

Chapter 20



Where to go From Here: Building Maintenance and Expansion

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Chapter 20



Where to go From Here: Building Maintenance and Expansion

The key question for any college working to support basic skills students is how to maintain and expand the effort. As the strategies and effective practices documented in this handbook clearly demonstrate, wonderful work is being done throughout the state. But it is usually occurring in small pockets, reaching only a portion of basic skills students. How can we ensure that the programs, pedagogies and strategies listed in this handbook are available for the 70% -85% of our incoming students who have basic skills needs? What can your college do to expand the services it is already providing and institute new programs and strategies? This chapter attempts to provide some suggestions.

First, Take Your Own Temperature

Before thinking about how to expand the efforts at your college, it is important to see where you are in terms of working with Basic Skills students. In Chapter 3 of this handbook, you took an assessment quiz and placed yourself on one of two rubrics. After rolling up your sleeves and working with the handbook, have you changed? Take the assessment quiz again.

Self-Assessment Quiz

General Knowledge about California Community Colleges, Basic Skills Students and Yourself.

A note about answering these questions:

- **This is anonymous. Answer honestly; no one is looking.**
 - **This is self-assessment.**
- a. **For each question, please select the best answer.**
- a. Approximately what percent of California Community Colleges students assess into one or more basic skills course in reading, writing, ESL or math?
- a. 0%
 - b. 25%
 - c. 35%
 - d. 50%
 - e. Over 70%

- b. What percent of the students in your class probably require additional pre-collegiate training in order to be successful in college-level course work?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 20%
 - c. 40%
 - d. 60%
 - e. Over 70%
- c. The definition of basic skills is: Those foundation skills necessary for students to succeed in college-level work in
 - a. Reading
 - b. Writing
 - c. Math
 - d. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - e. Any of the disciplines above as well as learning and study skills
- d. How many students who start 3 or more levels below college level actually make it to a college level course?
 - a. Less than 10%
 - b. 15% - 30%
 - c. Approximately 40%
 - d. Over 60%
 - e. 80% or more
- e. What is the AVERAGE number of hours our CCC students work per week? (as reported by the CCCCCO)
 - a. 8 hours/week
 - b. 16 hours per week
 - c. 24 hours per week
 - d. 28 hours per week
 - e. 32 hours per week
- f. Which of the following is true of students with basic skills needs in California community colleges?
 - a. They generally assess uniformly low on placement tests in all areas; reading, writing, math, and ESL
 - b. They may assess low on placement tests in one discipline while testing at college-level in other areas (i.e. a college level writer but require additional work in math)
 - c. They are easily identifiable in our classes by sex, age or ethnicity.
 - d.** They usually have learning and study skills necessary to succeed in college-level work.
 - e. They are found only in the Community Colleges and are only rarely found at the UC and CSU campuses.
- g. Which of the following is true about student success in basic skills courses?
 - a. The success rate in basic skill classes is the same as other college class success rates.
 - b. Ethnic diversity has no effect on student success in basic skills.

- c. There are obvious and very different success patterns in basic skills courses based on ethnicity.
 - d. Students that take basic skills classes always do better in the college level classes.
 - e. The majority of basic skills students complete the entire basic skills class sequence.
- h. Latina/o students represent the fastest growing population of community college students (averaging 27% of CCC students statewide but up to 85% at some individual colleges). Approximately what percent of Latina/o students and parents were unable to name even ONE source of financial aid funding?
- a. 5% -15%
 - b. 15% -30%
 - c. 30% -45%
 - d. 45% -50%
 - e. 50% -65%

Self-assessment

- b. **Answer these questions realistically with regards to your present work.**
- c. **Select the answer that most closely represents your belief and practice.**

- i. In the courses I teach and/or in the work that I do with students (e.g. as a counselor, librarian, etc) I consider student learning styles
 - a. Irrelevant with no conclusive research.
 - b. Possibly significant, but I don't know much about them.
 - c. Valid, but the students should adapt learning styles to teaching styles.
 - d. Important, but I don't know how to incorporate them into my class or work with students.
 - e. Essential, I include students learning style analysis opportunities for students and I adapt my work in consideration of various learning styles.
- j. I inform students about expectations by:
 - a. Referring students to the student expectations in the catalog or student handbook.
 - b. Informally discussing my overall expectations with the students.
 - c. Providing clearly documented expectations specific to the situation (e.g. instructions, process handout, syllabus, or rubric).
 - d. Describing a wide range of expected student behaviors associated with academic achievement, intellectual and psychosocial development, and personal responsibilities.
 - e. All of the above
- k. Concerning the design of your course or the way you interact with students in student services, which is **most** true? (Select the single answer that best represents your practice.)
 1. I have worked hard to create the course organization or student interaction dynamics as it is now and I am satisfied with my work.
 2. I have worked on my interactions with students/course design and attempt to assess its effectiveness, but have been unable to incorporate assessments or any changes.
 3. I regularly reassess my interactions with students/course design, content, and strategies.

4. I regularly reassess my course content, design and teaching strategies then document and share those changes and the data that led me to make them with my colleagues.
5. I adopted my course design or student interaction style from a senior faculty member and it has served me well.

l. On a **regular basis**, in my work with students, I **require** them to

I. Work collaboratively or join a learning community II. Review and analyze their work III. Create projects or products involving multiple components of high level application IV. Turn in written work V. Examine complex problems or case studies	VI. Communicate with me via e-mail or office visit VII. Give oral presentations VIII. Participate in field trips or observations of current relevant applications IX. Attend at least one office hour X. Become involved in campus or community activities (service learning)
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- None of the above are required
 - One of the above is required
 - A few of the above are required
 - I require at least 5 of the above
 - I require all of the above in my work with students
- m. In my work with students I
- a. Do not have planned assessments.
 - b. Occasionally assess students.
 - c. Limit assessments to final summative assessments such as exams or final report.
 - d. Assess students frequently, including formative and summative assessment.
 - e. Assess students frequently in a variety of different ways (projects, labs, quizzes, case studies), taking into account various learning styles, and authentic to real world tasks that relate to my course material.
- n. The feedback I provide students is
- a. Oral only.
 - b. Written only.
 - c. Either oral or written depending on the situation.
 - d. Either oral or written feedback and within hours or a couple of days at most.
 - e. Some form of oral or written feedback as quickly as possible and based upon criteria or a rubric with diagnostic and specific information.
- o. I consult with colleagues on my work with students
- a. Very infrequently or Never
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. In department meetings
 - d. When accreditation or program review requires dialogue
 - e. On a regular and scheduled basis to improve practice
- p. I believe that student interactions and classroom instruction should
- a. Allow students the opportunity to express what they know.

- b. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning including potential cultural differences or perspectives.
 - c. Emulate real world experiences, not those unique to academic environments.
 - d. Consider first what the student needs to learn and be able to do, then second what information or content is essential.
 - e. All of the above.
- q. With regards to professional development dedicated to student success and basic skills
- a. I do not participate usually
 - b. There are very few options on our campus, but I would participate
 - c. I participate in some faculty development opportunities on my campus
 - d. I participate in faculty development opportunities in venues outside of my campus
 - e. I participate in faculty development opportunities on my campus and in other venues (such as statewide, national, online or other professional meetings).
- r. Which of the following would be most beneficial to increasing student success in your area of work?
- a. Principles of learning theory
 - b. Specific pedagogical and student service practices
 - c. Holistic student development
 - d. Culturally responsive teaching theory and practices
 - e. Curricular and program alignment strategies

Examining our Practices

(A matrix linking these self-assessment questions to the *Effective Practices in Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* and other seminal literature is found in the appendix)



The following exercises use a series of rubrics to stimulate self evaluation with regard to effective practices. There are three rubrics and you should complete the rubric or rubrics consistent with the type of student involvement you have.

Rubric 1: Student Services

The first rubric addresses student service interactions such as counseling, library, financial aid, student cluns and student government, etc.

Rubric 2: Instructional Services

The second rubric addresses instructional interactions in the classroom, tutoring lab, library, or counseling, etc.

Rubric 3: Administrative Services

The third rubric addresses administrative duties that direct and support our services and instruction to students. This rubric is in the experimental stages as we try to define the effective practices that enhance an build a foundation for meeting those basic skills needs addressed in the Basic Skills Initiative.

The rubrics below provide another opportunity for self-assessment of our practice based upon important principles of good undergraduate education and principles of good practice for student affairs. Both *The Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (1987)*¹ and *The Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs (1996)*² have been supported by research on teaching and learning over the last 50 years (a summary is available in the Appendix). These rubrics were developed to educate and diagnose areas of potential improvement. These rubrics are not evaluation tools or used to justify what you are doing, but rather to stimulate us all to keep learning by identifying a few key areas.

The first rubric addresses work in student services, the second rubric addresses instructional work. Some people will need to complete both rubrics to cover the expanse of their work. Please circle the boxes that truly represent your practice, then place a star in the boxes that represent ways you would like to change your practice.

Student Services Practitioner Self-Assessment Rubric

	Sage Practitioner	Engaged Practitioner	Mentor Practitioner
1. Core Function	I see the core function of my role to serve students.	I see my core function to serve and educate students.	I see my core function to serve and educate students, but also to focus on student learning outcomes.
2. Active Learning	I see my role in student services as providing necessary information and advice for a student to be successful.	I see my role in student services as providing information, advice, and leading the student to make a good decision.	I see my role in student services as providing learning opportunities so that the student can discover information, know when and where to seek advice, and think critically about decisions.
3. Values and Ethical Standards	I do not feel I should participate in ethics and value discussions; this is the purview of the dean of students.	B) I feel the ethics and values discussions are covered well in the student handbook and I address them if a student asks.	I emphasize that college is a learning community with values and ethics meaningful for all of life and I model these for students.
4. Expectations for Student Learning	I want students to be aware of campus learning expectations.	I regularly communicate the high expectations our campus has described in the student handbook or catalogue and mission statement.	I communicate and hold students to high learning expectations by checking in with them and discussing not only our college expectations, but also the student's own personal expectations.
5. Perception about Learning Styles	I have heard about learning styles, but am unclear how to incorporate them into my student interactions.	I understand that students learn differently and have various talents. I want to know more and have spoken with colleagues about strategies.	I understand that people learn in different ways and have various talents they use to succeed in college. I believe students need diverse opportunities to show what they have learned and should continue to grow in the way they learn.
6. Systematic Inquiry to Improve	I get evaluated regularly and know how well I do my job.	My work is indirectly assessed through the student satisfaction survey we do periodically.	I regularly assess my work, including student input, and then dialogue with colleagues about results in order to improve.
7. Student Interactions	When talking with students I listen carefully and answer their questions.	In addition to listening carefully and answering questions, I also refer students to the appropriate academic support services.	I listen carefully, answer questions, and refer students to academic support services, while helping students consider learning, academic, and personal goals.
8. Achieving the Institutional Mission and Outcomes	I am very concerned with students but I am not how larger institutional goals are reflected in my work.	I have read the institutional mission and found it interesting or helpful. I am concerned about helping students meet the institutional learning outcomes.	I try to translate policy, such as our institutional mission, into a reality in student lives. I stay current on research and effective practices in human development and learning theory to help my students meet learning outcomes.
9. Interaction with other Student Services and Instructional Faculty	I don't see the advantage of discussing my work with others.	I meet with colleagues occasionally to discuss my work activities and inform other departments about pertinent information.	I regularly share things I am learning and new strategies or learning research with colleagues. I make an effort to forge educational partnerships with colleagues across the campus.
10. Faculty Perception of Multicultural Students	I understand that many of my students are from diverse backgrounds with different ways of understanding the material.	I understand that I may need to alter my style to communicate effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds.	I have identified some of the different cultural backgrounds and perspectives among our students. I try to create an inclusive and appreciative learning environment with this in mind.
11. Building Community	I identify myself with the department in which I work.	I have created a few connections with people from other departments, when it has served the student's needs.	I cultivate supportive communities that connect faculty, students and student services colleagues.
12. Commitment to staff development	I occasionally attend professional development activities and conferences.	I attend professional development activities and conferences and bring information back to share with fellow faculty.	I present ideas and research at conferences and campus professional development activities.
13. Faculty commitment to staff development	I occasionally attend professional development activities and conferences.	I attend professional development activities and conferences and bring information back to share with fellow faculty.	I presents ideas and research at conferences and campus professional development activities.

This rubric was designed based upon the *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs (1996)* jointly created by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)³ with additional principles from the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* (AAHE, 1998)⁴. The *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* are available online with inventories relating to each practice at <http://www.acpa.nche.edu/pgp/principle.htm>.

Proceed on to the rubric for instructional faculty and tutors.

³ Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs National Association of Student Personnel Administrators

<http://www.naspa.org/resources/principles.cfm>

1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 418 · Washington DC, 20009

phone: (202) 265-7500 · fax: (202) 797-1157

⁴ AAHE American Association for Higher Education. (1998). *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*. American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum. <http://www.aahe.org/assessment/principl.htm>

Instructional Faculty Self-Assessment Rubric

	Sage Teacher	Engaged Teacher	Mentor Teacher
1. Faculty Perception about Learners	I have heard about learning styles, but am unclear how to incorporate them into my teaching.	I understand that students learn differently and have various talents. I want to know more and have spoken with colleagues about teaching strategies	I understand that people learn in different ways and have various talents they use to succeed in college. I believe students need diverse opportunities to show what they have learned and should continue to grow in the way they learn.
2. Course Design and Documented Student Expectations	I provide statements of course expectations in my syllabus and other course documents and review them the first week of class.	I provide statements of course expectations in my syllabus and other course documents and I attempt to clarify and make them attainable to the students.	I have communicated and documented high expectations for every student in my courses. I try to ensure that the students understand and can meet them.
3. Course Organization	I have worked very hard to get my courses organized and I am satisfied with the way they are.	I assess my own teaching, but have difficulty changing my course organization.	I constantly assess my own teaching and make frequent changes to my course organization to reflect student needs.
4. Faculty Feedback	I provide feedback to the students, but the demands of my course content prohibit in depth discussion.	I offer relevant and instructive feedback, but it is difficult to provide it and help students to make appropriate adjustments.	I provide concise, timely and instructive feedback that affords students opportunities to make appropriate adjustments.
5. Faculty Assessment Practices	I provide three or fewer assessments AND these assessments are of one variety (only exams, for example).	I provide three or fewer assessments OR these assessments are of one variety (only exams, for example).	I assess students frequently and in a variety of ways (projects, labs, quizzes, case studies, Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), exams, etc.).
6. Assessment Alignment	My assessments are not aligned with the course outcomes.	My assessments are aligned with the course outcomes, but results are not used to make adjustments to my teaching or course design.	I follow a clear cycle in the classroom of teaching, and assessing, then dialoguing about results with colleagues, to make adjustments to the course design and delivery.
7. Student Interactions Outside of Class	When talking with my students during office hours, I listen carefully and answer their questions about course subjects and materials.	In addition to listening carefully and answering questions about course subjects and materials, I also refer students to academic support services.	I listen carefully, answer course subject questions, and refer students to academic support services, as well as, consider learning needs, academic goals, and personal goals.
8. Faculty Interaction with other faculty	I don't see the advantage of discussing assessment techniques or results with colleagues. And I am too busy to examine outside learning research material.	I meet with colleagues occasionally to discuss classroom activities. I read learning research that is sent directly to me.	I regularly share assessment results and new teaching strategies with colleagues. I make an effort to stay current on new learning research.
9. Student Metacognition (Thinking about Learning)	I believe this is the responsibility of other departments (first-year experience courses, academic development, counseling, etc.).	My students take assessments to become aware of their learning.	I regularly challenge my student to think about their own learning and provide assessment and guidance to help them understand some of the new learning theories.
10. Faculty Perception of Multicultural Students	I understand that many of my students are from diverse backgrounds with different ways of understanding the material.	I understand that I may need to create new assignments or methods of teaching my course material in order to communicate effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds.	I have identified some of the different cultural backgrounds and perspectives in my classes and ask students to provide input on their diverse viewpoints. I try to use this information to improve my teaching material and strategies.
11. Linkage to the Institution	I am very concerned with my own students but I am not sure what resources are available and how to connect them with campus services, events, and activities.	I sometimes mention services, events or activities on campus that students might find interesting or helpful.	I actively send students to campus services, events and activities and/or create opportunities through class projects or activities.
12. Connection and Integration with Student Services	I can name the services available to help students at my college.	I know the student services available for students and often send them for help to specific services (tutoring, supplemental education, etc.).	I have regular communication with faculty and staff in student services and instruction. I see the important connection between instruction and student services and actively facilitate student use of available services.
13. Faculty commitment to staff development	I occasionally attend professional development activities and conferences.	I attend professional development activities and conferences and bring information back to share with fellow faculty	I present ideas and research at conferences and campus professional development activities

This rubric was designed based upon the *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* developed through “50 years of research on how teachers teach and students learn” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987 p.4)⁵ and on the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* (AAHE, 1998)⁶. Both can be found in the appendix in further detail.

Proceed on to the rubric for administrative services.

⁵ Chickering, A.W., & Gamson, Z.F. (1987, June). *Principles for good practice in undergraduate education* [Special insert to *The Wingspread Journal*, June 1987]. Racine, WI: Johnson Foundation <http://www.fctel.uncc.edu/pedagogy/enhancinglearning/SevenPrinciples.html>

⁶ AAHE American Association for Higher Education. (1998). *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*. American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum. <http://www.aahe.org/assessment/principl.htm>

Administrator's Self-Assessment Rubric

Sage Administrator		Engaged Administrator	Mentor Administrator
1. Basic Skills Initiative an Institutional Priority	I support my institution serving the underprepared student.	I can articulate the goals of the Basic Skills Initiative and I see my role in making the Basic Skills Initiative an institutional priority.	I work with colleagues, faculty, and staff to teach them about the Basic Skills Initiative and to incorporate serving underprepared students as an institutional priority.
2. Shared Philosophy of Basic Skills	I support the philosophy of basic skills.	I can articulate a basic skills philosophy and see my role in building a shared basic skills philosophy in the areas I supervise.	I work with colleagues to help them develop a shared philosophy for basic skills within my own institution and with colleagues across the state at their own institutions.
3. Basic Skills Program Organization	I understand the concept of centralized or highly coordinated basic skills programs.	I can envision and I advocate for a centralized or coordinated the Basic Skills Program at my college.	I am working with colleagues to develop and implement the structure and budgeting necessary for a highly coordinated Basic Skills Program.
4. Early Basic Skills Student Involvement	I recognize the value of early student involvement in basic skills.	I can identify early student involvement strategies that are effective for students with basic skills needs.	I work with faculty and staff colleagues to share and implement effective practices for early student involvement in basic skills.
5. Integration of Instruction and Student Services	I understand the value of integrating instruction and student services to better serve students with basic skills needs.	I work to identify and implement ways to integrate instruction and student services to better serve students with basic skills needs.	I work with faculty and staff colleagues to share effective practices and implement integrated instruction and student services strategies aimed at holistically serving underprepared students.
6. Faculty and Staff Supportive of Basic Skills	I recognize the importance of having faculty and staff who are supportive of the basic skills.	I work with others to ensure that we recruit and hire faculty and staff that are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about basic skills.	I work with colleagues to ensure effective practices in recruitment and to hire faculty and staff who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about serving the underprepared student.
7. Professional Development	I understand the importance of providing professional development for the basic skills initiative.	I work to ensure that on-going professional development regarding the needs of the basic skills student is provided and available.	I work with colleagues to utilize effective practices in professional development for faculty and staff in meeting the needs of the basic skills student.
8. Faculty and Staff Expectation Regarding Basic Skills	I am learning about the factors that influence basic skills student success and retention.	I can describe some strategies that foster success for all students in all aspects of their chosen academic goals.	I work with colleagues to ensure effective practices for managing faculty and staff expectations for the success of underprepared students.
9. Student Expectations Regarding Basic Skills Needs	I am aware that underprepared students need to understand what they need to be successful in college.	I work to create and implement solid programs that clearly define for underprepared students what they must do to be successful in college.	I work with colleagues to utilize effective practices for programs that clearly prepare underprepared students for success in college.
10. Information Dissemination	I know that there are basic skills efforts being undertaken.	I have collected and read the CCC system-wide information about basic skills initiatives.	I work with colleagues to disseminate information about statewide and national strategies and initiatives to help underprepared students succeed. I understand the importance of an integrated statewide initiative involving K-12, Career and Technical Education and transfer institutions to improve the success of underprepared students.

A word about the rubric titles:

As higher education faculty, we have been trained as content experts. Sage teachers deeply embrace this fact, understanding and contributing to their field and believing that this is essential to all disciplines. **Sage faculty and practitioners** are skilled in their area of expertise, generally focusing on content and organizing their course and student interactions around that material. Though probably interested in active learning, they feel so rushed to cover the content in their courses and don't know how to incorporate the techniques, leaving them like a building plan sitting on the shelf that they will never find the time to construct. Most of us have been overly concerned about delivering content which may or may not be adequately absorbed and digested by our students. Just walk into almost any class the week before finals as we attempt to cover everything left!

Engaged faculty and practitioners are those faculty who incorporate active learning with their content delivery. A good metaphor for their teaching is like a television building show, demonstrating measurements, ways to approach a project and explaining about the best quality materials. Obviously, this will impact the amount of content covered. A teacher can only “show” so many how-to projects, but viewers may be more likely to reproduce them on their own.

Finally, the **Mentor faculty and practitioners** represent faculty who coach other faculty in research validated good practices. This includes handing over the building plan and materials so new faculty can learn and contribute. In the classroom and student services, mentors have passed on the architectural drawings, demonstrated important things, but the lesson is not over until the faculty member or student service practitioner can see what the student is actually able to do.

All three of these types of faculty or practitioners are good at what they do but have different strengths and values. It's important to know where you are now, as you set off to learn about what methods and approaches are most effective for basic skills students and where you might grow. No matter whether you're a sage, engaged or mentor faculty member or practitioner, this handbook is full of strategies that will help you to do this work.



Handbook Goals

Now that you've taken these two assessments, take a few minutes to think about your goals for using this workbook. What are your strengths in working with basic skills students? How would you like to grow? Jot down any of your thoughts here concerning things you would like to work on or examine more carefully in the coming chapters, the appendix and resource pages. Self evaluation is only useful if you consider how you will respond and act on your analysis. You will be asked to respond to many things in this handbook.

Did you see any difference in your answers and your thoughts about your role on campus? Note any changes in the box below.

As a next step, take a look at the goals for using this handbook that you noted in Chapter 3. Were they met? Have they changed? Note any differences in the box below.

Exploring College Goals

- ❖ We hope that you've found a strategy, program or approach to working with Basic Skills students that you would like to bring back to your college. Use the form below to explore how you might do that in more detail. This may be more effective if you can work with a team from your school.

First, describe the strategy in the box below.

Strategy:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing a strategy. The box is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page.

Next, brainstorm how it might work on your campus by answering the questions in the form below:

What strategy or strategies do you see most needed at your college based upon your ARCC and Student Equity data?

Strategy

Selected: _____

1. What resources (human, facilities, funds, etc.) will you need to carry out and sustain the strategy over time?	
2. How many students would this strategy need to serve in order to meet the Basic Skills needs of your college? How will you make this happen?	
3. What types of staff development will you need?	
4. How will you assess the effectiveness of the strategy?	

Second Potential **Strategy Selected**: _____

1. What resources (human, facilities, funds, etc.) will you need to carry out and sustain the strategy over time?	
2. How many students would this strategy need to serve in order to meet the Basic Skills needs of your college? How will you make this happen?	
3. What types of staff development will you need?	
4. How will you assess the effectiveness of the strategy?	

Finally, explore how you might work with entire campus to make this strategy come alive at your school.

Outcome: Incorporate buy in at the college, integration into student equity and action plan, sensitivity to Socioeconomic Status and Culture, and integration of student support services and instruction.

Selected Strategy:

Question	Plans	Estimated cost or resources to do this
1. How will you recruit Basic Skills champions you're your strategies at all levels (administrators, faculty, staff, students) on your campus?		
2. How will this strategy create systemic change on your campus and allow you to supplement rather than supplant your existing efforts?		
3. How will you integrate student services and instruction when you implement this strategy?		

Question	Plans	Estimated cost or resources to do this
4. How will this strategy result in a positive cultural shift on your campus?		
5. How does this strategy advance your current Basic Skills Action Plan?		
6. How does this strategy advance your student equity plan goals and potentially improve your ARCC outcomes?		
7. What other data do you need, or questions should you ask, to implement the strategy and to assess its effectiveness?		
8. What else would you need to consider to successfully implement your strategy? And/or What are your next steps?		

Professional Development

Before exploring your next steps to bring this strategy to your campus, consider using Staff Development as a vehicle. *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* identifies comprehensive staff development as one of four essential strands to strengthen basic skills. However, the review also notes that the evidence for the effectiveness of professional development both in terms of professional learning and subsequent effect on student learning is thin. This may be because professional development has an uneven history in community colleges. For almost a decade, the California state legislature allocated millions of dollars annually to the colleges for professional development programs as a result of AB 1725 (1988), but those funds were cut during the difficult budget times of the late 1990s. The rationale for the cuts included a lack of evidence that professional development programs made any difference for student progress and success at the colleges. Professional development funds were most often used for a wide range of one-time workshops, speakers or conferences that may or may not be directly related to the educational work of the institution.

In attempting to establish a connection between professional development and student learning, it's necessary to look beyond higher education research to the K-12 literature, which has a growing pool of studies that demonstrate that a *particular approach* to professional development (as opposed to professional development in general) is directly connected to improvements in student learning over time. When professional development is **ongoing, is directly linked to the curriculum and instruction, and is undertaken collaboratively and collegially**, it makes a difference. In other words, when professional development is integrated in to the educational work of the institution, and is defined as part of the professional responsibility of teachers, professional learning is connected to student learning and, ultimately, to student success.

Here are some types of professional development currently being used to expand faculty learning on working with basic skills students. All of them are faculty directed collaborative experiences that may expand your view of what professional development at the community colleges can be.

Evidence Process activities: The Evidence Process⁷ engages faculty from a range of disciplines teaching to collaborate in assessing student work using protocols developed to allow for a thorough and systematic examination of a piece of student work. The protocols were developed by Interdisciplinary experts and are based on an empirical understanding of the cognitive and social dimensions of interdisciplinary work; the protocols also serve as practical tools to guide quality interdisciplinary learning. The student work examined comes from students engaged in learning communities, where faculty researchers can study the development of interdisciplinary understanding. Faculty members engage in collaborative discussions about authentic assessments of student learning. Cerritos College uses the Evidence Process to support faculty development with faculty teaching in learning communities, many of whom teach basic skills classes. Faculty members report the process to be very intellectually engaging and beneficial in helping them to develop integrated assignments supporting deep, interdisciplinary learning. The revised assignments often reflect an enhanced understanding of the holistic nature of learners and the inseparability of learning and identity.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning/Faculty Inquiry Group collaborations: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) refers to the deliberate and systematic “process of studying and researching

student learning, opening this work to critical review, and then sharing ideas”⁸ learned through this form of inquiry with a broader professional community. The focus on assessment central to SoTL helps faculty appreciate assessment as part of a thoughtful inquiry into student learning. “A community of practice is created for faculty who wish to explore teaching and learning and study their craft in a collaborative environment of supportive colleagues.”⁹ Often these professional communities include a broad cross section of faculty, both from instruction and support services. Community college faculty members, while committed to teaching, have little time for “the reflective practice and scholarly research that sustains and energizes teaching and learning. Rarely do these faculty members have the opportunity to benefit from peer review which can often seem burdensome instead of beneficial.”¹⁰ By engaging in a collaborative SoTL environment, however, a supportive community of practice is built.

At Pasadena City College a faculty inquiry project, “How Jay got his Groove Back and made Math Meaningful,” engaged a team of faculty researchers studying teaching and learning of pre-algebra students. Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments were modified to better reflect meaningful Student learning outcomes for the course. Findings from the project included: a more student-centered classroom; a shift in focus from teacher to learner; more discussion about teaching and learning among math faculty; and an increase in retention and success rates.

Collaborative Lesson Study: Lesson study¹¹ is a process in which a small group of teachers collaboratively plans, teaches, observes, revises and reports results on a single class lesson. The teachers are often from the same discipline, but interdisciplinary groups, including counselors, can provide a variety of insightful perspectives. A "lesson" is a teaching and learning episode that usually takes place in a single class period. A lesson is carefully planned to address one or more student learning goals. The lesson plan describes not only what the teacher might say or do, but also how students are likely to respond to the lesson activities. As an object of study, a lesson offers a manageable "unit of analysis," one that reveals the richness and complexity of actual classroom practice. There are four major purposes that motivate lesson study: 1) To better understand how students learn what you teach; 2) To create usable products for other teachers in your field; 3) To improve teaching through systematic, collaborative inquiry; and 4) To build a pedagogical knowledge base in which teachers can benefit from one another's knowledge of teaching. Teachers work through the following steps:

- Form a Team – Three to six faculty with similar teaching interests are identified.
- Develop Student Learning Goals - Team members discuss what they would like students to learn as a result of the lesson.
- Plan the Research Lesson -- Teachers design a lesson to achieve the learning goals, anticipating how students will respond.
- Gather Evidence of Student Learning -- One team member teaches the lesson while others observe, collecting evidence of student learning.
- Analyze Evidence of Learning -- The team discusses the results and assesses progress made toward learning goals.
- Repeat the Process - The group revises the lesson, repeating steps 2-5 as necessary, and

⁷ see Project Zero: Evidence Process , <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/Evidence.htm>

⁸ **Carnegie Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)** at Northern Essex Community College, 2008. Office of Faculty and Staff Development, Northern Essex Community College. <http://cit.necc.mass.edu/ofsd/sotl.shtml> April 10, 2008.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Catherine Lewis, *Lesson Study: A Handbook Teacher-Led Instructional Change*, 2002)

shares findings.

Los Medanos math faculty engaged in a Lesson Study for its Elementary Algebra course and identified very concrete instructional changes to improve student learning outcomes in communications, problem solving, and multiple representations. Faculty also developed an action plan to implement improvements and continued assessments.

Identifying and Assessing Institutional SLOs: Staff from across the institution, including both instructional and counseling faculty, administration and support staff collaborate in identifying intended Institutional Learning Outcomes: the skills, knowledge and understandings that students should have attained from attending their institution. Institutional learning outcomes are overarching, cumulative and relatively few in nature. For some colleges, assessment of these outcomes engages the campus community in first identifying evidence of student learning outcomes within “capstone” courses and from relevant service and activity areas. At others, evidence is taken from any course where the outcome can be demonstrated by an embedded course assignment. Faculty members, both instructional and counseling, collaborate together in assessing and interpreting evidence of student learning. Although there is not hard evidence, it has been observed that, through this collaboration, faculty gain a more integrated comprehensive sense of what students have learned and become as a result of attending their institution. As faculty collaborate they gain a greater understanding of and value for a diversity of instructional and student development perspectives. This, in turn, informs their practice, be it teaching or counseling; the educational enterprise becomes more attentive to holistic outcomes.

The College of San Mateo has implemented Institution level student learning outcomes across campus in the areas of effective communication, quantitative skills, critical thinking, social awareness and diversity, and ethical responsibility. Faculty from both instruction and student support services are mapping their courses and services to these outcomes and assessing the Institutional level learning outcomes in their respective courses and services. For more information, see http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/SLOAC/sl_sloac.htm.

Would any of the above activities be an appropriate way to explore the strategy of working with basic skills students that you want to bring to your campus? Use the box below to brainstorm how any of these forms of professional development might work for you.

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to brainstorm ideas for professional development activities.

Role of the Academic Senate

The Senate paper, *The State of Basic Skills Instruction in California Community Colleges (April 2000)*, describes the role that local Senates should play in improving the success of basic skills students. The Senate can be a powerful ally in any work you would like to do with basic skills.

The paper recommends that:

- ❖ Local senates should lead their faculty and administration to view basic skills instruction as central to the community college mission.
- ❖ Local senates should study the basic skills programs in their colleges and support basic skills instructors and program leaders by:
 - a. Recognizing basic skills students' particular needs for programs that include a personalized approach and supporting smaller class sizes;
 - b. Urging administration to provide adequate ongoing funding for basic skills programs;
 - c. Working with counseling faculty and matriculation officers to ensure that all assessment of incoming students includes consideration of valid multiple measures and effective counseling and advising;
 - d. Reviewing course content to assure that it is aligned with results of placement information;
 - e. Supporting the hiring of faculty who are not only discipline experts but who are also committed to basic skills learners;
 - f. Acknowledging the importance of quality reading instruction to all areas of the curriculum and supporting the allocation of optimum conditions for reading instruction, including adequate classroom space and equipment to provide an environment conducive to learning;
 - g. Advocating for specific research geared toward identifying methods to help basic skills students to receive appropriate placement, and to increase their retention and success rates; and
 - h. Providing faculty development opportunities to inform all faculty about needs and methods of instruction best suited to basic skills students.
- ❖ Local senates should lead the college to take a more global approach to the instruction of basic skills students so that faculty from all areas participate in an Across-the-Curriculum approach to basic skills learners. Successful approaches involve student services faculty as well as faculty from all disciplines, teaching both general as well as vocational education. As with successful transfer efforts, serving basic skills students needs to be an institutional commitment.

In the ASCCC paper, *Issues in Basic Skills Assessment and Placement in the California Community Colleges* (2004), the additional recommendations were made with regard to assessing student in basic skills

6. Resources: Adequate resources must be provided to colleges to perform validation of assessment tests and prerequisites. In addition to funding for research staff, this includes support for the process of test validation and establishment of cut scores.
7. Writing Assessment: Appropriate assessment of writing ability needs to be implemented because one of the requirements for college-level study is the ability to communicate effectively in writing. Adequate resources need to be provided to permit such assessment.

8. **Technical Assistance:** The Academic Senate and the Chancellor’s Office should provide technical assistance to colleges whose assessment processes are inadequate according to their own reporting.
9. **Orientation:** High school students who complete language and mathematics requirements for graduation often find themselves placed in pre-college-level work after undergoing assessment at a community college. Colleges can do little to affect the preparation received in high schools. However, they can work to encourage entering students to address their English and mathematics needs right from the start. Orientation should address the importance of basic skills, ESL, and mathematics preparation.
10. **Counseling:** Adequate counseling resources need to be provided to further encourage under-prepared students to enroll in coursework that will ultimately lead to their success in college-level work.
11. **Common Definitions:** A clear understanding of “college-level” work needs to be shared among all segments of higher education. The Academic Senate should work with its higher education partners in clarifying what constitutes “college-level” and “pre-collegiate” work and expectations for students entering higher education.
12. **Availability of Data:** Current MIS data collection concerning assessment and matriculation fails to provide important information for the review of the success of basic skills programs. The Academic Senate should work with the Chancellor’s Office to identify additional types of data that need to be collected with regards to basic skills programs and student success in these programs.
13. **Placement Assessment Coordination:** Urban area colleges in close proximity to one another may consider opening discussions on how to discourage such placement/assessment strategies as “college shopping” and “assessment shopping.”

Has your college implemented any of these recommendations? What role might your local Senate play in helping you to implement the strategy that you would like to use for increasing basic skills students’ success? Use the box below to jot down your thoughts.

Don't forget that in developing your strategies you have many resources designed especially for California Community Colleges.

The Literature Review: *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (sometimes referred to as the "Poppy Copy" because of the color of its cover) builds on the work in Basic Skills Initiative Phase I that provided research of effective practices in developmental education. The first of its kind, this research provided a comprehensive report on effective practices in the United States. Over 1,600 administrators, faculty, and staff participated in training about this research last year under Phase II of the Initiative. We highly suggest you become familiar with this document. You can download a copy at:

http://www.cccbsi.org/Websites/basicskills/Images/Lit_Review_Student_Success.pdf.

A follow-up to the literature review is currently under development. This version will focus on equity/diversity strategies (in general and, specifically, for African-American and Latina/Latino students), high school to community college transition, and noncredit to credit basic skills courses.

Summary Brochure: In an effort to provide a quick summary of the comprehensive review conducted in Phase I of this Initiative, the project developed a brochure. The brochure represents a synthesis of the findings in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in the California Community Colleges*, which was circulated statewide. This brochure is very useful in providing detailed information in a brief format. You can download a copy to share with media, local legislators, or campus groups from our website at: http://www.cccbsi.org/Websites/basicskills/Images/BasicSkills_booklet-2.pdf

The Regular BSI Newsletter: As mentioned above, the third phase is an aggressive project to improve basic skills instruction on California Community Colleges. The newsletter about the progress of the *Basic Skills Initiative: Student Success Continuum* provides you with a brief summary of the Initiative. You can download a copy to distribute to the media or other constituents from our website at: <http://www.cccbsi.org/Websites/basicskills/Images/BSI-Newsletter.pdf>

Remember that we are assembling a database of Local Effective Strategies and Programs. You can submit your great ideas through the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=WHXjFzLZpIh3JVm0zMUBKw_3d_3d



And you will be able to search these innovative and effective strategies at <http://www.cccbsi.org>

We believe that many California community colleges have practices that are effective in improving the ability of basic skills students to succeed. We highly suggest that you begin to seek out programs on your own campus to highlight. We have found that the connection of legislators to their own community is very effective in advocating the need for more funding. In an effort to help you find these local programs, we plan to communicate with your administrators, faculty, and staff asking them to share with you these effective practices. It is our hope that as they feed you this information, you will share their good work with the local media and legislators in your area. The next pages include some talking points for local, statewide and federal legislators.

Talking Points about the Basic Skills Initiative

From the California Community College Chancellor's Office

Student Success -- Basic Skills Initiative Messages (Legislation)

- The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative recently signed by Governor Schwarzenegger as part of AB 194 redirects \$33.1 million in the state's community college budget to ESL and Basic Skills improvement. In addition to significant professional development, colleges are examining ways to fund increased student success through incorporation of tutors, new instructional materials and software and, various effective practices and curriculum improvements in the areas of ESL and Basic Skills.

- \$1.6 million, provided through AB 194, was distributed as a grant from the System Office dedicated to critical faculty and staff development to improve curriculum, instruction, student services and program practices in the areas of ELS and basic skills.

Student Success -- Basic Skills Initiative Messages (General)

- The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative goal is to increase student success rates among academically under-prepared community college students in the areas of **mathematics, reading, writing and ESL**.

- Basic skills education programs provide the foundation for success in academic pursuits and career technical education that will enable the community colleges to contribute significantly to California's economic health.

- Basic skills education is the first step on the track in academic achievements in community college, preparation for career technical education and success in the workforce, and transfer to four-year institutions.

- The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative addresses the ever-increasing population of students who need assistance in basic skills education to succeed in college and the work place.

Basic Skills Initiative Messages (Funding)

- Well-funded Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative efforts are critical to assist those underprepared for college-level work, the majority of incoming students, in achieving success in college course work.

- With the dramatic increase of underprepared students in our colleges, an ongoing investment in basic skills programs and continued professional development is needed to help students succeed academically and professionally.

Basic Skills Initiative Messages (Program)

- Through the professional development grant, continued statewide training and support are provided to address the professional needs of community college administrators, faculty, and staff in the effective practices that will serve incoming students, the majority of whom need one/more courses in ESL or Basic Skills.

- Through the professional development grant a collaborative effort among all 109 community colleges was initiated in this state to share effective practices, exchange teaching strategies, and utilize a self-assessment tool – a critical first-step for colleges to examine their ESL and Basic Skills instructional programs.

Economy/Workforce Messages

- With demand on the rise for an educated workforce in California, basic skills education provides the opportunity to dramatically increase workforce preparedness and availability. The demand also is for higher levels of knowledge and skills than in the past while simultaneously the levels of incoming students has dropped.
- More than ever, California community colleges are seeing dramatic increases in under-prepared students in basic skills. In a time when the state’s economic engine is in desperate need for an educated and well-prepared workforce, it is vital to focus our efforts on basic skills that lead to success in career technical education and success in the workplace.

***Additional Checklists for legislative contacts and sample letter for newspapers provided by the CCC Chancellor’s Office are in the Appendix.

Next Steps



Well, surely you knew that this question was coming. What are the concrete steps you need to take to bring this strategy to your college? Use this page to make a list. And continue learning. The last pages contain resources with proven strategies. Remember, if we do not wisely change the course of Basic Skills in California, we will not be serving our students and the health of California. Its economy and its global leadership will markedly decline.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Resources for your further study.

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1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 418 · Washington DC, 20009
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Chapter 20 Appendix

Where to go from here: Building Maintenance and Expansion



Appendix 1: Communications Packet for the Basic Skills Initiative

Appendix 1

Communications Packet for the Basic Skills Initiative

The following information is available through the California Community College Chancellor's Office as a Communications Packet for the Basic Skills Initiative

The Do's and Don'ts of Advocacy

- Take one issue at a time and don't mix issues. Narrowly focus when possible, on one or two of the most important issues at a time. Avoid "laundry lists" and mixed messages. **Be selective, set specific objectives and keep it simple.**
- Think long term. Effective advocacy is not limited to one meeting. Long-term credibility and rapport takes time and patience.
- Do your homework. Be fully prepared. Have a clear idea of long and short-term effects of Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative from the legislator's point of view -- particularly if politically risky.
- Know and understand the process. Officials are busy with a variety of demands. Learn the decision-making process and the pressure points of the system. Use that pressure sparingly when you really need it.
- Plan and coordinate the action. Continuity is vital. Advocacy is a long-term commitment. Key reminders:
 - Present the case clearly, concisely, and to the point.
 - Bring in credible third-party spokespersons, whenever possible.
 - Bring in technical expertise when needed, but don't cover the same ground repeatedly.
- Avoid classifying or pigeonholing legislators. Don't assume anything about them or their staff. Legislators often have split ideologies, conservative on some issues and liberal on others.
- Don't take support for granted. Those who support community colleges on one issue may not support it on another – especially during a major state deficit year where so many special interests are competing for the same slice of the pie.
- Don't be a pest. Make contacts count. Meetings should have a real purpose and should be held to the minimum needed to get the job done. Your issue is almost never the most important thing on their mind.
- Get to know key support staff. The staff knows the details of key issues in much greater depth, and that's how you get in the door. Legislators often take their leads from their staffs, and certainly, staff members set up the appointments.
- Develop a key contact program. Credible third parties can present your position effectively via mail, e-mail, or telephone. This method can be overused, but it can also be extremely effective if the third parties already have rapport with a legislator.

- Don't always have your hand out. Keep in touch even when you don't need help. Officials are looking for opportunities to enhance positive public exposure.
- Be aware of political realities. Be aware of local political machinations. Legislators and their staff are often politically ambitious. Within the limits of the law, staff should be alert to opportunities to be of help.
- Track and evaluate advocacy efforts. Adjust as needed.

Capitol Office/District Office Meetings

Every special interest group attempts to schedule meetings for Sacramento legislative conferences or Capitol/District office meetings with individual legislators. If you get a one-on-one visit with your representative, you must make the most of it. Here are a few guidelines:

- Call the scheduling secretary for an appointment. This is the gatekeeper, who usually fills out a daily calendar in fifteen minute intervals.
- Send a constituent or two. You enhance your chances if you arrange an appointment with your own elected representative.
- Know your legislator's background on your particular issue, as well as his actual role on at the Capitol, committee involvement, areas of expertise and interest.
- Plan and organize talking points for each meeting attendee before you get to the meeting. Be direct, clear, and brief.
- Always leave something tangible with the legislator: a business card, a list of supporters, an information kit, or a fact sheet.
- Always follow up with a brief thank you note. Once again mention your bill number or agenda.
- Make sure you can fit your message into about five minutes, in case the legislator has an agenda of his or her own.
- Stay focused on your issues. Try to re-direct the conversation if it sways off course. During early capitol visits, in March, legislators tend to be non-committal, especially about budget issues, since budget decisions will not occur until summer. That is why it is important to get your voice heard early.
- District office meetings with local legislators are a good chance to get to know your representative. Be sure to ask the scheduling secretary if the lawmaker would like you to send an information packet in advance or to wait for the meeting.
- You should have one key staff contact at your legislator's district or capitol office. That way, the legislator can develop a rapport. If you get a favorable news article or picture, send a copy. If a special event is going to take place, invite the legislator and the staffer.

A Checklist for Legislative Meetings

Make sure your local college representative is armed with the following information:

- What is the problem? (if there is one)
- How can your goal be met?
- Who opposes or supports these programs and, why?
- How does the political climate affect program funding? What is the likely response by other special interests?
- How much will this cost California? Where will the money come from?
- Who would benefit from these programs?

Media Relations

Media Relations - General

You cannot expect newspapers and broadcast stations to understand issues related to Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative. It is up to you to educate the reporters, by providing useful information.

- Find a newsworthy angle.
- Provide all the facts and background with your key messages
- Don't forget success stories. They are powerful image- building tools.

Most organizations want their stories covered in the major daily newspapers or on television or network radio, but those outlets generally cater to large, general audiences. Your story may have a better chance in a smaller community-sized outlet. You often get more coverage with many small stories scattered in dozens of local papers in lieu of targeting five major dailies like the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*. In fact, legislators are heavily influenced by local community papers in the districts they represent. They are lower hanging fruit in terms of media hits and are encouraged as a key target in this effort.

Contacting the Media

Through the news media and direct contact with legislators, you can ensure that the voice of CCCSO and local colleges will be heard and understood by key decision makers. This is where the importance of your key messages will be seen.

Guide to Dealing With the Media

"We should always tell the press, freely and frankly, anything they could find out in some other way."--Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn, BBC2 TV, "Yes", Prime Minister, Jan. 9, 1986.

The media is an important component to a public policy education program, since it is a powerful tool of persuasion and influence. This influence could be particularly helpful in obtaining support for ongoing Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative funding. Letters to the editor, an op-ed, or an endorsement written by the paper's editorial team, that appear in the hometown papers of key decision-makers, speak volumes.

One of the most effective ways to influence public perception of an issue is to gain favorable editorial coverage in targeted statewide newspapers. The local colleges need to identify and target publications in key legislative districts, develop regionalized information kits for these publications and work to schedule editorial board meetings with each targeted newspaper.

For this plan, a small-scale media effort will be designed by piggybacking off of the information developed for the legislative efforts. At minimum, an information kit would be available if a reporter calls or attends a committee hearing to cover Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative issues at the Capitol. Moreover, these materials will assist local colleges in developing relationships with local reporters to encourage feature stories or help ensure you are used as expert sources.

It is said that all politics are local, which makes the media an excellent and powerful vehicle to communicate your key messages. Although a large media outreach program might prove too expensive, you can implement letters to the editor, opinion editorials, and meetings with editorial boards to reach some of the more "difficult" legislators and decision-makers.

Create a Media Contact List

Identify local media outlets: Daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, magazines and journals.

- Identify key reporters at these news outlets.
- For newspapers call city and metro desks or track bylines on stories similar to the ones you want.
- For broadcast outlets, correspondence addressed to Radio News Director or Television Station Assignment Editor is sufficient.
- Since turnover is high, consider generic labels, such as Features Editor.

Decide what coverage you need: a listing in "Community Calendar" for an upcoming event or a more sophisticated editorial about an impending issue.

Attached is an initial media database that includes media within our 47 targeted community college areas (See Attachment).

Media Writing

Once upon a time, typos and copy reading flaws were caught by editors, but no more. Now, editors will just circular-file your press release. These same guidelines apply to letter writing and fact sheets as well.

The following are some tips for usable press releases:

- How you write is how your organization will be perceived.
- Remember, "A picture is worth a thousand words", especially in a small-town newspaper. Slick magazines and larger, metropolitan newspapers will send their own photographer if your story is newsworthy.
- Always start the first paragraph with a hook.
- Use the "Inverted Pyramid Style" with all important information in the early paragraphs, including: who, what, where, why, when, and how.

- Omit clutter and highly technical words. Use journalese rather than literary language.
- Use the 4-S formula for releases: Short, Simple, Strong, and Specific.
- Accuracy is critical. Research when necessary.
- Re-check names, addresses, telephone numbers, and spelling.

Hints for Your Press Release

- Get acquainted with the reporter or news editor assigned to your field.
- Never insist it be used. Let your story stand on its own merit.
- If a release isn't used it is still valuable to keep them informed on the issue and continue the “drumbeat” on this issue.
- When an interesting story breaks, notify the media immediately.
- Observe newspaper deadlines. Unless it is critical, never call a newspaper office before noon.
- Give papers something besides announcements. Success stories on BSI may work here.
- If you can relate your release to current events, it has a better chance of getting into the paper.
- Be brief and don't editorialize. Just tell the facts, not opinions unless they're quotes or Op Eds.
- Avoid complex words like finalize and implement.
- Newspaper writing is crisp and businesslike. Newsletters are more chatty and informal.
- Include a fact sheet whenever possible.
- Remember, your local colleges are your best resource.
- Think of photo ideas whenever possible. Try to never include more than three people in a picture.
- Quote third-parties whenever possible.

Editorial Board Meetings

Editorial board visits are a media relations must on this issue. Targeted college representatives should look to schedule meetings with their local editorial board. If a meeting is scheduled look to bring in local/credible coalition members to add to your credibility. In addition, bring in a media kit as a leave behind for editorial writers to review.

The following are the necessary steps in editorial board outreach:

- Identify and develop a database to contact your local papers editorial board
- Send them a media kit with a cover letter requesting an in-person or conference call meeting.
- A few days after the media kit is sent, follow up with a call to schedule a meeting/call with their editorial board staff.
- If a meeting is accepted, prepare for the following:
 - Bring in a few coalition members, to showcase your support and broad/diverse reach
 - An opening statement on the purpose of the meeting
 - Collateral materials, i.e. media kit as a leave behind
 - Prepare for Q&A discussion to follow on the merits of Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative
 - Convey not only BSI messages, but also your college influence in the community

- Prepare for about a 30-minute to an hour meeting

Opinion Editorials

Aside from paid ads, drafting and placing opinion editorials in targeted local papers is one of few ways to convey all your key messages on Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative, unfiltered. In our sample section below, we have included a general opinion editorial piece that can be used as a template for local targeted colleges to tailor and submit to their local paper on this issue. If placement occurs, CCCSO staff should be notified and sent a copy so the op-ed can be leveraged in Sacramento.

In addition, contact information on who should receive the op-ed to is included in our media database.

Letters to the Editor

Similar to opinion editorials, letters to the editor represent another way to convey your messages to key audiences, unfiltered. Letters can be submitted for both proactive and reactive efforts. For this program, we have included a sample letter to the editor that can be locally tailored by targeted colleges and submitted to their local publication.

Contact information on who to submit the letter to the editor is including in our media database.

Samples

The following section includes sample materials to be used as templates, they include:

- Sample Opinion Editorial
- Sample Letter to the Editor
- Sample Legislator Letter
- Sample Endorsement/Sign Up Form
- Sample “Success Story” Pitch Letter to Media

SAMPLE OP-ED (400-Word Maximum)

**Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative Gives Critical Boost
To Help Students Succeed in College**

**By <Name>, <Title>
<College or District Name>**

Increasingly, students enrolling at <college or district name> need to increase performance levels in ESL and basic skills as the first important step to success in career technical education and academic programs leading to transfer.

Governor Schwarzenegger as part of Assembly Bill 194 redirected funds to support Student Success for Basic Skills students. In 2007-08 more than \$30 million was allocated to the community colleges to fund program improvements that may include additional faculty and counselors, tutorial assistance, new software and various instructional strategies.

Efforts being made at the colleges must be sustained and supported strongly both here and throughout the state to help ensure that academically under-prepared community college students reach performance levels in mathematics, reading, writing and ESL required to succeed in college-level work.

Lacking the essential performance levels in ESL and basic skills, many students ultimately may abandon their educational pursuits. In doing, so they will fall short of the lifetime benefits that come with higher education and job preparation, both personally and professionally. California cannot afford to let this happen.

All 109 community colleges in this state, including <college or district name> are engaged in making improvements in how they serve ESL and basic skills students. They are sharing best practices and exchanging teaching strategies to make sure that innovative ideas that work well at one college are available to all in achieving a common goal of improving outcomes for students who need to improve performance in ESL and basic skills. All colleges have utilized a self-assessment tool that helped them evaluate their programs in ESL and basic skills. Subsequent to utilization of this tool, all colleges developed both long term and short term action and expenditure plans, describing the activities they will implement.

There is a strong economic incentive to support the work being done in ESL and basic skills. With demand on the rise for an educated workforce in California, basic skills education provides the opportunity to dramatically increase career preparedness. At a time when the state's economic

engine desperately needs a well-prepared workforce, it is vital to focus our efforts on preparing students through ESL and basic skills in a way that leads them to career technical education program success.

Our state elected leaders need strong affirmation from civic, business, and education leaders that the Student Success: Basic Skills Students Initiative a real difference in the lives of individual students and the community at large.

SAMPLE PROACTIVE LETTER TO THE EDITOR
(Maximum 100-150 words)

Letters to the Editor
<Newspaper Name>
<address>

To the Editor:

When our elected leaders enacted and initially funded the Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative, California took an assertive step forward to open doors for deserving community college students who needed to increase performance levels in, mathematics, reading, writing and ESL to succeed in achieving their educational objectives.

<College or District name>, in a consortium of all 109 California community colleges, is bringing life to this initiative, which provides more than \$30 million for making improvements in ESL and basic skills that include additional faculty and counselors, tutorial assistance, new software and other materials and various instructional strategies. Focus is placed on on-going evaluation of student progress to ensure attainment of learning outcomes.

We must encourage our legislators and the Governor to sustain support for this initiative, which holds real promise in helping students enter the workforce and/or transfer to four-year institutions successfully. These efforts being undertaken make a real difference in the lives of individual students and the community at large.

Sincerely,

<Name>
<Title>

SAMPLE LEGISLATIVE LETTER

The Honorable <Legislator name>
<State Senator or Assembly Member>
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear <Senator or Assembly Member> <Last name>:

I am writing to you today to urge sustaining support and funding for the Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative enacted as part of AB 194. As you may know, this program is designed to address the fact that rapidly increasing numbers of students enrolling in California's community colleges need to improve performance levels in ESL and basic skills. Mathematics, reading, writing and ESL capabilities are brought up to college level as the first important step on the path leading to academic achievement in community college, transfer to a four-year college, and readiness for career technical education and workforce.

The state's investment provides \$33.1 million to the community colleges to make improvements in ESL and basic skills that may include additional faculty and counselors, tutorial assistance, new software and other materials and various instructional strategies. Focus is placed on on-going evaluation of student progress to ensure attainment of learning outcomes.

To be sure, this time of major state budget challenges demands difficult choices by our elected leaders. The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative is one of the wisest investments the state can make in the future of our economy and our communities. To generate the greatest possible value, this initiative is a collaborative effort among all 109 community colleges in this state, including <college or district name>. Our colleges are working to share best practices and we exchange teaching strategies to ensure that innovative ideas that work well at one college are available to all colleges in achieving our common goal of improving outcomes for students.

More than ever, the state's economic engine desperately needs an educated and well-prepared workforce. It is vital that we focus our efforts on programs like the Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative now and in the future. Much is at stake. We in the community colleges are up to the challenge but we need the continued support of our elected leaders to succeed. Please contact me at <phone number> if I can provide you with more information about our work with this program.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

<Name>
<Title>

SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT/SUPPORT FORM

Community College Logo

Please list me as a public supporter of the **Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative**. This important effort funded by the State of California must be sustained and supported strongly throughout the state to help ensure that academically under-prepared community college students reach performance levels needed to succeed in college level work. Lacking the essential performance levels in ESL and basic skills, many students may ultimately abandon their educational pursuits. In doing so, they will fall short of the lifetime benefits that come with higher education and job preparation, both personally and professionally. California cannot afford to let this happen.

Please select a category:

Organization Company Individual Public Agency Other _____

Please complete the following information:

Company or Organization Name/Employer

Your Name Title/Occupation

Mailing address

City State Zip County

Phone number Fax number E-mail Address

Signature (Required) Date

SAMPLE “SUCCESS STORY” PITCH-E-MAIL OR LETTER

Dear <Editor/Reporter Name>:

A new state-funded initiative to help academically under-prepared community college students achieve success in college-level work is showing real signs of success at <college or district name> and we want to tell you more about it.

The number of students enrolling at <college or district name> who need to increase performance levels in English, mathematics, reading, writing and ESL is growing. To help us meet the challenge of preparing these students to succeed in career technical education and transfer programs, the California Community College Chancellor’s Office through the strategic planning process has been working with the Chief Instruction Officers, ??? Student Services Officers and Student Academic Senate in planning and implementing the Student Success: Basic Skill Initiative through the budget in place, funds have been redirected to efforts at the colleges focused on improvements for meeting needs of underprepared students. This funding allows our college and others around the state to provide more training and development for faculty, staff and administrators; instruction and in-class tutors, curriculum improvements and student assessment.

The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative already is making a real difference in the lives of individual students at <college or district name>. For example <insert local BSI success story>.

The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative helps these students reach performance levels needed for success in career technical education and academic programs leading to transfer. Moving forward, this important effort must be a high priority for ongoing state funding. Sustaining and supporting Student Success: Basic Skills Initiative, both here and throughout the state, will pay dividends in the form of successful students who ultimately become even more productive contributors to our society and economy.

The Student Success-Basic Skills Initiative is a collaborative effort among all 109 community colleges in this state, including <college or district name>. We work to share best practices and we exchange teaching strategies to make sure that innovative ideas that work well at one college are available to all in achieving our common goal of improving student outcomes. We also develop effective assessment programs, including a self-assessment tool, that help our colleges evaluate their performance in basic skills instruction to demonstrate that that the financial commitment being made is well worth the investment.

Please contact <name and contact number> for more information and to arrange interviews.