pathwaysTOresults

Team Leader Guide

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This module is part of a series of publications associated with the Pathways to Results initiative that is funded by a grant from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB Grant Agreement Number 2014-00266).

Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank ICCB for supporting the Pathways to Results initiative, and we acknowledge the assistance we have received from all Pathways to Results (PTR) team leaders and team members who enabled us to learn about how programs and pathways are implemented and improved using PTR.

Suggested Citation:

Jones, A., & Bragg, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Pathways to Results team leader guide (Rev. ed.).* Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. http://occrl.illinois.edu/files/Projects/ptr/PTR Team Leader Guide.pdf.

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Introduction

This Guide presents information that team leaders need to implement the Pathways to Results (PTR) process. The Guide is designed to improve the team leader's understanding of how to manage and lead a team, and to prepare team members to successfully complete the PTR process. The Guide is organized into sections that parallel the PTR process. This introductory section explains the purpose of PTR and it provides insights into how the PTR process should work when guided by a team leader and team members who are committed to implementing the process.

What is Pathways to Results?

Pathways to Results (PTR) is an outcomes-focused, equity-guided process that is designed to improve programs, pathways, and policies that support student transition to and through postsecondary education and employment. PTR focuses on addressing equity gaps between diverse learner groups and on improving processes that influence student success.

Equity and Outcomes

A focus on equity and outcomes is especially important to address if the education system is going to achieve improved results. Historically, postsecondary education, particularly community colleges, has paid a great deal of attention to access but they have placed less emphasis on outcomes (Bragg & Durham, 2012). In recent years, high schools have been held to increasingly higher expectations with limited resources to help students achieve. The operating assumptions in both cases seems to be that if standards are set high enough and students are given a chance to participate, increased performance will occur. Certainly high standards are important and student access is necessary, but these two ingredients are insufficient to ensure student success.

The simple fact is that student success is enhanced if students participate in structured pathways and receive adequate support at all levels of the education system. With careful attention to recruitment (access) and guidance that encourages participation in coursework associated with guided programs and completion of credentials that hold labor market value, students can be successful at completing K-12 education, transitioning to college, and obtaining family-wage employment. Stakeholders and team members associated with PTR need to understand this perspective as they work through the PTR process. Team leaders need to assert these values to be sure that everyone associated with PTR understands and is dedicated to improving student outcomes and strengthening local communities and local, state and national economies.

Partnership and Team Formation

An important first task is creating a partnership to support the PTR process, and getting input from this group of individuals who would be good members of the team. Synergy between the stakeholders and team is important because these groups need to work together collaboratively to implement the PTR process. The partnership should be formed first, and it should focus on bringing together diverse stakeholders who are committed to improving student success in education and employment. Ideas for improving pathways and programs come from blending the ideas of persons working inside the educational institutions that implement PTR, but also from persons outside the institutions that represent community groups, business and industry, and diverse student populations. Identify appropriate partners who should be represented. What employees would benefit from being part of this process? What secondary partners need to be part of an initiative to ensure smooth transitions for students? What community partners would be useful to support PTR?

Formation of the team involves selecting 8-12 individuals who are committed to engaging deeply in the PTR process. Individuals who represent the entire pathway are important to include, including secondary representatives (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators); postsecondary representatives (e.g., community college and university faculty, counselors and administrators); business, industry and community representatives; and others who are eager to engage fully in the process. Because the team needs to be a manageable number, it is important to think about the different groups and perspectives that are needed to carry out the project and select carefully to ensure that those involved in the work bring needed expertise and are able to maintain involvement over time.

Team engagement is critical to the success of the PTR process. One theory associated with how teams develop is Bruce Tuckman's five phases of "forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning" (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). In the "forming" stage, team members are introduced. Members are usually positive and polite as they get to know one another. Often the team leader plays a dominant role in discussion and shares how the team will work. In this early juncture, it is important for team leaders to assume a leadership role to direct the team and establish clear objectives. A tool provided to help with this is the *PTR Charter*. The *PTR Charter* explains the problem that will be addressed by the PTR process, designates ways team members are to be involved, and specifies the primary goal and responsibilities of team members.

Once formed, many teams quickly transition into a "storming" stage, where the team leader may be challenged as roles are clarified and the way people will work together is defined. As the team leader, it is important to be aware that members may be feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable with the PTR process because it is new to them. Some may react by questioning what the team and team leader are doing, and some may question what PTR is all about and why it is necessary to be involved. This is normal and team leaders should expect it. Establishing a process and structure to smooth conflict and build solid relationships between team members is vital during this stage. Team leaders need to help their colleagues adjust during this stage, and remain positive. Coaches associated with PTR who know the PTR process are available to aid teams to work through the storming stage.

Gradually, the team moves into a "norming" stage where team members come to respect the team leader's authority, and other team members step up to show leadership in specific areas. As an example, it will help the PTR process to have an institutional research (IR) staff member who is willing to work closely with the group and talk through complex issues with data collection and analysis. At this stage, the team, as a whole, should take responsibility for the PTR process and achieve stability in functioning.

Once basic trust is built, the team moves on to the "performing" stage where team members are able to work productively on the task at hand and progress towards the common goals that were declared in the team's *PTR Charter*. Work on various aspects of the PTR process may be delegated to different team members at this stage because there is buy-in from the entire team.

Teams do not normally last forever and there is usually a point where a team will break up, which is called the "adjourning" stage. Teams reach a culminating point in a particular PTR project and move on to another one or use what they have learned in their on-going professional work lives. During this stage, both individually and corporately, team members reflect on what they have learned during the PTR process and how the initiative can be sustained over time to develop and improve additional programs of study. This is a time for celebrating the team's achievements, and may also be a time when the formal team moves on to other activities and responsibilities.

Team Members

Numerous qualities are found in effective team members. Good team players do not have a particular personality type; indeed, anyone can be a good team member if he or she is willing to listen and cooperate to achieve the best results for the entire group. Team members need to commit to actively engage in the PTR process, they need to care about what the team is doing, and they need to be willing to contribute to the team's success. Effective team members look beyond their own areas of expertise and care about the team's overall success. Other qualities to look for in a team member include: reliability, constructive communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, and problem-solving skills. It is important for team members to share openly and willingly, and treat others in a respectful and supportive manner. It is important to communicate productively with team members, as well as partners.

Team Meetings

Clear communication is a critical element in all teamwork, including during team meetings. Roles and expectations need to be defined during regular team meetings, and agendas need to be shared with all team members who are part of the PTR process. People who are busy want meetings to be useful, so it is important for team leaders to plan the meetings, engage team members fully, and follow-up with meeting notes quickly. Sharing notes and assignments soon after the conclusion of team meetings is helpful to prepare everyone for the next step in the process.

Before the meetings, plan what will be accomplished and the goals of the time together. Determine whether other team members need to help plan the meeting. Have an agenda for meetings and try to stick to them. Establish doable goals for the meeting, be aware of time and plan accordingly, and assign someone the task of taking minutes. Meetings should start and end on time. Once the meeting is planned, team leaders need to determine who should attend, and send communication to the team members regarding date, time and meeting location. Be sure to distribute and have the team members read materials including charts, graphs, and data prior to the meeting. Following the meeting, the team leader should check in with individuals assigned tasks for the next meeting to ensure that the jobs are being accomplished.

It is important for team leaders to think about the best venues for team meetings and recognize that in-person meetings can be difficult to schedule and expect full attendance. Where possible, teams are encouraged to use technology such as GoToMeetings and telephone conference calls that enable everyone to participate, even when team members are located in other places or traveling for professional reasons. With the advent of so many technology applications, teams have more options than ever to conduct their business in ways that keep people involved, even when their involvement has to be from a distance.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

As noted previously, partnerships are a key component in PTR. PTR capitalizes on collaboration among stakeholders, including educational institutions at all levels of the education system, business and industry, community groups, parents and students, and other important stakeholders. Selecting partners and effectively communicating with them is necessary throughout the PTR process.

Communication with the partners is similar to the team members. Stakeholders will not meet as often with the team members but should still be actively engaged in the PTR process. Determine the optimal operating mechanism of the partnership (e.g. frequency, length, location, use of technology) to enable effective meetings. Identify factors important to sustain the partnership and evaluate the partnership's effectiveness. It is also important to communicate regularly with the stakeholders to determine that their needs are being heard.

Contents of the Guide

Each section provides guidance on the PTR process.

- Engagement and commitment
- Equity and outcomes assessment
- Process assessment
- Process improvement and evaluation
- Review and reflection

Team leaders are urged to go to the OCCRL website (http://occrl.illinois.edu/) and read each module thoroughly to become knowledgeable about the PTR process. Leadership of any process is complex if individuals do not understand how the process works, how to engage others in it, and how to overcome complexities and challenges that may emerge. OCCRL's website provides a rich set of resources that team leaders, team members, and stakeholders can use to conduct the PTR process.

In the remainder of this Guide, each PTR process is presented in seven sections designed to help new team leaders understand what they need to do to lead their team:

Section 1 – This section lists the goals and what the team is expected to accomplish.

Section 2 – Called Outputs, this section presents tools and templates that are helpful to the PTR process, and products that are used to assist the team.

Section 3 – This section provides the steps team leaders need to undertake to prepare to lead PTR. The more team leaders know and are comfortable with the PTR process, the easier it is to lead.

Section 4 – This section lists resources that help the team leader facilitate PTR. These resources also provide support and supplement the process.

Section 5 – This section describes activities associated with each component, along with the expected outcomes. PTR has steps to help the process move along, including steps that aid the team in maximizing results from the process.

Section 6 - This section provides definitions and terminology. These terms can be found in the PTR modules and are used frequently.

Section 7 – This last section offers a list of references and resources that provide additional background and support so that the team leader gains greater understanding of PTR. These resources are not endorsed by OCCRL, but may provide additional guidance and examples that are helpful to teams.

Engagement and Commitment

Goals of Engagement and Commitment

1. Engage and gain commitment of key partners and team members in implementing PTR and improving programs and pathways.
2. Review existing data to help specify and refine the initial problem statement included in the *PTR Charter*.
3. Plan from the beginning to transfer lessons learned to other programs and pathways.

Outputs

- Charter
- SWOT Analysis (or other strategic planning process used)
- Outcomes Menu

Team Leader Preparation

1. Read through the Engagement and Commitment module, and review other instructional materials on the OCCRL website. These resources help team leaders to become familiar with key activities that are accomplished in Engagement and Commitment.
2. Identify key leaders in the community and/or region to inform them about the PTR process and understand how PTR works.
3. Identify and invite key stakeholders.
4. Establish and disseminate the meeting time and agenda for the initial meeting.
5. Engage institutional research (IR) personnel to gather existing data to define the mission and goals of the partnership and determine the problem statement.
6. Review and select meeting and team facilitation strategies and techniques to promote stakeholder engagement and encourage active participation in meetings.
7. Review the *Strengthening Partnerships Workbook* and determine its potential use with the partners to help determine how the partnership will function, what roles and responsibilities will be carried out, what outcomes are expected, and how stakeholders will be accountable to each other to achieve those outcomes.

8. Participate in meetings and webinars to gain understanding of the PTR process and learn of ways other teams have implemented PTR. (This is called "benchmarking", and team leaders are encouraged to lead benchmarking activities to encourage cross-site learning. See the *PTR Evaluation and Benchmarking* Module for more information.)

Resources Needed to Support Team Leadership

- Institutional and/or district planning support staff
- Institutional research (IR) and evaluation design support
- Institutional Information Technology (IT) support
- Existing interagency agreements and partnerships
- Existing institutional and/or district level planning documents
- *Facilitator Tool Kit: A Guide For Helping Groups Get Results* http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourcelibrary/uploads/resources/Facilitator%20Tool%20Kit.pdf

Activities and Outcomes

Step 1: Engage leaders and form the partnership.

The primary outcome of Step 1 is the establishment of a partnership to guide and support the PTR effort.

A. **Educate key leaders** – One or more individuals from the secondary and postsecondary education systems generally assume initial leadership of the PTR process to ensure other education, employer, workforce, and community leaders are educated on the purpose and value of PTR. Support can be fostered if organizational goals are known and shared, the goal of the partnership identified, and the value/benefit for sitting on the partnership can be communicated.

B. **Identify partnership participants** – Representatives from all levels of education (K-12, community colleges, universities), workforce and economic development providers, employers, labor, and community-based organizations (CBOs) should be considered as members of the partnership, depending on the focus of the PTR team problem. Although, additions to the partnership can always be made as needs arise for input throughout the PTR process. Reviewing needs, capacity, and resources to solve problems is something the partnership should do at each meeting.

Step 2: Gather input from the partnership.

The primary outcome of Step 2 is the signing of the initial section of the *PTR Charter* by all partners.

A. **Review and analyze information and data relating to the education system and the labor market** – Sharing information with the entire partnership as to what currently exists in the way of policies, funding, programs, pathways, and employment is a critical first step in determining the future direction of the partnership. Research should be done prior to the first meeting so valuable meeting time is not taken to gather information but rather to discuss and reach consensus on the direction that the project should take.

B. **Conduct a SWOT or related form of analysis with partners** – Brainstorming the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the program or pathway and problem associated with student success can aid in the identification of the program or pathway that needs to be improved or developed through the PTR process. Additionally, challenges can surface from the SWOT or related analysis that will aid in the development of the problem statement for PTR.

C. **Develop a problem statement** – The problem statement is drafted for inclusion in the Charter with the understanding that additional information will need to be integrated into the Charter once the team conducts Equity and Outcomes Assessment, and also as the PTR process unfolds.

D. **Complete and sign the Charter** – The initial section of the Charter is completed and signed by all partners, including celebrating Charter signing with long-standing and new partners.

Step 3: Identify and convene the team.

The primary outcome of Step 3 is a plan that communicates a strategy for completing the remainder of the PTR process.

A. **Identify the team** – The team is the "legs" of the PTR process – this is the group that does the day-to-day work of PTR. Team members complete tasks between meetings, and they take responsibility for planning and communicating with key institutional, employer, workforce and community leaders about the progress of PTR. Team members should be individuals who are eager and willing to work together and who bring varying skill sets that represent key partner organizations who are committed to improving pathways and programs that produce student success.

B. **Convene the team** – Prior to the initial meeting the team leader shares the material generated by the partnership's prior meeting(s). The initial meeting of the team generally focuses on getting acquainted as well as identifying roles and responsibilities of each team member and gaining a clear understanding of the charge of the team in relation to the mission and goals of the partnership and the PTR process.

C. **Update the Charter and develop a plan for completing the PTR process** – The timing of this activity varies depending on the nature of the team and how quickly the team opts to begin its work. In some cases the *PTR Charter* can be updated and a plan developed for completing the PTR process in the initial team meeting; in other cases the team may need two or three meetings to get acquainted and create a shared sense of identity and focus. The key is to ensure that the plan incorporates activities, timelines for completion, outcomes identification, and responsible parties for the fulfillment of each activity and outcome. It is paramount to revisit the team makeup throughout the process to ensure that individuals who have critical information to move PTR along are part of the process.

Definitions and Terminology

Benchmarking: Comparing and measuring policies, practices, philosophies, and performance measures against other similar organizations and institutions. A standard by which something can be measured or judged.

Partner: Persons and organizations that represent community groups, employers, workforce and economic development agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), students, parents and other stakeholders who are committed to improving student success in education and employment.

Team Leader: Individuals who serve in the key leadership role on the team.

Team Member: Individuals who participate as members of a team who are committed to engaging deeply in PTR and implementing the PTR process.

Stakeholder: A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in a project or process associated with PTR and improving programs and pathways that lead to enhanced student success.

Suggested Resources for Team Leaders on Engagement and Commitment

ACT, Inc. (2011). *The condition of college and career readiness, 2013.* Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr13/

Amey, M. (2010). Leading partnerships: Competencies for collaboration. *New Directions for Community College, 149*, 13-23. doi: 10.1002/cc.391

Clagett, M., & Uhalde, R. (2012, June). *The promise of career pathways systems change.* Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/CareerPathways_JFF_Paper_060112.pdf

Friend, E. (2010, October). Partnering with business amplifies students' career opportunities. *Tech Directions, 70*(3), 19-21.

Jenkins, D., & Cho, S. (2012, January). *Get with the program: Accelerating community college students entry into and completion of programs of study* (CCRC Working Paper No. 32). Retrieved from http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=885

Outcomes and Equity Assessment

Goals of Outcomes and Equity Assessment

1. Identify, collect, and interpret disaggregated student outcomes data.
2. Understand and use PTR equity concepts when analyzing and interpreting student data.
3. Identify equity gaps and determine how these gaps need to be addressed in the PTR process.

Outputs

- Team Worksheet and Contribution to the Charter
- The Outcomes and Equity Templates

Team Leader Preparation

1. Read through the Outcomes and Equity Assessment module and identify questions that need to be clarified.
2. Review and ensure understanding of terminology and definitions. Gain a thorough understanding of what equity means in the context of PTR and the importance of equity in relation to programs, pathways, and student outcomes.
3. Identify the data, information sources, and resources needed. A review of Excel data templates available on the OCCRL website is necessary to get the full picture of the work that the team will be doing with data.
4. Solicit the support of institutional research (IR) staff and others with information about the identified problem(s) to assist with data collection.
5. Establish a timeline for distributing results of the data templates and graphs to the individual team members; the timeline should provide adequate time for individuals to ask questions and feel confident that they understand the results.
6. Establish a meeting time and agenda to include all team members in reviewing results of the data collection. This timeline should ensure adequate time to discuss the equity and outcomes results and methods for applying this information to the entire PTR process.

Resources Needed to Support Team Leadership

- IR provides requested data for the team. If there is no designated staff person available, other sources should be considered, including the Information Technology (IT) Office, campus administrators who manage data, and program leaders who are responsible for admissions, enrollment management, recruitment and retention, financial aid, accreditation and program review, etc.
- Disaggregated data at the program and institutional level, with adequate explanation of the origin of the data; how the data collection was conducted; and what data elements represent, including any issues with data quality; etc.

Activities and Outcomes

The process of conducting Equity and Outcomes Assessment may vary slightly from one team to another, depending on the size of the group and extent of data sources available. However, the general set of steps and activities that have been beneficial to past teams follows:

Step 1: Outcomes and equity selection.

The primary purpose of this step is to determine what student outcomes data to collect and to introduce PTR's definition of equity.

A. **The data collection process** – Learn where to find data and who has access to the data. The *Team Readiness Tool* in the Outcomes and Equity Assessment module will help in identifying this process. Further, for planning purposes, it is useful to consider the timing of data requests and corresponding wait-times to receive data. Area high schools' and regional demographics data are useful for comparisons, but strategies for securing these data must be planned carefully.

B. **Discuss the definition of equity** – PTR is committed to ensuring students persist and graduate at equitable rates. It is likely that different team members have varying outlooks on equity, and these perspectives need to be shared and considered openly and honestly. It is important to have frank discussions about differences and reach consensus on how team members will apply equity definitions to the PTR process.

C. **Develop inquiry questions** – Focusing on a few selected outcomes variables from the *Outcomes Menu* (completed in Engagement and Commitment) will help address team questions.

D. **Determine what data to collect** – It is important to include both student characteristics (attributes that do not change) and student outcomes. It is helpful to gather data at the program and institutional levels.

Step 2: Data collection and sharing.

The primary outcome of this step is to collect the data and disseminate it to team members.

A. **Data collection** – IR staff collects the data and puts it into templates for the team members to review. Electronic files of the templates are available on the OCCRL website with detailed instructions on how to complete the templates. Additional analyses can be performed, as necessary, and dependent on staff resources.

B. **Sharing and individual review** – The team members review the templates and graphs individually prior to meeting as a group. The team members should fill out the *Data Review Worksheet* prior to meeting as a group to help them understand and interpret the data.

Step 3: Data analysis and interpretation.

The primary outcome of this step is to interpret the data collected and revise the problem statement.

A. **Data review** – The team meets to discuss results and develop a problem description. The team will make a bullet list of findings that pertain to equity issues.

B. **Review the problem statement and update the PTR Charter** – After looking at the data and the resulting problem description, the team determines if the original problem statement needs to be revised. It is important to determine if the data supports the problem statement. Teams may find additional data are needed to refine the problem statement.

C. **Identify measurable goals** – Based on the problem statement, team members identify measurable goals and establish clear, quantified targets for improvement.

D. **Brainstorm a list of processes influencing student results** – This task identifies a list of processes that can influence student results, and it lays the groundwork for process assessment.

Definitions and Terminology

Disaggregated Data: To separate a whole set of data by specific subgroups or categories of students with the intent to provide specific information for the subgroup.

Student characteristics: Attributes about a student that usually do not change, such as gender, race/ethnicity and disability status.

Student outcomes: Results that are changed or impacted by a program, change or intervention, such as academic performance (e.g., cumulative grade point average), enrollment status, credits attempted and credits earned, certificate and degree attainment, employment, etc.

Suggested Resources for Team Leaders on Outcomes and Equity Assessment

Equity

Allan, E. (2011). Special issue: Women's status in higher education—equity matters [Monograph]. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, *37*(1). 1-163. Retrieved from doi: 10.1002/aehe.3701

Artiles, A. (2011, December). Toward an interdisciplinary understanding of educational equity and difference: The case of the racialization of ability. *Educational Researcher, 40*(9). 431-445. Retrieved from doi: 10.3102/0013189X11429391

Sellar, S., & Gale, T. (2011). Mobility, aspiration, voice: A new structure of feeling for student equity in higher education. *Critical Studies in Education*, *52*(2), 115-134. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/17508487.2011.572826

Outcomes Assessment

Baldwn, C., Bensimon, E., Dowd, A., & Kleiman, L. (2011). Measuring student success. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 153*, 75-88. Retrieved from doi: 10.1002/cc.438

Ewell, P., Paulsen, K., & Kinzie, P. (2011, June). *Down and in: Assessment practices at the program level.* Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved from http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/NILOAsurveyreport2011.pdf

Data Usage

Pathways to College Network. (2007). *Using data to improve educational outcomes: College readiness issue brief*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Pathways to College Network. (2011). *Leveraging data for college completion*. (Issue Brief, Fall 2011). Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from http://www.ihep.org/

Leinbach, D., & Jenkins, D. (2008, January). *Using longitudinal data to increase community college student success: A guide to measuring milestone and momentum point achievement.* (CRCC Research Tools, 2). Retrieved from http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/longitudinal-data-momentum-point-research-tool.pdf

Dougherty, V., & Lempa, M. (2010). *Conducting a scan of your college access and success system: Why it matters. How to do it. How to use it*. Retrieved from http://www.omgcenter.org/sites/default/files/OMG_CollegeAccess.pdf

Process Assessment

Goals of Process Assessment

1. Identify and select major processes.
2. Describe detailed steps of major processes.
3. Identify contributing factors.

Outputs

- PTR Process Inventory
- Detailed Process Description Worksheet
- Contributing Factors Worksheet
- Quality Tools

Team Leader Preparation

1. Read through the Process Assessment module and identify questions for clarity.
2. Review the quality tools associated with this process including flowcharts, cross functional charts, fishbone diagrams, 5W (Five Whys), and root cause.
3. Identify the appropriate institutional and/or district representatives who should be involved in identifying and describing the major processes. The individuals directly responsible for the identified process (i.e., process owner) should be included in steps two and three if they are not already team members.
4. Process Assessment is very active and participatory, so be prepared to engage team members using graphics, flip charts and markers, white boards, and other interactive tools.
5. Schedule meetings, including in-person, online and virtual meetings to be inclusive of all stakeholders who need to be part of this process.

Resources Needed to Support Team Leadership

- Having someone in the partnership who is familiar with or has experience with quality tools is a valuable resource that should be considered if the team leader does not have experience with these tools. It is important for the team leader to understand how to identify the root causes of a problem. Consider tapping into partners' expertise of the quality tools (e.g., business partners and institutional planning and improvement personnel).
- Be prepared to involve institutional research in case there are extra data or information needs that arise.

Activities and Outcomes

Each step and activity is described in the module. The process may vary slightly from the module depending on the size of the group and the identified problem. The basic steps and general outcomes include:

Step 1: Identify and describe major processes that support student progress along the career pathway.

The primary outcome is the identification of one or two major processes directly related to the identified problem that the team will examine in greater detail.

A. **Brainstorm major processes associated with problem** – Focus on processes that affect students that relate to the problem identified in Outcomes and Equity Assessment. Be inclusive when developing this list, even if the process minimally contributes to the problem.

B. **Briefly describe each major process** – Using the *PTR Process Inventory*, answer a few questions about each major process. This may be done in small groups and then the larger group may reconvene to discuss similarities and differences. Lengthy descriptions of these processes do NOT need to be provided.

C. **Select one or two major processes** – Only one or two processes should be selected and described in detail in Step 2. Selecting more than two major processes will be too much work for one PTR project. There should be a strong team consensus that the selected processes contribute to the problems identified in the problem statement.

Step 2: Describe detailed steps for the major processes.

The primary outcome of this step is a detailed description of the identified major processes and a list of potential contributing factors.

A. **Create a list of process steps** – There is not a predetermined way to approach this step but a brainstorming activity is a good starting point. It is critical that the process owner who knows the process best is engaged in this step. It could also be useful to engage students and other faculty or staff to seek additional perspectives. It is critical that these process steps represent how the process currently functions and not how the process is supposed to or intended to function.

B. **Complete the Detailed Process Description Worksheet** – This tool provides a framework for organizing and defining the major process steps. It is likely that different team members will have different perspectives on how the process currently functions, so it is important for the team to reach consensus on the answers to the questions in this worksheet. Be sure to record existing problems with the process as it is described because these may be useful as the team proceeds to Step 3. The team may need additional information from institutional research or data personnel to determine if the process is accomplishing the expected outcomes.

C. **Create a graphic representation of the process steps** – The graphical representation is a useful tool to document and understand the flow of the process as it currently functions. This flow chart can be developed in conjunction with the *Detailed Process Description Worksheet*. It is important to reiterate that this graphic should represent the process as it currently functions. This will be useful later when the team identifies the desired process changes or solutions.

Step 3: Identify contributing factors.

The primary outcome of this process is to identify contributing factors to the identified problem. The result of this step is to identify the factors that contribute most to the problem.

PTR assumes processes can continuously be improved. This assumption presumes there are problems with the existing process that can be improved. Step 3 will ultimately identify why the team believes the process is not working by identifying the contributing factors. Because PTR focuses on equity and process assessment and improvement, it is important to remind the team to focus on contributing factors that relate to problems with processes and not problems with students. For example, rather than identifying this contributing factor, "students do not apply for or receive scholarships," the team should identify this contributing factor, "the institution does not provide scholarship resources to students." Thus, the deficit is not with the student, it is with the process.

A. **Identify process steps that are within the control of the team** – There may be many process steps or elements that contribute to the problem. The team should identify those that are within control of the team and can be influenced by changes in institutional and organizational practices. Be realistic but also creative about how much control the team has over any given step or element of the process.

B. **Formulate hypotheses and generate a graphical representation of the contributing factors** – A graphical representation is an extremely helpful way to organize the team's hypotheses and ideas about the factors that contribute to the problems identified with the process. Use the tools provided to document the relationships among the contributing factors and to the problem. Focus on concrete factors that are related to elements of the process that was mapped in Step 2.

C. **Determine whether the contributing factors are directly related to the problem** – It is important the team reaches a consensus about whether the contributing factors directly relate to equitable student outcomes and ultimately the problem that was identified.

D. **Conduct additional research or review literature** – It is likely that the team will not know all the answers during this step and they may need to seek additional information. Rely on institutional research staff or the process owner who might have the resources to conduct additional research or review the literature to determine if the team's assumptions about potential factors are accurate.

Definitions and Terminology

Process: A set of interrelated tasks that achieve a specific result. A process typically contains multiple steps that follow a sequence and accomplish an outcome. An example of a process would be Advising.

Task: Activities that are part of a process. An example of a task within the Advising process would be helping students select a major.

Contributing Factor: Conditions or elements of a process that impact or influence an identified problem. An example of a contributing factor that might impede student success is tuition.

Suggested Resources for Team Leaders on Process Assessment

Developmental Evaluation

Hughes, K., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2011, February). *Assessing developmental assessment in community colleges* (CCRC Brief No. 50). Retrieved from http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/assessing-developmental-assessment-brief.pdf

Poth, C., Pinto, D., & Howery, K. (2011). Addressing the challenges encountered during a developmental evaluation: Implications for evaluation practice. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 26* (1), 39-48. Retrieved from http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=4&ss=21&_lang=en&article=26-1-039

Process Mapping

Driscoll, D. (2010). *Higher education planning for a strategic goal with a concept mapping process at a small private college* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Driscoll_uncg_0154D_10321.pdf

Root Cause Analysis

Mind Tools. (n.d.). *Root cause analysis: Tracing a problem to its origins*. Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_80.htm

U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (n.d.). *Root cause analysis*. Retrieved from http://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer.aspx?primerID=10

The Joint Commission. (2009, April). *Framework for conducting a root cause analysis and action plan*. Retrieved from http://www.jointcommission.org/Framework_for_Conducting_a_Root_Cause_Analysis_and_Action_Plan/

Process Improvement and Evaluation

Goals of Process Improvement and Evaluation

1. Select the solutions.
2. Develop an implementation plan.
3. Create an evaluation plan.
4. Implement and begin evaluation of the team's solutions.

Outputs

- Implementation plan
- Evaluation plan
- Suggested Solutions Worksheet
- Solution Evaluation Worksheet

Team Leader Preparation

1. Read through the Process Improvement and Evaluation module and identify questions for clarity. Read through the Evaluation and Benchmarking module.
2. Review group brainstorming techniques for the solution generation activity.
3. Identify appropriate institutional and/or district planning representatives to help leverage existing planning formats and processes for implementation planning.
4. Identify institutional research or other resources for evaluation planning and instrument development support if needed.
5. Schedule meetings, including in-person, online and virtual meetings to be sure to involve all stakeholders who need to be part of this process. Consider who should be engaged in each of the three main activities. Including a more comprehensive group to generate ideas and develop buy-in is important for the solution generation process. Also, include process owners and those responsible for implementation.

Resources Needed to Support Team Leadership

- Institutional and/or district planning support staff who have copies of formats and access to planning tools
- Institutional research and/or evaluation design support

Activities and Outcomes

Each step and activity is described in the module. The process may vary slightly from the module depending on the size of the group, availability of planning frameworks and complexity of solutions. The basic steps and general outcomes include:

Step 1: Identify solutions that address one or more of the contributing factors identified in Process Assessment and reach team consensus on the solution.

The primary outcome is a feasible solution(s) that addresses the identified problem and supports improved student outcomes and equity.

A. **The team brainstorms solutions** – Remember to include diverse perspectives and process owners in the discussion of solutions. It is important also to ensure that the group brainstorms multiple solutions before they start to evaluate them so that there are multiple options and perspectives to consider.

B. **The team creates an initial list of solutions** – One way to facilitate this activity is by having the author(s) of each solution complete the *Suggested Solutions Worksheet* for their solution(s) and then share with the larger group and modify if needed for clarity, and then group them together by categories/themes.

C. **The team reviews the potential solutions and identifies redundancies** – Be sure not to eliminate a partial solution without modifying the general solution to include that information. Remember that this step is just to remove redundancies and clarify/focus solutions, not evaluate or eliminate options.

D. **The team evaluates the potential solutions** – This step may be facilitated by asking the team to divide into small groups with each completing the *Solution Evaluation Worksheets* for a small number of solutions (two or three) involving the author(s) of those solutions. The small groups will include the author of each solution and a member who did not create the solution. Following the small group activity, reconvene the larger team to review and discuss the worksheets.

E. **The team engages in a facilitated discussion to reach consensus on solutions to be implemented** – Remember that there are many possible solutions and this is not a process to determine which are "good" or "bad" ideas but to select the solutions that are currently feasible, impactful, and doable given the resources, timeframe, and context. Sometimes a team will need to solve a first step before doing more; remember this is a part of continuous improvement. The team may determine to implement only one solution or more than one solution with the remaining ideas being future possibilities and options.

Step 2: Develop an implementation plan for each proposed solution.

The primary outcome of this step is a plan document/framework that describes the sequence of activities, resources needed, and persons responsible for completing the actions needed to implement the solution.

A. **Create a general description of the solutions** – No matter what framework or system is used for planning, the key questions included in this step will help ensure that the resulting plan reaches the desired outcome. If the team leader decides to have two separate meetings for solution generation and implementation planning (or a sub-group for the planning process), consider including this step in the first meeting where the more comprehensive team is present to ensure their vision is included in the plan.

B. **Determine how PTR aligns with existing institutional and partner planning processes** – This is an opportunity to leverage expertise, simplify the work for the team, and embed the solution within broader organizational commitments. Integrating the plan with institutional plans provides visibility, understanding of the effort and resources needed for accountability, and recognition of the solution's contribution. This is particularly useful for solutions that are longer term or that involve multiple areas and owners.

C. **If no planning process or template exists, use the PTR Implementation Plan** – The team may wish to answer the questions and create a basic flow for the timeline and steps included in the Process Improvement and Evaluation module before adding them to the *Implementation Plan*. The basics included in that section would be useful in any template including locally defined plans. Remember to consider pilot tests or small scale implementations of major changes to determine if they are working as intended.

Step 3: Develop an evaluation plan that includes measures and prepares team members to collect and analyze data.

The primary purpose of this step is to create measures to monitor the process of implementation to keep the plan on-track and to determine if the outcomes desired have been achieved.

As the team works on creating evaluation plans, remind them that there are two types of evaluation measures that are helpful to manage the implementation and measure success. The first are measures of activity – (i.e., how many students were served, who was involved). These measures help to describe the scope and scale of impact. The second type of measure is outcome indices (i.e., changes in completion for underrepresented groups, improved effectiveness of services and processes). The outcome evaluation measures articulate the extent to which the team achieved the improvement objective.

A. **The team reviews the solutions and identifies evaluation methods** – A good practice is to include institutional researchers or experienced evaluation practitioners to help with this process. Also remind the team to think about how they will measure the impact of activities as they occur and plan data collection accordingly. For example, if a new program will be described in a meeting, will an evaluation form be prepared for the end of the meeting to collect feedback? It is easier to collect the data at the time of the meeting instead of going back later. Also consider including institutional reviews for data instruments and ensure that the team complies with any established policies for data collection.

B. **The evaluation of outcomes may require that data collection occur in the future** – Include the evaluation processes as steps in the implementation plan to ensure that they are included in activities. Integrating with institutional plans helps with the project sustainability when implementation timelines are extended.

Step 4: Implement the solutions and begin to analyze results.

The purpose of this step is to start the solution implementation, monitor progress against the plan and determine outcomes of the project.

A. **Begin implementation of the solutions** – Depending on the scope of solutions and timeframes, the project may be monitored by the team or accomplished by process owners or other responsible parties. If there is a handoff of project responsibilities it is important to ensure that those implementing the plan are fully aware of the background and intent of the team, particularly the equity and outcomes focus.

B. **Begin implementation of the data collection in accordance with the plan** – Remember to include the evaluation steps in the implementation plan.

C. **Review the data and assess the extent to which the solutions address the problem** – If the project is not included in institutional plans, look for opportunities to report progress and inform the team if changes need to be made to the activities, responsible parties, deliverables, and/or timelines.

D. **Document the results** - Use the *PTR Implementation Plan* and complete accountability reporting required by grants or local planning.

E. **Modify the plan as necessary** – Remember the project is part of a process and there is always an opportunity to modify the approach if the expected outcomes are not being achieved.

Definitions and Terminology

Sustainability: The ability to maintain a new process when taking into account institutional support, cost, and feasibility.

Scalability: The capability to integrate assessment and improvement plans into existing planning and institutional frameworks.

Suggested Resources for Team Leaders on Process Improvement and Evaluation

Continuous Improvement

Data Quality Campaign. (2010, March). *Putting it all together: Supporting continuous improvement in education through strategic use of data systems.* Retrieved from http://inpathways.net/DQC_Putting_All_Together_Mar22.pdf

Evaluation and Program Improvement

Ewell, P., & Kelly, P. (2009, May). Colleges and universities and their stewardship of place: A guide for developing performance measures for the equity of access and student success. *National Center for Higher Education Management Systems*. Retrieved from http://www.nchems.org/pubs/docs/Guide%20for%20Analyzing%20Service%20Regions%20060509.pdf

Goldberger, S., Gerwin, C., & Choitz, V. (2008). *Test drive: Six states pilot better ways to measure and compare community college performance*. Retrieved from http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/resource/501

Review and Reflection

Goals of Review and Reflection

1. Review and reflect on results of the PTR process.
2. Document what individuals, the team, and the partnership learned in the PTR process.
3. Identify ways the PTR process can be extended to other programs and pathways.
4. Develop plans that insure that improvements are sustained.

Outputs

- Individual reflections
- Group reflection
- Results of data collection activities
- Plans to sustain the solutions and extend them to other programs and pathways

Team Leader Preparation

1. Read through the Review and Reflection module and become familiar with the purpose, goals, outputs and activities.
2. Draft a timeline for the activities and meeting(s).
3. Determine how the data regarding sustainability and scalability will be gathered.

Resources Needed to Support Team Leadership

- Tools provided in the module
- Sample questions to include in an interview, focus group or online questionnaire
- Assistance with compiling questionnaire results

Activities and Outcomes

The importance of capturing learning is powerful, so it is key to include as many members as possible. It is important to solidify the meeting date quickly and let team members know so they can plan to attend. They will need to come to this meeting having completed their individual assignments. There is flexibility in how some activities in this process can be accomplished.

The basic steps and general outcomes include:

Step 1: Complete the individual reflection and provide feedback.

The primary outcome is a collection of individual stories from as many members of the partnership as possible.

A. **Individual team members prepare a personal reflection** – As soon as possible, contact all individuals who are listed as partners on the *PTR Charter*. In the communication, clarify the purpose of individual reflections and emphasize the importance of receiving everyone's feedback to ensure that the group reflection will represent diverse members' experiences. Forward the *Individual Reflection Tool* to all team members and notify them of the team meeting date when the reflections will be shared and combined into the group reflection. For members who indicate they cannot make it to the meeting, offer to read their reflection for them.

B. **Individual team members provide data regarding sustainability and scalability** – At the same time the *Individual Reflection Tool* is sent, notify the team of the way in which data will be gathered about the sustainability of the PTR solution and its scalability to other programs, pathways and processes. There are several ways this can be accomplished. The team leader will know best which option his/her members prefer. For example, gathering this data has been accomplished via online surveys, conducting focus groups, or by conducting interviews with team members. The main goal is to gather as much input as possible.

Step 2. Create a group reflection.

The primary outcome is a group reflection.

A. **Provide members with the Reflection Sharing Tool** – Let the group know that after each member reads his/her reflection that there will be some time to record brief notes, words, or phrases that stood out.

B. **Individual team members read their personal reflection** – Remind members to listen carefully and reserve comments until all reflections have been read.

C. **Include reflections of members not present** – The team leader reads the individual reflections of members who could not make it to the meeting.

D. **Transfer noted words and phrases** – Ask the team members to write the words and phrases they heard in the reflections on sticky notes.

E. **The team leader facilitates creating the Affinity Diagram** – Encourage all members to actively participate in arranging the sticky notes into the categories, themes or general ideas common to the group. This may take several iterations and involve active discussion about why the themes emerged.

Step 3. Create shared understanding.

The primary outcome is a shared understanding of this PTR project and establishing plans for the next project.

A. **Discuss the results of the information gathered on sustainability and scalability** – Share the results of the data gathered via survey, interviews, focus groups etc. with the entire team.

B. **Display the information in ways that help participants see the group outcomes** – Charts, bar graphs and other graphical representation can help members clearly see their group's data.

C. **Draft team-level vision, mission, and goal statements that can guide this team's future work and other teams that might follow.**

Suggested Resources for Team Leaders on Review and Reflection

Reflection and Double Loop Learning

Banta, T., & Blaich, C. (2011). Closing the assessment loop. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 43*(1), 22-27. doi:10.1080/00091383.2011.538642

Kim, P., Hong, J., Bonk, C., & Lim, G. (2011). Effects of group reflection variations in project-based learning integrated in a Web 2.0 learning space. *Interactive Learning Environments, 19*(4), 333-349. doi:10.1080/10494820903210782

Smith, P. (2012). The importance of organizational learning for organizational sustainability. *Learning Organization, 19*(1), 4-10. doi: 10.1108/09696471211199285

Tagg, J. (2010). The learning-paradigm campus: From single to double-loop learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 123*, 51-61. doi: 10.1002/tl.409

Summary

This Guide is designed to provide assistance to the team leader. It is important for a team leader to understand how to successfully manage, organize, and lead a team through the PTR process. Each section of this guide corresponds to an aspect of the PTR process, and provides team leaders support in the implementation of PTR. The Guide is only one tool available to team leaders, with many other resources available on the OCCRL website to aid team leaders and teams.

Communication is a key component of team leadership. Guidelines and ground rules on how the team will function need to be clearly defined, so that everyone knows the team roles and responsibilities, to maximize team productivity, and to eliminate confusion and complacency. Materials sent out prior to team meetings, including comprehensive agendas, and follow-up after meetings are all essential components of leading a team.

Lastly, it is important to focus the PTR process on achieving equitable outcomes for all students. As team leaders guide their teams through the PTR process, with key partners and team members at the table, it is important to improve programs, pathways and ultimately student success as they complete programs and enter employment. Throughout the PTR process, the team leader should make a conscious effort to determine how PTR can be sustained and how it can be scaled up to other programs, pathways, and processes that need to be improved to support student success in the institution and partner organizations.

References

Bragg, D., & Durham, B. (2012). Perspectives on access and equity in the era of (community) college completion. *Community College Review, 40*(2), 106–125. Retrieved from http://crw.sagepub.com/content/40/2/106.full.pdf+html

Thayer-Hart, N. (Ed.). (2007). *Facilitator tool kit: A guide for helping groups get results*. Retrieved from http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourcelibrary/uploads/resources/Facilitator_Tool_Kit.pdf

Tuckman, B., & Jensen, M. (1977). Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group Organization Management, 2*(4), 419–427.

pathways TO results

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