Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry

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Background and Description
Information Capacity

The ability to **identify** the need for information and then request, gather, process, analyze, disseminate and **transform data into actionable information** within a collaborative culture of reflective **inquiry** so that plans and decisions may be made regarding **student success** and institutional effectiveness.
Information Capacity – Key Attributes

1. Needs/Priorities
2. Credible sources
3. Reliable & Valid
4. Timely
5. Dissemination
6. Actionable
7. Success/Effectiveness
8. Inquiry Culture

1. Identify data and information needs and priorities.
2. Request data from credible sources with ease and responsiveness.
3. Gather data that are reliable and valid.
4. Process and analyze data in a timely manner.
5. Disseminate data and information regularly, widely and in usable formats.
6. Transform data into actionable information.
7. Use data and information to improve student success and institutional effectiveness.
8. Support a culture of collaborative & reflective inquiry.
A Culture of Inquiry

Schools that have established a culture of inquiry recognize that their work does not end with a few lasting improvements. They know that improving teaching and learning is an intentional and ongoing process. These schools find that questions lead to action and action leads to new questions. This ongoing cycle of inquiry establishes a more thoughtful approach to improving teaching and learning schoolwide.

Sharon F. Rallis and Margaret M. MacMullen, “Inquiry-Minded Schools: Opening Doors for Accountability” (Kappan, June 2000).
Culture of Inquiry – Key Attributes

- A continuous improvement paradigm: student success and institutional effectiveness do not end with a few lasting improvements, it is a continuous cycle of review, enact and reflect.
- The inquiry process intentionally leads to action.
- Action leads to new questions which require a thoughtful, reflective and collaborative approach to improving teaching, learning and institutional effectiveness.
Information Capacity - Challenges

**Building Evidence-based Infrastructure**
- Managing and responding to myriad requests.
- Maintaining quality and integrity of data process.
- Making data and information widely accessible.

**Keeping Up with the Demand**
- Responding to heightened accountability mandates.
- Linking research to resource planning.
- Supporting data-driven decision-making.

**Turning Data into Action**
- Making data available and applicable at all levels.
- Making sense of and taking action on the data.
- Building a collaborative culture of inquiry.
A Model for Building Information Capacity

The Challenges:
1. Implementing An Evidence-based Infrastructure
2. Keeping Up With The Data & Info Demand
3. Turning Data Into Action
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT

How would you describe the information capacity at your college today?

How would you describe the culture of inquiry at your college today?

How would you describe the data and information usage at your college today?
Components and Strategies
Processes and Procedures

• Research committee or other group focused on development, implementation and evaluation of research processes and procedures
• Data request forms and fulfillment procedures, and criteria for prioritizing requests
• Guidelines for accessing and using data and information
Guided Inquiry

1. Which group on campus has been or could be identified as a “Research Committee” and how might this fit into your shared governance structure?

2. What are some of the processes and procedures for accessing and using data and information at your college and where do you see any gaps in these?
Your Turn!

Review the following sample documents and discuss the efficacy of these policies, processes and procedures at your college:

- Guidelines for use of data & information
- Protection of human subjects policy
- Review panels and committees
- Request and fulfillment procedures
- Criteria for prioritizing ad hoc requests
# Research Agenda

## What is a research agenda?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A useful organizing strategy</th>
<th>A descriptive map of a way forward</th>
<th>A means to help balance and link research</th>
<th>A powerful communication tool</th>
<th>A mechanism for facilitating college-wide dialog and building a culture of inquiry</th>
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Types of Research Agendas

• College-wide Research Agenda
  • Supports major college-wide initiatives & activities
  • Tied to college-wide plan (goals & priorities)
  • Includes recurring requests

• Topical Research Agenda
  • Focused on a single topic or group of interest
  • Tied to a specific initiative or activity
  • Fewer research activities than college-wide
Steps for Building a Research Agenda

1. Identify a lead group to develop and implement agenda.
2. Review goals, strategies and priorities to measure.
3. Conduct needs assessment to identify gaps in existing and needed research.
4. Link research to other college plans and initiatives.
5. Establish and align indicators to goals and measures.
6. Prioritize research and identify resources.
7. Establish reporting cycle.
8. Share agenda with constituencies to obtain feedback and inform.
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Which plans or initiatives at your campus would benefit from a research agenda?

MOVING FORWARD
How might your campus go about creating a research agenda?
Your Turn!

Use the **Research Agenda template** to draft a set of items for a college-wide or other research agenda.
Action Research Approach

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out… The approach is only action research when it is collaborative.

*Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988*
Action Research Approach

1. Identify an Idea or Problem
   - Implement Action
   - Conduct Fact Finding
   - Plan Actions

2. Amend Plan
   - Evaluate Actions
   - Implement Actions
Action Research Approach

Developing the Research Agenda
- What and who will be researched?
- How is research tied to college plans, goals, initiatives and/or activities?
- How will information be used/by whom/how often?
- Which methodology or approach will be used?

Turning Data into Information
- What do the data tell us?
- Which questions were fully answered by the research and which need more exploration?
- What are reasonable benchmarks based on the research?

Taking Action on the Information
- What interventions or strategies do we need to deploy in order to move the needle?
- How should this information be shared and applied across
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Who/which group currently provides primary leadership in facilitating action research discussions?

MOVING FORWARD
Which opportunities for data-driven discussion will you use to engage multiple constituency groups in the process?
What are some possible topics that an action research team on your campus might focus on?
Institutional Effectiveness and Data Facilitation

- Presentations
- Briefings
- Informational Sessions
- Data Integration Workshops
- Reports: Comprehensive, Exec. Summaries, and Highlights
- One-to-one Consultation
- Action Research Team Meetings
- Strategy or Design Meetings
- Web Presence
Data Integration Strategy Matrix

**SCOPE**

- **High**
  - Website Postings
  - Research Office Newsletter
- **Low**
  - Informational Sessions
  - Presentations
  - Technical Assistance Meetings

**IMPACT**

- **High**
  - Action Research Teams
  - College Research Committee
  - Sharing of Actions Taken on Data
- **Low**
  - Briefings
  - Data Integration Workshops
  - Research & Assessment Methods Workshops
  - Research Agenda Development and Implementation
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
What are some of the strategies your college is currently using to share and use data and information?

MOVING FORWARD
What are some other strategies that might be used to expand the opportunities and engage more people on your campus?
Your Turn!

Use the **Data Integration Strategy Matrix** to identify strategies your college uses and/or may want to use to share data and information.
Outcomes Reporting

• Establish a systematic way in which to report progress of goals using information from the research agenda including:
  • Key indicators and metrics
  • Trend analysis
  • Scorecard approach

• Provide a venue for benchmarking and best practice sharing including:
  • Performance Benchmarking: establishing performance targets and setting goals
  • Process Benchmarking: formal sharing and exchanging of strategies & interventions
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
What type of outcomes reporting format are being used at your campus? Who would be responsible for collecting and reporting the information?

MOVING FORWARD
What are some internal and external benchmarks that might be used in your college’s outcomes report?
Your Turn!

Review the sample Outcome Reports and identify a format that would work for your college.
Evaluation
Ideas for Evaluating the Model

- **Process & Procedures**
  - Perception Study
  - Checklist

- **Research Agenda**
  - Number of topical research agendas
  - Inventory of research requests

- **Action Research Approach**
  - Number of people involved in action research teams
  - Attitudinal survey on collaborative inquiry process

- **Information Sharing/Data Facilitation**
  - Scope depth analysis on discussions
  - Tracking of data and info sharing/facilitation activities

- **Outcomes Reporting**
  - Report on actions taken on research
  - Description of data usage
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Which of the options described in the Evaluation section might be easily integrated into your research infrastructure?

MOVING FORWARD
What are your next steps in creating a vibrant culture of inquiry at your campus and who will be involved?
BRIC TAP Inquiry Guide Series

1. Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
2. Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Learning (CUE Module)
3. Assessing Strategic Intervention Points in Student Services
4. A Model for Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry
5. Assessing and Planning for Institutional Effectiveness
6. Assessing Basic Skills Outcomes
7. Maximizing the Program Review Process
8. Turning Data into Meaningful Action
9. Research and Assessment for Noncredit Institutions

http://www.rpgroup.org/content/BRIC-inquiry-guides
The RP Group

www.rpgroup.org

The BRIC Initiative

http://www.rpgroup.org/projects/BRIC.html

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