Using Qualitative Inquiry to Inform Equity and Accountability
Planning for Student Success

2015 Research & Planning Group Conference

Frank Harris III & J Luke Wood
San Diego State University
Workshop Purposes

• Discuss the utility of using qualitative inquiry to advance campus-based research and planning efforts toward student equity

• Highlight qualitative inquiry tools that can be utilized in campus-based research and planning efforts
'This indicator measures...'

'Let me tell you a story...'

'I've got a story too!'

'Listen to my experience...'

Source: http://tinyurl.com/mccjq8b
Twitter Engagement

#m2c3
@minoritymaleccc
@jlukewood
@fharris3
What is $M^2C^3$?

$M^2C^3$ is an initiative that was established to partner with community colleges to build the institutional capacity necessary to facilitate student success for men who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in postsecondary education.

Community College Survey of Men (CCSM)

Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI)

Community College Insights Protocol (CCIP)

Male Program Assessment for College Excellence (M-PACE)
How are Equity Efforts and Qualitative Inquiry Compatible?

**Equity Efforts**
- enacting institutional efforts to close the achievement gap
- identifying outcome disparities
- viewing disparities from an “equity-minded” perspective (Bensimon, 2005)
- changing institutional practices to improve student success

**Qualitative Inquiry**
- prioritizes the voices and lived experiences of participants
- examines phenomena in context
- reveals culturally embedded patterns that shape phenomena
“Data” versus “Inquiry”

The Data Paradigm:

1. Data
2. Gaps in Educational Outcomes
3. Solutions (Best Practices)

The Inquiry Paradigm:

1. Data
2. Gaps
3. Inquiry into the Causes
4. Informed Solutions
5. Evaluation of Implemented Solutions

Bensimon, 2004
Consider Qualitative Inquiry. . .

. . . to get beyond surface-level understandings of phenomena

. . . when seeking contextualized and nuanced insights into phenomena (uncovering “hidden forces”)

. . . to triangulate quantitative findings

. . . Illuminate the voices of groups and individuals

. . . when there is a need to understand how individuals construct meaning and interpret their experiences

Harper & Museus, 2007
Common Myths and Misconceptions

• Qualitative inquiry is. . .
  – unreliable because it is not “objective”
  – not useful because it is time, person, and context bound
  – cannot account for a broad range of experiences because of small and non-random samples
  – not valid nor trustworthy because it is based solely on self reporting
  – not useful in garnering the attention of presidents, trustees, governing boards
  – not rigorous

Harper & Museus, 2007
Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry

- Document Analysis
- Concept Mapping
- Reflective Journaling & Narratives
- Photo Elicitation
- Ethnographic Observations
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Action/Participatory Research
Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry

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Document Analysis

• Involves collecting and analyzing existing institutional documents and artifacts to illuminate institutional values, assumptions, and priorities.

• Can be texts and images, including:
  • course syllabi and descriptions
  • campus newspapers
  • program curricula
  • course evaluations
  • institutional reports
  • advertisements
  • websites
  • historical/archival documents

• What embedded messages are conveyed in the document?

Bowen, 2009
Document Analysis

Culinary careers are everywhere—in restaurants, hotels, cruise lines, private clubs, resorts, private yachts, culinary schools, hospitals, and educational institutions. You can build your career in one of these hospitality segments, or easily transfer among the segments. According to the National Restaurant Association, the foodservice industry employs more than 11 million workers, making this industry one of the leading generators of job growth in the United States and the nation's largest non-government employer. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the restaurant industry's growth will be more than 30 percent in the coming years.

Culinary and foodservice professionals and owners indicate that the biggest challenge facing the industry is finding educated, competent, and well trained personnel to handle this growth. The income level of chefs, cooks, and food-preparation workers differ among regions of the country and types of food-service establishments. The highest wages typically are found in upscale restaurants and hotels in large urban cities where several executive chefs are employed or in catering.

A major in Culinary Arts/Culinary Management will put you on track to become a culinary specialist with career options as a caterer, line cook, restaurateur, executive chef, food stylist, pastry chef, kitchen manager, private chef, entrepreneur, restaurant manager, food writer or editor, product research and development specialist, or sous chef. There are rapid promotional opportunities in this field for people with increasing skill sets and enhanced educational backgrounds.
**Concept Mapping**

- Involves inviting participants to “map” or draw key experiences and perceptions in relation to a particular phenomenon.

- A “graphical representation” of participants’ experiences.

- Often facilitated by prompts, concept maps enable participants document their experiences in flexible, organic, and spontaneous ways.

- Can serve as stand-alone data or be used to facilitate additional data gathering processes.

Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009
Concept Mapping

- Proving them wrong
- Under-estimates
- Man up!
- Being invisible
- No role models
- Persistence
- Struggle
- Pride
- Strength
- A path to a better life
- Making ends meet
- $
Community College Insights Protocol (CCIP) Matrix

• A framework for obtaining qualitative insights about how men of color experience community colleges

• A consensus group protocol
  – Participants collaboratively identify challenges and propose recommendations for needed action

• Focused primarily on identifying:
  – salient challenges for men of color
  – factors that enable men of color to overcome salient challenges
  – institutional practices that facilitate success for men of color
  – what campuses should be doing to support men of color
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What challenges do you face as a man of color at this college?</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>What personal factors help you to overcome these challenges?</th>
<th>What is the campus currently doing that helps you succeed at this college?</th>
<th>What advice would you offer to campus leaders to help them better serve men of color at this college?</th>
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<td>1. Racial stereotypes</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>• Drive and motivation&lt;br&gt;• The desire to prove them wrong</td>
<td>• Offering a student success course for men of color</td>
<td>• Bring in men of color to serve as role models and sources of support.&lt;br&gt;• Connect us with men of color who attended this college and have been successful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Low expectations from faculty</td>
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<td>3. Feeling like “no one cares about me”</td>
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Important Considerations for Using Qualitative Inquiry

• What do we hope to learn from this inquiry?
• How will we be reflexive and transparent?
• How will we ensure confidentiality for our participants?
• How will we manage the data we collect?
• How will we analyze and make sense of the data?
• How will we present the data in a way that “tells the story” in a meaningful and compelling way?
• How will we ensure equity, voice, and institutional accountability in our work?
Suggested Further Reading

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