

# Module 4: Using State Data to Partner With Researchers

Activity Handouts

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## Activity 1: Opening Self-Reflection

**Purpose**: This exercise asks you to consider the potential benefits of integrating career and technical education (CTE) data into your state education data system.[[1]](#footnote-2) If you are working with other team members, partner to create a combined list.

**Directions:** States collect a great deal of education data to comply with federal and state reporting requirements and inform system improvement. Although this expectation holds for CTE, in many states, CTE data are maintained in separate databases from those used to administer academic programs.

Why might it be useful to integrate CTE data into your state education data system? Specifically, how might you leverage statewide data to gain a better understanding of your CTE program effectiveness and efficiency? Answer the following reflection questions to help frame your response.

* How might you combine the academic and/or administrative data contained in your state’s education data system with data on CTE to improve programming? Brainstorm two to three ideas below:
* How might you use longitudinal statewide data on students’ CTE course taking to inform your understanding of CTE programming at either the K–12 or postsecondary education level? Brainstorm two to three ideas below:
* How might you use longitudinal data on students’ CTE course taking that bridge the K–12 and postsecondary education levels to inform your understanding of CTE programming? Brainstorm two to three ideas below:

## Activity 2: Using State Data Systems

**Purpose**: This exercise will help you to think about how you might apply the information contained in a state data system to answer questions about the career and technical education (CTE) offered in your state.[[2]](#footnote-3) It also can help you think about the type of CTE data you might wish to incorporate into your own state system.

**Directions:** The Connecticut P20 WIN system offers an illustration of how a state data system might be configured to assist educators and researchers to assess the benefits that CTE offers. Follow the instructions below to gain an appreciation of the advantages and gaps that such a system offers.

1. The P20 WIN system is an example of a decentralized system where data are maintained by separate agencies. To learn more about the system, type the following URL into your web browser, and read the “About” and “FAQ” sections to learn more about the system and its capabilities: <https://www.ct.edu/p20win>.
2. Now that you have an idea of how the system operates, familiarize yourself with the types of reports that the system produces and how data are used for visualizations. Follow the links below and respond to the prompts provided.
3. Reports: <https://www.ct.edu/p20win/requests#topic>

What are your impressions about the information provided?

1. Visualizations: <https://www.ct.edu/p20win/requests#visualizations>

How might you use this information in your state?

1. The P20 WIN system uses a data dictionary to help users identify the types of data that are available for analysis. Click on the link below to download an Excel file containing the available data elements. Then, review the file and respond to the prompts provided below:

<https://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/p20win/P20WIN_Data_Dictionary.xlsx>

What are your impressions about the data elements that are available?

What else do you want to know (that is, what research questions do you have) about CTE programming in your state?

What additional CTE elements would be necessary to answer your research questions?

## Activity 3: Closing Self-Reflection

**Purpose**: This exercise will help you to think about how you might improve the usefulness of data included in your state’s career and technical education (CTE) data system or statewide longitudinal data system.[[3]](#footnote-4)

**Directions:** To complete this exercise, you will need a copy of the data dictionary used by your state to organize its CTE data. Once you have accessed this document, use it to help answer the following questions in the space provided:

1. Think about a pressing research question that you believe needs to be answered in your state. Write it in the space below.
2. Using your state data dictionary as a source, list a set of data elements that you might use to answer your identified research question.
3. Now, review the data elements you identified above by applying a compliance versus improvement lens. Select one that you believe is primarily compliance-based and consider how you might redesign it to provide more research- and improvement-friendly information.
1. Facilitator note: If doing this activity with a group, consider making this a 10-minute think-pair-share, with the individuals working taking 5 minutes to brainstorm and 5 minutes to share with another person. This can help to identify the range of benefits that analysis of statewide data may provide. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Facilitator note: If doing this activity with a group, consider making this a 20-minute think-pair-share, with the individuals working taking 10 minutes to brainstorm and 10 minutes to share with another person. This can help to identify the types of CTE data you might want to collect for your state system. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Facilitator note: If doing this activity with a group, consider making this a 10-minute think-pair-share, with the individuals working taking 5 minutes to brainstorm and 5 minutes to share with another person. This can help to identify possible improvements of your state data system. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)