

# Written Testimony to the Little Hoover Commission



## Basic Skills: The Role of the California Community Colleges

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The role of the California Community Colleges in providing basic skills instruction is a major part of its mission to provide instruction and support to over 2.7 million students throughout the state of California. There are currently 112 comprehensive campuses plus 3 campuses focused wholly on noncredit/community services instruction providing a coordinated response to the needs of the state.

### **Definition of Basic Skills: an Overview**

1. As defined in title 5, 55000(j) of the California Code of Regulation, credit non-degree-applicable basic skills courses are those courses in reading, writing, computation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) which are designated by the community college district as non-degree-applicable credit courses pursuant to subdivision (b) of section 55002.
2. In noncredit, the following areas comprise basic skills:
  - a. English as a Second Language
  - b. Adult Basic Education
  - c. Adult Secondary Education
3. Operationally, for both credit and noncredit, basic skills comprises:
  - a. English as a Second Language, which can be taught as Integrated Skills, ESL Reading, ESL Writing, or ESL Listening and Speaking
  - b. English writing and reading below the Freshman Composition level
  - c. mathematics below the level of Intermediate Algebra (the current requirement for an associate's degree)
4. In terms of coursework, these are the similarities and differences:
  - a. ESL: noncredit includes literacy and life skills in the curriculum; however, there is often an overlap at the highest levels of noncredit ESL with the lowest levels of credit ESL; credit ESL tends to have a more academic focus, sometimes offered within the context of vocational areas
  - b. English: the focus in noncredit is generally on preparing students to attain a GED or high school diploma, while the focus in credit is on bringing students to a sufficient skill level in both reading and writing such that they can take vocational and academic courses that lead to certificates, degrees, and transfer
  - c. mathematics: the focus in noncredit is generally on preparing students to attain a GED or high school diploma, while the focus in credit is on bringing students to a sufficient skill level in mathematics such that they can take vocational and academic courses that lead to certificates, degrees, and transfer

The delivery of basic skills courses follows generally two routes: credit and noncredit. The credit courses are considered to be courses that are in preparation for college-level courses, both degree and non-degree applicable. Noncredit courses are provided, at no charge to students, in an effort to directly respond to a growing number of California citizens who cannot read, write, or do mathematics at very elementary levels but need these skills for job attainment or mobility. Many of these noncredit students (many of whom are students of color or from a low socio-economic background) have no initial intention of obtaining a college degree as they are generally focused on subsistence within an

increasingly difficult economy. The role of noncredit has been evolving and broadening over the last several years. It addresses a full range of the student needs which include preparation for GED, high school diplomas, basic skills contextualized for Career and Technical Education, and successful completion of credit courses.

### **Basic Skills Enrollments**

The number of students enrolled in basic skills courses in California Community Colleges over the last few years is provided in an attached spreadsheet (*BS Enrollments*). For the 2009-2010 year, approximately 387,000 credit students and 156,000 noncredit students were enrolled in basic skills courses. This represents approximately 20% of the 2.7 million students enrolled throughout the state. More information on the students can be found by accessing the attached spreadsheet. All community colleges offer credit basic skills.

Credit and noncredit programs tend to serve slightly different populations of students. For example, in 2008-2009, 41.5% of credit basic skills enrollments were Hispanic students, while 57.4% of noncredit basic skills enrollments were Hispanic students. Furthermore, 40.2% of credit basic skills enrollments were students aged 19 or younger, while 55.0% of noncredit basic skills enrollments were students between the ages of 25 and 49.

According to Fall 2010 MIS data, 20 colleges offer no noncredit basic skills and an additional 26 colleges offer less than the equivalent of 10 full-time students (FTES) in noncredit basic skills. This means approximately 40% of all community colleges offer minimal to no noncredit basic skills instruction. In urban areas, however, community colleges have a significant presence, comprising 32% of adult education in the state.

The current data system does not collect data on the “source” of our students. However, we do collect data on the prior experiences of our students, which is what is reflected in the attached spreadsheet (*Source of Students*). Some caveats: this data is based on student self-reporting, so students who did not self-report are not included; students were able to check more than one category; and the data only reflects the experiences of students who have enrolled in basic skills English, mathematics and ESL. We understand the interest in returning students, but the definition for “returning” students for the community colleges (non-enrollment for one primary term) results in reporting that is far broader than useful for the commission. Percentages are not provided since this is an incomplete picture. In summary, of the students enrolled in 2009-2010 that self-reported, we have the following data (other years are detailed in the spreadsheet *Source of Students*):

- Credit – did not finish high school: 22,485
- Credit – finished high school: 286,352
- Credit – attended adult school: 3,833
- Credit – finished high school outside of US/international: 30,654
- Noncredit – did not finish high school: 23,710
- Noncredit – finished high school: 26,315
- Noncredit – attended adult school: 11,753
- Noncredit – finished high school outside of US/international: 23,479

We have looked at basic skills students who began in 2004-2005 and tracked their progress for six years. The list below provides information regarding successful completion of a degree-applicable course, certificates, and degrees. It does not include students who transferred to another higher education institution. Some caveats: students who took both noncredit and credit are only counted on the credit side and students who achieved multiple milestones were only counted once in this descending hierarchy – degree, certificate, degree-applicable course; thus, a student who attained both a certificate and degree was counted only once for attainment of the degree. Another caveat is that achievement data does not include the completion of the noncredit (CDCP) certificates, which demonstrate college or workforce readiness, or completion of GED or high school diplomas. The spreadsheet titled *Movement to Degree* provides a college-by-college breakdown. Here is a summary for the system:

- Total first-time students (2004-2005): 480,621
  - Enrolled in credit basic skills course: 141,988
    - Successfully completed degree-applicable course: 109,751
    - Earned a credit certificate: 2,162
    - Earned an AA/AS: 15,192
  - Enrolled in noncredit basic skills course (only): 58,376
    - Successfully completed degree-applicable course: 3,199
    - Earned a credit certificate: 77
    - Earned an AA/AS: 659

**Basic Skills Success**

Since 2004, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has been reviewing student data collected in its Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) project. One element tracked is the movement on course and program achievement. The following table provides data from the last four years related to general student success, movement at the early stages of college, vocational education, and basic skills.

ARCC DATA	Statewide Rates			
Indicator	2008	2009	2010	2011
Student Progress & Achievement	51.2%	51.8%	52.3%	53.6%
Completed 30 or more units	70.4%	71.2%	72.4%	72.8%
Fall to Fall Persistence	68.3%	69.2%	68.7%	67.6%
Voc Ed Course Completion	78.2%	77.7%	77.6%	77.0%
Basic Skills Course Completion	60.5%	60.5%	61.5%	61.4%
Basic Skills Course Improvement	50.0%	51.2%	53.8%	54.6%
ESL Course Improvement	44.7%	50.1%	50.2%	58.6%

Information provided in this table is evidence that many of the changes initiated in the Basic Skills Initiative have made a difference and that colleges are being proactive in their response to changing the system. Even modest gains in student success translates to very large gains across the state when you take into account that the system serves more than 2.7 million students.

A requirement for a special ARCC report was set forth in Assembly Bill 194 (chapter 489, statutes of 2007) - the Chancellor's Office must publish an annual basic skills accountability report and provide it to the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office. AB 194 also requires accountability for the outcomes produced through basic skills funding. To accomplish this, the Chancellor's Office created a framework, working with representatives from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office. They formed a special technical advisory workgroup, adding statewide representatives from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, researchers from different community colleges, and technical/research/program personnel from the Chancellor's Office -- all dedicated to the task of accountability reporting. The full report can be found at [ARCC Basic Skills Accountability](#).

### **The Basic Skills Initiative**

The delivery of basic skills instruction at the community colleges is provided through both credit and noncredit instruction. In most community college districts throughout the state this instruction is provided as a part of the comprehensive mission of basic skills, career and technical education, and transfer education. Where there are strong adult basic education programs in the public school systems, community colleges tend to focus attention on upper levels of basic skills as a beginning for the college-aspiring students. Where there are no adult education programs provided by the public schools, colleges tend to either offer strong adult education programs on their own or they mainstream the adult learners into their existing credit and noncredit programs.

For years, many noncredit programs have served students needing the very lowest levels of basic skills instruction, which includes up to 8 levels below transfer in ESL and 6-7 levels below transfer in mathematics, reading, and writing. Because of the drastic budget cuts in recent years to adult basic education in the public school districts, many adult education programs have been abolished or severely limited. As the public-school-based programs decrease, students increasingly attend community colleges to search for assistance.

At this time, there is not a definitive combined CDE and CCCCO inventory of programs that has been analyzed to provide identification of the gaps or the overlaps in curricular activity. To complicate matters, many community college districts overlap multiple school district service areas. In the state, there are only two counties where there is a community college but no adult education program in the public schools- these are San Francisco and Santa Barbara. By default, the community college serves 100% of the basic skills needs in these counties.

Addressing the needs of basic skills students has been a challenge for the community colleges for a very long time. Individual faculty have been innovating and seeking new ways to address this issue for many decades. In addition, the system has long been concerned about adequate student preparation for college work. California is the first and only state thus far where faculty have developed shared student learning outcomes for all basic skills courses (credit and noncredit) to track and potentially to provide articulation and placement throughout the system. This project represented a very broad collaboration by the system

to document outcomes and to build a common set of exit skills for each level of basic skills. A companion project with CDE to align Adult Basic Education and the Common Core Standards is in the planning phase.

The system believes that one area of needed improvement is in the messaging to high school students as to the skill expectations for entry into college-level work at the community colleges. The California State University (CSU) system pioneered the Early Assessment Program (EAP) as a means of signaling to high school seniors their preparedness for college-level work. The community college system has since joined with the CSU to use EAP results to communicate to students the need to better utilize their senior high school year in preparation for entry in college.

Unlike the CSU, the community colleges have most authority delegated to the local level. As a result, the community colleges have used local authority to tailor their programs and services to the local population. However, the strength of this type of customization has also led to criticism, particularly in the area of providing a common message to incoming students regarding preparation. Almost all community colleges conduct assessment testing to advise students about placement into English and mathematics coursework.

Currently, community colleges individually chose their assessment tests to use in the process, and the result is that the use of multiple tests in the system makes it difficult to provide a unified message to incoming students about what is considered college ready. The system is working on a statewide centralized assessment delivery project called CCCAssess. In addition to saving the system money through a statewide contract for assessment delivery services, the use of this centralized assessment will allow for development of a uniform message regarding college readiness. Faculty and others are already engaged in discussions about alignment of assessment testing with the Common Core State Standards to further strengthen the cohesiveness of messaging to incoming students.

While faculty have always been involved in improving basic skills instruction individually, until more recently, there has been little system-focused attention on the improvement of the instruction that takes place in the classroom. The system embarked on a project in 2007 to focus on the improvement of basic skills instruction and instructional support called the Basic Skills Initiative. Supplemental apportionment funding for basic skills course delivery over a college's enrollment cap was re-envisioned as a funding source for the Initiative. To provide colleges direction on how to use the funds, the Center for Student Success and the RP Group did an extensive literature search on effective basic skills practices, which resulted in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*. The report provided background on 26 effective practices, divided into four categories, the largest being "instructional practices." In addition, the report provided a tool for colleges to conduct a basic skills self-assessment and a cost/revenue modeling tool to inform local discussion and decision making. This funding has resulted in a renewed focus on basic skills instruction on college campuses, and some of the changes to instruction include creation of first-year experience programs, summer bridge programs, contextualized instruction, accelerated programs, and increased coordination of courses with student support services.

The Initiative also supports professional development offered initially through the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (see attached *BSI Summary 09*) and, now, through the California Community College Success Network (3CSN). 3CSN and its predecessors (the professional development effort has had several different names) have supported faculty with workshops, demonstrations, and the creation of networks of practitioners, all to support the implementation of these changes to instructional delivery and support.

Now that we are moving to the fourth year of the project, the system will be engaging the colleges in the collection of data to show that this investment of targeted dollars has made a difference in the success of students in basic skills courses and beyond. The system continues to work to improve its data systems and the ability for its data systems to connect with those of K12 and our 4-year college/university partners to provide further information that will help to inform instructional practice.

### **Possible Changes to the Current System**

Jack Scott, the current California Community College Chancellor, has organized a task force charged by the community college Board of Governors to provide a report on student success. The Student Success Task Force is charged with looking at all areas of the colleges and making recommendations on successful practices as well as funding models which might support and encourage those practices. In addition to general funding practices and overall student success, one of the particular areas being discussed is how to further improve the success of students in basic skills. It is premature at this time to provide recommendations, but the final report will be available following the expected adoption by the Board of Governors in January 2012.

It is important for the California Community College Chancellor's Office to work closely with the California Department of Education in coordinating the needs of basic skills students. Similar to the Student Success Task Force, which focuses attention on community college students, a task force should be convened to look at the combination of services provided by both systems, cutting down on duplication and improving effectiveness throughout the systems. The project needs to be research based and include practitioners from throughout the state.

The community college system is very serious and intentional in its efforts to enhance basic skills success through improvement in the classroom and supplemental services. Professional development is the key for providing faculty the resources and time to effectively improve the classroom environment. These resources can be enhanced by combining resources with the California Department of Education, eliminating duplication, and ultimately improving student success across the state.

While state budgets are currently in a state of reduction, it is important for the State of California to continue its effort to provide education for that section of the population that is most needy but at the same time has great potential to impact the future workforce of the state. There should be no further reductions to basic skills or adult basic education.

# ASCCC Basic Skills Summary Report 2006 to 2009



**Academic Senate**  
**for California Community Colleges**

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

# An ASCCC Summary Report on the Basic Skills Initiative

## A Collaborative Project Driven by the System's Strategic Plan



*The grant funded Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) began in 2006 as part of the strategic planning process. It has been reevaluated and renewed annually since then going through four years of growth, evolution and maturation.*

The goal of the comprehensive strategic planning process was to improving student access and success. The Strategic Plan guides California Community Colleges as they serve over 2.9 million students annually at 110 colleges. The Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) was a product of Strategic Plan Goal Area 2- Student Success and Readiness (<http://strategicplan.cccco.edu/>). The project addressed credit and noncredit basic skills and ESL as well as adult education and programs designed to help underprepared students. During this same period of time discussion, debate and analysis ultimately resulted in agreement on minimum graduation requirements in English and mathematics standards across all California community colleges. Implementation of the new graduation requirements began in Fall 2009.

A two-pronged approach created an environment for unprecedented accomplishments in Basic Skills. One prong of this plan allocated colleges supplemental funding to specifically address basic skills needs. This funding was guided by locally developed action plans documenting usage of the funding. The outcomes of the BSI will be tracked using the Accountability Report for Community Colleges (ARCC), specifically the ARCC Basic Skills report <http://www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/Divisions/TechResearchInfo/ResearchandPlanning/BasicSkills/tabid/1660/Default.aspx>

ARCC DATA	Statewide Rates		
Indicator	2008	2009	2010
<b>Student Progress &amp; Achievement</b>	51.2%	51.8%	52.3%
<b>Completed 30 or more units</b>	70.4%	71.2%	72.4%
<b>Fall to Fall Persistence</b>	68.3%	69.2%	68.7%
<b>Voc Ed Course Completion</b>	78.2%	77.7%	77.6%
<b>Basic Skills Course Completion</b>	60.5%	60.5%	61.5%
<b>Basic Skills Course Improvement</b>	50.0%	51.2%	53.8%
<b>ESL Course Improvement</b>	44.7%	50.1%	50.2%

The other prong took the shape of a Professional Development Grant which was designed to address training needs for faculty and staff in basic skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL). This report summarizes the evolution of the training and statewide participation through the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges involvement in this part of the initiative over the past four years. A brief visual of the Basic Skills Initiative and a timeline of the accomplishments are included on the next two pages.

ASCCC

Basic Skills  
Trajectory  
2007 to 2009

Concerns about  
Basic Skills and  
Assessment  
Raising of the  
graduation  
requirements

Phase 1

\*Literature Review  
collaboration  
Reports at various  
institutes and  
professional meetings

Phase 2

Train the Trainers  
\$33.1 million to fund  
college practices to  
address Basic Skills and ESL  
\$1.6 million for a  
professional development  
grant

Phase 3

Regional trainings  
Development of Basic Skills  
Coordinator Positions  
Development of Basic Skills  
Handbook- *Constructing a  
Framework for Success: A Holistic  
Approach to Basic Skills*  
Additional Literature Reviews  
transitioning from Adult Ed and HS  
and contextualized learning in CTE  
CB 21 alignment of Basic Skills  
Courses  
Inclusion of Noncredit & CTE  
special training  
Summer Institute  
Integrating Equity Plans with  
Action Planning  
Searchable Effective Practices  
Database  
\$33.1 million for Basic Skills and  
ESL  
\$1.6 million for a professional  
development grant

Phase 4

Regional trainings  
Increased training for  
CTE and Noncredit  
System-wide Basic  
Skills Curriculum  
review through CB 21  
Basic Skills Coordinator  
Training  
Local college visits  
Published Basic Skills  
Handbook  
*Constructing a  
Framework for Success*  
ARCC Supplemental  
Report on Basic Skills  
Prerequisite changes  
initiated  
Additional Literature  
review on Equity and  
Basic Skills  
ICAS Math  
Competencies  
Updated  
Funding reduced for  
BSI  
Funding reduced for  
Professional  
Development Grant

## Basic Skills Timeline 2007 to 2010

Phase 1	
February-07	Completed the Literature review
Phase 2	
September-07	Legislature approves 33.1 million annual on-going funding to address basic skills and ESL
September-07	1.6 million dollars for annual professional development grant (awarded to Foothill college working with ASCCC)
December-07	Train-the-trainers 20 regional college workshops on the review of the literature
Phase 3	
Spring 08	Professional meeting presentations on BSI, CCLC, CIOs, ASCCC Fall plenary, Vocational Education Institute
May-08	Colleges compete first action plans using assessment tool
May-08	Pilot first regional training at Bakersfield College
June-08	Six regional meetings introducing effective practices and analysis and modification of basic skills action plans referencing equity plans, literature review and effective practices presentations
July-08	Action plans implemented to guide use of basic skills funding
August-08	Summer Institute - Focusing on disciplines, adjuncts and Basic Skills Coordinators
August-08	Basic Skills Effective Practices Website
Summer 08	Curriculum Institute
Fall 2008	Focus on coordinators and Basic Skills teams five regional meetings
Fall 08	Professional meeting presentations on BSI, CCLC, CIOs, ASCCC Fall plenary, Student Success Conference
October-08	CB 21 meeting with credit
December-09	Completion of the Basic Skills Handbook
January-09	Two additional literature reviews based on Transitioning to Postsecondary Education
Spring 09	Additional literature review on basic skills contextualized learning in CTE
Phase 4	
Spring 2009	Completion of ARCC Supplemental Reporting Format
Spring 2009	Professional meeting presentations on BSI, CCLC, CIOs, ASCCC Spring plenary
Feb-April 09	Career Technical Basic Skills Training
April-May 09	Three regional meetings - Creating and Sustaining Effective Basic Skills
April-May 09	Noncredit Basic Skills Regional meetings
Summer 2009	Basic Skills Curriculum, CB 21 Training and Prerequisite issues at Curriculum Institute
Fall 2009	Professional meeting presentations on BSI, CCLC, CIOs, ASCCC Fall plenary, Student Success Conference
September-09	Basic Skills Coordinator Conference - The Importance of Creating Leadership within Campuses
September-09	Noncredit CB 21 meeting
October-09	Four regional BSI training - Maintaining and Enhancing Student Success in Difficult Times: Sustainable, Low-Cost Classroom Practices
October-09	Workshops to go and Technical Visiting teams
November-09	Revision of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) Math Competencies
Spring 2010	Complete Noncredit CB 21, bridge to credit and accountability
Future Goals	
Spring 2010	Additional literature review on basic skills and equity
March-10	Strengthened ESL/basic skills programs established through ARCC data
July-10	Provide optimal success rates; secure additional \$50 million for ongoing efforts

**The Basic Skills Professional Development Grant provides statewide training and support to address the basic skills training needs of California community college administrators, faculty, and staff in the areas of basic skills and ESL instruction in both credit and noncredit instruction.**

### **Phase I – The Literature Review**

This phase of the professional development grant resulted in collegial creation of a literature review that summarized and organized existing practices into manageable areas of emphasis. This foundational work completed by the RP Group with faculty and administrative collaborators has served to guide subsequent efforts. *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Success in California Community Colleges*, Center for Student Success (2007) Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Available at <http://www.cccbsi.org/publications>

### **Phase II - Training for Local Colleges**

Phase II of the grant was administered through Foothill College with the training developed by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC). BSI Phase II involved a “Train-the-Trainers” approach to educate statewide stakeholders on the Literature Review and to begin to create resource materials for use at the colleges. Over 20 meetings were conducted in an effort to train future leaders for more expansive training in phase III.

One useful tool developed by the CSS was a self-assessment tool that identifies strengths and weaknesses in basic skills instruction. This tool can be found at <http://www.cccbsi.org/self-assessment>. Another useful tool was the downstream-funding model that helped colleges recognize the financial value in meeting the basic skills needs of students [Cost-Revenue Excel Tool](#) (Excel, 55KB). This spreadsheet provides a template to breakdown sample programs costs and revenues.

The ASCCC and its system partners, in a collegial effort to identify basic skills issues and necessary regulation changes, successfully promoted a change in the California Education Code raising and standardizing graduation requirements. This Title 5 change (§ **55063**) required English 1A (Freshman Composition) and Intermediate Algebra or equivalents for all California community college Associate’s Degrees beginning Fall 2009. Part of the ASCCC-led professional development process included educating colleges about “alternative” career-related math and English courses to meet the new graduation requirements (e.g. math for health careers instead of Intermediate Algebra) as well as supporting the transition at the local colleges. The statewide curricular expertise integrated with local discussions about implications for student success were essential components of a successful transition at all 110 colleges. Resources were presented at various professional meetings such as the Academic Senate plenary meetings and institutes as well as other statewide organization meetings such as the Chief Instructional Officers, the Chief Student Services Officers, the Student Success Conference and the CCLC conferences. This effort reached large numbers of faculty, staff and administrators. In addition, the resources were posted on the ASCCC basic skills website.

### **Phase III – In-depth Training for Local Colleges and Professional Groups**

In Phase III the Academic Senate conducted widespread training and dissemination of effective practices and resources. Phase three moved to include other important stakeholders in the basic skills process including adjunct and noncredit faculty. Research indicated that large numbers of adjunct faculty actually taught the majority of basic skills classes and that up to half of all basic

skills and ESL students were in noncredit courses and programs. Another important focus was the definition and creation of Basic Skills Coordinators that worked across institutional boundaries and guided the construction of the action plans and implementation. Evaluation of Phase III included:

- **Direct knowledge evaluation:** During most of the professional development presentations pre and post tests were administered using clickers to electronically download and archive data concerning attendees' knowledge about basic skills issues. This provided direct assessment of the attendee's knowledge and changes in their knowledge and values about Basic Skills as a result of the individual professional development activities. Examination of these assessments revealed that early in the process, although BSI Phase II focused on describing the effective practices and major basic skills issues, the penetration of information was limited to the number of people attending the meetings. However, by summer 2008 of BSI Phase III, greater depth and breadth of exposure was occurring as evidenced by faculty pre-test knowledge.
- **Participant perceptions and survey:** Attendees were asked to evaluate the professional development sessions regarding content, presentation and potential value added to the attendee's own practices and to their institution. Assessment and evaluation materials were developed and implemented for each professional development activity under the grant. All items and evaluation results are available from the ASCCC office. The overwhelming responses to these evaluations were positive.
- **Feedback from stakeholders,** such as CIOs, CSSOs, counselors, CTE faculty, Basic Skills Coordinators and others, was collected during meetings that were held throughout the year to update internal and external organizations about the status of the project. Reports at plenary and other meetings and institutes revealed a growing number of people were familiar with the goals and purposes of the Basic Skills Initiatives. By spring 2009, BSI was a common term among CCC faculty, administrators and staff according our evaluation responses, but knowledge of information and application of that information are two different issues. This led to a research study to examine institutional rather than individual effects.

Evaluation processes that were focused on institutional and system-wide patterns, changes and processes included the following results:

Evaluation of the individual events and responses from attendees provided excellent data for adjusting the training and creating more effective sessions. But at some point, it is necessary to step back and ask what the overall effect of the investment was by taking a high elevation scan of the 110 colleges in the CCC system. This occurred in the BSI Phase III plan via two overview projects – one was an examination of sample college action plans to determine the effect of professional development on institutional behavioral change. Another involved the evaluation of system wide practice changes through a survey and qualitative review.

- **Action Planning Analysis:** This research project targeted at evaluating potential institutional changes subsequent to BSI training. It involved a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Action Plans comparing the 2007-2008 plans to the 2008-2009 plans of 9 schools that DID NOT attend BSI training and 27 schools that attended training. The Action Plans for those colleges that did attend trainings showed a greater degree of significant changes in the latest (2008-2009) plans than those that attended no BSI training. In many cases, it is difficult to determine whether the Planned Actions are progressive from

the previous year's plans as they are often so different from each other. In general, plans from those colleges that did not attend any trainings typically show little to no change in their Planned Actions. While this indicates indirect evaluation of the professional development activities, when combined with attendee feedback, this indicates a positive shift in an important area of the CCC mission at individual colleges. This research study provides evidence that colleges were actively revising and improving their action planning processes and that those colleges that sent attendees to the BSI training session showed some significant institutional planning differences. The details and methodology of this report are available at the ASCCC office.

- When the Basic Skills Initiative first began very few colleges had Basic Skills Coordinators, an important role that allows coordination across the campus, integration of efforts and the ability to implement organizational and institutional effective practices. Phase III initiated a survey and research project to understand, define and present this as an important role for effective institutional change. Currently over 50% of the colleges have established this position indicating the priority role that Basic Skills has and the significant impact of a leader to address issues. The Basic Skills Coordinator survey results are available at the ASCCC office.

System-wide changes that can be directly attributed to the Basic Skills Initiative Training.

- While the creation of the poppy copy represented an important product of the first phase of the BSI and dissemination of the effective practices were a focus of Phase II, Phase III had other tangible and important products as a result of the investment of money and time. First, beyond the training the production of a handbook, *Constructing a Framework for Success: A Holistic Approach to Basic Skills*, documenting CCC specific data, practices and faculty ready resources. Evidence of this important product and its dissemination can be seen in the colleges that have posted it to their web as a resource, the reference to it in the CSU MDTP newsletter, and links at the CIO and ACCA websites. This is available online at <http://www.cccbsi.org/basic-skills-handbook>
- Phase III created an interactive web resource for faculty and administrators. The *Basic Skills Initiative Effective Practices Database* structured around the effective practices that allows people to search real college practices. The Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) created the database of professional development and student programs as a part of the English as a Second Language/Basic Skills Professional Development grant funded by the California Chancellor's Office. This database contains peer reviewed programs, strategies and practices that colleges submitted using two criteria: demonstrated student success and sufficient quantitative and/or qualitative data to substantiate their effectiveness. This can be reviewed at <http://www.cccbsi.org/>

- Phase III also produced a system-wide curricular and MIS change of an enormous magnitude. Faculty in the basic skills credit disciplines of English, ESL, mathematics and reading documented the outcomes for each level of course prior to transfer. This statewide effort involved cooperation of faculty from all 110 colleges and resulted in a document describing curricular outcomes through the basic skills student pathway. The work was vetted and unanimously adopted by the Academic Senate and will serve as a basis for recoding all basic skills courses in order to provide the kind of accurate data necessary to report student progress. This recoding represents an indirect measure of the core components of the Basic Skills Professional Development training such as faculty understanding of our current basic skills students and understanding of ARCC data and implications of accountability reporting. This work is available at <http://www.cccbsi.org/rubric-information> Recoding will be completed by March 2010 and subsequent ARCC reporting will reflect the increased accuracy of this information.
- The original literature review (2007) documented basic skills effective practices as a general topic. It soon became apparent that additional literature reviews would provide specific information necessary for important specialized issues in basic skills. Phase three saw the completion of two literature reviews focused on transitioning from adult education and high school. A third additional literature review on basic skills contextualized learning in Career Technical Education (CTE) has been recognized as a an outstanding resource with excellent potential to meet the specialized needs of CTE faculty within the current CCC culture and structure. This work has also been noted nationally.
- Another far reaching project was the completion of the ICAS (Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates) Math Competencies. The importance of this work cannot be underestimated. In order to understand basic skills it is essential to have a good definition of college-level skills. Validation of these skills by the combined faculty of the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges creates a clear message to the public, K-12, and students about the expectations for their skills level. This project has also met national recognition through the American Diploma Project. This effort was lead by the ASCCC and is available at <http://www.icas-ca.org/>

In summary the pre- and post-testing for content knowledge, the evaluations of individual attendees, and stakeholder feedback provided important evaluative data to shape and validate the effectiveness of the BSI professional development training. The usage and dissemination of the products created through BSI Phase III (the handbook, effective practices searchable website, additional literature reviews) provide evidence of the outreach, breadth and depth of this phase of the project, which now has critical mass for a system with 110 colleges and 60,000 faculty. The important creation of Basic Skills Coordinator positions to move this work forward through local leadership provided system-wide evidence of a sea change in institutional practice. Validation of common math competencies, through ICAS, verified that California public higher education, across all three segments, were in agreement as to the essential expectations. The important changes to institutional thinking reflected in the action plan modifications from those colleges sending attendees to the professional development

activities and statewide curricular projects speak to a Phase III that effused the important professional development foundation to redirect old embedded and ineffective practices with new dialogue, interventions and promises of increased student success in the future.

#### **Phase IV – Continued Training for Local Colleges and Professional Groups Expansive Changes for Basic Skills Curriculum Alignment**

The summary and evaluation of the BSI Phase IV continues the same remarkable story although ASCCC funding was reduced to \$525,000 and more specifically limited to regional meetings. Faculty perspectives, curriculum and alignment across our system focused on helping students succeed. In February 2009, the ASCCC assembled a Workshop Team to implement the Senate’s BSI Regional Workshops for Spring and Fall 2009. Team members represented diverse disciplines closely involved in the BSI.

Because of widespread interest in three types of effective programs, the training initially focused on First Year Experience (FYE), Tutoring, and Cross-Curricular (Learning Communities, etc.) programs and network coordinator updates. Recognizing the importance of working with campus colleagues, colleges were required to register a team of interested participants, including CIOs, Senate presidents, basic skills coordinators, basic skills faculty, and any faculty interested in these types of programs. Other BSI workshops for CTE and Noncredit were held simultaneously (an extension of the 2008 grant). All workshops were very successful and well attended (349 spring attendees). Most of the faculty participants were from English-related fields, with student support and learning support divisions well represented. The workshop evaluations showed a high level of satisfaction. Over 94% of those responding, agreed that the workshop approach was effective. Written feedback was very positive, and participants provided good suggestions for future workshops. The most frequent comment was that participants really appreciated the time to work together with their campus colleagues, and many planned to continue this collaboration when they returned to their home campuses. Most importantly, subsequent phone and email surveys of participants indicated that the majority were currently working on their workshop plan to implement a new program or expand an existing program. This is, by far, the most significant measure of the success of these Senate workshops.

Fall Regional Workshops included a Coordinator Workshop and four Teaching and Learning Workshops. There were 118 attendees at the Coordinator Workshop. The agenda provided opportunities to work with RP Group researchers on interpreting college success data and program assessment; time devoted to developing a rubric for assessing Action Plans; evaluation of BSI coordinator roles and effective models; updates on CB 21; discussion of creative solutions to the current fiscal crisis; evaluation of the level of buy-in on their campuses, using LACCD Vice Chancellor Gary Colombo’s *Basic Skills “Tune Up Kit”*; a presentation from Academic Senate on the importance of creating leadership within campuses.

There were over 600 attendees at the four Teaching and Learning Workshops that were focused on “Maintaining and Enhancing Student Success in Difficult Times: Effective, Sustainable and Low-Cost Classroom Practices” apropos to the budget challenges facing California Community Colleges. Building on the success of the college team approach, Basic Skills Coordinators were asked to recruit, register, and lead diverse college teams of 5-10 faculty members, including one full-time and one adjunct faculty member per department from any of the following areas: math, English, reading, ESL, CTE, Noncredit; a content area

faculty member; student and learning support faculty. The inclusion of faculty who had not attended previous BSI workshops was especially encouraged. Academic Senate President Jane Patton addressed the importance of maintaining and enhancing student success in these challenging times, and participants worked with RP Group researchers to design their own classroom assessments and interventions. Eight breakouts offered a variety of topics, including effective learning strategies for the classroom, integration of student support and instruction, CTE and contextualized instruction, and involvement of adjunct faculty in campus BSI efforts.

The Academic Senate sponsored BSI Regional Workshops have been a tremendous resource to community college faculty and administrators since their inception. By focusing on college teams in the Spring and Fall 2009 Regional Workshops, the Senate made these workshops even more effective by providing professional development to groups of faculty and administrators, who could then continue their collaboration on basic skills initiatives when they returned to their home campuses.

In addition, the Workshop Team is presently creating an Online Resource List (informally “Workshops-to-Go”) that will be posted to the BSI website in December 2009. The List will consist of approved, successful workshop presenters who agree to provide workshops or consultation linked to specific categories. These presenters provide a rich resource for colleges that would like more information about a specific practice or program. Colleges will be able to contact people with demonstrated knowledge and experience, who could help them develop new teaching strategies or programs for students with basic skills needs. In addition, colleges that are located far away from regional workshop sites and have difficulty attending workshops will now have access to create their own local workshops on their campuses.

The virtual resources on the BSI website continue to expand. The BSI Effective Practices database which has been revised and a process for peer review and posting is currently being updated. This powerful, searchable resource will provide data-informed effective strategies that colleges can personalize for their own use.

In addition to the highly effective regional workshops, the CB 21 recoding project and training webinars were conducted in conjunction with the Chancellor’s Office. Over 300 locations attended these informational sessions with multiple attendees at each location. Continued work on the CB 21 recoding, statewide curricular discussion and resulting ARCC Basic Skills supplemental data will provide useful metrics to substantiate the BSI work locally and statewide. Future projects will include Spring 2010 regional noncredit and credit meetings on the basic skills curriculum and CB21 rubric work as well as Noncredit discussions on accountability metrics. A paper addressing basic skills and equity will include two parts: a literature review and practices that promote equity in basic skills.

#### Conclusion:

Obviously the energy, creativity, and exemplary work done statewide has been dependent on collaborative and mutually respectful teamwork. There has been unprecedented professional development, supplemental resourcing, regulation changes and fundamental evidence of a cultural shift statewide. The CCCs now understand and have invested in basic skills and ESL with efforts that are unequalled by any previous system-wide efforts in California or in other states. The strength of the Basic Skills Initiative rests in the forethought of the strategic plan,

involvement of those with high level knowledge, respect and statewide authority. The system-wide impacts and the benefit to California's future as a result of this focused initiative are unparalleled. In order to continue this good work it is essential that the focus is not diverted from basic skills and that it include issues of adjunct faculty, noncredit and equity. Success in this project will depend upon a deeper statewide faculty-led training (and this necessitates increased numbers of faculty built upon the thousands currently trained), maintaining resourcing for basic skills and ESL, and wisely implementing the current necessary budget cuts. The Basic Skills Initiative cuts to the heart of our academic needs statewide in K-20; maintaining focus and effort is essential to California's future.



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