on the approach selected for data collection, in terms of its timing and the questions used. For instance, the data collected may be different if the goal is to assess the representativeness of the student complement compared to the population basin, or if the goal is to identify student diversity to inform the offer of student services.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Issues regarding equity, diversity and inclusion are multidimensional in nature. Ignoring the linkages and interactions between the different dimensions of identity may result in incomplete analyses and unequitable solutions. Reducing individuals to a racial group will disregard the many other drivers (e.g., language skills, first generation students, financial background) of participation in the postsecondary sector, and of social and academic outcomes. Recognizing and upholding the complexity of JEDI would result in analyses that integrate an intersectional approach (where the different dimensions of identity interact) and search for comprehensive solutions.

ADAPTABILITY

As mentioned before, JEDI is an area of knowledge that is growing and evolving. The introduction and use of new terms to refer to different communities is an example of this. As we can only expect this area of knowledge will continue to evolve, the approach selected for data collection should allow for adaptability and flexibility to incorporate future changes. The latter should be informed by current research and guided by the needs of the community, particularly regarding communities of historically underrepresented people.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- ❖ When to ask the question(s)?
- ❖ How to ask the question(s)?
- ❖ How to use the data collected?

WHEN TO ASK THE QUESTION(S)?

RAE data about the student population can be collected at various times and using diverse tools. In this section, we put forward three scenarios regarding when to collect the data for consideration by BC PSIs. These scenarios are not exclusive of each other as the data collected in each can produce supplementary information.

Collecting RAE data at the point of admissions

Description and target population

- Collecting data at the point of admissions will involve developing and adopting system-wide standardized questions regarding REA.
- Information would be requested from all applicants.

Possible uses

- The information would allow for assessing the representativeness of the student population vis-à-vis the diversity in the community.
- It may also be possible to assess whether the offer or acceptance rates vary depending on the applicant's race/ethnicity, as a first step at identifying the presence of systemic discriminatory practices.

Storage

- Information would be stored in the admissions system.
- The extent to which the information would be transferred to each institution would be a function of the institution's own SIS. It may offer a solution for institutions unable to capture this information in their own systems.

Challenges

- Applicants may be concerned that the information will impact their acceptance into a given institution.
- There may be disagreement across institutions regarding what standardized question(s) will be asked.

Considerations

- Clear information regarding how the data will be used and how it is ensured that it does not influence the selection process, should be provided to applicants.
- Even though all applicants will be asked question regarding REA, they should be given the option to decline providing the information (e.g., Prefer not to answer).
- Applicants should be asked for permission to eventually transmit this information to the institutions where they register.

Collecting RAE data at the time of registration

Description and target population

- Information would be collected by each institution at the time of registration.
- All students would be asked REA questions.

Possible uses

- The data collected could allow for reviewing the representativeness of the student population vis-à-vis their communities
- In depth analyses could be used to assess:
 - Participation in cultural or recreational activities
 - Use of services (academic services, residence, cafeteria)
 - Differences in academic results.

Storage

Information could be stored in the SIS or elsewhere.

Considerations

- Data should not be collected if its intent is not to directly benefit students.
- Institutions will be able to use their own question/definitions
- An option to not provide the information should be given to students
- Access to the data within the institution should be governed by clear and transparent policies
- Avoid using the data for analysis within a 'deficit narrative'.
- Information could be reviewed/validated every session
- In the focus groups, participants mentioned that collecting the information during registration would be "the easiest".
- Consider sharing information without any identifiable data

Collecting RAE data using a survey

Description and target population	Use a survey (run on a regular basis) to collect information about students.
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| Possible uses | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of targeted services• Identification of discriminatory, exclusionary practices |
|----------------------|---|

Storage	These data would not be linked to the SIS.
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| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information is not available at the individual student level, which limits the reporting/analysis that can be done of the student population.• Students may not be motivated to participate in the survey, which may result in biased results.• The analysis of qualitative data collected via surveys (or other means) is resource-intensive. |
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HOW TO ASK THE QUESTION(S)?

- ❖ Include representatives from campus community and student body in design process of questions
- ❖ Transparency about goals, intentions, and understanding of terms used
- ❖ Race/ethnicity are commonly used together in a single question
- ❖ Broad categories may mask differences – use both open-ended and multiple choice options
- ❖ Provide definitions for terms used
- ❖ Voluntary disclosure / allow “choose not to disclose” or to skip a question

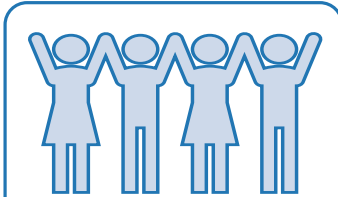
HOW TO USE THE DATA COLLECTED?

- ❖ Data collection can be used to assess diversity in PSIs but should be conducive to development of policies and practices that lead to greater equity and inclusiveness
- ❖ Analysis protocols and resulting initiatives should be developed in partnership with stakeholders from impacted communities
- ❖ Consider an intersectional lens – using different variables simultaneously to better understand intersection of systems of discrimination and disadvantage
- ❖ Some benefits and possible uses: Admission policies / review of traditional admission criteria / reduction of racial biases / increased accessibility to higher education / targeted support services and programs

PRIORITY ACTIONS — DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION



Identify the intended uses of the data

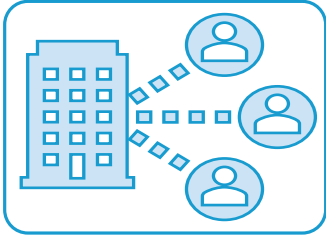


Ensure a participative approach in design and implementation



Design and implement a communication strategy

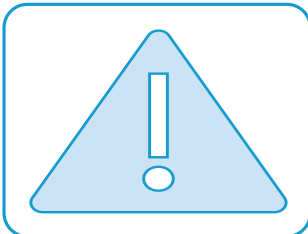
PRIORITY ACTIONS — GOVERNANCE



Build individual and systemic capacity for respectful engagement in data collection and reporting



Identify the rules, processes, and role delegations for these data

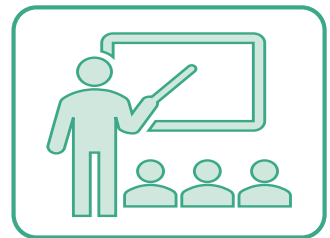


Ensure use of data does not cause further harm

PRIORITY ACTIONS – EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Everyone should receive education, training and be involved in dialogue

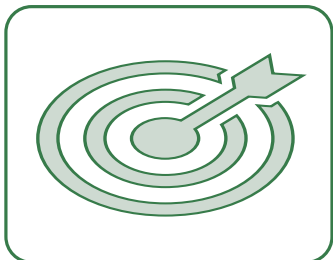


Develop training curriculum adapted to the institution's circumstances



Ensure that training is reviewed and available on a recurring basis

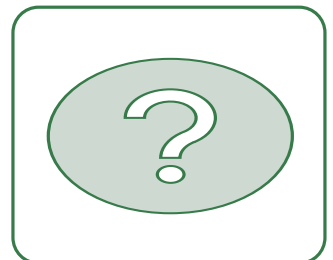
PRIORITY ACTIONS — EVALUATION COMPONENT



Identify benefits to students



Document, document, document



Continuously assess and collect feedback

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- ❖ Race, ancestry and ethnicity are complex, evolving, and overlapping concepts. Constant revision of terminology is needed.
- ❖ PSIs collecting these data must ensure compliance with FIPPA and Human Rights Act. Paying attention to the unfolding Anti-Racism Data Legislation. Ensure an individual's privacy is protected.
- ❖ Isolated data collection on race will have limited impacts on anti-racism practices. Other actions are required

Q&A

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