



Needs Assessment Development

Module 3 Facilitator's Guide

Module 3: Framework Overview and Data Mapping

Overall Goal: To support a State or district in developing a comprehensive needs assessment process that can be used by schools for implementation at the local level. Please note that this module focuses on developing a standard needs assessment process rather than conducting a needs assessment at the school level.

Module Purpose: Establish specific content for the selected State or district needs assessment process. (Note: The group must develop or select a needs assessment framework after Module 2 but prior to engaging in Module 3).

Participant Outcomes: During this module, participants will do the following:

- Become familiar with the topics included in the needs assessment framework.
- Draft guiding questions for each topic.
- Begin mapping data sources to guiding questions.

Materials

The following materials are recommended for the work session and associated activities:

- Module 3 Presentation slide deck
- Participant agenda
- Handout 1: Guiding Questions
- Handout 2: Framework Comparison
- Handout 3: Data Map Template
- Copies of the agency's selected framework printed as handouts
- If the agency has supporting narrative materials describing the framework elements, copies should be provided for each table.
- Slides 15–16, printed double-sided as a handout
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes

- Sticky dots (colors are unimportant)
- Seating assignments, with participants divided into small groups by framework element
(Note: Groupings should be selected such that participants are working on the element that most closely aligns with their role in the agency or area of expertise.)

Agenda Outline

Table 1 provides a detailed outline of the agenda for the work session. It includes timing, slide numbers, activities, and materials. This outline provides facilitators with a big-picture view of this module and the corresponding activities. You may need to allot additional time for the activities depending on the audience's familiarity with the content.

Table 1. Detailed Outline of the Agenda

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Welcome, Overview, and Introductions	10 min.	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduce facilitators. • Review the overall goals and purpose for developing a needs assessment, and preview activities for this module. 	Presentation slide deck	Whole group
Ice Breaker	10 min.	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ice breaker of choice as a way of facilitating introductions from participants (name, title, role). 	N/A	Whole group
Setting the Stage: Meeting Norms	5 min.	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review norms on the slide and pick one to focus on today; determine whether any should be added. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slide deck • Chart paper 	Whole group
Activity: Framing the Process	10 min.	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that this activity assumes the group has a framework already selected. The presentation reviews and clarifies the role of the framework within the needs assessment process. 	Presentation Slide deck	Whole group

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Defining Our Inquiry	105 min.	13–19	<p>Presentation (15 min.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the guiding questions slides. • Provide overview of small-group activity. <p>Group work (45 min.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm words or phrases that resonate and write on sticky notes (5 min.). • Put notes on chart paper and organize into themes (10 min.). • Draft up to three overarching guiding questions, based on themes (30 min.). <p>Carousel feedback (35 min.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups add comments and questions to others' chart papers in rounds, using sticky notes for feedback (approximately 25 min. total). • Groups return to their original chart paper and revise based upon feedback (10 min.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slide deck • Handout 1: Guiding Questions • Handout 2: Framework Comparison • Chart paper • Markers • Dots • Sticky notes 	Divided into small groups by topic
Identifying and Mapping Data	55 + min.	20–25	<p>Introduction by lead (15 min.)—see <i>talking points</i></p> <p>Data Maps (20 min.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups: brainstorm data map for one topic. <p>Carousel Across Topics (20+ min.—may need more depending on number of groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass maps clockwise until each pair has contributed (6 to 8 min. per rotation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Slide Deck • Handout 3: Data Map Template • Sticky notes 	Small groups

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Identifying and Mapping Data (continued)	55 + min.	20–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original group vetting: once the data map has returned to the original group, reflect on the feedback, update, and capture questions (10 min.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Slide Deck Handout 3: Data Map Template Sticky notes 	Small groups
Reflect on Module and Next Steps	20 min.	26–29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate reflection discussion using prompts on the slide (15 min.). Review next steps and respond to questions (3 min.). Preview Module 4 (2 min.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation slide deck Chart paper Markers 	Whole Group

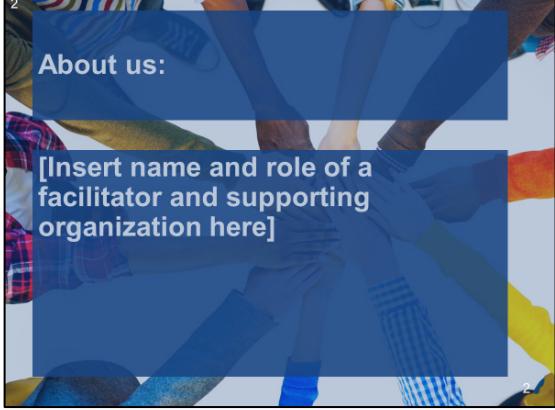
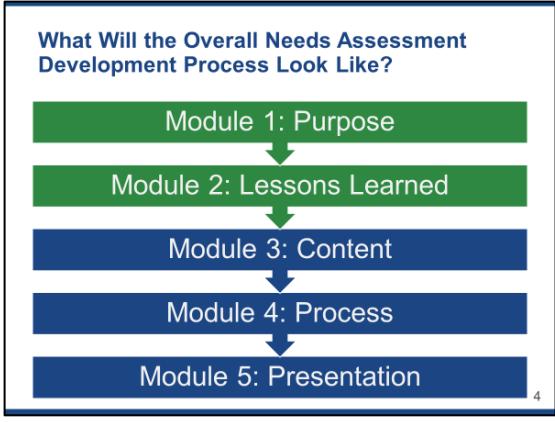
Script

The following slide-by-slide script provides guidance to facilitators as they present the content and learning activities included in the work session based on this module. Reviewing the entire guide prior to facilitating the work session is highly recommended.

Module 3: Framework Overview and Data Mapping

<p>Facilitation Note:</p> <p><i>Officially welcome the participants. Introduce yourself and fellow facilitators. Discuss your relevant background experiences to build participant confidence in your skills as facilitators.</i></p> <p><i>* Note: Other entities using this presentation may insert their logo in place of the State Support Network logo.</i></p>	 <p>Needs Assessment Development Module 3: Framework Overview and Data Mapping [Presenter Names] [Date]</p> <p> State Support Network Partnering for School Improvement</p>
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Slide 1

<p>Facilitation Note: If you are presenting on behalf of an organization (e.g., a regional educational service center), you may use this slide to introduce your organization supporting this work, or you may replace this slide with your own “about us” slide.</p>				
<p>Facilitation Note: Introduce presenters, and (if desired) go around the room to allow participants to introduce themselves.</p>	<p>Meet the Presenters</p> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>Title email</td> <td>Title email</td> <td>Title email</td> </tr> </table>	Title email	Title email	Title email
Title email	Title email	Title email		
<p>Explain: “Today we are focusing on the <i>content</i> of our needs assessment.”</p>	<p>What Will the Overall Needs Assessment Development Process Look Like?</p> 			

<p>Explain: “These outcomes give us a preview of our activities today.”</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>During this module, participants will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with the topics included in the needs assessment framework. • Draft guiding questions for each topic. • Begin mapping data sources to guiding questions. <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>
<p>Explain: “Notice that, unlike our prior modules, today we are beginning to draft materials for the new process. Today’s module is a start on this work, and then you’ll be working in between modules to get more of the content components fleshed out before we come back together for our module on process development.</p> <p>We’ve seated you purposefully today, as each small group will be working on a specific element. Everyone will have the chance to weigh in across all the elements, but small groups will each focus on something specific.”</p>	<p>Agenda: Module 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome, Overview, and Introductions 2. Framing the Process 3. Defining Our Inquiry 4. Identifying and Mapping Data 5. Reflect on Module and Next Steps <p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Slide 6</p>
<p>Facilitation Note: <i>Use icebreaker as part of group introductions. When choosing the ice breaker, consider what you think the specific group will need and explain the “why” before beginning the activity.</i></p>	<p>Placeholder for Icebreaker activity slide</p> <p style="text-align: right;">7</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Slide 7</p>

<p>Explain: “Take a look at norms on slide and pick one to lean into today.”</p> <p>Ask: “Are there other norms you typically work with in your agencies? What else might our group struggle with? What norms might support productive dialogue and respectful decision making?”</p> <p>Facilitation Note: <i>Insert “manage technology” if no one else comes up with it.</i></p>	<p>Norms for Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be present. • Share the air. • Assume goodwill. • Respect what is shared. • Honor the thoughts behind all perspectives. • Ask for clarification when you disagree or don’t understand. • Others?  <p>8</p>
<p>Explain: “We know you have a framework selected already. However, we’d like to spend a few moments reviewing what a framework is and what it provides in this context, to make sure we have a common understanding and are working with common language.”</p>	<h2>Framing the Process</h2> <p>What are the core questions, concepts, or content we want the needs assessment to address?</p> <p>9</p>
<p>Explain: “The term “framework” can have different meanings based on context, but this dictionary definition captures nicely the role of a framework within a needs assessment. The third meaning, “the larger branches of a tree that determine its shape,” is particularly helpful as a visual.</p> <p>Although we don’t address this until the Presentation module, we do encourage you to capture your framework in an infographic or other colorful visual display (if you haven’t already), as this approach will help to make it memorable.”</p>	<p>What Is a Framework?</p> <p>From Merriam-Webster:</p> <p>1a: a basic conceptual structure (as of ideas) 1b: a skeletal, openwork, or structural frame 2: frame of reference 3: the larger branches of a tree that determine its shape</p> <p><small>Framework. (n.d.). In Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/framework</small></p> <p>10</p>

Explain:

“Here is the slide from the Success Elements presentation in our first module—illustrating why a framework is important.”

Why Is a Framework Important?

- Provides a core organizing structure
- Formalizes the priorities
- Creates consistency and focus

Everything maps back to the priorities.

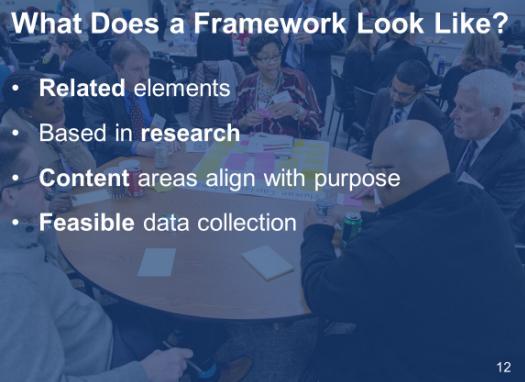


Slide 11

Explain:

“There are four attributes to an effective needs assessment framework: (1) the elements of the framework obviously relate to one another; (2) it is based on research; (3) it answers the question: Will determining needs and priorities related to these issues result in meeting the needs assessment purpose? (in other words, it reflects your organizational priorities and theory of action related to school improvement); and (4) data can be collected and examined responding to each of the issues identified within the framework. (This last attribute is very important and may sound obvious, but we have had situations where states identified elements that were very difficult to collect data against, given logistical constraints.)

Before we move on, are there any questions about frameworks, or their role within a needs assessment?”



Slide 12

Defining Our Inquiry

What do we need to know about the components of the needs assessment?

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Slide 13

Explain:

“Here is the framework you’ve selected and which will provide the underpinning for this needs assessment. We also have this slide as a handout on your tables for easy reference.

We’ve seated you purposefully today, as each small group will be working on a specific element.”

Placeholder for visual display of framework

Use this slide to share a graphic or list the elements of the framework you are using

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Slide 14

Explain:

“This slide and the next one are also printed as handouts on your tables. You may find it easier to read the text on the paper version.

The first thing we need to do is to draft a set of guiding questions for each element that will drive our inquiry. To craft the right kinds of questions, we need to think in terms of grain size. Guiding questions are large and overarching and can’t necessarily be answered simply or directly.

Guiding questions could easily be compared to essential questions for student learning. These are questions that

- Are open-ended,
- Are thought-provoking,
- Raise additional questions, and
- Require support and justification.”

Guiding Questions

ARE	ARE NOT
Overarching, umbrella questions, that generate other inquiry questions within	A long list of subquestions collapsed into a single, run-on sentence
Open ended	Answered with Yes or No
In need of multiple perspectives and/or data sources to answer fully	Addressed with a singular data source or perspective
Driving your needs assessment, telling you which data you need to collect	Disconnected from the core components you want the needs assessment to address

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Slide 15

Explain:

“Guiding questions are the highest level of question that drive your investigation. They are not answered directly. Rather, these questions should identify some purpose for digging deeper into a given topic. The questions that are responded to in the actual investigation will align to these higher-level guiding questions.

Here are some good examples of guiding questions, contrasted against some poor examples. Now, the poor examples are still things we want people to have the answers to! But, those are not the guiding questions. They are not the overarching questions driving our inquiry in each of these domains. This is an important distinction.

What are some of the differences you notice between these two sets of examples?

Facilitation Note:

- *If participants get stuck, direct them to the question characteristics from the previous slide, which are also on a handout.*
- *If participants don't address this, ask them to identify why each of the poor examples doesn't work as a guiding question.*

Explain:

“Here's a visual that helps explain what we mean about grain size. Using our first guiding question as an example, we can see that there's a natural cascading process that occurs when you delve deeper into the guiding question. Starting with the outer ring (that's the guiding question!), we inquire about the presence of systemic and collaborative processes and about specific resources and access.

To look into this question, we need to know the following:

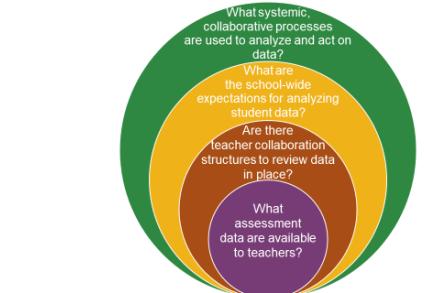
- Are there school-wide expectations for analyzing student assessment data?
- Are there teacher collaboration structures in place?

Guiding Questions

Good Examples	Poor Examples
How does the school ensure that systematic, collaborative processes are used to analyze and act upon assessment results?	Are teachers using assessment data?
How does the district/school recruit, train, and retain high-quality, effective staff?	What is the teacher turnover rate?
How do schools create/ensure a welcoming environment, including safety in and around schools?	How are school transportation zones determined?

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Slide 16

Question Levels

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Slide 17

- What summative assessment results are available to teachers?

Now, this graphic is to illustrate a point only. Ideally your guiding questions will be large enough that multiple questions can be asked at each sublevel. But don't get caught up in defining subquestions for each level right now. For now, we are only focusing on developing those first, overarching questions, like the one in the outer ring here."

Explain:

"In your small groups, begin by labeling your chart paper with the domain, or framework element, that you are assigned to.

Then, spend 5 minutes individually brainstorming key words or phrases that resonate for you when you think about this element, and jot those down on sticky notes.

When you are ready, put those notes on the chart paper, and spend about 10 minutes collecting them into themes, or affinity groups.

Using those themes as a guide, draft one guiding question per theme, and write out those guiding questions on chart paper (depending on how many key words you came up with; this may require a second piece of chart paper!) If you get stuck, think about how you would expect to see this element come to life in a successful school setting. Draft a question that gets at what you want to see at the local level."

(Once groups are working on drafting questions)

Explain:

"You will likely come up with many, many questions to think about, but we are looking for a maximum of three guiding questions for each topic. If you have more than three themes, think hard about whether any could be combined! Ultimately, there shouldn't be more than three themes, or subtopics, within each domain.

Developing the Right Questions

1. Brainstorm words or phrases that resonate (write on sticky notes).
2. Put notes on chart paper and organize into themes.
3. Draft up to three overarching, guiding questions, based on your themes.

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Slide 18

Finally, it's better to get a few good ideas down than it is to have one perfect question. You'll have lots of time to refine and adjust these as you go, but for now, let's concentrate on identifying the right themes, and then we'll give you a chance to discuss and provide feedback to one another."

Explain:

"You're now going to have a chance to review each other's work and provide some feedback!"

Taking a stack of sticky notes and some dots with you, engage in a carousel review of key words and guiding questions. Scan what you see on the chart paper; add dots to the keywords, themes, and questions that resonate with you; and use sticky notes to add new ideas or pose questions for consideration. Each participant is required to either add a new comment (sticky note) or add a dot to signal agreement with concepts and meaning. You'll get to move through all the stations, or topics.

When you get back to your original station, review with your small group the feedback provided by your colleagues and make revisions based on feedback."

Facilitation Note:

Timing – add more stations as necessary, but note decreasing time should be allotted as you move through the stations:

- *Station 1: 10 min.*
- *Station 2: 8 min.*
- *Station 3: 5 min.*
- *Original station: 10 min.*

(When people are back at their original stations)

Explain:

"Remember that you don't have to have this all wrapped up and final right now. It's more important to capture a group of good ideas and good draft questions, than to spend your time creating a single perfect question.

(When time is up)

Carousel Feedback

At each station,

1. Review keywords and guiding questions,
2. Indicate agreement with dots, and
3. Add new ideas or pose questions using sticky notes.

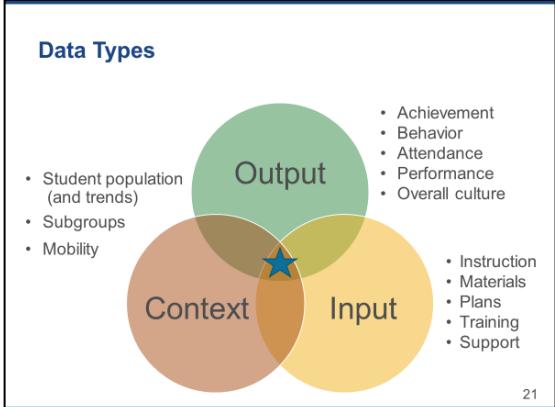
At your original station,

1. Review input, and
2. Make revisions as necessary.

Remember: The goal is a group of good ideas, not an isolated perfect question!

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Slide 19

<p>Explain:</p> <p>“I know you’d like to do more work refining these questions, and that will be your homework following this module. But now, we’re going to take a break from the questions and move on to talking about data sources.”</p>	
<p>Explain:</p> <p>“Now we will begin exploring the data element.”</p>	 <p>Identifying and Mapping Data</p> <p>20</p>
<p>Explain:</p> <p>“You’ll remember we talked about data types when we reviewed the success elements in Module 1. For each framework element, you want some of each type of data to help respond to each of your guiding questions.</p> <p>To introduce a helpful visual or metaphor, think about your data types as the food pyramid of your needs assessment. In order to ensure a healthy needs assessment, you need a well-balanced plate. Student data are your bread and butter and will help you to a point, but they won’t sustain a healthy inquiry. Input data are protein—the building blocks!—and will add muscle. Demographics are your fruits and vegetables—your vitamins—ignore them at your peril.</p> <p>And, like foods, the same ones will show up on different plates. For example, student subgroup data are probably going to show up as helpful in every element or domain—because these are the data that describe the students you serve. Other data sources are more unique and will apply more in some places than others. (Student achievement data, for example, probably do not land under school climate.)”</p>	 <p>Data Types</p> <p>Output</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Behavior • Attendance • Performance • Overall culture <p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student population (and trends) • Subgroups • Mobility <p>Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction • Materials • Plans • Training • Support <p>21</p>

Explain:

“What we are going to do next is to engage in some brainstorming around the data that would be most useful to have to respond to the topics and guiding questions you’ve identified.”

Selecting the Data

Data that describe what is going on within the system related to the framework elements (inputs)?

Data that describe what the system is producing related to the framework elements (outputs)?

Data that describe the stakeholders and context (demographics)?

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Slide 22

Explain:

“Each table has a blank data map template, as well as a copy of this example to illustrate how it should be filled out.

Begin by labeling your template at the top with your topic or framework element; then fill in your guiding questions in the first column.

Then, start brainstorming the data sources you would want to use to dig into those guiding questions. Fill in your ideas at the top and try to come up with at least one data source per data type, for each question.

In the example provided, the question is about recruiting, training, and retaining high-quality, effective staff. The team that filled this out selected professional development plans as a source of input data (this would be a training input; there are certainly others). Then they added attendance and retention data under outputs and a look at changes in student population over time under context. There are other contextual factors to consider, but they started with an examination of whether this school or district was growing or shrinking in terms of population. This isn’t completely finished—there are other data sources to add for this question, and some of these data sources might also apply to the next guiding question, which isn’t filled in yet—but this is kind of start we are looking for today.

Sample Data Map in Progress

Guiding Question	Input Data		Output Data		Demographic or Context Data	
	Professional development plans		Teacher attendance data	Teacher retention data	Changes in student population over time	
How does the district/school recruit, train, and retain high quality and effective staff?	X		X	X	X	

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Slide 23

There are likely questions to be asked about whether these data are currently collected and who has them, but at this point, we are just starting by identifying the kinds of data you need without going too far into the weeds.

I encourage you to brainstorm! Write down everything you can think of and worry about fine-tuning later.”

Explain:

“When we are finished, you’ll be able to collapse your work into a spreadsheet that maps the data sources (and types) against the guiding questions and framework elements. As you’ll see from this, it’s entirely possible that a box corresponding to a single data source (say, output data source #10, whatever that is) will be checked off next to every question. That’s okay. The point of doing this is to be able to create a map of the data it makes sense to use, so you can have a conversation about the data you need against data you have and plan for how to move forward.”

Data Crosswalk						
Framework Component #1	Guiding Question	Input		Output		Demographic
		Data Source #1	Data Source #2	Data Source #3	Data Source #4	Data Source #5
Framework Component #2						Data Source #6
Framework Component #3						Data Source #7
Framework Component #4						Data Source #8
Framework Component #5						Data Source #9
Framework Component #6						Data Source #10
Framework Component #7						Data Source #11
						Data Source #12
						Data Source #13
						Data Source #14
						Data Source #15
						Data Source #16

Slide 24

Explain:

“We are going to spend some time working in small groups to begin to flesh out your data maps, and then you’ll pass them around for review. (Unlike the carousel walk, this time you are moving the paper instead of the people!)

(When it’s time for peer review)

Explain:

“Please pass your map clockwise to the next table. Take a moment to read the map that has been handed to your group for review and use sticky notes to add questions and comments.”

Facilitation note:

Add more stations if necessary, but note that the same total amount of time should be allotted for moving across stations. Follow the suggested times below or adjust to your group’s needs:



Slide 25

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Station 1: 8 min.</i> • <i>Station 2: 6 min.</i> • <i>Station 3: 5 min.</i> • <i>Original station: 10 min.</i> | |
|--|--|

Explain:

“When your map comes back to your group, spend some time updating it based on feedback. Use the back side of the map to capture your questions about data sources—for example, if you have questions about what they are and where to find them.”

Facilitation Note:

Transition to the final section of this module.

Reflect on Module and Next Steps

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Slide 26

Facilitation note:

Participants captured some questions on the backs of their work sheets; however, it will be important to facilitate a conversation about the looming questions in the room regarding data. It's important to start with what they are wondering and then to identify what has to be resolved to move forward (this can look like a to-do list). Facilitator (or designee) should capture these on chart paper.

Use the final question to gauge the group's progress and comfort level with the process.

Reflection

- What questions do we have about data sources?
- What do we need to resolve in order to move forward?
- What thoughts or revelations did you have about needs assessment as a result of today's work?

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Slide 27

<p>Explain:</p> <p>“Note that this work will need to continue; however, you do NOT have to have these tasks completed to move to the next module. You’ll need to keep refining the guiding questions and data maps, and at the same time, start pursuing answers to some of the questions we’ve just identified.</p> <p>Facilitation note:</p> <p><i>It may be helpful to provide participants with electronic copies of the data map template and example if they don’t have them already.</i></p>	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Continue the work we started today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine guiding questions. • Map data sources to questions and topics. • Explore data availability.
	<p>Module 4: Process</p> <p>As a result of this module, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify activities for each of the needs assessment implementation phases. • Establish roles and responsibilities at school, district, and State education agency levels. • Draft a timeline and sequence of activities.