FIGs and APPLEs at Berkeley City College:
Bite-sized Collaborative Projects with Big Results
Collaborative Projects

FIG: Focused Inquiry Group

APPLE: Action Plan Project for Learning Excellence
Why FIGs and APPLEs?

Inquiry + Action = Improvement

The Four Components of Increasing Student Success

A model adapted from
Achieving the Dream Inc.
www.achievingthedream.org
The Four Components of Increasing Student Success

1. “What’s Wrong?” (Outcomes)
   Use longitudinal data [and other existing research] to assess student success, equity gaps, etc.

2. “Why?” (Underlying Factors)
   Collect and analyze LOCAL data to identify barriers or challenges:
   • Focus Groups
   • Surveys
   • Literature Reviews
   • Learning Outcome Assessment

3. Intervention(s)
   Revise or design [informed by research – “what works?”] new interventions and/or policy changes to address underlying factors impeding student success.

4. Evaluation & Modification
   Collect and analyze data: to what extent did interventions/policy changes increase student success? Modify accordingly.
FIG: Focused Inquiry Group

- Ask a “thorny” question
- Look at existing research/data/models
- Gather data from students
- Look at data & make recommendations
- Present findings
FIG  Examples of Inquiry Questions:

• BIO/GEOG: What kinds of active learning activities best help students learn scientific concepts?
• COUN: How can we improve students' experiences at their first orientation at BCC?
• ENGL: How do we help students to improve their research skills?
• ESL: How can we best incorporate technology to meet our language learners’ needs?
APPLE: Action Plan Project for Learning Excellence

- Identify a need from previous FIG recommendations and/or LO assessment action plan
- Look at existing research/data/models
- Create concrete product and/or take action to meet need
- Present findings
APPLE: Examples of Action Plan Projects (MATH)

FIG:
How can using narratives in math reduce anxiety and increase retention/completion?

APPLE:
Pilot the use of various writing assignments in math classes for both affective and metacognitive purposes.
APPLE: Examples of Action Plan Projects (multidisciplinary)

ILO Assessment:
What common factors resulted in high-scoring papers?

APPLE:
Identify best practices in teaching essay organization, presentation of purpose, and language proficiency; create handouts, exercises, or lesson plans in these areas to disseminate to teachers across disciplines at BCC.
**APPLE:** Examples of Action Plan Projects (ESL)

**FIG:**
How can we better prepare our students for the demands of transfer-level English?

**APPLE:**
Design and implement common Midterm Assessments of Progress for the new accelerated curriculum, based on the standards for English 1A.

**APPLE:**
Create new supplemental courses to contextualize language learning, and certificates to guide students through the program.