



Cradle-to-Career Data System Personas



Personas

Personas help develop a clear understanding of target audiences by bringing them to life in a very human and real way. This helps us gain a better understanding of behaviors, patterns, needs and preferences.

Along with some basic demographics, each persona includes the following details:

- Functional — what's the specific task they're trying to complete?
- Social — how do they want to be perceived?
- Emotional — how do they want to feel?
- Pains — what negatives are they trying to avoid?
- Gains — what positives are they trying to accomplish?



Analyzers

Daniel Reyes

Demographics: 43, chief of staff for the California Assembly member from Merced.

Functional: It's his job to support his boss by determining what prior initiatives were successful, and in developing and evaluating policy proposals. (It's also his job to get his Assembly member re-elected!)

Social: He wants to be perceived as a resource in his community for immigrants and English language learners, and as an expert in education policy.

Emotional: He wants to feel that he's done all he can to make a strong case for equitable investments in his community.

Pains: It's a struggle to find information about longer-term outcomes for students in the Central Valley and how they compare to other parts of the state along with information about numbers of people being trained for high-demand jobs in the region. Sometimes the information provided is distorted to achieve a specific policy goal.

Gains: Good data and examples of effective practices that relate to challenges in the Central Valley will allow him to interpret data for a policy context, champion successes in the district, and better serve his Assembly member.



Cristina Escalante Velasquez

Demographics: 31, a policy and research analyst for an education equity organization that focuses on statewide issues and is based in Los Angeles.

Functional: It's her job to create narratives that convince people in power to champion more equitable distribution of resources. She helps others see that outcomes are influenced by structural factors and how communities can benefit from specific types of investments.

Social: She wants to be perceived as a skilled data storyteller by her organization and connected to others working on similar analyses.

Emotional: She wants to ensure that members of her community are seen as "college material" so they have the same educational opportunities as she did.

Pains: She's concerned that the available information doesn't provide a complete picture of the structural factors that shape education outcomes, or she finds that she can't even access information to help make her case and reframe how an issue is understood. The information that is available often uses arcane terminology or focuses only on negatives, which makes it difficult to engage the community to advocate for change.

Gains: The ability to pull information at various grain sizes, timeframes, and areas of focus; to identify trends and differences in outcomes based on students' demographics and backgrounds; and to combine information in new ways will allow her to reveal hidden stories and craft a compelling storyline.



Amy Dubois

Demographics: 46, a senior program officer at a community foundation based in San Francisco.

Functional: It's her job to make compelling cases to her board so that they will underwrite her proposals and keep meaningful resources flowing to the community.

Social: She wants to be perceived as someone who can identify novel solutions and share them with her peers and decision makers to create collective impact and inform policy.

Emotional: She has a sincere desire to understand and do right by marginalized communities to address issues of injustice.

Pains: Lack of access to information about investment contexts and outcomes makes it difficult to discern which investments will make a significant impact, particularly given the pandemic crisis and its disproportionate impact on communities prioritized by her foundation. Additionally, her board is focused on short-term, high-impact outcomes even though system change can take a long time.

Gains: Easy to access information on educational trends in the community and examples of students able to overcome challenges will shed light on prior, current, and potential investments.



Peter Martinelli

Demographics: 57, a senior fellow at an education think tank at a prestigious university near Santa Barbara.

Functional: It's his job to conduct innovative, high-quality analyses for prestigious academic journals that will yield grants to help sustain his think tank.

Social: He wants to be perceived as an expert adding insights to the field of education reform by building on an established field of inquiry.

Emotional: He's driven by passion for education issues and the power of research to inform policy.

Pains: Siloed data sets, legal constraints, and long timelines for fulfilling data requests means that he has difficulty accessing information in the first place. He often finds that underlying data sets are incomplete and not structured in a manner that aligns with his research questions. The recent increase in publicly-available dashboards has led to competing narratives about student experiences and outcomes.

Gains: Timely access to student-level data, paired with information on how it was derived and access to study methodology, will enable him to understand how others came to their conclusions; the opportunity to inform the development of the system will help ensure that it operates in a manner useful to researchers.



Additional Analyzers

Kendrick Williams

Demographics: 32, a vice principal at a high school in San Diego, and currently working toward a doctorate in education.

Functional: It's his job to identify, evaluate, and test strategies for student success that will garner support from administrative decision makers and parents. He's also working on his dissertation that will analyze the effect of test strategies on the academic outcomes of African American boys.

Social: He wants to be seen in his community as a leader and role model for young African American boys.

Emotional: Aspiring to implement change on a large scale, he gets a charge from opportunities to learn and theories of action that help kids succeed.

Pains: He has limited time to navigate a data request process or figure out how to use publicly-available information. He can see some data sets are flawed based on his local context, but others have not realized they are problematic. He lacks clarity about which data tools he should use for his dissertation versus information that should only be used to support individual students.

Gains: Easy to access data, including the ability to compare results across locations and groups of students, can help him with his dissertation. Additionally, readily available longitudinal data will clarify whether his ideas related to testing strategies have been effective over time or in other contexts. Information about how data are defined and constructed and how to interpret that data will help him fulfill both his roles.



Andrew Wilson

Demographics: 59, a reporter for an online education newsletter based in San Jose.

Functional: It's his job to create high-value content and provide in-depth analyses for specific groups of students and figuring out if statewide investments made a difference over the long run.

Social: He wants his content to be shared widely, bring in more readers, and ensure his online newsletter is able to stay afloat.

Emotional: He wants to tell people's stories, particularly those who are normally overlooked, to the people most likely to make changes to policy and practice.

Pains: He cannot find the information he needs quickly. Source information is generally structured in a way that does not answer his questions. Often the information he needs has been filtered by an interested party or he has outright been denied access, making it harder to discern the outcomes of policies, programs, and investments.

Gains: Support on how to access and understand information along with the ability to get relevant information quickly and easily will allow him to serve as a data interpreter for others. Neutral, accurate, and recent data, with the ability to compare results for different groups, locations, and time frames will drive new stories.



Organizational Planners

Nicole Smith

Demographics: 47, director of counseling and guidance for a school district in the Visalia.

Functional: It's her job to building internal capacity for analyzing data in ways that inform her counselors' practices so they can better serve their students. She also works externally with postsecondary partners to identify and correct misalignment in policies that hurt students' outcomes.

Social: She wants to be an effective communicator in her community, helping to determine her district's practices and influence policy. She also wants to communicate information with colleagues and partners in ways that increases their interest in using data and improves their practices.

Emotional: She wants to feel knowledgeable of effective practices and confident about sharing them with her district, district leadership, and other districts in her area.

Pains: Although she's skilled in the use of data and analytics, she has issues with its reliability. She's faced with gaps in her current data system and cannot effectively track measures and trends over time.

Gains: Access to district and statewide student outcome data that shows trends over time will help her identify how best to increase the number of students who meet a-g requirements, apply to college, and get good jobs.



Sanjay Singh

Demographics: 60, director of admissions for a public higher education institution in Fremont.

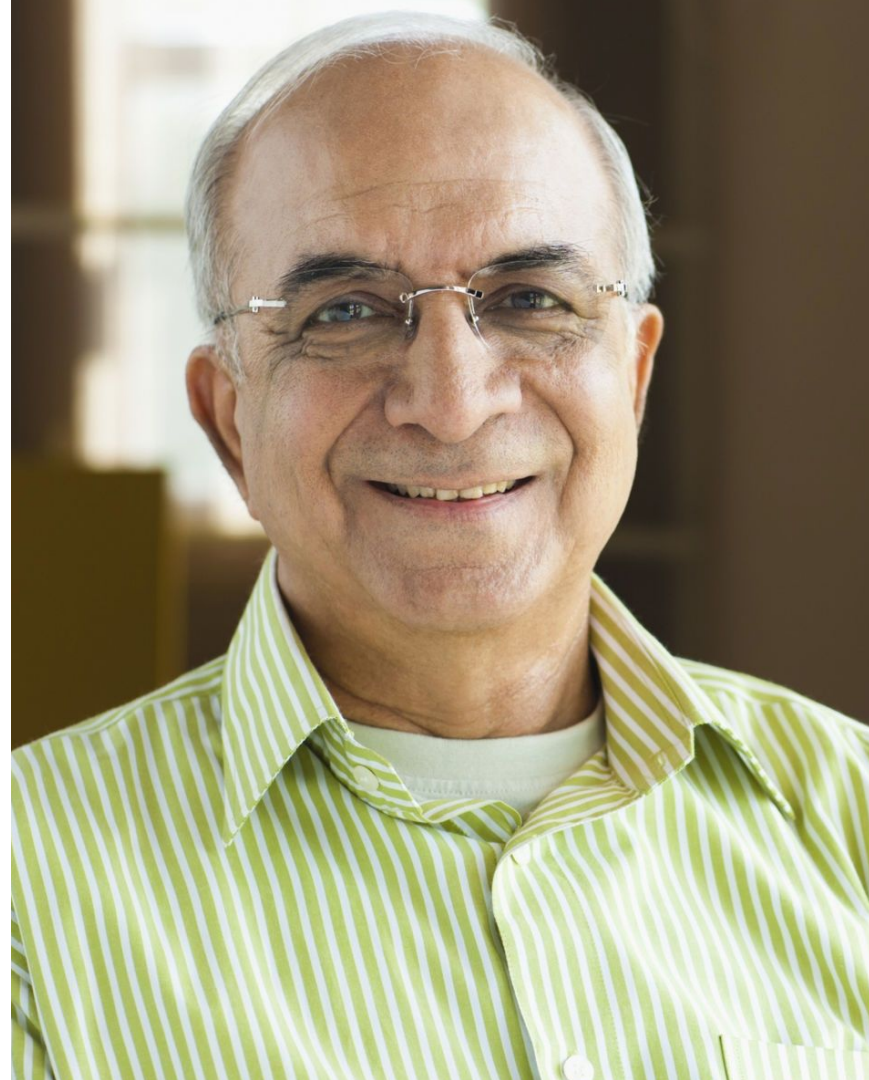
Functional: It's his job to identify groups of students for outreach programs to improve access for underserved students in addition to his other duties as director of admissions.

Social: He wants his office to be perceived as accountable and transparent with its policies.

Emotional: He has a deep commitment to public higher education and access and he wants to maintain alignment with policies from the chancellor's office.

Pains: Lack of access to information in a single portal that is accurate, consistent, useful, not duplicative of existing data, and can be disaggregated.

Gains: Outcome information for students at his and other institutions, both short- and long-term, will help his institution identify policies related to admissions, enrollment, and articulation that will help future students.



Lisa Chan

Demographics: 42, program monitor at a state agency in Sacramento.

Functional: It's her job to ensure the program meets its statutory requirements and that taxpayer funds are being spent appropriately.

Social: She wants to be perceived as a detail-oriented, capable achiever.

Emotional: She's motivated by a belief in government and the public good.

Pains: It's a struggle to do her job due to a both a lack of data and lack of trustworthiness of data. Career technical education data is not collected consistently and hard to find if not included in a federal Perkins requirement. The information she chases down is conflicting or missing and she doesn't know why it doesn't match.

Gains: Detailed data in a variety of formats and a query builder will help her identify certain demographics/information used for program monitoring.



Gabriela Ruiz

Demographics: 30, the program director for a nonprofit college readiness organization in Los Angeles.

Functional: It's her job to improve pathways to college and career for her students.

Social: She wants to be perceived as an innovative leader with a reputation for creating compelling opportunities for program expansion and growth.

Emotional: She wants to feel connected and engaged with a community of like-minded doers.

Pains: She struggles with lack of access to disaggregated information in a single portal, along with a lack of information about the pipeline for college and career readiness for her programs and how her program is performing.

Gains: Information that can help identify bright spots and opportunities for improvement, along with benchmarks related to postsecondary success for students in her program, will allow her to fulfill her functional role. Support in understanding and using education data to take action will improve her program's funding and outcomes.



Additional Organizational Planners

Ellen Yan

Demographics: 45, a former teacher and principal. She now leads the evaluation and assessment team at a school district in the San Gabriel Valley.

Functional: It's her job to leverage the power of data to guide improvement efforts in her district.

Social: She wants to transform her colleagues' views of data from one that is distrustful and punitive to one that is uplifting and actionable.

Emotional: She wants to feel that she's making a real difference in her colleagues' — and their students' — lives.

Pains: She's pulled in multiple directions depending on where there is momentum in the district. School and system leaders have different interests and pet projects and she feels pressure to provide actionable data, even though it may not always align with or take team members away from other work. And while she has access to her own district data, she doesn't know how to benchmark this data to other systems.

Gains: Data that is easily accessible and downloadable (such as disaggregated information about whether her students have met a-g requirements and are prepared for college, applied for financial aid, enrolled in college, earned a degree, and got a good job) along with access to detailed explanation of how certain reports are generated will allow her to better fulfill her functional role.



Enrique Cruz

Demographics: 30, curriculum developer for an education-related technical assistance provider in Folsom.

Functional: It's his job to communicate with and create curriculum for those teaching English language learners.

Social: He wants to be perceived as an enthusiastic creator of interesting, engaging, and relatable curriculum. He wants to help people understand what happens to K-12 English language learners over the course of their education and how they progress.

Emotional: He's motivated by a desire to help people develop and learn. He's also excited about the numerous data tools that are available.

Pains: Enrique is early in his career and may not have the breadth and depth of knowledge of someone with more experience. Understanding the historical and political context to identify key stakeholders is a challenge.

Gains: Data that is accompanied by context for the groups he serves and comparison information to other districts will help him develop an understanding of the English language learner population, both statewide and for the region he is serving.



Latasha Thompson

Demographics: 52, the executive director for a nonprofit workforce development organization in Hayward.

Functional: It's her job to serve as an expert voice for her board, partner organizations, educational institutions, employers, and other stakeholders.

Social: She wants to be perceived as results-oriented with high standards for herself and her staff.

Emotional: She's motivated by a desire to provide innovative and concrete solutions for improving pipelines in specific career pathways or discrete populations.

Pains: The lack of information about longer-term outcomes and whether sufficient numbers of people are being trained for high-demand occupations makes it difficult for her to identify new opportunities for programs and services, particularly given changes to workforce conditions.

Gains: Data that can be used for accountability and continuous improvement, program-specific outcomes related to employment and earnings, and support in understanding education data will help her identify bright spots and opportunities for improvement.



Leticia Chavez

Demographics: 40, consultant for a childcare initiative in Los Angeles.

Functional: It's her job to advise on ways to improve the quality of early learning and care programs, helping their students succeed.

Social: She wants to be perceived as knowledgeable and resourceful.

Emotional: She's motivated by a desire to provide resources for her families to ensure that they can evaluate early learning and care programs.

Pains: She's concerned about the lack of data. Finding high-quality, reliable, and valid data that demonstrates both the value of and outcomes for early learning and care programs is a challenge. She's frustrated by the lack of bilingual and Spanish-language resources that are critical to sharing information with the families she is working to serve.

Gains: Trend data that shows easy-to-understand early learning and care demographics and outcomes will help her better fulfill her functional role.



Elaine Lewis

Demographics: 48, school board president for a small district in Ventura.

Functional: She sets the school board's priorities and agenda, maximizing the value of local control policies to make sure community needs are met.

Social: She wants to be seen as a knowledgeable, trusted community leader.

Emotional: She's wants to feel secure in her position on the board so that she can ensure the district eliminates inequities in students' experiences and outcomes, so all students in the community succeed.

Pains: COVID-19 has increased already significant public frustrations with the education system along with casting into doubt whether or not traditional metrics of success remain relevant and meaningful. There's resistance from colleagues about the need to adopt an equity-based approach focusing on the needs of specific populations. And there is a lack of information about which programs, initiatives, and investments are working and *why* they are working.

Gains: Digestible, easy-to-communicate data will allow her to set the board agenda as well as justify priorities, big policy decisions, and investments in ways that build trust in the community. Data that is consistent from the state-level to the local-level will allow for meaningful comparisons across time and between groups. A wide array of data points — including longitudinal *and* point-in-time data — will allow her to identify and track information about the challenges and successes most applicable to her community.





Practitioners

Erica Cohen

Demographics: 34, counselor at a high school in Pomona.

Functional: It's her job to help her students prepare for college and, ultimately, get a good job, along with using data to advocate for her students to administrators, district leadership, and the legislature.

Social: She wants to be perceived as an engaging connector between her peers, parents, and students, particularly for first generation students and multilingual populations.

Emotional: It's inspiring to her to see whether interventions improve student outcomes over time and identify what is working.

Pains: Time is limited due to the number of students she is supporting and the level of crisis they are experiencing. It's a struggle to use many different, disconnected technologies with minimal support or training.

Gains: Training and information on how data tools, along with guidance she can share about these tools and how to use them, can help support her students and families. Access to information that is ready to use, doesn't have to be reformatted, and can be tailored for different student types and experiences will help her mitigate challenges such as financial aid and other support services that her students need to succeed in college.



Bob Jackson

Demographics: 62, faculty member at a community college in Long Beach.

Functional: It's his job to teach (including managing the recent transitioned from in-person to online courses) and participate in college-wide committees.

Social: He wants to be perceived as insightful and proactive, developing a cadre of students who share his passion for his field.

Emotional: He's inspired by his institution's graduation initiative and wants to help develop a learned, informed society of critical thinkers.

Pains: It's a struggle to make sense of the different outcomes reported from various data sources. Additionally, the recent transition from in-person to online learning has him concerned that he's not able to meet the needs of his students.

Gains: Information about student transfer and employment outcomes after they finish his program and whether these outcomes vary by various student demographics will help inform his teaching and participation in various college-wide committees.





Individuals

Wayne Nguyen

Demographics: 26, retail store clerk in Redding.

Functional: He sees it as his role to help his younger sister be the first person in the family to get a bachelor's degree, identifying affordable education options that provide a reasonable return on investment.

Social: He wants to be perceived as diligent and supportive, making sure his family's basic needs are met given their precarious financial position.

Emotional: He's motivated by helping his siblings fulfill their dreams with career opportunities related to their strengths and interests and that provide a living wage.

Pains: There's a lack of support in navigating college options while in high school and understanding college requirements. He is also concerned about the government having students' personal information, and doesn't know if he can trust the information available on government websites.

Gains: Information presented in plain language, designed for someone with little experience in higher education, and that doesn't talk down to the user will help him better identify college pathways open to people in his community, along with financial aid and other supports.



Patrice Beals

Demographics: 37, human resources manager and single mother of two in elementary school, moving from San Bernardino to Los Angeles for a new job.

Functional: It's her role to make concrete plans for her children's academic futures and ensure that they excel even more than she did by moving to an excellent school district.

Social: She wants to be perceived as informed in her discussions with school administrators and school board members about issues that impact her children.

Emotional: She wants to quickly access information on her phone and for this information to be easy to understand.

Pains: She's experiencing a lack of information about longer-term education and career outcomes and she's concerned about whether information provided by schools tells the whole story. She doesn't want a lack of community and resources to keep her kids from getting the support and opportunities they deserve.

Gains: Information about schools in the neighborhoods where she is looking at housing -- including the cultural and racial mix of students and teachers in schools in the neighborhoods, the availability of college-prep courses, college-going rates and subsequent outcomes, and how these vary by student characteristics -- will help her find the best home for her family.



George Acebedo

Demographics: 20, attends community college in Grossmont, and works at a casino managed by his reservation.

Functional: He wants to transfer and graduate from a four-year school.

Social: He wants to be perceived as useful — learning skills and gathering information that he brings back to his community.

Emotional: He wants to feel supported in overcoming the types of challenges that have constrained options for his friends and relatives.

Pains: It's a struggle to access web-based tools at home due to lack of technology infrastructure. Additionally, he's unfamiliar with rules related to transfer and how they may differ by institution.

Gains: Having someone to show him where to find the information he needs about the pros and cons of specific institutions (such as location, majors offered, and whether related jobs would be difficult to find close to home) and how to access supports to help him transition to a new campus will help him achieve his goals.



Jennifer Meyer

Demographics: 25, waitress and personal trainer in Hemet.

Functional: Now ready for college, it's her job to successfully find the fastest path through school to her broader life goals.

Social: She wants to be perceived as in control of her life and her time, and in a good place financially.

Emotional: She wants to feel secure in her knowledge of education options, including certificates as well as degrees.

Pains: She's unclear on her options for the right educational pathway or what type of credential to pursue. She doesn't know how she'll figure out going to school and working to cover her basic expenses. And it seems there's no easy way to find the information she needs, other than general web searching or reaching out to her community network.

Gains: Clarity about the job and earnings potentials of specific pathways, as well as the costs and expected timeframe to complete each credential, will empower her to make informed decisions about her future. Task lists and follow up support will help her clarify and implement actions she needs to take.



Additional Individuals

Frank Leon

Demographics: 58, owner of a landscaping business in Salinas.

Functional: He was unable to attend college, so it's his job to provide for his family and ensure his kids are have a better life than he did, which means getting an education.

Social: He wants to be able to share useful advice with his extended family and community that can help them push toward their goals.

Emotional: He wants to feel supported in his search for information about workforce training, apprenticeships, colleges, financial aid, and career pathways in his community.

Pains: He is uncomfortable with reading complex information in English, particularly when it uses opaque educational terminology. He dislikes using websites because he doesn't have a computer and his spotty cell service makes apps frustrating.

Gains: Support from someone who can alert him to available data and translate it for him, both for the specific context of his community and into Spanish, will give him more clarity on how postsecondary pathways relate to good jobs and career trends for the future.



Rowan Bishop

Demographics: 17, high school junior in Oakland.

Functional: It's their job to identify their path in the world and create future opportunities for themselves.

Social: They want to be perceived as a community builder, sharing interesting information with others and connecting with them in a safe, inclusive environment.

Emotional: They want to feel that they are making the world a better, more fair place.

Pains: They are unclear about the value of college, have a narrow sense of career opportunities, and are unclear about how their current actions will shape their future opportunities. Then there's the difficulty of paying for both college and living costs, particularly in the Bay Area.

Gains: Current, immediately available, and tailored information about realistic career options, educational pathways to those options, how to pay for college, and clear action items they can take in the near term will help them identify the most efficient path for meeting requirements.

