

PATHWAYS TO RESULTS

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY BRIEF

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Institutionalizing Pathways to Results in Career and Technical Education Programs (CTE) at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges & Rock Valley College

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The Pathways to Results (PTR) model was developed to support improvement efforts associated with programs of study at Illinois community colleges. As a result, teams at institutions statewide have applied the model to complete the program-review process required by the Illinois Community College Board (2017) for individual instructional programs. Two Illinois community colleges selected for PTR Implementation Partnerships sought to more broadly institutionalize PTR to bolster continuous improvement efforts, especially in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC), comprised of four campuses in rural southeastern Illinois, focused on advancing institutional capacity for disaggregation of data. Rock Valley College (RVC), which serves the northern Illinois urban center of Rockford and its outlying rural areas, identified a need to more meaningfully engage stakeholders in data analysis.

Identifying the Problem at IECC and RVC

At RVC, it had become evident that data was not being used consistently for program review across CTE programs. Furthermore, even for those programs that were using data, stakeholders often struggled to meaningfully interpret disaggregated data to identify improvement needs. This resulted in a disconnected program review process with potentially missed opportunities to identify equity gaps and implement or scale innovative practices to advance student success.

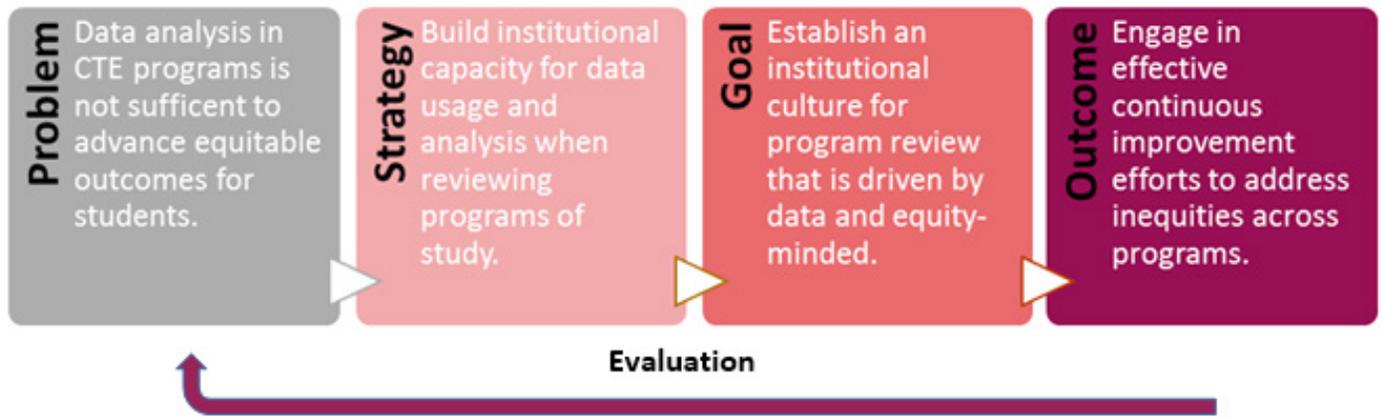
IECC faculty and staff who were seeking to extract program-level data across campuses were engaging in a complex, labor and time-intensive process. Thus, the team identified the need for tools that would efficiently extract and disaggregate program-level and districtwide student data across CTE programs. Absent this capacity, questions would continue to arise surrounding the consistency and validity of manually collected data, limiting the colleges' ability to advocate for equity-minded change efforts across individual programs and campuses.

The Improvements

Program review at RVC is the responsibility of faculty chairpersons. Therefore, as the college adopted the PTR model for program review across CTE programs, professional development for the faculty chairs was necessary. As part of the required Chair Academy training, modules were incorporated to implement the adoption of the PTR model to facilitate the program review process and associated advisory committees, as well as to highlight issues of access and equity. In addition, advisory committees were restructured to increase collaboration with workforce partners. Specifically, these committees went from being led solely by the program's faculty chair to being co-led with a representative from a local employer.

About Pathways to Results: Implementation Partnerships

PTR is an outcomes-focused, equity-guided process to improve student transition to and through postsecondary education and into employment. The process engages community college practitioners and their partners to identify and understand the problematic aspects of systemic design--whether processes, practices, policies, or pedagogies--and to find sustainable solutions that will support equitable student outcomes. In 2016, a second project year was added to the Pathways to Results model, titled PTR: Implementation Partnerships. Teams who participated in an Implementation Partnership, or "Year Two," project work to implement, evaluate, and scale their work in a network of other colleges striving to improve equitable student outcomes in innovative ways.



IECC and RVC's Intervention Logic Model

At IECC, team discussions revolved around consideration of various technologies that would support the creation of a student-success dashboard featuring disaggregated data that would streamline assessment efforts across departments and colleges and highlight equity gaps. Cost was an important consideration given the need to sustain the adopted technologies following the grant period. These discussions opened the door to broader impact associated with the creation and implementation of a data plan to be adopted across institutions, one that would advance the consistency, accuracy, and accessibility of reporting to meet various institutional needs.

Mapping the Logic Model

As institutions are held more accountable for student outcomes, meaningful data analysis is pertinent to implementing equity-minded change. This requires technological capacity for data collection and concentrated efforts toward training faculty and staff to analyze data, engage in discussions with stakeholders, and identify opportunities for improvement. Repeated opportunities for reflection and professional development surrounding issues of equity have been identified as pertinent to advancing equity-mindedness, particularly among faculty (Ching, 2018).

Notes on Scaling and Sustainability

For community colleges in Illinois, the program review process occurs on a five-year cycle (Illinois Community College Board, 2017). At RVC, alternating annual focus areas of equity and

access with relevancy and innovation will move this review cycle toward a model of continuous improvement for CTE programs of study.

While both institutions first targeted CTE programs with low enrollment or those scheduled for program review during the implementation year, the broad participation of internal and external partnerships has naturally resulted in scaling opportunities beyond CTE. At IECC, the relevancy of building capacity for reporting disaggregated data beyond CTE programs has logically made the sustainability of new technologies a top priority.

Acknowledgements

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Reference

Ching, C. D. (2018). Confronting the equity “learning problem” through practitioner inquiry. *The Review of Higher Education*, 41(3), 387-421. doi: 10.1353/rhe.2018.0013

Illinois Community College Board (2017). Program review. Retrieved from https://www.iccb.org/academic_affairs/?page_id=36