

RP Group BRIC
Technical Assistance Program



the Research & Planning Group
for California Community Colleges

The Bridging Research, Information, and Cultures Initiative (BRIC)

Technical Assistance Program

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Technical Assistance Program (TAP), a segment of the RP Group's Bridging Research, Information, and Cultures (BRIC) Initiative. This packet includes the application to participate in the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) as well as overviews of the BRIC Initiative and the RP Group. The BRIC Initiative is funded by a two-year grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Please complete and submit the TAP application by Monday, March 1st, 2010. Kindly contact Rob Johnstone at johnstone@smccd.edu if you have any questions.

The BRIC Initiative

The purpose of the BRIC Initiative is to strengthen inquiry-based practice and build cultures of evidence at the California community colleges in order to enhance student success and facilitate goal attainment. Acknowledging that research is fundamentally an intervention-based activity, BRIC seeks to encourage the use of research to optimize the conditions and systems under which students learn. By examining institutional-level metrics and facilitating opportunities for practitioners to better understand how data and information can be used at the ground level, institutions can leverage collaborative discussions on ways to improve outcomes and enrich students' experiences.

In order to create opportunities for collaborative inquiry and meaningful discussions about using data and evidence to enhance student success at California community colleges, this initiative aims to:

- 1. **Increase the efficiency of institutional research offices to handle existing workloads.** The RP Group has hired an Institutional Research "conierge" to stay current on available and newly-developed tools and resources and effectively communicate them with researchers and planners statewide.
- 2. **Develop an online and regional professional development structure to enable practitioners to work more effectively with data and information.** The budget crisis has resulted in deep cuts to the professional development infrastructure of the California community college system. The RP Group is developing a series of opportunities that can be easily accessed at little or no cost and that addresses the limited time that will be available for professional learning. Many of these resources will be tailored for non-research professionals and will address the value of research, data coaching, and using evidence for decision making.

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3. Provide tailored assistance that enables colleges to strengthen cultures of evidence. The RP Group's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) will send specialized teams to increase the capacity of practitioners (faculty, staff, administrators, and researchers) to collaboratively analyze and act on information.

The Technical Assistance Program Benefits

Up to fifteen colleges will be selected to receive an organizational needs assessment, professional development training, and customized data facilitation and coaching interventions during the 2010-11 academic year. This support will be provided by the BRIC TAP Lead Team - comprised of faculty members, researchers, and student services professionals with a broad collection of expertise in using information to inform planning, enabling student success, and building institutional effectiveness. These teams will work with existing institutional infrastructures through a combination of on-site skills trainings, regional meetings, conference calls, and online support. A small group of pilot institutions will receive support beginning in spring 2010.

The TAP seeks to assist practitioners achieve the following outcomes:

1. Developing Actionable Information
Apply evaluation and assessment techniques, practices and models that are grounded in good assessment principles and result in actionable data.
2. Interpreting Data through Discussion
Interpret research and assessment data through meaningful and thoughtful discussions that lead to improved program interventions and classroom teaching and learning strategies.
3. Facilitating Dialogue
Use effective facilitation skills for discussing institutional research and assessment with various college constituency groups.
4. Integrating Evidence into Institutional Processes
Implement integrated planning strategies that are equity focused and have well-defined links to budget and other core decision-making processes.
5. Building an Inquiry-Based Practice
Develop an infrastructure for building a culture of evidence that promotes collaborative inquiry.

Expectations of the Participating Institutions

Colleges who participate in TAP should be prepared to provide:

- o A point person for the project
- o Individuals or groups from within the college who will work with and be trained by the BRIC TAP Lead Team during the on-site interventions
- o Telephone/in-person interviews during the organizational needs assessment phase
- o Opportunities for staff, faculty, and administrators to participate in professional development and data coaching activities
- o Willingness to make changes in response to the technical assistance process
- o Participation in an evaluation regarding the impact of the technical assistance
- o Attendance at an all-day launch/orientation meeting

(2009-2010)

The Bridging Research, Information, and Cultures Initiative (BRIC)

Technical Assistance Program Application

Due date: March 1st, 2010

Guidelines for Filling Out the Application

This form is intended to help focus applicants on specific arenas where technical assistance could strengthen existing efforts to create cultures of evidence and inquiry. It will also help the project team to better understand the existing culture within your college. Your responses will be confidential, so we prefer that applicants directly address concerns that might be integral to the project.

Please email a PDF copy of your response to johnstoner@smccd.edu by the application deadline of March 1st, 2010. Given that we're asking for a signature page, we are requesting that you additionally mail a hard copy of your application to us at the following address:

RP Group / BRIC Project
1528 Sacramento Street
Berkeley, CA 94702

If you'd like to be considered for the Spring 2010 BRIC TAP pilot, we are requesting that your application be submitted by February 1st, 2010. This will allow us to work with the 2-3 pilot schools in March and April, fleshing out our ideas while providing additional on-site assistance to the pilot schools. Note that the pilot schools will also continue with the BRIC Tap project through the 2010-11 year.

Application Questions

1. The overarching purpose of the BRIC initiative is to strengthen inquiry-based practice at institutions. Describe your institution's historical and current use of information and evidence to inform planning and make decisions. Identify projects or initiatives that have been successful in using information. Additionally, identify areas where gaps exist in either the use or availability of information or evidence. In this latter domain, where would you like to see the college evolve? (500 words maximum)

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2. The TAP is designed to collaborate with existing campus infrastructures to strengthen the capacity of the practitioners at the institution. Examples of such infrastructures include Student Success Committees, Basic Skills Committees, Student Learning Outcomes Committees, Faculty Inquiry Groups, Flex Days, and department meetings. Describe the existing internal and external institutional structures that could be involved in the implementation of this project. Include the functions served by these groups and how they could expand your institution's ability to improve programs and services through the use of timely and relevant information

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and evidence. Describe how these institutions fit into your governance structure. (300 words maximum)

3. What actions do you expect the college to take as a result of participating in TAP? Are there particular changes you hope to implement as a result? (300 words maximum)
4. The BRIC Initiative is preparing resources on the following topics. Select between one and three topics on which your institution would like to collaborate with the BRIC team in the 2010-11 academic year. Please ensure that at least one of your selections is from the CORE MODULES list.

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CORE MODULES

- NO * A. Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
B. Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Learning
C. Assessing Student Services Outcomes

SUPPORT MODULES

- ✓ 1. Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry
2. Assessing Institutional Effectiveness
3. Assessing Basic Skills Outcomes
4. Maximizing the Program Review Process
✓ 5. Turning Data into Meaningful Action
5. If your institution is selected as a participant, identify the individuals who would collaborate with the individuals in the BRIC teams. Please list their names and titles.
6. Please let us know if you would like to be considered as a pilot institution. A pilot institution would begin its participation in spring 2010. In exchange for receiving an additional term of support, it would provide feedback on the TAP's design, process, and reference materials. If you would like to be considered for the pilot, please submit your application by February 1st, 2010.

Signatures

President/Chief Executive Officer

Chief Instruction Officer

Chief Student Services Officer

President, Academic Senate

Chief Research Officer

The RP Group

The RP Group seeks to build a community college culture that views planning, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional effectiveness as key strategies for student success. We use an integrated model of research and evaluation services, professional development, and statewide projects to achieve these goals within the California community college (CCC) system.

At the core of RP's approach is an effort to expand the definition of research. More than gathering information, we envision a process that also encompasses dissemination, interpretation, action, and ongoing evaluation of practice.

The California community college system, with 110 colleges and 2.9 million students, is the largest system of higher education in the world. Growing from its roots as a professional association for research and planning staff within this system, RP now works on multiple levels to facilitate the transformation of how evidence is understood and integrated into the classroom, the institution, and the system as a whole.

Gathering institution- and system-wide data from an insider's perspective. Most research conducted on community colleges is instigated by four year institutions. The RP Group is unique because its research projects are generated by questions from within the system and conducted by teams of community college faculty, administrators, institutional researchers, and student services staff who can gather more nuanced information. Furthermore, our teams are able to contextualize research results so they can be used by practitioners to better understand and take action on issues at their own colleges. For example, an RP research report popularly known as *The Poppy Copy* became an organizing framework for local efforts and statewide funding for basic skills. Our key research topics include workforce training, transfer, and basic skills. RP also provides evaluation services to colleges, funders, and statewide initiatives.

Providing venues for sharing and analyzing information. Given the size and diversity of the CCC system, practitioners may be unaware of work being done at other colleges. Therefore, RP offers a range of opportunities for practitioners to engage research findings, build skills, and share information from their own colleges, including large state-wide conferences, multi-day institutes, regional networks, and internet-based exchanges. In addition, RP serves as a neutral convener of stakeholders in order to facilitate planning and consensus-building on statewide issues. For example the RP Group has helped shape revisions in the structure of the Basic Skills Initiative, recommended consistent measures for statewide accountability, and strengthened implementation of student learning outcome assessment.

Building a stronger understanding of the use of information in California community colleges. Although data has traditionally been perceived as the purview of institutional research offices, the increased focus on accountability requires that faculty, administrators, and student services staff engage with gathering, analyzing, and acting on information as well. The RP Group helps facilitate this shift through tailored support, often in partnership with other organizations. For example, RP offers workshops and conference sessions for administrators in conjunction with CCLC and ACCCA and collaborates with the statewide Academic Senate to train and support student learning outcome coordinators. By incorporating faculty, staff, and administrators in our research projects and partnering with other organizations to tailor and disseminate research results, we also help build expertise and confidence in research. Finally, RP works with institutional researchers to build their skills in providing data coaching and support.

RP Group BRIC Proposal

BRIC Initiative

Bridging RESEARCH, INFORMATION, and CULTURE Initiative

Application Questions:

Q1 The Overarching purpose of the BRIC Initiative is to strengthen inquiry-based practice at institutions. Describe your institution's historical and current use of information and evidence to inform planning and make decisions. Identify projects or initiatives that have been successful in using information. Additionally, identify areas where gaps exist in either the use or availability of information or evidence. In this latter domain, where would you like to see the college evolve? (500 words)

At Laney College, the Educational Master Plan (EMP) is the blueprint for institutional priorities, commitment and strategic action. Dynamic in nature, it will be reviewed annually for congruency with new educational trends, and the evolving needs of students and the district. Program Review and Unit Plans are at the heart of the college planning process. These core planning documents address needs assessment and program efficacy that lay the foundation for the Laney College EMP, making it the outgrowth of a program review and planning model that supports improvements, based on research and assessment outcomes.

Using the cycle of assessment and planning stated above, decision-making at the college goes through a shared governance process. In the 2007 Laney College Participatory Governance and Administrative Structures document, achievement of institutional goals requires effective leadership through participatory governance. Laney College has developed a systematic participative process that involves faculty, administrators, classified staff and students.

Exemplified in the most recent efforts revising the college EMP, the Laney EMP Committee (LEMPC) was activated to integrate, streamline, and guide college-wide involvement, thereby ensuring that the 2010 EMP is a result of collaborative and inclusive efforts. The Committee identified and incorporated three primary goals.

- Conduct an environmental scan and collect data.
- Synthesize the information into trends and implications in order to revise college goals, objectives and strategies.
- Write a data-informed EMP that will guide the college towards institutional effectiveness.

The EMP document was written using an open and collaborative process, building upon prior planning conducted within the campus community and utilizing input from throughout

the college. The Committee will continue to lead college-wide planning efforts and will monitor progress on the EMP planning agendas.

Another example where information and evidence were used to direct planning and programs was modeled in Laney's participation in Strengthening Pre-collegiate Education Community Colleges (SPECC) initiative. In 2003, Laney College received a Strengthening Pre-collegiate Education Community Colleges (SPECC) grant from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Eighteen faculty members participated in inquiry groups for two years. Within these groups, faculty examined both classroom practices and institutional and classroom data to inform evidence-based changes in practice.

In a period of diminishing resources (e.g., resulting in the recent loss of the position of college researcher), it is imperative to keep the focus on maintaining an institution committed to educational effectiveness that promotes organizational efficacy and student success. It is for this reason that the college seeks participation in the BRIC Initiative.

Some of the gaps that we expect to close during our partnership with the RP Group through the BRIC Initiative will address specific concerns in the following areas:

- There is a need to solidify and actualize a plan for transforming the college into one that exemplifies a learning paradigm;
- Minimal institutional consciousness about continuous quality improvement;
- No use of data to illuminate and address educational equity issues;
- Lack of an evidenced-based decision-making model that integrates planning and intentionality within the institution's resource allocation processes.

2. Describe the existing internal and external institutional structures that could be involved in the implementation of this project. Include the functions served by these groups and how they could expand your institution's ability to improve programs and services through the use of timely and relevant information and evidence. Describe how these institutions fit into your governance structure. (300 words maximum)

Learning Assessment Committee – a subcommittee of the academic senate, comprised of faculty, administrators, and classified staff, responsible for leading student learning and services assessment efforts on campus. Training the committee in research methods and in using data meaningfully would further the college's SLO assessment efforts.

Basic Skills Work Group – an ad hoc group of faculty, staff and administrators in the process of becoming a formal committee. The work group has led the institution in development of new learning communities; pedagogies using contextualized learning, institutionalization of a

campus-wide tutor training program, coordination of instructional support, and participation in reflective inquiry groups for basic skills instructors. Training the work group in research methods and data analysis would make them more effective at assessing existing efforts and enhance future planning agendas.

Equity Committee – select administrators, faculty and staff that meet intermittently to review and revise the equity plan. There is a great need to update and enhance the existing equity plan to include an expanded analysis of demographic data and to add an assessment component for determining campus progress in meeting the benchmarks set out in the plan.

Department Chairs – coordinate the activities of each department, and are responsible for completing unit plans and program review, among other things. There is a need for chairs to be trained in understanding research data and turning it into meaningful action.

Flex days – There are 3 flex days each semester. Flex days would be an ideal time to train other faculty and staff in the use of research methods. Additional workshops can be scheduled at other days and times.

There are other campus committees that would benefit from an understanding of data and how to turn it into meaningful action, including the Matriculation Committee and the Professional Development Committee.

Q 3. What actions do you expect the college to take as a result of participating in TAP? Are there particular changes you hope to implement as a result? (300 words maximum)

For the purpose of continuous quality improvement, under the auspices of its appropriate constituencies and governance bodies, Laney College is and will continue developing, integrating, implementing, enhancing, and assessing plans for student learning, services, and engagement, institutional effectiveness, resource allocation, facilities, technology, academic integrity and participatory governance.

It is our intention that assessment processes be meaningful and useful. We are focusing on widespread engagement of more instructors, departments and staff actively involved in assessing course and program outcomes, greater institution-wide dialogue about assessment results, what they mean and how to use them. We envision that the TA program will enable us to develop an inquiry-based evidence team of faculty and staff that will provide training and support for their peers in the assessment process. This team will help fill the void created by the loss of the college researcher position. We believe that the three gaps we've identified will be filled by the following actions:

- Develop a comprehensive plan for clearly defining, communicating and engaging the college community in demonstrating the value and role of assessment and research as functions of institutional effectiveness.
- Develop strategies for professional development, departmental and committee dialogue that turn data into meaningful action.
- Revise and strengthen the college's student equity plan.
- Integrate student equity planning agenda into EMP and other college planning documents.
- Develop a model for integrating planning and intentionality with the budget allocation processes.

Q.4 We have chosen the following modules for collaboration with the BRIC team in the 2010-2011 school year.

CORE MODULE:

Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Learning

SUPPORT MODULES:

1. Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry
2. Turning Data into Meaningful Action

Q. 5 The following individuals have been identified to collaborate with the BRIC Team:

Laney College Learning Assessment Committee (LAC) members:

Vina Cera (CTE Faculty)

Michelle (Cheli) Fossum (Outcomes and Assessment Coordinator, Chemistry Faculty)

Mildred Lewis (Student Services Coordinator)

Evelyn Lord (Library Services Faculty)

Martha (Ann) McMurdo (Counseling Faculty)

Marco Menendez (Instructional Dean)

David J. Mitchell (ESL Faculty)

Newin Orante (Student Services Dean)

Linda Sanford (Instructional Dean)

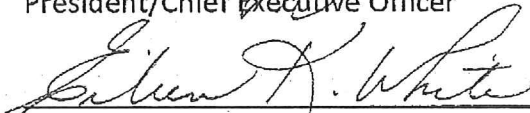
Karolyn van Putten, Ph.D. (Psychology Faculty, Senate President)

Eileen White, Ph.D. (Acting Vice President of Instruction)
Kathy Williamson (Mathematics Faculty)

Signatures [Pending – for delivery with hard copy of application]




President/Chief Executive Officer



Chief Instruction Executive Officer



Chief Student Services Officer



President, Academic Senate

Chief Research Officer

WASC Retreat – January 2009

WASC Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment
January 29 – 31, 2009
Laney College Team Report

Team Members:

Donald Moore, VP Student Services
Tina Vasconcellos, Dean of Matriculation
Linda Sanford, Dean of Humanities, Language Arts and Social Sciences
Karolyn van Putten, Faculty Senate President
Cheli Fossum, SLO Coordinator
Rich Hashimoto, Welding Instructor

Overview:

Our general purpose in attending this retreat was to learn enough to move the college forward in development and assessment of program level outcomes. Additionally, we wanted to know how much assessment is enough in meeting the accreditation standards.

Each college team was assigned a mentor and paired with other colleges. Our mentor was Tanya Renner and we were grouped with College of the Marshall Islands, Merced College, Northern Mariana Islands College and Palomar College. A plenary session started each day, followed by work sessions in which teams met with their mentor and/or worked on team planning. On the second day, team planning was interspersed with two lecture/discussion periods in which individual team members went to other locations. There were four different lectures in each of the two sessions and team members went to the lectures that they deemed most salient in completion of the team planning project and then shared what they learned with the entire team during the work sessions. At the end of the second day, we also met with Barbara Wright, WASC Associate Director, to discuss our General Education SLOs and questions that we had pertaining to assessment of GE outcomes.

Lectures and Plenaries:

Plenary 1: *Learning-centered Pedagogy and Assessment: Focused for Student Success* by Amy Driscoll. Ms. Driscoll articulated the rationale for and scholarship of the impact of learner-centered pedagogy and assessment.

Plenary 2: *Assessment in Learning-Centered Institutions* by Mary Allen. Ms Allen articulated the reasons for emphasizing a learning-centered focus and the need for a cohesive curriculum that includes program assessment.

Lecture 1: *An Outcomes-based Assessment Model for General Education* by Amy Driscoll. This provided an opportunity to design components of a model for assessment of general education outcomes, tailored to the institution's purpose and mission.

Lecture 2: *Assessment for Student Affairs Staff and Other Campus Professionals* by Mary Allen. This provided an overview of several different ways to assess student services programs.

Lecture 3: *Unique Issues in Assessment for Community Colleges* by Gary Williams. Participants discussed the nature of the students served by their institutions and the implications for assessment of student learning outcomes that flow from these considerations.

Lecture 4: *Direct and Indirect Approaches to Assessment* by Barbara Wright. Criteria for selecting assessment techniques and various types of techniques were discussed.

Lecture 5: *Developing and Applying Rubrics* by Mary Allen. Participants reviewed rubric examples.

Lecture 6: *Analyzing Student Learning to Improve Our Practice* by Amy Driscoll. Discussion focused upon the analysis of assessment results.

Lecture 7: *Assessment for Community College Career and Technical Educational Programs* by Gary Williams. Focus was upon analysis of the curricular design and common ways to assess behavioral and performance outcomes for competency-based programs.

Lecture 8: *The Administrator's Role in Assessment of Student Learning* by Cyd Jenefsky. This workshop defined the administrators' role in creating a learning environment for the college campus that is active, concrete, relevant and routine.

What did we learn? What do we want to do next?

- There is no specific amount of assessment that we must do. If we are able to use the information to improve our programs, then what we have done is good enough. Examination of our teaching and learning is essential to creation of positive change.
 - Assessment is ongoing. We are always in an assessment cycle.
 - We need to make a comprehensive list of programs at Laney. This includes: degrees, certificates, general education, and student services units. Assessment of sequences of courses, learning communities and grant funded programs like CAA is useful, but not necessary for compliance.
 - Alignment of outcomes (course, program, GE, institution) is critical.
 - We need to develop an assessment philosophy statement – short enough to be easy to remember – aligned with our mission statement and values.
 - We wish to continue as a task force to ensure that our plans are carried forth.
 - Three areas of emphasis emerged as needing our attention:
 1. Communication/Dissemination of Information
 2. Strategies that Encourage Dialogue (buy-in)
 3. Sharing Responsibility
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Communication/Dissemination of Information

- Use language that encourages and supports innovation.
- Use the phrase “learner-centered” whenever possible.
- Be consistent in the messaging.
- Develop an assessment philosophy that is learner-centered and aligned with the Mission Statement.
- President to lead by framing his language as “learner-centered”. He has to do it everywhere.
- Communication mechanisms include:
 - E-mail
 - Eagle Flies
 - LAC newsletter
 - LAC Meetings
 - Department Chair meetings
 - Division meetings
 - Student Services Council
 - College Council
 - Faculty Senate
 - Classified Senate
 - ASLC meetings
 - Flyers (posted and in mailboxes)
 - Bulletin Boards
 - Opening Ceremonies
 - FLEX Day activities
 - Website (links from homepage)
 - Develop a new Assessment webpage
 - Department meetings
 - Cluster meetings for SLO leads
 - Individual meetings with Deans
 - Special notices of events, rewards and activities
 - Brown Bag discussions
- Disseminate examples of program outcomes to everyone.
- Disseminate GE outcomes to everyone.
- Disseminate WASC rubrics to everyone
- Let everyone know that we are now focusing upon program level outcomes
- Communicate ALL information again and again. Do not assume that one communication is enough.

Strategies that Encourage Dialogue (buy-in or ownership)

- Formulate user groups and/or teaching communities for people with common interests.
- Use rewards/honor the accomplishments regularly
- Develop incentives (stipends, release time, prizes, gifts)
- Professional Development Day activities
- Develop a network of cluster leads (regular meetings for the leads)
- Adjust meeting times so that more people can attend (move away from lunch-time)
- Personal invitations (phone, notes, cards, etc)
- Have a trained facilitator at Department Chair, Division, and Departmental meetings to keep the dialogue consistent
- Retreats (focused by area and/or need --- no open free-for-alls).
- Regular Workshops
- Yearly Assessment Faire
- Orientation for new faculty
- Distribute rubrics
- Share assessment methods examples
- Survey faculty needs
- Schedule common assessment sessions for review of rubrics, norming and scoring.
- Bring in the experts for presentations and discussions
- Start assessing GE outcomes with a small group that are likely to be successful. Herald them, again and again.
- Cultivate and celebrate the champions.
- Publish assessment results
- Funnel assessment results to existing committees

Sharing Responsibility

- President frames the dialogue
- Task Force to develop a timeline for all action steps indicating areas of responsibility and responsible parties
- Train more people to lead assessment workshops
- Train at least one person from each large department to be the assessment coordinator for the department
- Designate facilitators for meetings and workshops
- Develop a training manual and forms that all can use
- Form an Institutional Effectiveness Committee for purposes of funneling all assessment related activities through it. Should be comprised of only the most knowledgeable assessment people on campus.
- Have an assessment office, staffed by faculty.
- Model at all levels: in meetings, discussions, memos, publications. At the very least state what the desired outcomes for each are and periodically assess whether the outcomes have been met.
- Disseminate results of this retreat to Administrative Leadership Council, Student Services Council, Faculty Senate, Learning Assessment Committee and others.