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ICCB PROGAM REVIEW:
ASSISTING ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO IMPROVE QUALITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

IN

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

BY

Daniel S. Hagberg

Chicago, Illinois

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Dissertation Notification of Completion

Doctoral Candidate Daniel S. Hagberg

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Community Colleges Improve Quality

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Date of Final Approval Meeting September 14, 2015

We certify this dissertation submitted by the above named candidate, is fully adequate in scope and quality to satisfactorily meet the dissertation requirement for attaining the Doctor of Education degree in the Community College Leadership Program.

Signature

Date 9/15/15

Date 9/15/15

Date 9/15/15

Dedication

This is dedicated to my wife, Jody, and our four wonderful children, Caleb, Joshua, Isaac, and Rebekah, who have supported me and have endured through this process with me.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my dissertation committee: Dr. Dennis Haynes, Dr. Judah Viola, and Dr. H. Catherine Miller. I truly appreciate your time and guidance in this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Rebecca Lake who was instrumental in getting me in the National Louis University Community College Leadership program. Dr. Lake, you continued to believe in me even when I did not and your support to move me along the journey—even though that took much longer than anticipated—was invaluable in getting me to the end of this process.

I would like also like to express my gratitude for the wonderful members of my doctoral cohort (DOC 2): Angie, Bill, Harry, Jeff, Karen, Katie, Mark, Michael, Michelle, and Shelly. Thank you for being such a wonderful group to experience this journey with; spending time with all of you made the early two-hour long drive before and after Saturday classes worth it.

Abstract

This qualitative case study explored the process that the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) undertook to evaluate their statewide Program Review system and the modifications that were implemented based upon that evaluation. Data was collected through interviews with members of the Task Force that undertook the review and recommended the changes to the system. Extant documents that were used by the Task Force further enriched the findings and analysis which was done through the lens of the Baldrige A-D-L-I (Approach, Deployment, Learning, Integration) Process Evaluation rubric. Although the steps taken through the work of the Task Force seemed to align well with the A-D-L-I rubric, due to decreased staffing and limited resources at ICCB, an on-going and more robust system to assess the Program Review system was not built into the modified system. Therefore, the improvements appeared to be a more limited improvement event rather than facilitating on-going, continuous quality improvement of the Program Review system.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of Study

Gaining, maintaining, and sustaining quality with the assistance of a systematic and logical approach is something that organizations have focused on for a long time. Businesses have worked to implement continuous quality improvement (CQI) or total quality management (TQM) models, concepts or theories to facilitate these endeavors in a constantly changing environment. One such model is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program which was created by Public Law 100-107 in 1987 (NIST, 2001). Post-secondary institutions, and particularly community colleges, are no different in their need to respond to changes and continuously improve their quality. Directly modeled on the Baldrige program, the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) was developed for accrediting post-secondary institutions in the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation region (Spangehl, 2000).

Effective assessment is an integral part of determining if any improvement has occurred in any meaningful way. Reporting on these assessments and subsequent improvements is part of the accountability efforts of an organization. There are two main external bodies to which public community colleges must make these reports: their respective state system and regional accrediting organization. For community colleges in Illinois, those bodies are the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), respectively.

Oversight and assessment of the member community colleges has always been a function of the ICCB. Beginning in the mid-1980s, ICCB implemented a program review system whereby all programs would be assessed in a coordinated way throughout the state on a five-year cycle. A previous change to ICCB's program review system was done in 1993 with the most recent modification implemented in fiscal year 2007 and described in the FY2007-2011 Program

Review Manual (ICCB, 2007). Since all community colleges in Illinois are required to participate in the program review system, it is important that they know why and how ICCB made the change in order for the process to be of greatest value to the colleges and ICCB. Therefore, this study seeks to provide that greater understanding by exploring the modification that ICCB made to the program review system.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study is: to explore if the strategic modification of the program review system by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) with a model similar to the academic quality improvement program (AQIP) is engendering the expected outcomes in Illinois community colleges.

Driving Questions

The driving questions arising from the purpose of the study are:

1. Why was the modification of the Program Review system seen as a priority for ICCB?

2. How and in what ways did ICCB change the Program Review system?

3. What are the assessment strategies that ICCB is using to validate the new Program Review system?

4. Is the new Program Review system seen as an improvement by ICCB and what are the procedures in place to ascertain its effectiveness?

Context for the Study

Starting with Joliet Junior College being founded in 1901 as the first public 2-year college in the nation, Illinois has had an extensive involvement in the history of community colleges. Since 1990, the entire state has been included within 39 community college districts which are currently comprised of 48 colleges that form the Illinois community college system.

As the coordinating body for the community college system in Illinois, the mission of ICCB as stated on their web site (www.iccb.org) is:

- To administer the Public Community College Act in a manner that maximizes the ability of the community colleges to serve their communities.
- To promote cooperation within the system and accommodate those state of Illinois initiatives that are appropriate for community colleges.
- To be accountable to the students, employers, lawmakers, and taxpayers of Illinois.
- To provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities for the individuals and communities they serve. (ICCB, 2006)

In regard to the third item, ICCB currently publishes two main reports related to accountability in the community colleges in Illinois: Illinois Community College System Performance Report; and the Program Review Statewide Summary Report (which replaced the Accountability and Productivity Report for the Illinois Community College System in fiscal year 2007). Describing these initiatives, the fiscal year 2007 Performance Report stated that "[t]he Performance Report is an important component in the array of initiatives community colleges engage in to enhance quality and be accountable to the students, taxpayers, and communities they serve including . . . Program Review" (ICCB, 2007a, p. 1). Furthermore, "[p]rogram review has always been the major accountability tool by which community colleges demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the programs and services they offer to students. Review and evaluation of programs at the local level is a requirement for all community colleges" (ICCB, 2007b, p.1).

The program review system was established by ICCB in the mid-1980s to provide for "for the review of individual instructional programs by community colleges . . . in order to promote the quality of programs and the accountability of the system . . . [by] review[ing] similar programs at the same time with a coordinated multi-year schedule" and then "in 1993, the process was revised to incorporate new reporting requirements associated with the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity initiative" (ICCB, 2007, p. 4).

As described in the FY2007-20011 program review manual, the program review system

was:

> designed so that the Illinois Community College Board can fulfill its responsibility to
> assure that each college has an appropriate review process, to coordinate and report on
> accountability efforts, to support local program review processes, to collect and
> disseminate information about best practices, and to identify and develop solutions for
> statewide programmatic issues. (ICCB, 2007, p. 6)

The purposes of the program review system are listed as:

1. To support campus-level planning and decision-making related to:
   -Assuring the continuing need and improving the quality and cost- effectiveness of
   instructional programs;
   -Assessing, improving, and updating programs on a regular basis;
   -Discontinuing programs when there is no longer sufficient demand, quality cannot be
   maintained at an acceptable level, or they are no longer cost- effective.
2. To demonstrate the accountability of the community college system in maintaining
   high quality, cost-effective programs that are responsive to the needs of students,
   businesses and industries in Illinois
3. To identify best practices, exemplary innovations, and program issues that need to be
   addressed at the state-level by the ICCB. (ICCB, 2007, p. 6)

A further change to the ICCB program review system was implemented in fiscal year

2007. The modifications to the program review system were based upon the recommendations of

an ICCB Task Force in 2005 and "were designed to provide colleges with flexibility to

incorporate the Program Review System into campus planning to provide both colleges and the

ICCB with information needed to meet their respective responsibilities in a timely and efficient

manner" (ICCB, 2007, p. 4).The purpose of this study is to explore if this strategic modification

of the program review system is engendering the expected outcomes in Illinois community

colleges. The following are the indicated changes that were made:

1. The respective roles and responsibilities for Program Review of colleges and the
   Illinois Community College Board are redefined and the purposes of Program Review
   clarified.
2. To encourage colleges to integrate program review with campus planning and quality
   improvement processes, the annual calendar, data requirements, and program
   schedule have been revised. ICCB staff will make every attempt to provide colleges
   the Follow-up study report or special requested materials by the September preceding

the August submission date. It is always acceptable for colleges to use the most recent data available. Exceptions to the state-level schedule may be approved to accommodate campus planning cycles.

3. Guidelines and schedules have been developed for reviews of academic disciplines and cross-disciplinary programs-general education, adult education, remedial/developmental programs, vocational skills, and transfer programs, in addition to occupational programs so that the system can benefit from the sharing of best practices and improved accountability.

4. While colleges will continue to examine need, quality, and cost for each program, they may develop documentation for the review and results in a way that is appropriate to broader campus planning and decision making processes. (ICCB, 2007, pp. 4-5)

With the currently stated goal for Program Review "[t]o encourage colleges to integrate Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement processes" (ICCB, 2007, p. 4), the Program Review system is itself clearly situated in the realm of quality improvement. Therefore, this study will utilize the conceptual framework of continuous quality improvement (CQI) as the fundamental lens through which to explore the modification of the ICCB Program Review system. Furthermore, since the Program Review system modifications were influenced by the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) accreditation model which itself was based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program, the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric is used as the specific CQI lens for the analysis herein.

Brief Description of Study Design

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology from an interpretive paradigm and is situated within the context of continuous quality improvement as part of the lens through which the findings are viewed. Furthermore, a case study was selected as the approach for this research. The purpose and driving question themselves served as a guide for establishing the study's boundaries. In particular for this study, exploration of the 2007 modifications to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review system and those who served on the Task Force which developed the recommended changes served to bound the study. Creswell (2007)

believes that a case study method is chosen for research such as the one under investigation in this study which seeks to understand a real-life event or occurrence. He also states that "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p. 73). Furthermore, when a researcher is seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of a well-bounded occurrence like the revisions to the ICCB Program Review system, a case study methodology is a good approach to employ.

This study about the ICCB Program Review system was limited to exploring changes in the process that ICCB implemented in fiscal year 2007. Seeking to gain an in-depth understanding about the change in the ICCB Program Review system required collecting data primarily from interview material as well as documents. The use of multiple data collection methods is common feature of a case study approach mentioned by Creswell (2007) and Johnson & Christensen (2004). Furthermore, this study was focused on exploring the process of strategic modification to the Program Review system by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and whether it engendered the expected initial outcomes for ICCB. Therefore, the perspective sought was clearly from that of ICCB rather than from the individual colleges' viewpoints and thus the site selection was limited to the single institution of the Illinois Community College Board. However, since the ICCB Task Force also included a number college representatives, very limited anecdotal feedback from a college perspective was also obtained.

The report of findings and recommended modifications submitted to the ICCB was authored by three higher education consultants engaged by ICCB to facilitate this specific project. The consultants worked with the larger Task Force comprised of nine college representatives and six ICCB staff members; these 18 participants comprised the potential sample pool. Since one aspect of the purpose of this study was to explore whether the changes to

the Program Review system had engendered the expected initial outcomes for ICCB, the staff

members from ICCB were particularly well situated to provide this type of information.

Furthermore, it was felt that the non-ICCB staff on the Task Force who were still working in the

Illinois community college system would best be able to provide the richest data for the study.

An investigation was undertaken to verify which Task Force members were still employed

within the Illinois community college system and out of the 18-member potential sample pool,

nine Task Force members were invited, and eight participated in this study (See Table 1).

Table 1. *Summary of Study Participants*

	Community College	Consultants	ICCB Staff	Total
Original members of Task Force	9	3	6	18
Task Force member currently involved in Illinois community college system	3		3	6
Invited to participate in study	3	3	3	9
Participated in study	2	3	3	8

There is a range of interview formats that can be utilized in any research, from highly

structured and standardized questions to a more informal and conversational approach (Merriam,

1998). A semi-structured interview format was adopted for this study consisting of a set of open-

ended questions that were used as a guide in each interview; the questions were open-ended to

allow and encourage greater depth of responses. In order to provide consistency with the data

collection across participants, an interview guide was developed to initiate and help direct each

interview. This guide was sent by email to each participant one week prior to the interview so

that they could be more prepared, if they so desired.

Data gathered for this study were obtained from two sources: (a) the aforementioned semi-structured interviews and (b) documents pertinent to the modifications that ICCB did to the Program Review system. Since the website used to store the material used during the Program Review evaluation process was no longer active, it was not possible to locate all of the documents generated and available at the time of the review process. However, one of the consultants involved in the project had saved all of her documents from the process and provided these archival documents to the researcher which greatly increased the number of extant documents germane to this study. Included in these documents were notes from some meetings, draft and intermediate reports, results from a survey to colleges across the state (although not the actual survey instrument), and the response that the consultants submitted to the original request for proposal (RFP) from ICCB.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study include the following: (a) that ICCB has an assessment strategy in place for reviewing Program Review reports submitted by the member colleges, (b) that the modification implemented by ICCB in 2007 resulted in an improvement to the Program Review system, and (c) that the individuals that are being interviewed will provide objective and honest responses.

Significance of the Study

Systematic and effective assessment through processes such as the program review system is needed to meet legislative intent. Therefore, all community colleges in Illinois are required to submit an annual program review report to ICCB. Also, one of the stated intentions of the modification in the program review system was "[t]o encourage colleges to integrate program review with campus planning and quality improvement processes" (ICCB, 2007). In

order for member institutions to effectively achieve these outcomes, it is important that they have

a good understanding of why, and in what ways, ICCB changed the program review system.

Member institutions will also benefit from a better understanding of how ICCB assesses the

reports that are submitted by the individual colleges.

The Illinois community colleges rank among the top five both in terms of the number of

colleges and the total number of students enrolled according to the American Association of

Community Colleges (AACC, n.d.). Therefore, an understanding of the Program Review system

in the Illinois community college system, how it was modified, and whether it is engendering the

intended outcomes can be of use for schools and systems in other states.

Chapter Summary

In the context of an evolving accountability environment for Illinois community colleges,

the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) embarked on an effort to modify and update their

Program Review system in 2005 after more than ten years since the previous redesign. Three

educational consultants were engaged to facilitate the evaluation process and a Task Force

comprised of ICCB staff members and college representatives joined of them for the project. The

work of the Task Force culminated the submission of a final report of their findings and

recommendations for modifying the Program Review system.

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategic modifications to the ICCB Program

Review system and whether those changes were engendering the expected outcomes. The

individuals who were best able to provide feedback into this research question were the members

of the Task Force that undertook the 2005 evaluation. Those Task Force members who were still

involved in the Illinois community college system at the time of this study were invited to

participate in semi-structured interviews and provided rich insights into the work of the Task

Force. Further data for this research was gathered from extant documents from the work of the Task Force that were provided by one of the consultants who had maintained an archive of the files. These documents help to triangulate and enrich the data that had been collected through the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Gaining, maintaining, and sustaining quality with the assistance of a systematic and logical approach is a unifying theme throughout organizations today. To meet their customer and stakeholder needs and expectations competently and effectively in a constantly changing environment, businesses and organizations of all sizes and specialties have implemented continuous quality improvement (CQI) models and/or total quality management (TQM) strategies. Postsecondary educational institutions, and particularly community colleges, are no different in their need to respond to challenges and changes and their need to maintain the quality of their academic programs and organizations. This need and subsequent responsiveness has been evident in all higher education institutions by the growth of evidence-based decision making practices, and quality assessment tools and models.

Effective assessment is an integral part of determining what needs improvement, evaluating if any improvement has occurred in any meaningful way, and identifying what further improvement needs to be addressed. Besides the intrinsic need for healthy higher education institutions to engage in these efforts, the general public and funding agencies continue to expect more and more explicit measures of accountability. Therefore, it is critical for institutions to document their assessments and subsequent improvements as part of the accountability efforts for the organization. For public community colleges, there are two main external bodies to which they must regularly submit these types of reports: their respective state system and regional accrediting organization.

For all 48 community colleges of Illinois, oversight and assessment of the member community colleges has always been a function of Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, ICCB implemented a Program Review system whereby all programs in each Illinois community colleges would be assessed consistently across the state on a coordinated annual schedule. In addition to the purpose of state-level accountability, Program Review is intended to be integrated into each individual institution's strategic planning, decision-making, and quality improvement efforts. The Program Review system remained essentially the same for over 25 years with only minor updates. However, ICCB staff felt that a modification to the Program Review system could better accomplish the goals of program level accountability across the state. Furthermore, such modifications were also envisioned to allow the ICCB Program Review system to more closely integrate with each school's quality improvement strategies.

Since all community colleges in Illinois are required to participate in the ICCB Program Review process, it is important for them to be fully aware of its goals. One way to do this is to understand how the Program Review system was initially developed, and to identify how and in what ways ICCB undertook a process of program evaluation and improvement to develop a new system intended to better assist its member institutions in their own individual quality improvement efforts.

Although concepts and theories from a variety of disciplines could have been used to frame this study, it is through a lens of process evaluation as a continuous quality improvement effort that this study will explore the changes to the Program Review system implemented in fiscal year 2007. The general concept of continuous quality improvement (CQI) is refined to examine CQI efforts in education beginning with the Baldrige Award for Education—which itself influenced the development of the AQIP accreditation process which then informed the changes to the Program Review system. Furthermore, the concept of process evaluation is

employed to explore how and in what ways ICCB undertook to modify the existing Program Review system. These concepts will serve as the conceptual framework for this study and assist in analyzing the data. The use of the Baldrige education process evaluation scoring guideline is used specifically and will be discussed at the conclusion of the following review.

In order to put this study in context, the literature review begins with a brief historical overview of the Illinois Community College system with the formation of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The process that ICCB used to evaluate and modify the Program Review system will be investigated through the conceptual framework of process evaluation. Furthermore, since the modified Program Review process has been impacted by the AQIP accreditation model which itself drew from the Baldrige model, the Baldrige process evaluation rubric of **A**pproach, **D**eployment, **L**earning, and **I**ntegration (A-D-L-I) will specifically be used as a lens for the analysis.

Historical Overview

Starting with Joliet Junior College being founded in 1901 as the first public 2-year college in the nation, Illinois has played an extensive role throughout the history of community colleges. The Illinois community college system has grown and in 2008 it ranked among the top five in the country both in terms of the number of colleges and the total number of students enrolled, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, n.d.).

Writing about the Illinois community college system in 1998, Ivan Lach, former executive director of the ICCB, outlined a number of key events and legislation that has occurred which led to the formation of the Illinois Junior College Board in 1965. The first community college legislation in Illinois was initiated in 1931 which allowed for one junior college to be established as part of the public school system of Chicago. The Junior College Act in 1937

provided for community colleges to be developed as part of the public school system across the state. Legislation in 1951 established standards and procedures for creating junior colleges although funding and state appropriations for junior colleges did not begin until 1955. The Illinois Board of Higher Education was created in 1961 and although not directly overseeing junior colleges at the time, the legislation did refer to them (Lach, 1998). Four years later, the Junior College Act of 1965

> Created a legal base for the establishment of public comprehensive districts with locally elected boards in a system coordinated and regulated by a State Junior College Board, which in turn related to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, as did the governing boards of the other public colleges and universities [and] [s]et forth the powers and duties of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Junior College Board, and the boards of the local junior college districts as individual entities and in relation to each other. (Lach, 1998, paragraph 7).

In 1973, the board changed its name to indicate *community* rather than *junior* colleges. With the founding of the most recent college and district in 1990 (Heartland Community College), the entire state has been included within 39 community college districts which are currently comprised of 48 colleges (see Figure 1).
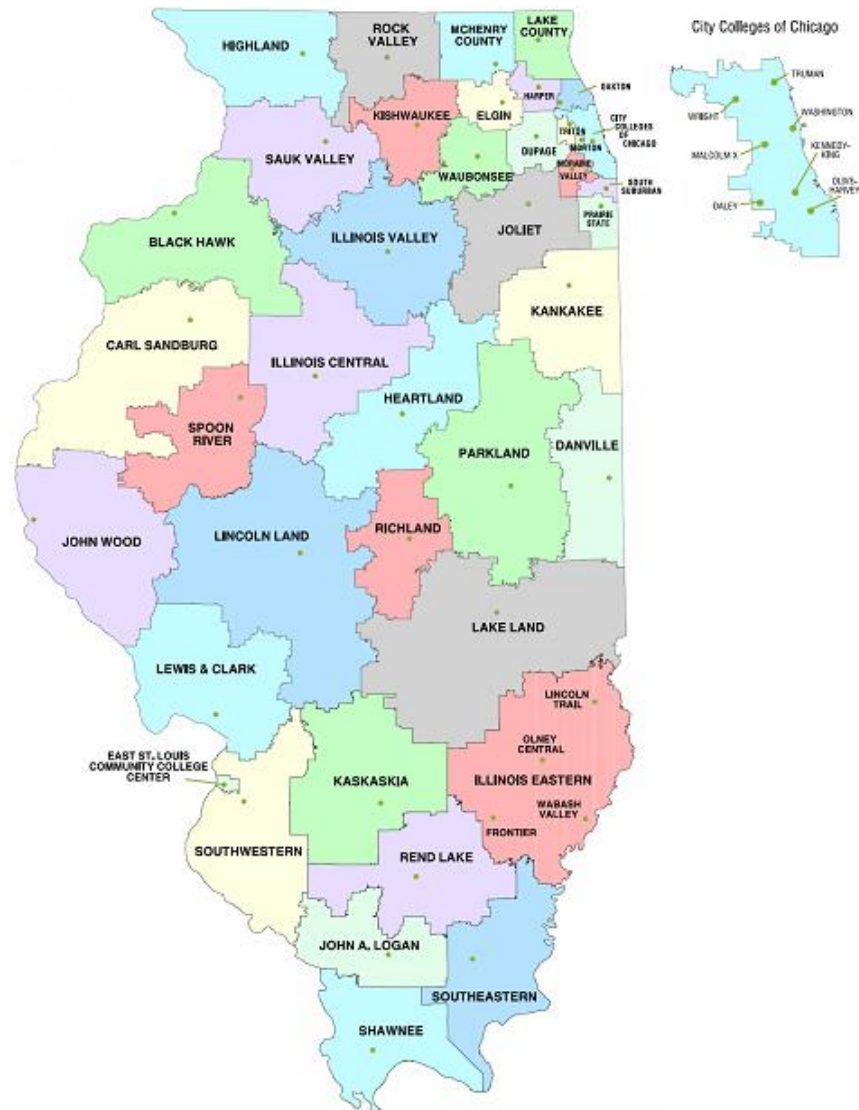
Figure 1. *Illinois Community College Districts*

The Illinois Public Community College Act (110 ILCS 805) contains the guidelines for the operation of the community college system within the state including the Illinois Community College Board. The enumerated duties of the ICCB include "provid[ing] statewide planning for community colleges as institutions of higher education and co-ordinate the programs, services and activities of all community colleges in the State" (Article II, §2-12, ¶ a) and "determin[ing] efficient and adequate standards for community colleges for the physical plant, heating, lighting, ventilation, sanitation, safety, equipment and supplies, instruction and teaching, curriculum,

library, operation, maintenance, administration and supervision, and to grant recognition

certificates to community colleges meeting such standards: (Article II, §2-12, ¶ f). Furthermore,

the ICCB is charged to "make a thorough, comprehensive and continuous study of the status of

community college education, its problems, needs for improvement, and projected developments

and shall make a detailed report thereof to the General Assembly" (Article II, §2-10). From the

duties and roles outlined in the statute, as the coordinating body for the community college

system in Illinois, the ICCB lists its four-fold mission on its website (www.iccb.org) as the

following:

1. To administer the Public Community College Act in a manner that maximizes the ability of the community colleges to serve their communities.
2. To promote cooperation within the system and accommodate those state of Illinois initiatives that are appropriate for community colleges.
3. To be accountable to the students, employers, lawmakers, and taxpayers of Illinois.
4. To provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities for the individuals and communities they serve. (ICCB, 2006)

Accountability and assessment have been built into the legislation governing Illinois

community colleges and is clearly reflected in the ICCB's mission statement. The development

of the Program Review system in the mid-1980s is one of the ways in which the ICCB strives to

meet this goal itself along with each of the member institutions. Broader accountability

initiatives in the state have been influences in a previous modification to the Program Review

system as well as the modifications which are the focus of this study.

ICCB Program Review

ICCB developed the following rules in 1983 regarding the evaluation and review of

program at each of the state's community colleges:

1. Each college shall have a systematic, college-wide program review process for evaluating all of its instructional, student services, and academic support programs at least once within a five-year cycle.
2. The minimum review criteria for program review shall be program need, program cost, and program quality, as defined by each college.

3. Each college shall develop a schedule that shows when each program will be reviewed during each five-year cycle. Occupational programs shall be scheduled in the year following their inclusion in the ICCB follow-up study unless the college obtains an exception in writing from the ICCB. The review of general education objectives of the academic programs shall be scheduled annually, but may focus each year on areas specified by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and ICCB.

4. The ICCB may request the college to include special reviews of programs that have been identified as a result of State-level analyses, legislative resolutions, or Illinois Board of Higher Education policy studies by notifying the college of this request prior to January 1 of the year the special review is to be conducted.

5. Each college shall keep on file for ICCB recognition purposes a copy of its current program review process, its five-year schedule for program review, and complete reports of program reviews conducted during the past five years.

6. Each college shall submit to the ICCB by August 1 each year a summary report of its previous year's program review results in a format designated by the ICCB and a copy of its current five-year schedule of program reviews. (ICCB, 2008, Section 1501.303,d)

Both the ICCB and the IBHE view the need for program review as a key part of their planning and accountability initiatives. An initiative by ICCB in 1989 established statewide accountability measures and the program review process was amended to require colleges to submit documentation examining the cost-effectiveness of their institution. After the IBHE instituted the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) initiative in 1991, the ICCB Program Review system was modified and a program review guide was published by ICCB two years later in 1993: *Community College PQP/Program Review Guide* (ICCB, 2005a). Each year since the creation of the guide in 1993, ICCB would also publish an annual addendum to the guiding specifying any other special inquiries as indicated the 2004-2005 addendum:

> This *Addendum* contains supplemental instructions and reporting requirements for community colleges to address in their Fiscal Year 2005 Accountability/Program Review Reports. Information regarding the completion of Parts A and B, which are standard items in the annual report, is included in the *Community College PQP/Program Review Guide* (December 1993). Each year as a part of the Accountability/Program Review reporting process, the colleges have been asked to respond in Parts C and D of their reports to special inquiries based on issues from the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board state-level initiatives. (ICCB, 2005a, p. 1)

Subsequent to that time and leading up to the 2007 modifications under study herein, several more Illinois initiatives occurred which were factors leading up to the work of the 2005 Task Force including the development of the *Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities, and Excellence* adopted in 1999 (IBHE, 1999) which has been replaced by the *IBHE 2011 Strategic Plan* (ICCB, 2007, IBHE, 2007), and the ICCB *Promise for Illinois Revisited* (ICCB, 2006a). Each of these initiatives impacted the program review process as it was refocused and expanded to produce the necessary information needed to address these initiatives. Thus the Task Force noted in their final report that

> During the past decade, various reporting requirements were added to Program Review to address colleges' contributions to achievement of broad statewide goals and objectives. Now other mechanisms, including performance indicators and related reports, provide accountability for these contributions" (ICCB, 2005, p. 1).

As noted previously, one of the four missions of the ICCB is to be accountable to constituents including students, employers, lawmakers, and taxpayers of Illinois. ICCB currently produces two main reports related to accountability in the community colleges in Illinois: Illinois Community College System Performance Report and the Program Review Statewide Summary Report. Table 2 illustrates how the later report replaced the Accountability and Productivity Report for the Illinois Community College System in fiscal year 2007 as part of the modification to the Program Review system being studied herein. Prior to 2007, the results from the Program Review process were included within the Accountability and Productivity Report.

Table 2. *ICCB Accountability Related Reports*

Fiscal Year	Title of ICCB Report	
Before 2007	Illinois Community College System Performance Report	Accountability and Productivity Report for the Illinois Community College System
After 2007	Illinois Community College System Performance Report	Program Review Statewide Summary Report

Describing these initiatives, the fiscal year 2007 Performance Report stated that "[t] The Performance Report is an important component in the array of initiatives community colleges engage in to enhance quality and be accountable to the students, taxpayers, and communities they serve including . . . Program Review" (ICCB, 2007a, p. 1). Furthermore, "[p]rogram review has always been the major accountability tool by which community colleges demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the programs and services they offer to students. Review and evaluation of programs at the local level is a requirement for all community colleges" (ICCB, 2007b, p.1).

As described in the FY2007-20011 Program Review manual, the Program Review system was:

> designed so that the Illinois Community College Board can fulfill its responsibility to assure that each college has an appropriate review process, to coordinate and report on accountability efforts, to support local program review processes, to collect and disseminate information about best practices, and to identify and develop solutions for statewide programmatic issues. (ICCB, 2007, p. 6)

The purposes of the Program Review system are listed as:

1. To support campus-level planning and decision-making related to:
   -Assuring the continuing need and improving the quality and cost- effectiveness of instructional programs;
   -Assessing, improving, and updating programs on a regular basis;
   -Discontinuing programs when there is no longer sufficient demand, quality cannot be maintained at an acceptable level, or they are no longer cost- effective.
2. [sic] To demonstrate the accountability of the community college system in maintaining high quality, cost-effective programs that are responsive to the needs of students, businesses and industries in Illinois
3. To identify best practices, exemplary innovations, and program issues that need to be addressed at the state-level by the ICCB. (ICCB, 2007, p. 6)

A further change to the ICCB Program Review system was implemented in fiscal year 2007. This modification to the Program Review system was based upon the recommendations of an ICCB Task Force in 2005 and "were designed to provide colleges with flexibility to incorporate the Program Review System into campus planning to provide both colleges and the ICCB with information needed to meet their respective responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner" (ICCB, 2007, p. 4).The purpose of this study is to explore if this strategic modification of the Program Review system is engendering the expected outcomes in Illinois community colleges. The following are the indicated changes that were made:

1. The respective roles and responsibilities for Program Review of colleges and the Illinois Community College Board are redefined and the purposes of Program Review clarified.
2. To encourage colleges to integrate Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement processes, the annual calendar, data requirements, and program schedule have been revised. ICCB staff will make every attempt to provide colleges the Follow-up study report or special requested materials by the September preceding the August submission date. It is always acceptable for colleges to use the most recent data available. Exceptions to the state- level schedule may be approved to accommodate campus planning cycles.
3. Guidelines and schedules have been developed for reviews of academic disciplines and cross-disciplinary programs-general education, adult education, remedial/developmental programs, vocational skills, and transfer programs, in addition to occupational programs so that the system can benefit from the sharing of best practices and improved accountability.
4. While colleges will continue to examine need, quality, and cost for each program, they may develop documentation for the review and results in a way that is appropriate to broader campus planning and decision making processes. (ICCB, 2007, pp. 4-5)

Continuous quality improvement

With the change in 1993 incorporating the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) initiative and the currently stated goal for Program Review "[t]o encourage colleges to integrate Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement processes" (ICCB, 2007, p. 4), the Program Review system is itself clearly situated in the realm of quality improvement. Therefore, this study will utilize the conceptual framework of process evaluation as a continuous quality improvement (CQI) effort as the lens through which to explore the modification of the ICCB Program Review system. For Illinois community colleges which maintain accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the most appropriate specific CQI is the HLC's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) accreditation model. Furthermore, it was this then relatively new model that specifically influenced the modifications to the ICCB Program Review system. The AQIP model itself was based upon the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award and thus the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric is used as the conceptual lens in this study. In order to provide the context for that framework, it is useful to begin by briefly tracing the history of CQI and how it has been expanded from the business to the educational sector. Although some may differentiate between TQM and CQI, this study will treat the two terms as being synonymous.

Overview

Much of the efforts of total quality management (TQM) and continuous quality improvement (CQI) in the business sector find their roots in the work of W. Edward Deming. In his 1982 book entitled *Out of the Crisis*, Deming listed his set of 14 points for management and indeed the American Society for Quality concurs that Deming's 14 points are a "core concept in implementing TQM" (ASQ, n.d., paragraph 4). As a working description for TQM/CQI for this

review taken from the business sector, Stanley Spanbauer (1995) from the USA Group National

Quality Academy described total quality management as

> a management philosophy which puts *systems* [italics added] and processes in place to meet and exceed the expectations of customers. It is a relentless quest for continuous improvement through documentation and the use of tools in a problem-solving atmosphere that features team action and good leadership practices. (p. 521)

The idea of systems is a key aspect in relation to CQI efforts and is found throughout the AQIP

accreditation model even requiring institutions to develop and maintain a systems portfolio.

Although having its beginnings in the biological sciences, the idea of systems thinking

has been adapted and expanded to many other fields. In writing about the work of Paul Weiss

and Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the field of biology starting in the early 20th century, Drack and

Apfalter (2007) noted that this expansion has been a positive trend but with the expansion has

come some dilution and variability in application of the theory. Rather than discussing general

system theory and its variations, for the purposes of the overview presented here, the discussion

will be more about the concepts of systems *thinking* particularly in the form of soft systems

thinking as it relates to human interactions—as opposed to hard systems which typically deal

with well-defined technical situations.

It is helpful to begin with a basic characterization of what system thinking entails.

Writing in their textbook *Systems Thinking Basics: From Concepts to Casual Loops*, Anderson

and Johnson (1997) listed the following principles that characterize systems thinking:

1. Thinking of the "big picture"
2. Balancing short-term and long-term perspectives
3. Recognizing the dynamic, complex, and interdependent nature of systems
4. Taking into account both measurable and non-measurable factors
5. Remembering that we are all part of the systems in which we function, and that we each influence those systems even as we are being influenced by them. (p. 18)

It is clear that systems thinking is holistic in nature rather than being compartmentalized and narrowly focused; decisions and changes made in one part of an organization have an impact in other parts.

In the update to his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge (2006) stated that "today, systems thinking is needed more than ever because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity" (p. 69). He elaborates on how systems thinking can help in coping with the growing level of complexity in the following description:

> Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing the "structures" that underlie complex situations, and for discerning high from low leverage change. That is, by seeing wholes we learn how to foster health. To do so, systems thinking offers a language that begins by restructuring how we think. (p. 69)

It is because systems thinking is a *framework* for thinking about a subject in a holistic way that it has found application in many different fields.

Using Senge's eleven "laws of the fifth discipline" (2006, p. 57) as a structure to their discussion, Thornton, Peltier, and Perreault (2004) addressed each law in respect to K-12 school districts. Those eleven laws are: (a) today's problems come from yesterday's solutions; (b) the harder you push, the harder the system pushes back; (c) behavior grows better before it gets worse; (d) the easy way out usually leads back in; (e) the cure can be worse than the disease; (f) faster is slower; (g) cause and effect are not closely related in time and space; (h) small changes can produce big results but highest leverage areas are often not obvious; (i) you can have your cake and eat it just not all at once; (j) dividing an elephant in half does not produce two small elephants; (k) and there is no blame. (Senge, 2006)

Another prominent author in the field, Peter Checkland (1999), in his book *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*, overviewed several tools that are used in the implementation of systems thinking in an organization including modeling, causal loops, and CATWOE analysis.

CATWOE stands for a methodology that addresses customers, actors, transformation process, Weltanschauung (worldviews/perspectives), ownership of the system, and environmental constraints. Basden & Wood-Harper (2006) discussed shortcomings in the CATWOE methodology and proposed ways to address some of these issues to make it more approachable for those that are new to soft systems thinking. This greater accessibility for neophytes in the field, including practitioners, is what Ackoff (2006) and Warren (2004) suggested to address the reasons why systems thinking has not been more widely adopted by organizations.

As indicated by (1999), the use of modeling and causal loops is often done in the implementation of systems thinking. In a study of the effectiveness of modeling in learning systems thinking, Hung (2008) found that after utilizing modeling tools a group of graduate students demonstrated significantly enhanced systems thinking practices. A similarly positive experience with the use of causal loop models was described by Cavana & Mares (2004) who worked to integrate systems thinking with policy formation. AQIP also utilizes a very simple model of how the AQIP categories fit together shown in Figure 2.
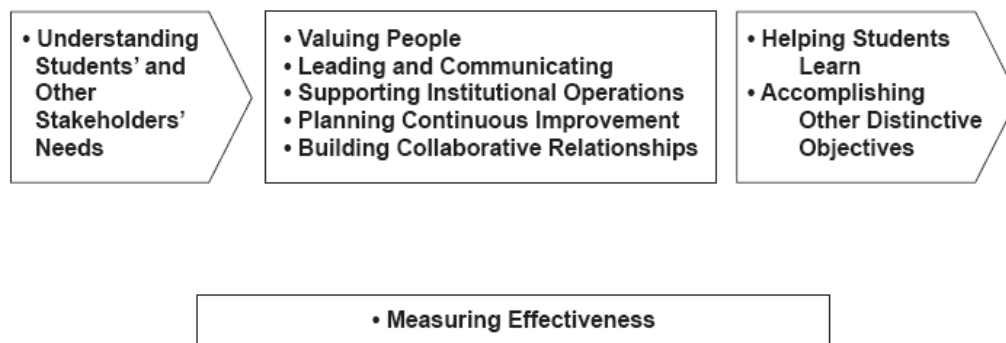
Figure 2. *The nine AQIP categories*

Before further discussing the development of the AQIP accreditation model, it is important to begin briefly with the Baldrige Award for Education which served as one of the foundations for the AQIP model itself.

AQIP Accreditation Model

Building upon the national efforts of quality improvement, in 1987, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) developed the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award through the passage of Public Law100-107 (NIST, 2001). Originally developed for use in the business sector, a pilot program was conducted in education and health care in 1995. Following this pilot, in 1999 the Baldrige Quality Award for Education was officially passed by congress (Diamondstone, 2000).

Soon after the development of the educational criteria for the Baldrige award, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) regional accrediting body launched the academic quality improvement program (AQIP). This project was developed through funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts as an alternative accreditation model for member institutions. AQIP's founding director Steve Spangehl (2000), stated that the development of AQIP was based on principles "that underlie total quality management (TQM), CQI, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) program, ISO 9000, state quality programs, and similar efforts" (pp. 565-566).

Rather than being a continuous quality improvement framework that has been adapted from a business model, AQIP has been specifically designed for use in higher education institutions. Being based on the principles of the Baldrige Award, there are many similarities between the AQIP and Baldrige Criteria. In responding directly to a question about how the

Baldrige and AQIP criteria compare with each other, Spangehl summarized the comparison by

stating that

> The major difference is that AQIP includes measures in every criteria rather than grouping them all in one, as Baldrige does with its Criterion 7. And AQIP splits out the work processes that Baldrige collapses into Criterion 6. In AQIP, there are separate criteria for teaching and learning processes, other institutional goals (criterion 2), support processes, and collaboration and partnering. In Baldrige, you'd find these in 6.1, 6.2, etc. (Spangehl, 2004)

A further distinction between the two processes is that an institution implementing the Baldrige

criteria is eligible for receiving a national award whereas the AQIP program is tied to re-

affirmation and maintaining accreditation. Thus, the AQIP model may be a more attractive

model for an institution to pursue continuous quality improvement initiatives because of the

direct tie-in to accreditation and thus not needing to go through both Baldrige and the traditional

accreditation process (Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality [PEAQ]):

> The criteria and activities involved in the academic quality improvement program are designed for a school to align their quality improvements efforts with a demonstration of meeting accreditation standards. The process allows each institution to strive toward their unique mission and for HLC to be more involved in supporting those efforts (AQIP, 2005).

> Thus, rather than looking primarily toward the past as in a traditional accreditation model

to assess the meeting standards, the AQIP model focuses much more on the future and involves

more on-going interactions between each institution and AQIP. This is in line with what

Braskamp, Poston, & Wergin (1998) from the Council of Higher Education Accreditation wrote

when discussing assessment in the context of accreditation:

> Accreditation is built on both self and peer assessment. The Latin root of the word "assessment" is assidere, which means to "sit beside." "Sitting beside" implies dialogue and discourse, understanding the other's perspective before making judgments of quality and integrity. "Sitting beside" is a more effective strategy to incorporate these features than the more common image of assessment as "standing over," which portrays a detached, self proclaimed neutrality and by implication and perception, a superiority. (paragraph 6)

The AQIP model of accreditation is designed to be more of this type of partnership between HLC and the individual institutions through formative assessment rather than a merely summative evaluation that is often the case in the traditional PEAQ process.

Also writing contemporaneously with the beginnings of AQIP implementation, Judith Eaton (2001), the president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), discussed six features of accreditation reform including revising accreditation standards to focus on quality improvement. In highlighting the recently developed AQIP model, she stated that "[i]n AQIP, the accrediting organization is a coach and assistant rather than a judge or summative evaluator" (p.41). Working together with the member institutions through assessment and quality improvement activities, "AQIP uses direct, cost-effective, processes that themselves are continuously improved" (AQIP, 2005, p. 2). Indeed, the 2008 AQIP Category Revision Project incorporates a number of improvements from the original categories developed in 1999-2000 (AQIP, 2008a).

Such changes in the accreditation process from the development of AQIP to the 2008 modification thereof, are also evident in the changes to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review system. In fact, one of the three developments that were listed in the 2005 Task Force report was that "accrediting organizations, particularly the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central association have encouraged colleges to develop assessment systems and continuous quality improvement processes" (ICCB, 2005, p. 1). Furthermore, ICCB situates their Program Review system within CQI with a goal of supporting "campus level planning and decision-making related to assessing, improving, and updating programs on a regular basis" (ICCB, 2007, p. 6).

Conceptual Framework

Process Evaluation

As ICCB looked to modify the Program Review system to align with the AQIP accreditation model, they engaged in a process evaluation of the system itself. This study explored how ICCB undertook that process evaluation and whether the modifications that were made to the Program Review system were indeed an improvement from ICCB's perspective. Therefore, a brief discussion of process/program evaluation culminating in an overview of the Baldrige process evaluation cycle follows.

According to the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), a program evaluation can be defined as a

> systematic study using research methods to collect and analyze data to assess how well a program is working and why. Evaluations answer specific questions about program performance and may focus on assessing program operations or results. Evaluation results may be used to assess a program's effectiveness, identify how to improve performance, or guide resource allocation. . . . A program can be defined in various ways for budgeting and policy-making purposes. Whether a program is defined as an activity, project, function, or policy, it must have an identifiable purpose or set of objectives. (GAO, 2012, p. 3)

Expanding on the definition of a program evaluation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation stated that "effective program evaluation does more than collect, analyze, and provide data. It makes it possible for . . . program stakeholders to gather and use information, to learn continually about and improve programs" (Kellogg, 2012, p. 1). Seen in this light, program evaluation should be a positive experience that facilitates improvement and better outcomes for all stakeholders. However, program evaluation is often seen as having little value or even as a negative or punitive process.

Because this study is exploring the modifications that ICCB made to its Program Review system, there are several layers that can be designated as a program within the GAO definition.

The lowest level would be the program reviews performed at each individual community colleges which are submitted to ICCB each year. Then there is the Program Review system in its entirety that ICCB set out to evaluate and determine what modifications should be done to the system. This study was designed to look at the process that ICCB used to conduct the evaluation of the Program Review system. Although process evaluation is not completely synonymous with program evaluation, in the context of this study they will be treated interchangeably.

When writing about program evaluation, McNamara (2008) noted three myths about program review:

1. Evaluation is a useless activity generates lots of boring data with useless conclusions.
2. Evaluation is about proving the success or failure of a program.
3. Evaluation is a highly unique and complex process that occurs at a certain time in a certain way, and almost always includes the use of outside experts. (McNamara, 2008)

In parallel with those myths, Metz (2007) gave examples of fears or concerns that are often expressed in regard to program evaluation:

1. Evaluation will divert resources away from the program.
2. Evaluation will be too complicated.
3. Evaluation will be an additional burden on staff.
4. Evaluation will produce negative results.
5. Evaluation is just in the form of program monitoring. (pp. 1-2)

Although these perceptions of program review may have a legitimate basis, with proper communication and evaluation approach each of these concerns can be readily addressed and at least minimized. Furthermore, the gains that can be realized through an effective program evaluation outweigh the potential downsides.

Metz (2007) went on to enumerate five major reasons why there is value in performing a program evaluation in spite of the fears and concerns that might exist:

1. A program evaluation can find out "what works" and "what does not work."
2. A program evaluation can showcase the effectiveness of a program to the community and funders.

3. A program evaluation can improve staff's frontline practice with participants.
4. A program evaluation can increase a program's capacity to conduct a critical self-assessment and plan for the future.
5. A program evaluation can build knowledge for the . . . field. (p. 3)

When choosing to do a program evaluation, the literature includes a variety of approaches. In reviewing more than 20 approaches, Stufflebeam (2000) grouped them into several categories including questions/methods-oriented evaluations, improvement/accountability-oriented evaluations, and social mission/advocacy evaluations. The majority of the approaches fell into the first category of questions/methods-oriented evaluations and include outcomes approaches which are usually from an internal perspective, as well as accountability studies which generally involve an external assessment of program outcomes.

Stufflebeam (2007) also created the CIPP Evaluation Model which is a "comprehensive framework for guiding evaluations of programs, projects, personnel, products, institutions, and systems" (p. 1). The corresponding items in the CIPP acronym are the model's core parts of context, input, process, and product evaluation and ask the respective questions about what needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Was it successful? A checklist was also developed for use in applying the CIPP Evaluation Model to "particularly help in the evaluation of programs with relatively long-term goals" (Stufflebeam, 2007, p.1). The undergirding concepts for utilizing the CIPP Model were described as follows:

> [E]valuations should assess and report an entity's *merit* (i.e., its quality), *worth* (in meeting needs of targeted beneficiaries), *probity* (its integrity, honesty, and freedom from graft, fraud, and abuse), and *significance* (its importance beyond the entity's setting or time frame), and should also present *lessons learned*. . . . The model's main theme is that *evaluation's most important purpose is not to prove, but to improve.* (emphasis in original) (Stufflebeam, 2007, p. 2)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also developed a framework for program evaluation that mirrors the CIPP Model and is summarized in Figure 3.
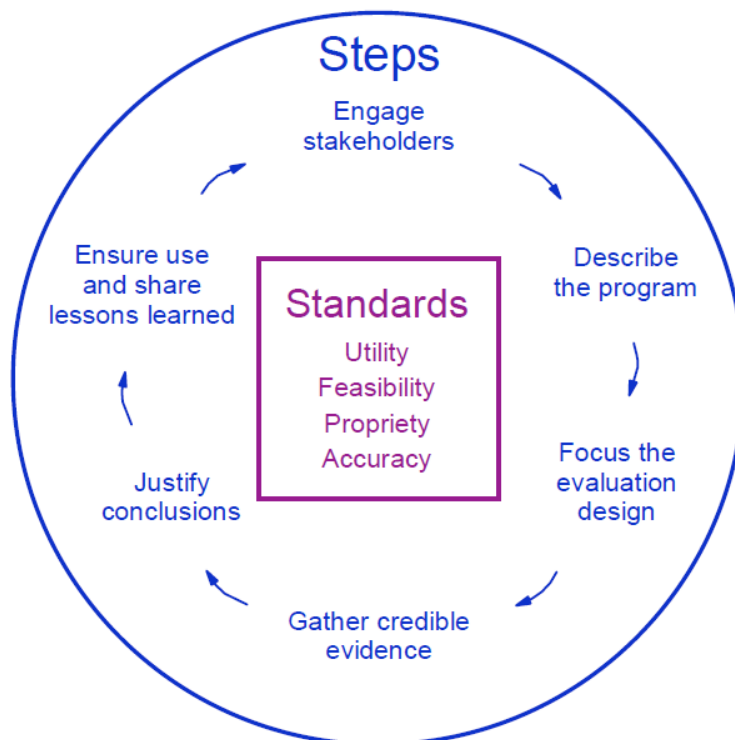
Figure 3. Depiction of CDC framework for program evaluation.
Source: www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.

Key aspects of this framework include the engagement of stakeholders and the learning that

occurs during the evaluation which is then passed along to the stakeholders in a continuous

process for improvement. It is also noted that the "steps are all interdependent and might be

encountered in a nonlinear sequence" and "decisions regarding how to execute a step are

iterative" (CDC, 1999, p.2).

A common model that has been used for continuous improvement is the four-step PDCA

(plan-do-check-act) or PDSA (plan-do-study-act) method which is also known as the Deming

cycle or Shewhart cycle. Moen & Norman (2009) traced the etymology of this model with a

basis in the scientific method to the coalescence in the work of Walter Shewhart in the 1930s and

the further work of W. Edwards Deming beginning in the 1950s in Japan. Although PDCA and

PDSA are often used interchangeably with PDCA being found more often in a quick online

search, Deming viewed PDSA with *study* rather than *check* as the more appropriate cycle

designation in order to put more emphasis on the learning and assessment that is part of the cycle

(Moen & Norman, 2009). Figure 4 depicts the PDCA cycle with two turns of the cycle which

clearly illustrate how the cycle is intended to be iterative: over the passage of time and with

successive turns through the cycle, continuous improvement occurs and the level of quality

achieves higher standards.
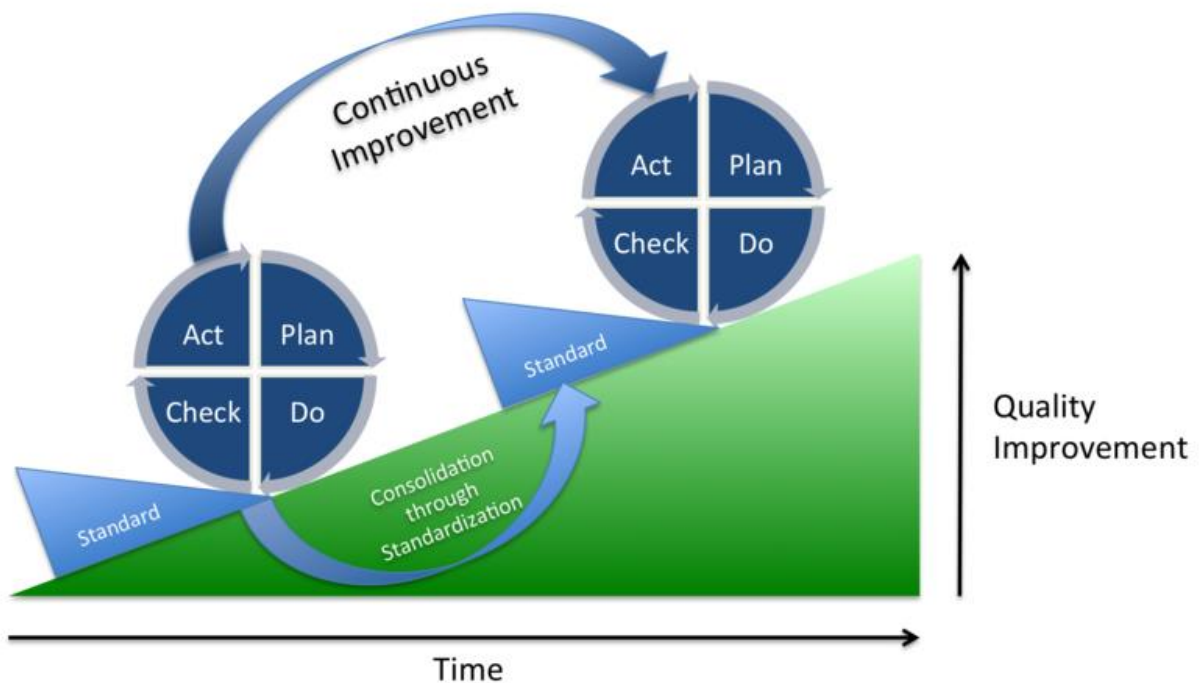
Figure 4. Depiction of the PDCA cycle (or Deming cycle). Licensed for use under CC 3.0 by
Vietze (2013).

Baldrige Process Evaluation

The Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) framework has two main areas

of consideration for its evaluation: process and results. Writing in terms of process evaluation,

Shawyun (2012) noted that "the rotating PDCA concept of Plan – Do – Check – Act . . . has

evolved into the newer A-D-L-I concept of Approach – Deployment – Learning – Integration as

expounded in the . . . MBNQA Education Criteria for Performance Excellence" (p. 8). These

four aspects to the Baldrige Process Evaluation rubric are further described as follows:

- "Approach" refers to:

  o The methods, systems, mechanisms or techniques used to accomplish the process.

  o The appropriateness of the methods, systems, mechanisms or techniques to the requirements of meeting the standards.

  o The effectiveness of the use of the methods, systems, mechanisms or techniques.

  o The degree to which the approach is repeatable and based on reliable data and information (i.e., systematic).

- "Deployment" refers to the extent to which:

  o The institution, college, programs or administrative units approach is applied to all levels of the unit(s) in addressing requirements relevant and important to the approach.

  o The institution, college, programs or administrative units approach is applied consistently to all levels of the unit(s).

  o The institution, college, programs or administrative units approach is used by all appropriate work units at all levels of the unit(s).

- "Learning" refers to:

  o Refining the institution, college, programs or administrative units approach through cycles of evaluation and improvement and innovation.

  o Encouraging breakthrough change to the institution, college, programs or administrative units approach through innovation.

  o Sharing refinements, improvements and innovations with other relevant work units and processes in the institution, college, programs or administrative units to all levels of the unit(s).

- "Integration" refers to the extent to which:

  o The institution, college, programs or administrative units approach is aligned with the organizational needs identified in the institution, college, programs or administrative units.

- o The institution, college, programs or administrative units' measures, information, and improvement systems are complementary across processes and work units at all levels of the unit(s).
- o The institution, college, programs or administrative units' plans, processes, results, analyses, learning, and actions are harmonized across processes and work units at all levels of the unit(s) to support organization-wide goals.

The scoring guidelines related to these process evaluation factors are displayed in Figure 5.

	0 or 5%	10%, 15%, 20%, or 25%	30%, 35%, 40%, 45%	50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%	70%, 75%, 80%, or 85%	90%, 95%, or 100%
Approach	No **systematic approach** to Item requirements is evident; information is **anecdotal**.	The beginning of a **systematic approach** to the **basic** requirements of the item is evident	An effective, **systematic approach** responsive to the **basic** requirements of the item is evident.	An effective, **systematic approach** responsive to the **overall** requirements of the item is evident.	An effective, **systematic approach** responsive to the **multiple** requirements of the item is evident.	An effective, **systematic approach** fully responsive to the **multiple** requirements of the item is evident.
Deployment	Little or no deployment of any **systematic approach** is evident.	The approach is in the **early stages of deployment** in most areas or work units, inhibiting progress in achieving the basic requirements of the item.	The approach is **deployed**, although some areas or work units are in the **early stages of deployment**.	The approach is **well deployed**, although deployment **may vary** in some areas or work units.	The approach is **well deployed** with **no significant gaps**.	The approach is **fully deployed** without significant weaknesses or gaps in any areas or work units.
Learning	An improvement orientation is not evident; improvement is achieved through **reacting** to problems.	Early stages of the transition from reacting to problems to the general improvement orientation are evident.	The beginning of a **systematic** approach to evaluation and improvement of key processes is evident.	A fact-based, **systematic** evaluation and improvement process and some **organizational learning**, including innovation, are in place for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of key processes.	Fact-based, **systematic** evaluation and improvement and **organizational learning**, including innovation, are **key** management tools; there is clear evidence of refinement as a result of organizational level **analysis** and sharing.	Fact-based, **systematic** evaluation and improvement and **organizational learning** through innovation are **key** organization-wide tools; refinement in **innovation**, backed by **analysis** and sharing, are evident throughout the organization.
Integration	No organizational **alignment** is evident; individual areas or work units operate independently.	The approach is **aligned** with other areas of work units largely through joint problem-solving.	The approach is in the early stages of **alignment** with your basic organizational needs identified in response to the organizational profile and other process items.	The approach is **aligned** with your overall organizational needs identified in response the organizational profile other process items.	The approach is **integrated** with your current and future organizational needs identified in response to the organizational profile and other process items.	The approach is **well integrated** with your current and future organizational needs identified in response the organizational profile and other process items.

Figure 5. Baldrige A-D-L-I Process Evaluation scoring guidelines. Adapted from Baldrige (2011a).

Shawyun (2012) further expanded on how the PDCA cycle and A-D-L-I are related and even serve in a complementary manner:

The PDCA is supplemented and complemented by the ADLI metrics to strengthen its performance level determinants. In the A (APPROACH), together with the P (PLAN), one would need to determine a planned approach in terms of the systems or mechanisms, the tools or techniques used, and what and how resources are auctioned upon in the D (DO) and D (DEPLOYMENT) in the configurations and supports of the systems or mechanisms, tools or techniques. In the C (CHECK), one would need to define the measures and methodology and identify whether one L (LEARN) from it, and then A (ACT) on what is measured and learnt. Learning should lead to continuous improvements and innovations. Lastly, one would need to determine what and how the standards and criteria are aligned or I (INTEGRATE) within the same and across different Standards. (p. 124)

In the same way that the PDCA model can be visualized as a cycle that is iterative, the Baldrige

A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric can also be shown similarly as in Figure 6. As indicated in the

figure, the starting point once a process has been selected to be evaluated is at the learning stage

with an assessment current state of the given process or program. When ICCB looked to modify

their Program Review system, it was based upon their own concerns with the efficacy of the

system and anecdotal feedback that they had received from the community colleges throughout

the state. From this starting point, they then undertook a more formal evaluative approach

through the engagement of educational consultants and the formation of a representative Task

Force. It is this process and the steps that ICCB took which are looked at through the Baldrige A-

D-L-I process evaluation rubric for the research described here in.

APPROACH – WHO IS BEING SERVED?
(Include Internal AND External stakeholders)

What do the internal and external stakeholders served by this process NEED?

How are the methods we're using to accomplish this process:
Aligned with the needs of our stakeholders? Effective? Repeatable? Scheduled? Timely? Meaningful? Ethical? Flexible? Formalized?

How are we building in opportunities for:
Evaluation? Improvement? Innovation? Sharing?
(Focus groups? Surveys? Committees?)

DEPLOYMENT–HOW ARE WE MEETING THOSE NEEDS?

How and to what extent is our APPROACH actually meeting our stakeholders' needs?

To whom are we deploying our APPROACH?
Is it being applied by all appropriate individuals/units? How?
Is the deployment of our APPROACH: Consistent? Systematic?

How will deployment of the APPROACH be evaluated?
(Competency Assessments? Exams? Achieving our LEARNING SUCCESS MEASURES?)

PROCESS REVIEW/ ENHANCEMENT

START HERE by selecting a work process for examination

NEXT STEP:

INTEGRATION – HOW IS OUR APPROACH ALIGNED TO HCC'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY?

How and to what extent is our approach meeting over-arching HCC goals or strategies?
(these may tie to Vision, Mission, Values, Foundational Commitments, Enduring Goals or more specific division or departmental goals)

How does our APPROACH support organizational goals and enhance other processes?

Think about how this APPROACH:
Increases…
Improves…
Enhances…
Encourages
Reduces…
Eliminates...

LEARNING – HOW ARE WE REFINING OUR APPROACH?

What is our key outcome?
(What is the specific result we want?)

How do we define success in achieving our key outcome?
(What have we measured/what could we measure to know we've achieved our key outcome above?)

Key sub-processes to analyze:

Use **measurables** to:
➢ Describe where we are in the process
➢ Explain how we intend to positively maintain or enhance the process through refined or innovative approaches:
• Timing/Location Adjustments
• Fact-based Analyses
• Reactive to proactive APPROACH evolutions
• Modifying the people/positions involved
• Including/enhancing systematic evaluation opportunities
• Etc.

How are we sharing our process enhancements across the College?

Figure 6. Depiction of the A-D-L-I Process Evaluation cycle. Source: Heartland Community College Office of Institutional Research; used with permission.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the Illinois community college system including the development and context of the ICCB Program Review system. With the program review system itself and the process/steps that ICCB undertook to modify the system within the auspices of continuous quality improvement, a brief development of CQI/TQM concepts were explored. These concepts were further refined to the specific implementation of CQI embodied within the

AQIP model for accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission since it was an influence on the modifications that ICCB made to the Program Review system. The AQIP model itself had its genesis from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) and thus was included.

As this study sought to explore the process and staff that ICCB undertook to evaluate and modify the program review system, the conceptual framework of process/program evaluation was further discussed. The PDCA, or Deming, cycle was introduced as a widely used model for process improvement and its relationship to the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric was described. It is the A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric/cycle that was used as the lens through which the modifications to the ICCB program review system was analyzed in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

This study sought to understand the modifications made to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review system and the process by which those changes were developed and implemented. In addition, the study also explored whether ICCB views that these modifications to the Program Review system have engendered the expected outcomes. It is from this purpose that the research methodology was derived. Specifically, this was an exploratory qualitative study utilizing a case study methodology and is situated in an interpretive paradigm. Chapter 3 begins with a foundational discussion of qualitative inquiry and case study methodology, and includes an explanation of the participant selection criteria, a description of the data collection methods, and data analysis techniques and processes employed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the study and an account of the researcher as the primary tool for this study.

Qualitative Inquiry

The research purpose determines the paradigm in which to approach a study; i.e., in either a qualitative or quantitative manner. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (1998) is

> an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Creswell (2007) further expanded on his description in the second edition of his book *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* stating that qualitative researchers have an "approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes" (p. 37).

Researchers Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln concur. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), in order to arrive at this holistic understanding, "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring them" (p.3). In order to identify the changes made and in what ways the modifications to the Program Review process were developed, it is vital to obtain perspectives of the Task Force members. Each person has their own unique perspective of the work of the Task Force which together, forms a rich picture of process and the changes contemplated and implemented.

In regard to the principle of naturalistic inquiry—namely that neither external control nor manipulation is used in a study, Lincoln & Guba (1985) "suggest[ed] that inquiry must be carried out in a 'natural' setting because phenomena of study, whatever they may be—physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological—*take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves* [italics in original]" (p.189). Indeed, gaining an understanding of the Program Review system modification involved no experimental manipulation as found in quantitative research. Therefore, this study is positioned within a qualitative paradigm and is situated within the context of ICCB as part of the lens through which the findings are viewed.

In contrast, a quantitative research approach would seek to determine correlation and causality through the use of controlled experiments and the manipulation of a number of variables. Johnson and Christensen (2004) described quantitative research as being aligned with the "deductive component of the scientific method" (p. 30) and qualitative research is more of a bottom-up approach that is inductive in nature. As such, quantitative research seeks to determine causal relationship and test a specific hypothesis whereas qualitative research has a goal of understanding the context and meaning of an event or phenomena such as the Program Review

modifications explored in this study. Table 3 displays a comparison between qualitative and

quantitative research adapted from a number of authors including Johnson & Christensen (2004),

Lincoln & Guba (1985), Merriam (1998), and Denzin & Lincoln (2005).

Table 3. *Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Research*

Qualitative	Quantitative
Naturalistic, contextual, and exploratory	Experimental design with prediction, control, and manipulation of one or limited variables
Researcher is the primary tool for data collection and complete objectivity not possible	Researcher uses structured instruments to collect data and removes outside the process and objective
Purposeful sampling	Large, randomized, representative sampling
Holistic in approach	Narrow focus on limited aspect of event to test a specific hypothesis
Seeks understanding and meaning attached by the participants	Seeks to determine correlation and causality
Thick, rich data and descriptions form basis for inductive analysis	Numeric data analyzed statistically and deductively to test the initial hypothesis

This study explored three aspects to the modification to the ICCB Program Review

system: (a) the processes that were used in determining and implementing the changes to the

ICCB Program Review system, (b) the specific changes that were recommended and

implemented by ICCB, and (c) from ICCB's perspective, whether the changes have engendered

improvements. In addressing these three elements and the purpose of the study, the approach

most appropriate to this research was a qualitative inquiry.

Interpretive Paradigm

In contrast to the positivist approach in which "knowledge gained through scientific and

experimental research is objective and quantifiable" (Merriam, 1998, p. 4), the interpretive

paradigm recognizes that context plays a significant role in the research process and results.

Specifically, both the participants as well as the researcher brought their own context and interpretation to the situation under investigation. Creswell (2007) stated that "the researcher's interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings" (p. 39). The participants also bring their own interpretation to the information events that they share with the researcher. It is therefore incumbent on the researcher to "try to understand the people he or she is observing from their viewpoint" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 33). Furthermore, once the research is completed and shared, the readers also interpret the study and its findings through their own context, history, and understandings.

Case study

A case study was selected as the methodology for this research. The purpose and driving question themselves served as a guide for establishing the study's boundaries. In particular for this study, exploration of the 2007 modifications to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review system and those who served on the Task Force which developed the recommended changes served to bound the study. Creswell (2007) believes that a case study method is chosen for research such as the one under investigation in this study which seeks to understand a real-life event or occurrence. He also states that "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p. 73). Furthermore, when a researcher is seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of a well-bounded occurrence like the revisions to the ICCB Program Review system, a case study methodology is a good approach to employ.

In discussing the case as a bounded system, Johnson & Christensen (2004) state researchers using this approach "study how the system operates . . . are interested in holistic description . . . and it is important to understand how the parts operate together in order to

understand the system (i.e., the case)" (p. 377). Thus beyond having a bounded focus, a case study approach is also holistic and examines the system or phenomenon in its particular context, lending itself the appropriate methodological choice for this study.

Robert Yin (2003) succinctly describes three criteria that must be considered when choosing a research methodology:

1. the type of research questions posed;

2. the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events; and

3. the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. (p. 5)

In respect to Yin's first criterion, the purpose and the driving questions for this study resulted in the selection of a qualitative approach and also fit within Yin's framework for selecting a case study research methodology. Yin's second criterion deals with whether the researcher has control over the event. Modification to the ICCB Program Review system (i.e., the event) has already occurred and therefore, is not in the control of the researcher. Finally, this study explores how and in what ways the current Program Review system was modified, something about which little or nothing is known, and thus fits well with Yin's third criterion.

According to Yin (2003), this third criterion assists the researcher to differentiate between using a historical narrative or case study approach. Yin described this difference principally in terms of the type of access the researcher has to the event(s) and direct participants being explored:

> Histories are the preferred strategy when there is virtually no access or control. Thus, the distinctive contribution of the historical method is in dealing with the "dead" past—that is, when no relevant persons are alive to report, even retrospectively, what occurred and when the investigator must rely on primary documents, secondary documents, and cultural and physical artifacts as the main sources of evidence. . . . [T]he case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, but it adds two sources of evidence not usually included in the historian's repertoire: direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events. . . . [A]lthough case studies

and histories can overlap, the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence. (pp. 7-8)

For this research, those directly involved were available and thus the primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews with those that served on the ICCB Program Review system Task Force. Therefore, in keeping with Yin's three criteria, this would indeed be considered a contemporary phenomenon and supports the selection of a case study approach for this research.

In her revised and expanded edition, Sharan Merriam (1998) reflected on her own previous description of the case study defined in terms of the end product (Merriam, 1988) as well as that of Yin (1989) who defined it in terms of the research process. She concludes that "the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of the study . . . the case [is] a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 27). The exploration into the specific changes made to the ICCB Program Review system clearly is investigating a well-defined and finite set of outcomes. Furthermore, this research sought to understand the process whereby these changes were developed and implemented by ICCB but did not, however, contemplate how the individual institutions implemented the changes. In looking at a process such as this one, Merriam (1998) further stated that the "case study is a particularly suitable design if you are interested in process" (p. 33).

In summary, the selection of a case study methodology for this research was supported by the nature and focus of the research:

1. The study explored a bounded system which is a defining characteristic of case study research (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2007).

2. Yin's (2003) three research approach conditions for selecting case study were met in this research.

Case Selection

This study about the ICCB Program Review system was limited to exploring changes in the process that ICCB implemented in fiscal year 2007. Seeking to gain an in-depth understanding about the change in the ICCB Program Review system required collecting data primarily from interview material as well as documents. The use of multiple data collection methods is a common feature of a case study approach mentioned by Creswell (2007) and Johnson & Christensen (2004).

Site Selection

This study was focused on exploring the process of strategic modification to the Program Review system by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and whether it engendered the expected initial outcomes for ICCB. The perspective sought was then clearly from that of ICCB rather than from the individual colleges' viewpoints. Therefore, the site selection was limited to the single institution of the Illinois Community College Board.

Purposeful Sampling

According to Creswell (2007), purposeful sampling is done when the "inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). Merriam (1998) agrees with this description and states that "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). Therefore, only those individuals who served on the ICCB Task Force were invited to participate in the study.

Johnson & Christensen (2004) summarize purposeful sampling as "a nonrandom sampling technique in which the researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to

participate in a research study" (p. 215). This approach is best suited to meet one of the most vital aspects of qualitative inquiry: to gather rich, thick data from those who know the most about the phenomenon under investigation. This differs from quantitative inquiry which seeks data from random samples that can then be generalized to the larger population as a whole. Rather than trying to randomly sample and hope that the participants would be able to shed light on the study. Merriam (1998) states that "the criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information rich cases" (pp. 61-2). Furthermore, it is important to use a number of sources so that multiple insights and perspectives can be collected to enhance and strengthen the understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, only those involved in the ICCB process to change the Program Review system constituted the sample pool of those eligible to be invited to participate in the study as these are the only individuals familiar with the study topic.

The report submitted to the ICCB was authored by three higher education consultants employed by ICCB for this specific project. These three individuals worked with the larger Task Force comprised of nine college representatives and six ICCB staff members. In order to gather a deeper understanding of the process and a variety of perspective in order to gather the most rich, thick data possible, all of the 18 participants comprised the potential sample pool. Since one aspects of this study was explore whether the changes to the Program Review system had engendered the expected initial outcomes for ICCB, the staff members from ICCB were particularly well situated to provide this type of information. Furthermore, it was felt that those community college Task Force members who were not employees of ICCB and were still working in the Illinois community college system would best be able to provide the richest data for the study. An investigation was undertaken to verify which Task Force members were still

employed by the Illinois community college system. Therefore, from the potential full sample

pool, six Task Force members were invited from among the two types of Task Force members

(ICCB staff and community college representatives) as well as the three consultants. Table 4

displays the categorization of the participant selection pool.

Table 4. *Summary of participant selection pool*

	Community College	Consultants	ICCB Staff	Total
Original members of Task Force	9	3	6	18
Task Force member currently involved in Illinois community college system	3		3	6
Invited to participate in study	3	3	3	9

Participant Selection

Participant selection was purposeful and directed to specifically shed light and

understanding on the given research purpose. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state, "A good

informant is one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to

reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed and is willing to participate in the study" (p.

228).

Seeking to understand the changes to the ICCB Program Review system and how the

modifications were made, those who served on the Task Force that recommended the changes

were the best situated to inform this study. The 18 members of the Task Force were the only

individuals eligible to be invited as participants in this study. A further criterion that was used for

participant selection was that the college representatives and ICCB staff members from the Task

Force needed to still be involved in the Illinois community college system. It was felt that only

those who were still involved would be knowledgeable with the information required to address the purpose of this research.

Since the Task Force completed its work and the report was submitted in 2005, a number of individuals from the Task Force were no longer involved at the time of this research in Illinois community colleges due to retirements or relocations out of the state. Therefore, along with the three educational consultants, six individuals from the other 15 original Task Force members remained employed in the Illinois community college system and were invited to participate in the study. The invitations to participate resulted in the sample pool for the study as follows: (a) the three educational consultants, (b) three college representatives (from the nine who served on the Task Force), and (c) three ICCB staff members (from the six that served on the original Task Force). Of the nine total individuals who were invited, eight were able to participate in the study as reflected in the final row of Table 5.

Table 5. *Summary of participants*

	Community College	Consultants	ICCB Staff	Total
Original members of Task Force	9	3	6	18
Task Force member currently involved in Illinois community college system	3		3	6
Invited to participate in study	3	3	3	9
Participated in study	2	3	3	8

Contact Protocol

The development and use of a protocol in contacting the participants of the study insured a consistent approach and collection of data. Yin (1989) states that the use of a protocol helps to

both anticipate and plan for issues that may arise as well as increase the reliability of the study. Therefore, the following contact protocol will be used in this investigation.

1. Verification of Task Force members still working in the Illinois community college system.

2. Invitation extended to the individuals to participate made with an introductory e-mail describing the study coupled with a follow-up telephone call.

3. Once agreement obtained to participate, a copy of the informed consent form was sent via e-mail.

4. Arranged interview (date, time, location) convenient for the participant.

5. One week prior to interview, copy of interview questions sent via e-mail and interview date, time, and location re-confirmed.

Data Collection

Creswell (2007) stated that "unquestionably, the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information" (p. 43). Unlike the objective, numeric data found in quantitative research, the form of data found in qualitative research is mostly verbal found through interviews, documents, and observation (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Particularly because of the qualitative nature of the data that was gathered in this study, it was important to use multiple sources and types of data to develop a complete picture of the changes made to the ICCB Program Review system. Yin (1989) stated that "the use of multiple sources of evidence…Allows the investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and observational issues" and that "the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry" (p. 97).

For this study regarding the changes that ICCB made to the Program Review system, four sources of data were used. These data collection methods consisted of (a) demographic questionnaire, (b) semi-structured interviews, (c) documents, and (d) field notes.

Demographic Questionnaire

In order to facilitate an efficient use of the time for each interview, basic demographic information was collected through the use of a pre-interview questionnaire. All participants completed the questionnaire in order to gather information which served as contextual background of the participants of the study. Copies of the questionnaires used for both ICCB and non-ICCB participants can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

The demographic questionnaires were administered through the use of SurveyMonkey®, a web-based survey tool. A link to the questionnaire was sent to the participants one to two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the interviews. As necessary, follow-up reminder emails were sent to encourage completion of the questionnaire. This popular survey tool provides researchers the means to create user-friendly surveys, readily collect responses, and analyze the results. A variety of plans are available to choose starting from a free basic plan that allows 10 questions and 100 responses per survey which was more than adequate for this study. Surveys can be created from scratch or by editing a variety of templates that are provided and can include 15 different types of questions. For this study, the demographic questionnaire was created using the intuitive design tools.

Semi-structured Interviews

A common form of data collection in qualitative research is through the use of interviews (Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Indeed, Yin (1989) stated that "one of the most

important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 88). For this study, face-to-face semi-structured interviews served as the primary source of data.

There is a range of interview formats that can be utilized in any research, from highly structured and standardized questions to a more informal and conversational approach (Merriam, 1998). A semi-structured interview format was adopted for this study consisting of a set of open-ended questions that were used as a guide in each interview. The questions were open-ended to allow and encourage greater depth of responses. In order to assist participants' comfort in each interview and therefore provide more in-depth answers, adequate time was taken prior to each interview to describe the nature of the study. Probing and follow up questions were also used to garner a deeper understanding by the researcher.

In order to provide consistency with the data collection across participants, an interview guide was developed to initiate and help direct each interview. This guide was sent by email to each participant one week prior to the interview so that they could be more prepared, if they so desired. A table which maps the interview questions to the study's driving questions can be found in Appendix E.

In order to ensure that the most accurate representation of what was said, each interview was audio recorded using two recording devices. These audio recordings were sent to a transcriptionist to transcribe the interview session. In addition, each participant received a copy of the transcript for review to check for accuracy. This member checking was completed prior to using the transcript for data analysis.

Documents

Another source of data that was used in this study was the review of documents pertinent to the modifications that ICCB did to the Program Review system. These were gathered from the

ICCB web site (for current documentation about the process) as well as any and all relevant documents from the Task Force (including meeting minutes, and the survey instrument used in the process) that could be collected from the participants.

Documents provide an important data source of what occurred and helped to triangulate data collected from other sources. Merriam (1998) stated that "one of the greatest advantages in using documentary material is its stability. Unlike interviewing an observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied. Documentary data are "objective" sources of data compared to other forms" (p. 126). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also state that the stability of documents was "both in the sense that they may accurately reflect situations it occurred at some time in the past and that they can be analyzed and reanalyzed without undergoing changes in the interim" (p. 277). The documents that were collected for this study about the ICCB Program Review modifications provided an objective description of what happened in the meetings regarding the changes.

Beyond providing an unbiased snapshot of what occurred that is stable with the passage of time, "documentary data are particularly good sources for *qualitative* case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (Merriam, 1998, p. 126). Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985) described documents as a "*rich* source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the context they represent. The richness includes the fact that they appear in a natural language of the setting" (p. 277). Drawing upon the documents that were gathered and generated by the task team during the changes to the ICCB Program Review system, a clearer picture of the context in which the change occurred was obtained.

Since the website used to store the material used during the Program Review evaluation process was no longer active at the time of this research, it was not possible to locate all of the documents generated and available at the time of the review process. However, one of the consultants involved in the project had saved all of her documents from the process and provided these archival documents to the researcher which greatly increased the number of extant documents germane to this study. Included in these documents were notes from some meetings, draft and intermediate reports, results from a survey to colleges across the state (although not the actual survey instrument), and the response that the consultants submitted to the original request for proposal (RFP) from ICCB.

Field Notes

Creswell (2007) described field notes as consisting of both descriptive and reflective in nature. Descriptive notes are direct observations of the setting and what occurred during the interviews whereas the reflective portions are the beginnings of analysis and help to ground the researcher in the context of the interview. Both types assist the researcher to connect with the actual interview through the recall of setting, tone, and thoughts/reactions that occurred during the interview. Merriam (1998) stated that "field notes can come in many forms, but at the least they include descriptions, direct quotations, and observer comments" (p. 111). Since the interviews in this study were recorded and transcribed, the field notes did not include direct quotations and were focused on descriptions and observer thoughts/comments.

Since a primary purpose of field notes is to aid in later recall, Johnson & Christensen (2004) encourage researchers to "correct and edit any notes you write down during an observation as soon as possible after they are taken because that is when your memory is best" (page 188). Therefore, field notes were recorded directly after each of the eight participant

interviews through the use of a laptop computer. Field notes were both observational and reflective as the researcher created memos regarding the interviews' settings as well as reflections concerning the participants' responses. By taking the time to compose robust field notes, a more complete understanding was captured by the researcher and future recall was enhanced.

Interview Pilot

Prior to conducting the face-to-face interviews with the participants, the interview questions were tested in a pilot study with several individuals who have knowledge regarding ICCB Program Review. The purpose the small pilot was to provide an opportunity to examine the wording and clarity of the interview questions validating that each elicited the data and information needed to answer the purpose of this study. In addition, the researcher's questioning technique and interview skills were honed and adjustments made as needed. This pilot group included individuals involved in community college institutional research as well as ICCB staff familiar with Program Review. However, none of the pilot group were eligible to participate in the study.

Participants were provided the interview questions and asked to provide feedback on both the interview process and questions. Feedback from this pilot group assisted to refine the questions and strengthen the interview process. Only minor suggestions were made regarding the wording to questions to enhance their clarity and all were incorporated. A few probing questions regarding external influences that impacted the modification of the Program Review system were suggested by those from ICCB and were also included as appropriate.

Ethical Considerations

All research needs to be done in an ethical manner regardless of the method, paradigm, or design used in the study. Creswell (2007) states that even at the point of designing a study, "we consciously consider ethical issues—seeking consent, avoiding the conundrum of deception, maintaining confidentiality, and protecting the anonymity of individuals with whom we speak" (p. 44). All steps of the research should be conducted in a manner that is above reproach. If a study is not designed with ethical considerations from the outset, then it runs a much greater risk of failing to maintain the highest ethical standards throughout. It is important to note that "ethical decisions do not belong to a separate stage of interview investigations, but arise throughout the entire research process" (Kvale, 1996, p. 110).

In relationship to the participants of this study, two specific elements were particularly germane: (a) informed consent of the participants; and (b) confidentiality of their information. This research was done in accordance with the policies set forth by the National-Louis University Internal Research Review Board. Each participant was asked to sign two copies of the informed consent form (Appendix C) prior to the interview: one which they kept and the other copy kept for the researcher's records. In addition, a signed confidentiality agreement form (Appendix D) was also obtained from the professional transcriptionist. Although all the names of the task team members are public record, in order to provide some level of anonymity, participant responses were shielded by the use of pseudonyms.

In order to further protect the participants, it is important to treat all of the data collected in this study with care. Therefore, all documents, field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts are kept securely stored in a locked cabinet and/or in a password protected electronic form. In

addition, only the researcher has access to the data gathered in this study. After seven years, these data will be destroyed and/or securely erased.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in qualitative research is not a clearly defined step-by-step approach but is rather a non-linear, iterative, and re-iterative process. The researcher sought to discover patterns and themes found within the thick, rich data that was collected. Merriam (1998) states that "data collection and analysis is a *simultaneous* activity" that "begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read" (p. 151). Stake (1995) agrees and states that there is no distinct demarcation signaling when data analysis begins, but rather it is an ongoing process and cycle wherein "analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). He further believes the goal of data during analysis in qualitative research, the goal is "to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully" (p. 75).

In order to facilitate the efficient processing of the large amount of data collected in qualitative research, it is important the data collected is well organized. This logical organization assists the data to be effectively segmented and coded to allow for themes and patterns to emerge from the process. Segmenting the data has been described by Johnson and Christensen (2004) as "dividing the data into meaningful analytical units" (p. 502). Once segmented, the researcher engages in coding by "marking segments of data (usually text data) with symbols, descriptive words, or category names" (Johnson and Christensen, p. 502) and seeks to discover how the data fits back together in meaningful themes.

However, this process is not a linear process but rather the data collection and analysis occur in concert with one another during the research process, and Creswell (2007) describes this

interactive and integrative process as "moving in analytic circles" (p. 150). Use of this type of analytical framework affords a logical and systematic approach that is transparent and objective. Creswell (2007) developed a framework known as the Data Analysis Framework. It is comprised of four spiraling analytical phases: (a) data managing; (b) reading and memoing; (c) describing, classifying, interpreting; and (d) representing and visualizing. Creswell's data analysis spiral provided the framework for the analysis phase of this study.

Data Managing Stage

Managing the collected data effectively entails cleaning the data, clarifying notes, as well as keeping records of individuals, dates, and specifics of each interview and collected pertinent documents. Through these efforts, data retrieval and recollection of the interview process is enhanced. The bulk of the data that was collected during this research was electronic in nature and organized for efficient access. This data was archived and "backed up" to a secured cloud-based storage service for safety with authenticated access from a variety of computer workstations. Documents were also organized in manila folders and kept in a secure location until being destroyed after seven years.

Reading and Memoing Stage

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), gaining familiarity with qualitative data through multiple readings of all the data and information gathered sets the stage for further analysis and interpretation. They strongly believe "reading, rereading, and reading through the data once more forces the researcher to become intimately familiar with those data" (p.158). The initial reading of each transcript was undertaken while listening to the respective recording in order to clean up and confirm the veracity of each transcript. Line numbering was employed

throughout the interview transcripts to assist in efficiently re-locating various sections by including line numbers with comments and notes.

Memoing notes were continuously created and maintained throughout the process. Johnson and Christensen (2004) describe these memos as "reflective notes that researchers write themselves about what they're learning from their data" (p. 501). The process of memoing throughout the study allowed for insights and thoughts to be captured to enhance future recall and require less reliance on memory alone thus improving the accuracy and reliability of the data analysis process. Memoing notes were generated for the interview transcripts, the documents that were obtained, as well as throughout the data analysis. In keeping with Marshall and Rossman's (2006) statement, memoing is about "writing notes, reflective memos, thoughts, and insights is invaluable for generating the unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and obvious to the creative" (p. 161).

Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting Stage

Further immersion and refinement of the data continued as it was segmented and coded to bring order to the data as the work of analysis proceeds. This was accomplished through arranging and re-arranging the data, using a variety of data displays, and looking for patterns and themes to develop. The starting point for breaking apart the data and discovering patterns was through the use of coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe codes as

> tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive and inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to "chunks" of varying size—words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected of unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex on (e.g., metaphor). (p. 56)

Although other codes and sub-codes emerged and developed from the data as it was processed, the initial guide to coding was the Baldrige guidelines for scoring the process evaluation dimensions. This was particularly useful in addressing the process that ICCB used to

modify the Program Review system. The Baldrige process scoring guideline consists of

assessing the following four factors: approach, deployment, learning, and integration (A-D-L-I)

(Baldrige, 2011).

Beyond just the process that was used by ICCB to change the Program Review system,

this study also addressed ICCB's initial expected outcomes from the changes. Therefore, a priori

coding of the collected data was also based upon the expected outcomes list in the Task Force

recommendations (ICCB, 2005) and in the Program Review manual (ICCB, 2007):

1. Clarifying the purposes of Program Review and the roles of the colleges and
   ICCB,
2. Integrating Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement
   processes,
3. Developing a Web-based information system and reporting methods,
4. Developing guidelines and schedules for reviews of academic disciplines and
   cross-disciplinary programs—general education, adult education,
   remedial/developmental programs, vocational skills, and transfer programs—in
   addition to occupational programs, and
5. Revising reporting requirements and sharing best practices. (ICCB, 2005, pp. 1-2)

As codes emerged and were developed, they were documented and maintained in an

organized and structured list of codes and the accompanying definitions. This assisted in

applying them effectively and keeping focused in going through the data as well as provided a

transparent audit trail of the process. In addition, care was taken to capture any emerging themes

that did not fit any code or category.

Representing and Visualizing Stage

The final stage in Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral is the representing and

visualizing stage. Displaying the data in a variety of ways assisted in discovering themes and

trends within the data collected for this study. Although not all the different data was placed in

tables or figures, all did assist to draw conclusions and lead to the findings. Johnson and

Christensen (2004) agree with Creswell and also indicate that a helpful tool to make sense of the

data is the use of diagrams or figures. As there were three distinct types of participants in this study (Task Force members who are ICCB staff, consultants and college-representatives), using these categorizations to organize the data assisted in finding patterns that were useful to compare and sharpen the analysis.

Trustworthiness: Reliability and Validity

The very nature of quantitative research is one in which objectivity and control are designed into the experiment and of the tool in order that its validity and reliability is assured. By contrast, in qualitative research, rather than trying to maintain a detached and completely objective perspective, the assumption of the paradigm is that the researcher is an integral and primary tool of the data collection and analysis. With this level of engagement on the part of the researcher, it is critical to be particularly mindful to the factors that affect the trustworthiness of a study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the basis for trustworthiness as simply a response to the following questions:

> How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? (p. 290)

Some researchers focus their discussion on four areas that respond to these questions: internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, when speaking in terms of qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the respective terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability when discussing trustworthiness which are also the same terms used by Leedy and Ormord (2005) when describing trustworthiness in quantitative research.

When discussing the quality of research designs, Yin (2003) indicates four aspects to evaluate: (a) internal validity, (b) external validity, (c) reliability, and (d) construct validity.

Merriam (1998) uses nearly the same four terms and describes internal validity as answering the

question "how congruent are the findings with reality?" (p. 201). Strategies that can be used to

ensure internal validity include triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and being

mindful of the researcher's biases and the background that affect their interaction with the

research at hand. External validity is concerned with the ability to generalize the findings to

other, wider, situations and hence is addressed through rich, thick descriptions and multisite

designs when possible. Reliability is achieved through the use of a case study protocol including

triangulation and a transparent audit trail. Finally, construct validity is also realized through

triangulation along with using multiple sources and conducting member checks of preliminary

findings. Table 6 summarizes steps that several authors list as ways to address trustworthiness in

relation to qualitative research.

Yin (1989) stated that the use of a case study protocol significantly increases the

reliability of a study and was used in this study. The use of a research protocol assists in keeping

focused as well as forms the basis for maintaining an audit trail of the data collected and the

analyses conducted. For this study, the use of a contact protocol assisted to maintain consistency

while working with the participants from the two distinct groups of participants who served on

the Task Force reviewing the ICCB Program Review system: ICCB staff and non-ICCB staff.

Furthermore, data collected from these two groups allowed for triangulation of the data between

the groups as well as with the collected documents.

Table 6. *Comparison of Trustworthiness Concepts within the Qualitative Paradigm*

	Lincoln & Guba (1985)	Yin (1989)	Merriam (1998)
Internal validity	Credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, member checks	Internal validity: pattern-matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, logic models	Internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory research, researcher's biases
External validity	Transferability: rich, thick description	External validity: theoretical framework, replication logic	External validity: rich, thick description, typicality or modal category, multisite designs
Reliability	Dependability: audit trail	Reliability: case study protocol, case study database	Reliability: investigator's position, triangulation, audit trail
Objectivity	Confirmability: audit trail, reflexive journal	Construct validity: multiple sources, chain of evidence, member checks of preliminary findings	Researcher's biases, triangulation

The primary data collection method for this study was the use of semi-structured interviews. Each of these interviews was audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The use of a recording device allowed the researcher to focus on the responses of the interviewee and assured that the conversation was fully and accurately captured. Prior to analysis of the interview data, the verbatim transcripts were sent to the participants for member checking to make sure that

their thoughts and intentions had been conveyed properly. Member checking was done to verify

accuracy by providing the verbatim transcripts to each participant and was a significant part in

strengthening the credibility of the study (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995).

Further enhancing the internal validity or credibility was the use of triangulation among

interview data, field notes, and documents. The artifacts that were obtained included the

consultant's initial proposal, meeting working notes, PowerPoint presentations, and results from

the survey that the Task Force conducted during their work. Furthermore, the report that was

produced by the Task Force was used to triangulate the data from the interviews and thus

strengthen the study. Table 7 summarizes how trustworthiness was maintained throughout the

study in keeping with the four strategies from Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 7. *Lincoln and Guba's Trustworthiness Strategies as Related to this Study*

Strategy	Components	Application to the study
Credibility	Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, member checks	Semi-structured interviews, reflexive field notes, documents; regular meetings with research chair; participants asked to review transcripts for accuracy
Transferability	Rich, thick description and data	Verbatim transcription of participant interviews, reflexive field notes
Dependability	Audit trail	Transparent, understandable, and detailed methodology
Confirmability	Audit trail, reflexive journal	Transparent methodology, inclusion of researcher as an instrument, field notes, reflexive journal

Limitations

Limitations exists within all research. Qualitative research studies often rely on people as

a primary source of data. Therefore, by its very nature, there will are inherent weaknesses or

limitations in this study that can impact its findings. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that "no research study can be perfect, and its imperfections inevitably cast at least a hint of doubt on its findings. Good researchers know—and that they also report—the weaknesses along with the strengths of their research" (p. 276). Being aware of these limitations from the very beginning of the study allows the researcher to mitigate and account for the impact they might have on the outcomes of the study. Communicating these limitations enhances the transparency of the study and assists the reader in their interpretation and transferability of the results. For this research study, two limitations were identified: (a) recall of the participants, and (b) limited availability of documents.

Accurate recall of the participants. The first limitation of this study was that it had been several years since the Task Force had completed its role. Because of this, a number of the people who served on the Task Force were no longer working with community colleges at the time of this study. Also, even for the remaining individuals, some were no longer directly involved in the Program Review process and therefore were unable to give meaningful responses to a few of the interview questions. The impact of this limitation was reduced through the collection of documents that were obtained in the study including the Task Force's final report. Therefore, it was clear how important it was in this study to triangulate the interview data with the documents that were obtained.

Availability of documents. Although document retrieval was a critical data collection method in this research study, there were limits as to what documents could be gathered. In particular, at the time of this research study, the website that had been maintained during the time the Task Force worked to change the ICCB Program Review system was no longer available. Therefore, most of the public documents used and disseminated by the task team were not

accessible. In spite of this fact which posed a significant hurdle, through the organizing and archiving work of one of the consultants, much of the team's work was provided on a CD to the researcher which provided an invaluable contribution to this study. Through this collection of documents, the richness of this study has been greatly enhanced.

Researcher as Research Instrument

In qualitative studies, the researcher is explicitly a key research instrument that is integral in the interpretive paradigm. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) described the role of the qualitative researcher as one who "attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena" (p. 3). Of necessity, there is a level of subjectivity as the researcher situates and contextualizes the data. Therefore, it is important for the reader to understand the background of the researcher as he serves as the primary research instrument.

The researcher received a Bachelor of Science degree in ceramic engineering in 1988 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During his undergraduate studies, he worked at Argonne National Laboratory through a cooperative education program. He went on to pursue and receive a Master's of Science degree in ceramic engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1991. Through his graduate work, the researcher was the recipient of an Office of Naval Research (ONR) fellowship, an International Society for Hybrid Microelectronics (ISHM) fellowship, as well as a Beckman Institute fellowship.

At the point in his doctoral work in ceramic engineering at the University of Illinois of only needing to complete the research and write the dissertation, the researcher was given the opportunity to serve on a dean-level search team and he began to find an appeal in academic administration. Connections through that search further lead him to learn more specifically about what such a role might look like in a community college setting.

The researcher starting down a community college career path when he obtained an adjunct teaching position at the newly formed community college which was located next door to his apartment. As this college was very new and growing, an opportunity came up within eight months to take a fulltime math faculty position on a temporary basis in 1994—which later became a tenure-track math and physical science position in 1996. The structure of this position was also uniquely aligned with his interest in administration as the college's instructional administrative duties were distributed across all fulltime faculty with twenty percent release time built into each faculty position for the role as lead faculty.

As a lead faculty member, he was responsible for scheduling and staffing within the department among other administrative duties. During this time, the college was going through a rapid growth period and further instructional structure was developed with the creation of administrative division chair positions and the reduction of lead faculty positions. After five years as a lead faculty, the researcher moved into an explicitly administrative position as the division chair of math and science in 1999. It was also at this time that he began to be more directly involved in the Program Review process at the college. However, at that point his involvement was limited because the division he oversaw was entirely transfer oriented and the focus of Program Review was more on the career and technical areas. Furthermore, the college's reporting to ICCB for Program Review was mostly centralized at that time.

In 2006, the researcher became the associate dean of the math-science division at the college which reflected the growth of the division and expanded duties of the position. It was about this time that two other changes occurred that impacted his role in Program Review: the college was accepted into AQIP as the process for reaffirmation of accreditation, and the ICCB Program Review system was modified. The change to the Program Review system allowed the

college to more fully integrate this process into other assessment and strategic planning efforts at the college and specifically with its AQIP processes.

With his passion for community colleges, the researcher had looked for a number of years at going back to school to earn a doctorate in community college leadership. However, it was not until 2007 that the timing finally worked out and he was able to begin the Community College Leadership doctoral program at National-Louis University.

In 2010, he was promoted to the role of dean of math and science and continued to expand his involvement in regular Program Review within the various areas of the division as well as the division as a whole. Overall, he has been involved at the same community college starting as an adjunct faculty and moving progressively through the roles of full time faculty, division chair, associate dean, and dean. With each step along the way, he became more involved in Program Review within the math-science division and through the ICCB Program Review system.

Chapter Summary

A case study methodology was chosen for this interpretive qualitative research study about the changes made to the ICCB Program Review system. The primary data collection was through semi-structured interviews and documents. The participants for the interviews were purposefully sampled from among those who served on the Task Force that submitted the modification recommendations to ICCB as they were the only ones who were able to provide information germane to this study.

The overall framework for the data analysis throughout this research was Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral consisting of (a) data managing, (b); reading and memoing, (c); describing, classifying, interpreting, and (d) representing and visualizing. Coding of the data

analysis was through the Baldrige process evaluation criteria which consists of four factors: Approach, Deployment, Learning, Integration (A-D-L-I). However, the coding was flexible enough so that as other patterns and concepts developed, they were incorporated into the coding.

To ensure research soundness, strategies were incorporated into the design to address the qualitative criteria described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) consisting of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The two identified limitations of the study were accurate participant recall and limited availability of documents. Finally, the use of a consistent and systematic design approach for a data collection and analysis allowed for improved trustworthiness, rigor, and transparency of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are: (a) provide the findings from participant interviews, (b) present findings from extant documents from the Task Force which add richness to the data and provide triangulation with the interview data, (c) analyze the findings around the driving questions based on the conceptual framework of process evaluation specifically narrowed to the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric, and (d) briefly discuss emerging themes from the study.

Findings

In reviewing the change that ICCB made to the Program Review process, the primary data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the Task Force that conducted the review and submitted the report outlining their findings and recommendations. The Task Force consisted of ICCB staff members and two types of non-ICCB staff: Illinois community college representatives and project consultants. The following findings from the interviews are grouped by the interview questions and further sub-grouped by the type of member on the Task Force.

Another source of data gathered in this study were documents gathered from the ICCB web site (for current documentation about the process) as well as any and all relevant documents from the Task Force (including meeting minutes, and the survey instrument used by the Task Force) that were able to be collected from the participants. These findings follow the interview summaries below.

Task Force Member Interviews

There were 18 people who were part of the Task Force which evaluated the ICCB

Program Review system which was comprised of ICCB staff members, hired consultants, and

college representatives. Of the six ICCB staff members who were on the Task Force, the three

who were still working at the Illinois Community College Board were all invited and agreed to

participate in this study. Three of the nine college representatives were still involved in the

Illinois community college system and were invited to participate—two agreed to do so. Finally,

all three of the consultants were invited and were able to participate in this study. Table 8

summarizes the participants and how they are referenced in this study.

Table 8. *Study Participants*

Participant	Designation in Text
First ICCB Staff Member	Staff A
Second ICCB Staff Member	Staff B
Third ICCB Staff Member	Staff C
First Consultant	Consultant A
Second Consultant	Consultant B
Third Consultant	Consultant C
First College Representative	College Rep A
Second College Representative	College Rep B

Appendix E contains the set of interview questions used for the participants of this study

that are also mapped to the four driving questions. Although the interviews with all participants

consisted of the same set of core questions, the non-ICCB staff participants (i.e., the consultants

and college representatives) were asked two introductory questions.

Interview Questions 1 and 2. *How were you selected to serve on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Task Force which evaluated the Program Review system in 2005? What was your involvement with the Program Review system prior to serving on the Task Force?*

ICCB Staff. The ICCB staff who participated in this study, were not asked these two initial questions; however, they did provide some insight that was germane to the question about how the consultants were engaged and the Task Force was formed.

Initially, ICCB had planned to have a Task Force comprised of ICCB staff and college representatives but as Staff A described, consultants were engaged in the process to coordinate and facilitate the Task Force:

> After a lot of internal discussion and a couple of false starts we finally decided that the best way to do that was to hire some consultants to get some input from the system, to review the history of the system, and to see how we arrived, why we arrived, to check the legislation to make sure that we were doing what was required of us and to make sure that the new process that we developed fit those requirements . . . Then we put out an RFP and it was kind of interesting because we liked a piece of one and a piece of another, so we got the two entities together and said can you work together to do this and they did. (Staff A)

After ICCB had engaged the consultants with their merged proposal, ICCB staff who were involved in Program Review were added to the Task Force along with representatives from a number of community colleges. When speaking with Staff B, the approach that was used by ICCB to select college representatives (and even specifically College Rep B) was described:

> we got together and talked about people who we felt had a good process in place and people who were interested in being part of something related to Program Review. I can tell you that that is probably where we came up [College Rep B] . . . [He] has always been one of the college folks who used Program Review in specific ways and . . . we felt like he would have some good ideas. There are also members from our program advisory committee that I think we drew from, so we . . . hand picked some people. (Staff B)

While looking to invite individuals interested and involved with Program Review, Staff A also indicated that a further objective for the selection of Task Force members was to have a broad spectrum of familiarity and experience with the Program Review process:

Like any [ICCB] Task Force, what we were looking for were things like some geographic disparities, we wanted people from all over the state, we wanted representation from big institutions and small institutions, we wanted people on the research side, people who were actually involved in doing the Program Review, so administrators from the different program areas. We wanted some . . . of the other services that are offered. We just tried to come up a broad enough group that we felt like every aspect of the colleges that was involved in Program Review would be represented adequately. (Staff A)

Consultants. In responding to how they were selected to serve on the ICCB Task Force, the consultants related that they responded to a request for proposals (RFP) that had been put out by ICCB. Consultants A and B submitted a joint proposal that was complementary to the proposal that was submitted by Consultant C so ICCB requested that all three submit a combined proposal.

This combination of the two complementary proposals brought together three consultants who had various experience with Program Review. Consultant A had spent considerable time working in the Illinois community college system at one of the community colleges as well as on staff at ICCB. Consultant B had 25 years of experience in higher education and had a strong "interest in what was happening nationally in Program Review" and joined Consultant A on their initial proposal. Consultant C was working as an institutional researcher at a local community college and submitted the other proposal to ICCB in response to the issues that she and her statewide colleagues had with the then current state of the Program Review system.

College Representatives. College Rep A indicated that she was recommended by the president of her college. In her position at the college, she oversaw the Program Review process and provided the final review of the report submitted to ICCB.

The other college representative who participated in this study (College Rep B) was invited to serve on the Task Force directly by ICCB because he had

received a grant through some funds from ICCB . . . [and] had been working on Program Review for 10 to 15 years before that . . . [and] hope that they recognized that there was some experience with Program Review. (College Rep B)

He also stated that he had "inherited the Program Review responsibility" with his position and was also the person at the college who submitted the final report to ICCB.

Interview Question 3. *What is your understanding of the purpose(s) of Program Review for Illinois community colleges?*

ICCB Staff: From the perspective of the ICCB staff members, although Program Review is a required report each college submits to the state, the main value should be having a robust process at the local level:

> it is important to have a process in place that requires the colleges to go through some sort of structured evaluation to make sure that they are still meeting the need; that that program still meets the needs that it was originally set up for and that it is still useful for them, the student participant, and that student completer. (Staff C)
>
> The purpose for Program Review, and it is a local process, is not a state process, it is to evaluate the need, cost, and quality of your programs . . . We just require that they have a process in place to review and evaluate programs. (Staff B)

The idea of evaluating need, cost, and quality of programs as a foundational purpose of the Program Review system was repeated throughout the interviews with all participants (ICCB staff and non-ICCB staff).

Beyond being just a local process, the ICCB Program Review System includes a coordinated five-year review cycle through all of the career and technical education (CTE) programs across the state (transfer and non-academic programs are also on a coordinated cycle as the result of the modifications to the system being studied herein). This coordinated reporting cycle allows for a state-wide report to be developed that helps not just the state overall but also provides a broader context for the individual colleges to place their results:

> We hope that at the end of the Program Review process that [colleges] have an idea of how their program is operating at that particular point in time, but also to compare it to similar programs throughout the rest of the system. If you're participating in the Program Review and doing a specific program, then once the [state] report comes out, you can do a comparison across the board. From the ICCB perspective, it is an opportunity for us to do exactly that as well. We do not look at the programs necessarily in isolation, but what

is most important to us is that across the board trend . . . We do a review of the program area more than the review of a program at that specific college. (Staff A)

Consultants. The consultants spoke to Program Review being in a larger context

although at its core, the real value of Program Review is for the individual institution:

> Basically for program improvement and updating, even if ICCB did not require it, the local institutions should do periodic Program Reviews to make sure that their programs are up to date . . . At the state level it is really accountability and working with and assuring the public and basically the legislature that you have a system out there that is accountable because you get all sorts of, both legitimate and non-legitimate, concerns about the community colleges and some of their programs (Consultant A).

Consultant B indicated that Program Review nationally was shifting at the time from a regulatory

model to a coordination model at the system level:

> [Nationally] it was a shift from regulation to coordination . . . If regulation is the purpose then you want to make sure that everybody is following the rules for Program Review . . . If it is coordination, it is more a focus on identification, achievement of academic objectives, quality improvement. And those were words that were being used much more than regulation. (Consultant B)

College Representatives: The college representatives also understood that the purpose of

Program Review is "really a process in order . . . to be able to justify programs, are they cost-

effective, are they meeting the needs of the students in the community?" (College Rep A).

Although acknowledging that there was a state reporting requirement, College Rep B indicated

that he "always viewed it as a TQM kind of initiative."

Interview Question 4 *How would you describe the previous Program Review process*

(i.e., prior to the changes made based on the Task Force's recommendations)?

ICCB Staff. The previous Program Review system consisted of a main report wherein

each college answered a series of questions about each of the programs under review during the

given fiscal year. For career and technical education (CTE) programs, there was a coordinated

five-year cycle for all colleges. Although transfer programs were included in Program Review,

they were not on a statewide coordinated cycle and each individual college decided how to group

their transfer programs as well as determine their own five-year cycle for review. Over time, the Program Review report also included sections that were not directly related to Program Review—as Staff B indicated—and hence was named the Accountability/Program Review Report: "at some point in time that report started taking on new requirements outside of what our staff and our board wanted. The accountability title and other information started being added to it."

When speaking about the previous Program Review form, Staff C indicated that the questions were poorly worded and the reports that ICCB received from the colleges "ran the gambit from really, really good stuff; a good report that really honed in on where the program was, to simple one-word answers to questions." This range of responses from the colleges made it particularly challenging for ICCB staff to produce the Statewide Summary report that was the final step in the Program Review system. The overall impression of the previous system by the ICCB staff members was highlighted with descriptions including "cumbersome," "very formulaic," and "very task-oriented." As Staff C further indicated, the process completing the summary report at the end was also burdensome with little perceived value: "staff took an incredible amount of time to write this report for the board and it had little or no value . . . I do not think you could really glean too much . . . from this report that took hours and days and weeks to do."

Consultants. Consultants A and B did not have first-hand experience with the contemporaneous state of the ICCB Program Review process and hence responded with generalized statements about Program Review being a regulatory process to ensure that "at the state level [we] could say all our community colleges are reviewing all their occupational

programs on a periodic basis" (Consultant A). However, Consultant C was working at a community college at the time and described the old system this way:

> From the college perspective, [Program Review] was a headache; it was an annual report that did the college absolutely no good; it was an exercise. It was an exercise in part because each college had their own evaluation systems, their own way of evaluating programs. . . . There were [sic] a series of seven [or] eight questions, they were actually decent questions basically how has your enrollments changed over the past five years, they are analytical type of questions. Is your program cost effective? How do you know this? Use data, comment on your equipment, is your equipment and other facilities up to date? Do you have a diverse student body? Then some good questions like what are concerns about your program? What things you want to brag about, basically, they are not exact wording, but what good things do you have to brag about? What innovations do you have? And then any other type of comments. There was a last box where you, it was a marker box, where you would indicate, it was a 1 to 3, whether you were going to eliminate the program, whether the program was going to be continued. (Consultant C)

College Representatives. The college representatives described Program Review as a "process in order . . . to be able to justify programs, are they cost-effective, are they meeting the needs of the students in community?" (College Rep A). However, she also indicated that it was often "just a routine of people doing what ICCB required and shelving it."

College Rep B related that the old process "still covered the three primary areas of economics, quality, and relevance." He also spoke of frustration with the financial data that was required in the submitted reports:

> [When] I look back at the financial side of it, those numbers were always provided to the individual [college]; it came out of the reports that were sent to Springfield and came back. The problem is we could not reproduce a lot of the data; it was difficult to understand why certain finances were the way they were. (College Rep B)

He further indicated that "the quality components were primarily narrative" and that relevance was based on "reviews of Department of Labor information."

Interview Questions 5 and 6. *As the Task Force was formed, what did you feel were the reasons that ICCB wanted to modify the Program Review system and accountability report? What were the goals for the Task Force?*

ICCB Staff. Based on the less than favorable impression by ICCB staff on the state of the Program Review submissions and unfavorable feedback from the colleges about the Program Review system, ICCB staff begin having discussions about reviewing the system itself:

> questioning what the value was of the Summary Report and it sort of spurred conversation amongst staff to really take a look at how useful that statewide summary was . . . Nobody could really answer those questions . . . At [that] the time, staff thought it was a good idea to create this Task Force of people that would take a look at the current process and the Statewide Report and try and decide what to do with that. (Staff B)

> At that point we started discussing how can we make this better? How can we make this better for us? This is not really serving our needs, this is a task that we have to do, just like the colleges, that lets get it done, we have got deadlines, we would wait to the last minute, we would all get it done, and feel very good that it was another thing we could check off our list for the year. We started having those discussions. (Staff A)

Table 9 displays responses from ICCB Staff members about the state of the Program Review submissions prior to the formation of the Task Force.

Table 9. *Issues with the Previous Program Review System*

Participant	Response
Staff A	"We felt very strongly and had heard from a lot of the people who worked on Program Review at the colleges, and we could see by what they were submitting, that the Program Review process became very task oriented. It was one more thing to do that the original intent of Program Review was to have colleges sit back and look at how these programs are performing, to do some sort of in depth process and to submit something to ICCB, and what they were doing, basically, it was one more report to do at the end of the year. So they would fill out the forms and submit them to us and not do anything with the information."
Staff B	"I think one of the things that I was always afraid of was that for a lot of colleges Program Review was not for them it was for us. They did it once a year because they had to, August 1 was the deadline, let's just fill out those forms and get it to ICCB so everybody is happy."
Staff C	"From our perspective at the ICCB we had to write a report that summarized all of this. Well, it was very difficult to do that, to come up with and weave a narrative together that pulled this together in one report, because we would get volumes from one college and a couple of sheets of paper from another."

The goals of the Task Force in reviewing the Program Review system were initially set out by the ICCB staff in their request for proposals (RFP) process and further expressed by the consultants in their submitted proposal. Table 10 displays the responses of the ICCB staff to the question of the goals of the Task Force. The main desired outcome was to make the Program Review system more meaningful for the individual colleges as well as to make it possible for ICCB to prepare a more useful state wide summary report.

Table 10. *What were the Goals for the Task Force? (ICCB Staff)*

Participant	Response
Staff A	"We wanted to make it more useful to [colleges] so as we saw more colleges going toward the AQIP model or the Lincoln/Baldrige or one of the other kinds of more in-depth assessment, as they were working on strategic plans as they were working on the requirements for Higher Learner Commission. We wanted to develop a process that would allow them to use those more extensive internal analyses for the Program Review rather than just filling out some forms and turning them into ICCB."
	"To try to update the Program Review process, to develop a new process that would be more beneficial to the colleges that would provide us with more information that we could then use for state wide analysis, and to incorporate the assessment procedures that the colleges were using into this Program Review."
Staff B	"One of them was to evaluate the usefulness, or the effectiveness, or whatever term you want to use, of the existing Statewide Summary Report. One of the goals was to evaluate the process by which colleges submitted their Summary Reports and determine whether there were more effective or efficient ways of doing that . . . Another one was to evaluate whether or not what we were currently reviewing, which is essentially the CTE and some sporadic academic programs, was enough . . . and they wanted to make it more [of] a holistic approach."
Staff C	"To simplify [Program Review] for the colleges, plus streamline those reports to make what [ICCB] received more standardized. That was done in order to help [ICCB] staff prepare the report, but also, overall, I think it was to simplify the whole process, make it a little more understandable and more open- ended. . . . Simplify everything; make it easier on the colleges and then easier on [ICCB] staff."

Consultants. The consultants' responses to the question of the goals for the Task Force mirrored those of the ICCB staff that had been part of the RFP. Table 11 displays the consultants' perception of the Task Force's goals.

Table 11. *What were the Goals for the Task Force? (Consultants)*

Participant	Response
Consultant A	"Some of the major goals were identified by the Illinois Community College Board in their RFP. They wanted the purposes the Program Review clarified, they wanted to see how it could be refined to better fit the local needs and to see what adjustments are needed to better serve the needs at the state level, the Illinois Community College, what are the key components that are needed, what are not. Part of it was to try to reduce the workload of the staff at the ICCB . . . one of our efforts there was to simplify the report or to make the report more focused."
Consultant B	"They wanted to move to more of a quality approach or a coordination approach, promote quality development rather than regulation and capitalize on what the Higher Learning Commission was doing with AQIP . . . We wanted to come up with a program, a system, and a process that would enable institutions to use their annual totally quality improvement or some other process and still meet the statutory requirements that ICCB needed to fulfill."
Consultant C	One was to update occupational review schedule . . . looking at transfer programs, at the time we were overhauling Program Review, we realized transfer programs were not looked at on a statewide level . . . The third thing was to look at support services. At the time we were overhauling all the support services a college was supposed to review as a part of Program Review . . . to make it work for both ICCB and to have something useable that the colleges could do something with . . . the idea was for it to dovetail with AQIP.

College Representatives. The college representatives echoed some of the goals enumerated by the consultants and ICCB staff about having the Program Review system being more holistic to incorporate transfer and non-academic areas as well as to align better with each college's overall planning and quality initiatives.

Interview Questions 7, 8 and 10. *During the work of the Task Force, what did you feel was your role or responsibility and in what ways did you participate? What was the process that*

the Task Force used to determine its recommendations and report? After the report, what was

your understanding of the process that ICCB planned to implement the recommended

modifications to the Program Review system?

> ***ICCB Staff.*** ICCB Staff indicated that much of the background work in reviewing the

Program Review system was completed by the consultants and then feedback was provided by

the other Task Force members via e-mail and when they met face-to-face:

> Let [the consultants] do some of the work, the heavy load carrying, and then bring the
> Task Force in for validation and next steps. I do not think [the Task Force] met too many
> times . . . [it was] the consultants that formulated a lot of these ideas and then ran them by
> the Task Force and the Task Force gave their feedback and opinion and gave them
> marching orders. So the consultants kept improving in between and came back to the next
> meeting with some more revisions. (Staff C)

At the first meeting, the Task Force spent their time "going over results of the surveys, the

process that we have now, statutory requirements of Program Review and how it could better

align with things that they are already doing" (Staff B). Although much of the work was done by

the consultants between the meetings of the Task Force as a whole, they also worked closely

with the ICCB staff to coordinate the efforts:

> [T]hat was the role ICCB staff always plays: we offer our ideas and our suggestions, but
> in something like this, we are really the staff person that they use to serve as that liaison
> in bouncing ideas off of. . . . We got together and had regular meetings between our staff
> and the consultants and then the Task Force. (Staff B)

> Near the end of the Task Force's work and with the implementation of changes to the

Program Review system based on their recommendations, input was sought by the broader

community college constituency:

> [There was a] series of presentations before the final report was written where the
> consultants went to a lot of the organizations, the met with chief student service officers,
> they met with institutional researchers, they met with chief academic officers, they met
> with presidents, and they did a summary of their findings and asked for input at that
> point. (Staff A)

> [ICCB] sought input at some point towards the end from the CAOs [Chief Academic Officers] and the President's Council; that is standard operating procedure from the agency. We do not have big changes in the academic arena without the CAOs. We do not make big agency wide policy adjustments without the presidents and both groups looking at it. (Staff C)

This request for broader input mirrored the initial web survey that was conducted at the beginning of the review process by the consultants prior to the first meeting of the Task Force.

In addition to the communication and requests for feedback during the work of the Task Force, ICCB also provided a variety of opportunities for colleges to understand the revised Program Review Process as outlined by Staff B:

> [ICCB] scheduled a couple of workshops that I think we ended up handling via maybe conference call where we would have people call in and we would go through the new manual and the templates. We had at least two of those and then we had a couple of workshops as well the following year where we talked about changes to other things, the program approval processes, but also Program Review and . . . we sent out some sort of memo from staff announcing this is it, a website where we are going to be hosting these call-ins and workshops and if you have questions contact us. That is typical for how we handle things here, we will send out emails or announcements and then we will start doing trainings and we are always available for colleges if they want us to come there and talk to just their staff. (Staff B)

Furthermore, the implementation of the modifications to the Program Review system was phased-in wherein the first year served as a pilot and colleges could choose to submit the report under either the old or new system. Each individual college was requested to not mix and match the two formats but to choose only one of the formats for all the areas reviewed. After this one-year transition, all colleges were required to utilize the new Program Review system for all of their submissions.

Consultants. The consultants brought complementary strengths and backgrounds to their proposal and their work with the Task Force.

> The three of us served as, obviously, moderators, but I also because . . . I was actively doing Program Review simultaneously with doing this project, I could put input into it from a practitioner standpoint. [Consultant B] and [Consultant A] really stood outside the box; they were taking a lot of theoretical and administrative [focus], [Consultant A] from

his experience with ICCB, [Consultant B] with her IBHE experience, and we were all coming in with different hats on and it really helped balance it out. (Consultant C)

Beyond bringing her practitioner viewpoint to the Task Force, Consultant C also took the lead in developing and administering a survey about Program Review that went out to all of the Illinois community colleges at the beginning of the review process. She also indicated that one of her specific roles was to collect and review the five-year Program Review cycles that each college used for reviewing their transfer programs and non-instructional areas.

The consultants indicated that much of their work was spent gathering information, meeting together as a team, and spending time meeting with ICCB staff. Consultant B described her role along with the general role of the consultants as follows:

> [My role] was to gather information, summarize and organize for the decision makers then help formulate the decisions that were made by the larger group and move it forward. My particular role in this project was the work and interests that I had on national trends in Program Review . . . The most frequent activity outside of being at my desk and collecting information was meeting with [the other consultants]. We also met with ICCB staff and then we met with the Task Force. At the time [our] approach was to do as much ground work for the Task Force as we possibly could so that they could spend their time thinking about what needed to be done, rather than collecting information. (Consultant B)

In order to get broad input beyond just the Task Force, the consultants also coordinated a variety of focus group sessions throughout the state with generally interested parties as well as specific groups such as institutional researchers, college presidents, and faculty groups:

> We went to the northern part of the state and met with 20 or so interested individuals and went through some of the issues and suggested preliminary recommendations and had them respond to them, took their input. . . . We had a focus group at an institutional researchers meeting . . . we had one in the central part of the state and had one in the southern part of the state, and we had one in the northern part of the state. Again, the [Task Force] and ICCB notified people that we are going to have these so we scheduled them and had focus group meetings on some of the issues and some of the tentative recommendations. . . . [We] gave presentations . . . to the Council of Presidents and to the administrators group and the faculty association . . . to make them aware of what was going on so that they would not be surprised by any recommendations. (Consultant A)

After gathering input from these various constituency groups throughout the process, the work of processing that feedback was the role of the consultants and Task Force:

> The Task Force was charged with helping us [the consultants] understand what was going on at the college[s] more than what we got from the focus groups. Understand it and [then] [Consultant A], [Consultant B], and I would come up our ideas, run them by ICCB, get their okay, but then we would run them by the Task Force. The Task Force was basically telling us, yea or nay, or basically saying there is no way this would fly at my institution and here is why. It was designed to come to consensus and to get feedback over our drafts, the documents and the ideas for overhauling the process. (Consultant C)

Upon the completion of the work of the Task Force and the submission of the final report with the Task Force's recommendations, Consultants A and B moved on to other projects and were unable to speak to ICCB's implementation of the recommended modifications. However, as an institutional researcher working in the field, Consultant C related that the implementation of the modifications included a one-year trial period:

> The first year was a trial year, colleges had a choice: they could use the old method still especially if they [had] already (some colleges finished their PQP stuff in the fall; other people were finishing it at the very last minute). To be fair to everybody, we gave people a choice. The second year, however, was a little more of a full implementation. (Consultant C)

During this phase-in period, information sessions were held for a variety of constituents throughout the state in order to inform them of the new modified Program Review system:

> [Staff B] and I did several presentations, we presented at professional meetings, state professional meetings, to capture people's attention, career deans, the institutional research organizations, and so forth. Saying here is what is happening to Program Review, so we were trying to get out and communicate. . . . There was a fair amount of time and energy put into that. (Consultant C)

> ***College Representatives.*** Both of the college representatives indicated their role within the Task Force was to provide feedback and advice throughout the process. College Rep B summarize the overall process as an iterative process:

> [ICCB] employed the facilitators to lead a group [and] the group was established. We worked on this for probably . . . six to eight months, we had meetings back and forth, drafts were developed, the draft was sent out to everybody for review, recommended

changes, discussions, give you some time digest it, come back [and] discuss those again with input from the committee, etc. (College Rep B)

Interview Questions 11 and 12. *In what ways does ICCB assess the Program Review system? How does ICCB assess the individual colleges' Program Review reports?*

ICCB Staff. The consensus from the ICCB staff was that assessment of the Program Review system is done through the Recognition process. According to the ICCB Recognition Manual (ICCB, 2011):

> Recognition is a statutory term describing the status of a district which meets instructional, administrative, financial, facility, and equipment standards as established by the Illinois Community College Board (Section 805/2-12f and 805/2-15). Community colleges must be recognized to be eligible for state funding. Based on a five-year cycle, ICCB staff conducts recognition evaluations to assure that colleges are in compliance with these standards. All colleges are evaluated on a select number of standards during the same five-year cycle.

The recognition process itself is done at an individual college level and covers all aspects of the specific college under review; one of the most significant areas examined is the college's Program Review process. As described by Staff B, Program Review is a significant component of the review and ICCB looks at

> five years worth of Program Review reports and whether or not all of their programs that were supposed to be reviewed during those five years were. We look at the indicators they used for need, cost, and quality and as far as the quality goes, the quality piece of recognition has to do with how extensive their on-campus evaluation is. Do they look at more than just enrollment when it comes to need? Do they look at more than just whether or not the program makes money versus loses money? What are they using to determine whether or not it is a quality program and how does that feedback into how they keep the program current, relevant, and cost effective? So we try to do that through recognition. (Staff B)

ICCB Staff C concurred with the significance of the Recognition process in determining the efficacy of the Program Review process:

> The Program Review is an ongoing process . . . that colleges should always be in a Program Review mode. I think that is the AQIP model, that it is not just something you do now and then it's over, it is just a matter of what is it you are looking at right now, cyclical, and ongoing. In the administrative rules we say that the colleges have to have a

process that is systemic and college wide for Program Review. That is one of the big things that we look at when we go out on these recognition visits is look at their processes, their local processes, is it systemic and college wide? . . . From that perspective I think it [Recognition] is incredibly important in a wide range of areas and not just Program Review. (Staff C)

Although during a Recognition visit/review the focus is on an individual institution, the review of all colleges' Recognition evaluations allows for ICCB to assess the overall state-wide Program Review system.

Consultants. The consultants echoed the responses of the ICCB staff in that the assessment of the overall Program Review system and college's individual Program Review processes was accomplished through the recognition process:

You always need accountability and the accountability at the state level is to have a system in place that you can say, hey, our community colleges are doing Program Review and as a result of that so many programs are being improved, etc. and so on. . . . It is a process that you can look at the Program Review process during recognition, and that is probably the best place for ICCB to assess what is going on or what kind of planning processes the colleges have to support their decisions. The Program Review Reports should be available, the detailed ones for that analysis and that is how ICCB does it. (Consultant A)

ICCB's role would be a review of the process and that would take place in the recognition process which is already an audit type function (Consultant B)

College Representatives. The college representatives were less aware of how ICCB assessed the Program Review system other than it was their understanding that the recognition process was the main vehicle for that review. In regard to individual college's Program Review report submissions, College Rep B indicated his sense that "[ICCB is] more worried about the process than what the report says" and that this process is what ICCB most closely looks at during a Recognition evaluation.

Interview Questions 9 and 13. *At the completion of this Task Force's work, in what ways do you feel that the proposed modifications to the Program Review system differed from*

those previously in place? What were the anticipated outcomes from the Program Review system

modifications?

   ICCB Staff. The ICCB staff members were in agreement that one of the significant

changes from the proposed modifications was in the use of technology including the

recommendation to create a web based submission form. Until that could be accomplished, at

least the submissions from the colleges would be done electronically rather than via hard copy

reports.

> One big difference was the use of technology. We were able to make use of that, where
> the [old forms] we were operating from, did not; the technology was not there. We were
> looking at making it easier on the people doing the Program Review and making it easier
> for us to receive the information. (Staff A)

   In addition to the increased use of technology for the report submissions, "the reports that

[the colleges] submitted to the agency [ICCB] were greatly simplified and streamlined down"

(Staff C). Although there was consensus among all of the participants that the streamlined forms

were a major outcome of the work of the Task Force, some concern was mentioned that the

streamlining might have been too much:

> I do remember looking at the revisions and wondering if we simplified it too much. Once
> again, if the college goes about it the right way, then . . . the report was supposed to be
> just the tip of the iceberg. The colleges are supposed to be in engaged in this big Program
> Review process and then they had to give [ICCB] a few things at the end and we always
> knew that if a college focused on that end product and did only what it needed to get to
> that, they were short shrifting the Program Review. That is what recognition is for too, to
> go in and evaluate your process. (Staff C)

   The proposed modifications provided colleges a "lot more flexibility as far as what they

tell us [ICCB] . . . Now they really have a flexibility to choose what they evaluate, the indicators

they use to evaluate on campus, and then what they should tell us" (Staff B). This flexibility also

allowed for "the use of the integration of other assessment models" (Staff A) which was another

intended outcome of the proposed modifications.

Along with these broader outcomes, the inclusion of a coordinated five-year cycle for colleges to review transfer programs was a very concrete outcome from the Task Force's recommendations that was mentioned by staff members.

Consultants. Consultant A summarized the anticipated outcomes of the modifications to the Program Review system would be "To clarify the purpose to make it better fit local institutions, planning, systems, and to provide better data or more refined data at the state level." He further stated that

> We enabled colleges to integrate the ICCB program into their academic assessment planning and budgeting by making some modifications in schedules and so forth, concentrating the review entirely on instructional programs and including the transfer program and the general studies. . . . Then revising the Annual Summary Report which the revision made it easier for colleges to report, there was not as much narrative required and it would have made it easier for the ICCB staff to analyze it and to really get the data that they needed. . . . The basic thing was to review the purpose of the Program Review and make sure it is up to date, to refine it to the degree that it better meets the needs of the local colleges and the state and . . . there was quite a bit of consensus on that by the work groups and the focus groups.

Consultant C concurred that anticipated outcomes from the recommended modifications included flexibility in a form that would serve both the individual college's as well as ICCB's needs:

> What we were anticipating was to come up with better quality reports that both the colleges could use and ICCB. . . . Generally we were still looking for a better document that could be used for AQIP and could be used for all sorts of other assessments like some of those mini accreditations that have to go on. . . . Using it for a whole bunch of different things to dovetail with those assessment cycles. An assessment process that would not conflict with what the college already had to do. (Consultant C)

The consultants also indicated that a further modification that was proposed by the Task Force was to develop a consistent five-year cycle for transfer programs based upon the IAI (Illinois Articulation Initiative) clusters of programs.

College Representatives. The college representatives also noted the updated form which was streamlined relative to the old process as one of the modifications. They also shared that a significant change was the development of a coordinated schedule for the "academic disciplines,

cross disciplinary instruction, student and academic services, and other program actions"

(College Rep B) to add to the cycle that already existed for occupational programs. College Rep

A further summarized that the "anticipated outcomes were that this would be a better system for

colleges to use this in their overall planning and not just a separate piece that was required by

ICCB, so this process of work would be incorporated in their overall planning."

Interview Questions 14, and 15. *Are the modifications to the Program Review system*

achieving their expected outcomes? Now that the new Program Review system has been in effect

for a couple years, what are your thoughts about the modification and its impact?

ICCB Staff. The ICCB staff were in agreement that the basic outcomes of the

modifications to the Program Review system were being achieved:

> I think [the modifications] are achieving the goals of what the Task Force set out to do. I definitely think that the way in which we asked for information to align with the things that colleges are already doing. I think that for a lot of them, it is an easier format to submit to us and I also think that creating a different way of looking at instructional programs have been accomplished; we especially require that you look at those areas in that format in general education and transfer programs. (Staff B)

Besides being an easier format for the colleges in their report submissions, the creation of the

statewide summary report that ICCB prepared was also made much easier:

> I know that [the modifications] did simplify the report writing from the staff's perspective. . . . The old report writing, we had a team of three people, it was pretty much our entire CTE team and that is all we did for weeks and weeks and weeks, was churn through these reports and draft out [the state summary report]. From my very selfish perspective as a state bureaucrat, the revisions have helped, because it has allowed a smaller staff to spend less time on it and that allowed our already small staff to concentrate on some of the other areas that [we] need to. (Staff C)

Staff A also indicated that the initial feedback from colleges in regard to the Program

Review system modifications had been very positive:

> I heard after we implemented the new format . . . that a lot of colleges were looking at it more campus-wide rather . . . that a number of colleges were going through strategic planning or they were using AQIP, or whatever self-assessment they were using and they were incorporating Program Review into that year-long evaluation. . . . With some of the

colleges that I talked to, they were very excited about building [Program Review] into their own strategic planning and their own self-evaluation, or continuous improvement model. (Staff A)

Staff B also noted that "Through recognition visits that I have been on and the conversations I have had . . . the reformat seems to have accomplished that goal of making it more efficient as far as aligning; that seems to have worked."

Although the overall outcomes were being achieved, Staff A also indicated that due to staff turnover and being short staffed after the implementation of the Program Review system modifications, ICCB was "still not writing those reports we talked about writing years ago; we were still not looking at specific program areas that we hoped that we would be able to look at from the reports" (Staff A). She further stated that even though non-instructional areas have been included in the modifications, she "would like to see the auxiliary areas play a little more significant role; I do not think that has changed enough."

Consultants. Consultants A and B were not still engaged in the process once the Task Force's final report was submitted and hence could not speak to the efficacy of the Program Review system modifications. However, as a practitioner in the Illinois community college system, Consultant C did report that she felt that the general outcomes have been met and that "the feedback I got from my colleagues was in general [that] they liked [the revised process]." She also stated

> In general, I think we were moving in the right direction and I think some of the reason we did not have a lot of negative feedback, surprise, shock, and violent reactions from presidents and CAO's [chief academic officers] was that there was a lot of communication on the front end. There really were not a lot of surprises when this finally was implemented. (Consultant C)

College Representatives. Through her connections with other colleges, College Rep A indicated that colleges "are using [Program Review] in their institutional planning . . . the majority of the colleges . . . in the last couple years . . . are using Program Review as it was

intended." Although his college already had a strong Program Review process in place at his

college, he also indicated that their process had improved with the modifications to the ICCB

Program Review process:

> I think it has improved since [the modifications]. Because of the focus in Springfield, it created a focus institutionally and we have done a lot more to integrate the Program Review with other areas of the college regarding institutional effectiveness and institutional advancement. . . . I think it has definitely enhanced just like any TQM process would enhance, like AQIP. . . . The impact is evident in the reports that we send back. Everybody is doing a better job of evaluating their programs and looking at strategies to improve. (College Rep B)

Documents

During the work of the Task Force, a website was maintained at one of the community

colleges that served as a repository of documents and information for the Task Force as well as

the broader Illinois community college system. Although the website no longer exists, the

researcher was able to obtain a collection of documents that had been maintained and was

provided by Consultant B. These documents included the proposal submitted by the consultants,

the results of the web based survey used at the beginning of the Task Force's work, a summary

presentation about Program Review in other state systems, as well as meeting summaries in the

Task Force's preliminary recommendations and final report. Table 12 displays how the

documents that are used in this study will be referenced in the proceeding sections.

Table 12. *Document designations*

Document	Designation in Text
Consultants combined proposal	Proposal
Web survey results	Survey
Presentation of state systems	State Review
Meeting summary	Meeting Notes
Consultants' preliminary observations	Prelim Observations
Task Force Final findings and recommendations	Final Report

Consultants' Proposal. In response to the ICCB request for proposal (RFP), the three

consultants submitted a proposal that outlined four steps for the evaluation of the Program

Review system. In their proposal, the consultants outlined some background to Program Review

in Illinois:

> The purpose of Program Review in Illinois community colleges, like most accountability
> processes, has been expanding since 1983 (*Community College Program Review Guid*e,
> 1993). While the minimum standards of evaluating instructional, academic support and
> student service programs on the basis of need, cost and quality have not changed, other
> initiatives have been brought in, such as the *Illinois Commitment,* that review the broader
> relationship between statewide goals and institutional mission. In addition to Program
> Review, Illinois community colleges must also participate in accreditation through the
> North Central Association (NCA), and some individual programs (particularly Health
> Professions) must comply with individual program accreditation. With the emphasis on
> Program Review and evaluation broadening to review alignment of institutional and state
> goals, all of these review processes place a high demand on human and fiscal resources,
> and many of these processes overlap with each other. (Proposal)

The four steps proposed by the consultants were 1) define the Illinois Community College

Program Review system, 2) gather constituent input, 3) compile the final recommendations, and

4) implement the modifications.

During the first step of the evaluation process, the consultants proposed that a Task Force

would "be formed to guide the evaluation . . . [which would] include academic officers,

institutional researchers, and others" (Proposal). In order to clarify the purpose of Program

Review,

> A review of the history and regulations surrounding Program Review in Illinois is
> necessary. In consultation with the Working Group, a review of the Program Review
> Guides, Addendums, and IBHE/ICCB Administrative Rules and Procedures will be
> conducted. In this review, mandated purposes, necessary components, deadlines and
> previous definitions of concepts in Program Review will be identified. . . . A second part
> to defining Program Review is to examine other system definitions and models of
> Program Review. . . . A literature review will be conducted to identify national "best
> practices." Comparisons will be made of these other systems to Illinois to aid in analysis
> of the present system. (Proposal)

Furthermore, a survey was proposed in which

> A representative from each community college (the person with the primary
> responsibility for Program Review) will be asked to provide a brief summary of how
> Program Review is conducted at his or her institution, and how this process connects to
> any other institutional assessment or planning processes. Included in this will be a brief
> survey on what other Program Review-like processes are being conducted at their
> institution and the type of NCA accreditation process (AQIP or traditional), and the type
> of data being used for need, cost and quality indicators. (Proposal)

During the second step of the process, constituent input would be gathered through "a

series of focus groups to be held . . . at selected sites throughout the state" (Proposal) Once the

background research and gathering of constituent input had been completed, the third proposed

step involves the Task Force working together to develop a set of final recommendations along

with a draft of the new programmer view manual. The submitted proposal addressed the

implementation of the Program Review modifications which included an assessment strategy:

> The project team will conduct information sessions at selected sites [during
> implementation] to present the results of the evaluation, and to review the revised
> process. A listserv will be established so that Program Review coordinators across the
> state can share resources as well as provide feedback. . . . During the implementation
> phase, brief surveys will be conducted to assess the quality of the process. . . . [Also,] the
> project team recommends a final survey of the process be conducted in late July 2005.
> (Proposal)

Web survey results. One of the first tasks that that was completed in the work of

reviewing the ICCB Program Review system was a web survey. There were respondents from 32

respondents consisting mostly of institutional researchers and vice presidents from the Illinois

community colleges resulting in an institutional response rate of 62.7% (Survey). Most colleges

reported that Program Review is integrated into "strategic planning, continuous quality

improvement, budget planning, performance reporting, and institutional effectiveness processes"

although several indicated that "the timing of Program Review hampered integrating it with

other quality assurance and planning processes" (Survey).

The respondents were asked about the usefulness of the various Program Review report

items and the summary of their findings is displayed in Figure 7. Whereas the program and

discipline reports (A-1 through A-4) were seen to be valuable, all of the "functions" report items

(A-5 through A-7) were found to be less valuable and/or the respondents indicated no opinion or

they did not use the given item.

Item/Section of the Report	N	Extremely Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Somewhat Valueless	Valueless	Extremely Valueless	No Opinion/ Do not Use
Addendum:								
Instructions	32	21.9%	34.4%	40.6%	3.1%	0	0	0
Data Tables	32	25%	25%	37.5%	6.3%	3.1%	3.1%	0
Program Review Report:								
A-1: Occupational Programs	27	0	55.6%	33.3%	3.7%	3.7%	0	3.7%
A-2: Academic Disciplines	31	12.9%	32.3%	38.7%	12.9%	3.2%	0	0
A-3: Developmental Ed.	31	12.9%	32.3%	41.9%	6.5%	3.2%	0	3.2%
A-4: Academic/Student Support Programs	30	0	23.3%	46.7%	9.4%	10.0%	0	10.0%
A-5: Overall Academic Functions	31	3.2%	12.9%	32.3%	12.9%	9.7%	0	29.0%
A-6: Administrative Functions	31	0	12.9%	29%	22.6%	9.7%	0	25.8%
A-7: Public Service Functions	31	0	19.4%	29%	22.6%	9.7%	3.2%	16.1%
Part B: Action Summaries	31	3.2%	12.9%	22.6%	22.6%	19.3%	16.1%	3.2%
Part C: Follow-up Study Analysis	31	16.1%	29.0%	32.2%	6.5%	9.7%	3.2%	3.2%
Five-year Schedule for Program Review	32	25.0%	46.9%	18.7%	9.4%	0	0	0

Figure 7. *Response frequencies for Program Review report items* Source: Task Force web survey summary.

Most of the colleges provided comments and elaborations on the ratings that they gave to the usefulness of the various Program Review report items. Figure 8 displays the summary of the comments taken from the compiled survey results.

Most of the comments centered on Part B, data tables, the timing of the release of the addendum, and integrating Program Review with internal review processes.
- Nine respondents said that the addendum was often not sent out in time to be useful to conducting the Program Review. Often, Program Review was already completed, or well underway by the time the addendum was released.
- Three respondents questioned the accuracy of the data tables.
- Eight respondents commented that Part B was useless or not relevant. They stated that unit cost data was inaccurate, it assumed spending only occurred during the year of review, and that it needs to be simplified.
- Several respondents were troubled that the forms didn't address student learning outcomes, said that the forms were confusing.
- Several said that Program Review was most beneficial when it corresponded with internal review processes.
- Several said that it was time to update the Program Review manual, that a template would be helpful, and that it would be beneficial if ICCB could offer training sessions about the Program Review process.

Figure 8. *Comments about Program Review report items.* Source: Task Force web survey summary.

For those colleges that indicated that Program Review at their institution was at least somewhat useful (94%), their explanation of that rating is displayed in Figure 9.

Most of the responses indicated that respondents were pleased that Program Review is mandated, and that it serves as a template to encourage program evaluation as Program Review may not take place if it wasn't.
- Nineteen (63.3%) said that Program Review is a foundation, or template, for internal review processes to engage deans, advisory committees, and faculty, to aid in decision-making, and identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Six (20%) respondents said that it is good that the Program Review process is mandated and sets a schedule and deadlines.

Figure 9. *Comments about the usefulness of Program Review.* Source: Task Force web survey summary.

The responses to the question "What type of process would your institution use to assure program quality, need, and cost effectiveness if Program Review were not required by ICCB?" are displayed in Figure 10.

There were three general responses to this question: stay with the Program Review process, switch to a process that mirrors NCA/AQIP accrediting requirements, and develop or continue with their own internal review processes.
- Nine (27.3%) respondents said that they would continue on with ICCB's Program Review process. However, most of these respondents would modify the process to switch it to an annual process, ask different questions, and use different indicators of effectiveness.
- Nine (27.3%) would maintain and use their college's internal review processes.
- Four (12.1%) said that they would implement a Program Review process that would feed into NCA/AQIP accreditation assessments.
- A couple respondents said that without ICCB's Program Review process, their colleges might not conduct Program Reviews.

Figure 10. *Other review processes to assure quality, need, and cost-effectiveness.* Source: Task Force web survey summary.

In the final comment section of the survey, several respondents indicated that the timing and release of the addendum made it difficult to incorporate in the local Program Review process. Several also indicated that "the Program Review guide and forms need to be modified and that it would be helpful if ICCB provided flow charts and other aids to make the process clearer as well as provide training sessions for those responsible for Program Review" (Survey). Finally, the survey summary document also noted that "one respondent asked this important question: 'How has this information been used state-wide to make significant changes that affect all institutions?'" (Survey).

In addition to the web survey results from colleges across the state, the Task Force itself included nine college representatives who provided feedback about the usefulness of Program Review at their own institutions:

> The use of Program Review in campus planning and decision-making differed considerably among the colleges represented by the members of the Working Group. At

some colleges, the Program Review process was integrated into campus-wide planning processes and results were used to make programmatic and resource allocation decisions. At other colleges, Program Review consists of filling out the forms to submit to ICCB. The review process may be taken more seriously if it leads to action to improve the program. It was suggested that workshops on various models be conducted to encourage integration. (Meeting Notes)

National overview of Program Review. Consultant B conducted a national review of Program Review as one of the first steps in the evaluation process of the ICCB Program Review system. She summarized these findings in a presentation that was given at the first full meeting of the Task Force. Figure 11 displays an overview by decade of the evolution of Program Review and was described more fully as follows:

- During the 1970s . . . many states established coordinating boards primarily to curb continued expansion by colleges and universities. Program review procedures focused on economic and efficiency factors—reducing program duplication, preventing mission creep, promoting efficiency.
- During the 1980s, emphasis was placed on quality. Assessment of student learning began receiving attention in the mid-1980s.
- In the 1990s, quality and cost were examined together under the rubric of academic productivity. Measures such as retention and completion rates, student satisfaction and job placement were used as proxies for the quality of programs. Considered together with cost information, these measures gave a picture of academic productivity.
- During this period, Program Review also became a means to demonstrate how programs and institutions were contributing to statewide goals for higher education. In some states, institutions were also expected or encouraged to incorporate Program Review in campus strategic planning.
- More recently [2000s], emphasis has been on Program Review's role in demonstrating accountability to external audiences—legislators, students and families, and the general public.
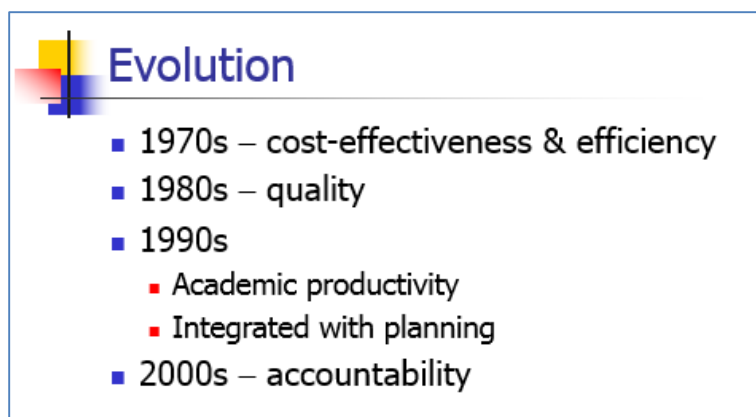
Figure 11. *Evolution of Program Review*. Source: State Review document.

The general purposes of Program Review were outlined in the state review and are

displayed in Figure 12.
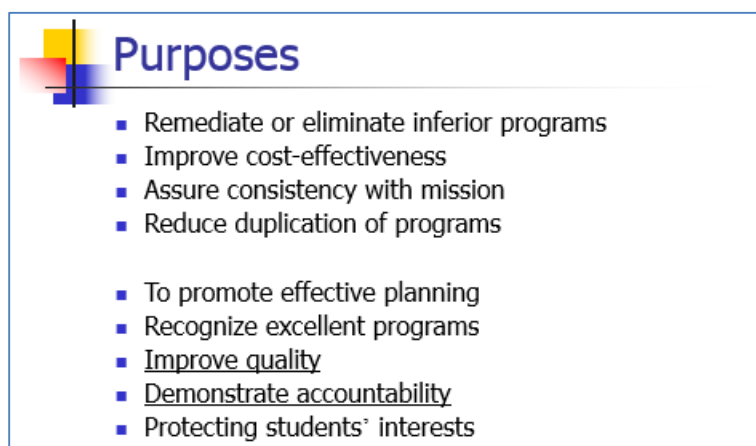
Figure 12. *Purposes of Program Review*. Source: State Review document.

After reviewing more than a dozen different state systems, Consultant B indicated that

there are three basic models for Program Review.

> The Program Review processes among the states might be grouped into three basic
> models that focus on cost efficiency, quality improvement, and accountability
> respectively. These models differ in purposes, data examined, and the types of decisions
> made at the state and campus levels. Interesting examples of Program Review processes
> in other states include Iowa's alignment of Program Review to accreditation self-study,
> Virginia's focus on a limited number of programs that fail to meet "viability" standards,
> and Florida's budget-driven process. (Meeting Notes)

The basic models for Program Review are summarized in Figure 13.

Basic Models

	Cost-efficiency	Teaching & Learning	Accountability
Purpose	Maintain, reduce, or eliminate programs	Improve, update, invest, cooperate	Measure status & progress
Data	Cost, faculty workload, enrollment, & degree data	Assessment of learning outcomes, placement, & transfer	Cost & quality data plus issue-related information
State-level Decisions	Eliminate, reduce, maintain, or expand	Approve process, accept or reject conclusion & plan, follow-up	Summarize and report

Figure 13. *Basic Models of Program Review*. Source: State Review document.

Task Force final report. As the Task Force worked to put together the final report of

their findings and recommendations, they developed several principles as the basis of their work:

> The survey and discussions also suggest that following principles might be considered in
> developing a new Program Review process:
> * ICCB's Program Review system should provide flexibility to accommodate and
>   support colleges' internal quality improvement and planning processes.
> * To the extent possible, the Program Review process should contribute to and draw
>   from other quality improvement processes.
> * Up-to-date data should be available on demand in flexible formats.
> * Colleges should be required to report only the information that ICCB needs to
>   fulfill its responsibilities.
> * Program review reports should be in a simplified form and format that minimizes
>   paperwork for colleges' and facilitates summary and analyses for ICCB staff.
>   (Prelim Observations)

These preliminary principles carried over into the final report that was submitted by the

Task Force which addressed five general topics:

> [The recommendations] are designed to provide colleges with flexibility to incorporate
> the Program Review System into campus planning to provide both colleges and the ICCB
> with information needed to meet their respective responsibilities in a timely and efficient
> manner.
> * Clarifying the purposes of Program Review and the roles of the colleges and
>   ICCB.

- Integrating Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement processes.
- Developing a Web-based information system and reporting methods.
- Developing guidelines and schedules for reviews of academic disciplines and cross-disciplinary programs—general education, adult education, remedial/developmental programs, vocational skills, and transfer programs—in addition to occupational programs.
- Revising reporting requirements and sharing best practices. (Final Report)

Also included in the introductory material within the final report was a statement describing the changing environment wherein the Program Review system was situated. This changing environment provided context as to why ICCB engaged in the evaluation of the system:

Since ICCB's Program Review System was redesigned in the early 1990s, there have been three developments that provided the context for this evaluation of the System and the development of recommendations. First, colleges have developed comprehensive planning and quality improvement processes. . . . Second, accrediting organizations . . . have encouraged colleges to develop assessment systems and continuous quality improvement processes. Third, the Program Review System may now focus on the original purpose—evaluating instructional programs. During the past decade, various reporting requirements were added to Program Review to address colleges' contributions to achievement of broad statewide goals and objectives. Now other mechanisms, including performance indicators and related reports, provide accountability for these contributions. (Final Report)

The steps that were taken throughout the review process and work of the Task Force including the various focus groups and other informational meetings were summarized as follows:

After meetings with the [Task Force] and ICCB staff, preliminary recommendations were developed and distributed to colleges. The preliminary recommendations and related analyses were posted to a website and comments invited. A presentation was made at the fall meeting of the Illinois Association of Institutional Researchers. The preliminary recommendations were then discussed in meetings with several ICCB committees—Program Advisory Committee, MIS and Research Advisory Committee, the Chief Academic Officers, and Chief Student Services Officers. After a second meeting with the [Task Force], the preliminary recommendations were revised. The revised recommendations were then discussed at focus group meetings held at Heartland, Waubonsee, and Rend Lake Community Colleges and attended by academic officers, institutional researchers, and others responsible for on-campus Program Reviews. Based on the advice of the [Task Force], advisory committees, and focus groups, the recommendations were refined and revised. (Final Report)

After providing the context and a summary of the process undertaken by the Task Force, the remainder of the final report addressed the recommendations grouped in several topic areas including: clarifying the purpose of Program Review, incorporating transfer and non-instructional areas into a coordinated five-year cycle, and simplifying the reports submitted by the individual colleges. In terms of clarifying the purpose of Program Review, the report indicated that

> Because of the progress that colleges have made in developing quality improvement processes, data systems, and procedures, ICCB's role can now be focused on assisting colleges in improving local reviews, disseminating best practices, addressing state-level issues, and promoting the system's responsiveness and accountability. (Final Report)

A state-wide five-year cycle of career and technical education (CTE) already existed and the Task Force recommended keeping that schedule but grouping it more consistently. In addition to this coordinated CTE cycle, the recommendation was to have a similar one for academic disciplines as well as cross-disciplinary areas with colleges allowed to maintain their own five-year cycle for non-instructional areas:

- A five-year Program Review schedule should be maintained. The current schedule should be amended to reflect the transition to the revised Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP 2000).
- Reviews of Academic Disciplines should occur on a five-year schedule and focus on the quality and learning outcomes of individual courses and clusters of courses. General education and other courses designed for transfer should be examined. Remedial courses should also be included in the reviews as appropriate.
- Cross-Disciplinary Reviews should occur on a five year schedule and focus on the college-wide objectives for selected instructional areas and examine the extent to which desired outcomes are being achieved.
- Each college should evaluate student and academic services, including advising/counseling, financial aid, library, admissions, and registrar functions, at least once during each five-year cycle. Colleges should determine their own schedules within the five-year Program Review cycle for reviews of student and academic support services. (Final Report)

One of the concrete changes to the Program Review system that supported the other changes was in the simplification of the forms/templates that were used by colleges to submit

their reports to ICCB. To enable a more efficient process, the Task Force recommended that a

web-based submission process would be developed and that the following characteristics would

describe the new report format:

- Summary Program Review reports submitted to ICCB should focus on the results of Program Review, presentation of best practices and exemplary innovations, and identification of programmatic issues that need to be addressed at the state level.
- While colleges should be expected to address need, quality, and cost of all instructional programs in their reviews of individual programs, detailed reports for local use on these reviews need not be submitted to ICCB. Instead, summary review reports should be designed for use in campus-level decision making and should be examined by ICCB staff in the recognition process.
- The Program Review summaries submitted by colleges to the ICCB should be simplified in substance and format to minimize paperwork for colleges and facilitate analyses by ICCB staff. (Final Report)

In order to make the Program Review system as beneficial as possible to colleges, the

Task Force recommended that "ICCB staff should organize workshops so that colleges could

share best practices and strategies for incorporating Program Review in assessment, planning and

budget systems" (Final Report). Also to assist colleges with integrating the new system into their

local processes, the Task Force suggested that

> Fiscal year 2006 will be a pilot year for the revised ICCB Program Review System. Colleges may choose to implement some or all of the revised System or to use the current Program Review system for the Program Reviews to be submitted in August 2006. (Final Report)

The final report concluded with a reiteration of the context for the need to modify the

Program Review system as well as a statement in regard to the expected outcomes from their

implementation:

> The ICCB Program Review System was developed in the 1980s and last revised in 1993. The past 11 years have brought changes—increased emphasis on accountability, changes in approaches to accreditation, and development of performance indicators. Information systems have been developed and improved at college and system levels. Most colleges have developed comprehensive Program Review processes and coordinated them with systematic procedures for academic planning, budget development, assessment, and other quality improvement process.

This report described recommended revisions to the state-wide Program Review system of the Illinois Community College Board. The recommendations are designed to clarify the purposes of the system, enable colleges to integrate Program Review into on-campus planning and quality improvement processes, improve data systems supporting Program Review, and streamline reporting requirements. (Final Report)

Analysis

Driving Question 1: *Why was the modification of the Program Review system seen as a priority for ICCB?*

In order to address the question of why ICCB embarked on an evaluation of the Program Review system, it was first necessary to understand the purpose and status of Program Review prior to the formation of the Task Force. The participants were consistent in their understanding that the fundamental purpose of Program Review was to evaluate the need, cost, and quality of programs—particularly in career and technical education (CTE) programs—at community colleges throughout the state. Although the real value of an effective Program Review process is at the local college level, there is also a legislative requirement for conducting Program Review. In the words of Consultant A, "At the state level, it is really accountability and working with and assuring the public and basically the legislature that you have a system out there that is accountable."

A broader perspective of the purpose of Program Review and its evolution over the previous 30 years at the national level was summarized and presented by the consultants in an early meeting of the full Task Force and is displayed in Figure 14.

Figure 14. *Evolution and purposes of Program Review.* Source: State Review document.

As the ICCB Program Review system had evolved over time through various initiatives at the state level, the Program Review reports required from the colleges had been expanded as Staff B summarized: "at some point in time, that report started taking on new requirements outside of what our staff and our board wanted . . . and other information started being added to it." Particularly with the addition of other reporting requirements, many colleges viewed the required annual report as just a necessary task to check off at the end of the year and as Consultant C indicated, "From the college perspective, [Program Review] was a headache, it was an annual report that did the college absolutely no good; it was an exercise." College Rep A also added that Program Review at the college level was often "just a routine of people doing what ICCB required and shelving it." Furthermore, ICCB staff themselves described their overall impression of the previous system with terms including "cumbersome," "very formulaic," and "very task-

oriented." This view from ICCB staff included the perspective that completing the summary

report at the end of the year based upon all the individual college submissions was also quite

burdensome with little perceived value: "staff took an incredible amount of time to write this

report for the board and it had little or no value" (Staff C).

As ICCB staff begin to question the value of the statewide summary report, they were

also observing what was being submitted by the various colleges and "could see by what [the

colleges] were submitting, that the Program Review process became very task oriented" (Staff

A). Unsurprisingly, ICCB had received feedback from the colleges expressing frustration with

the Program Review system and began investigating how to update the system. Much of the

indications of dissatisfaction that the Task Force gathered in the web survey of colleges was in

regard to the additional items such as Part B of the report. It was in this context that Staff A

reported that "after a lot of internal discussion and a couple of false starts, we finally decided that

the best way to do that was to hire some consultants" to facilitate the evaluation process.

When asked specifically about their perceptions of why ICCB wanted to modify the

Program Review system and the goals for the Task Force, the participants concurred that the

desire was for the Program Review system to become more holistic in incorporating transfer and

nonacademic areas as well as to better align with each college's overall planning and quality

initiatives. Specifically, ICCB "wanted to move to more of a quality approach or a coordination

approach, promote quality development rather than regulation, and capitalize on what the higher

learning commission was doing with a AQIP" (Consultant B). Staff A further summarized what

ICCB desired to accomplish with the evaluation of the Program Review system:

> We wanted to make it more useful to [colleges] so as we saw more colleges going toward
> the AQIP model or the Lincoln/Baldrige or one of the other kinds of more in-depth
> assessment as they were working on strategic plans as they were working on the
> requirements for Higher Learner Commission. We wanted to develop a process that

would allow them to use those more extensive internal analyses for the Program Review rather than just filling out some forms and turning them into ICCB.

To try to update the Program Review process, to develop a new process that would be more beneficial to the colleges that would provide us with more information that we could then use for state wide analysis, and to incorporate the assessment procedures that the colleges were using into this Program Review. (Staff A)

A-D-L-I Process Evaluation: When utilized effectively, Program Review is about continuous quality improvement at the local college level for each of the areas under review. When ICCB looked to evaluate the overall Program Review system, they were embarking on a continuous quality improvement effort in regard to the process at the statewide system level. As the ICCB staff gathered direct feedback from the colleges, observed the quality of reports that were submitted, and look at their own processes in generating the statewide summary report, they were at the learning stage of the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle which consists of the four components of approach, deployment, learning, and integration. In this stage, organizational learning occurs through evaluation, feedback, and experience.

It was exactly this type of feedback that initiated ICCB's closer examination of the Program Review system. They began asking the questions outlined in the A-D-L-I rubric:

- Approach: Is the Program Review system aligned with stakeholder needs? Is it effective?

- Deployment: Is the Program Review process meeting stakeholder needs? Is it being applied consistently?

- Learning: How is the Program Review system being refined? How does ICCB assess that it is successful?

- Integration: How is Program Review integrated with other state level processes? Is it integrated at the college level with other local assessment strategies?

The answers to these questions indicated that the Program Review system was not well aligned with the colleges' needs and based upon a broad range of quality in submitted reports, it was clear that the system was not consistently deployed across the colleges. Not only was there evidence that at many colleges Program Review was just a task done at the end of the year to meet a state requirement rather than an effective assessment process, but the creation of the statewide summary report by ICCB had also become a cumbersome task that provided little to no real value.

The four A-D-L-I principles seemed to have a strong relationship as to why ICCB viewed the modification of the Program Review system as a priority. Their initial assessment of the status and efficacy of the Program Review system resulted in the engagement of consultants and the formation of a Task Force to take a more in-depth evaluation of the system. The work of this Task Force culminated in a set of recommendations and ultimate modifications to the Program Review system.

Driving Question 2: *How and in what ways did ICCB change the Program Review system?*

The question of how ICCB went about evaluating and changing the Program Review system addresses the logistics and the process that was utilized. From the interviews with the ICCB staff members, once the decision had been made to proceed with the evaluation and it had become clear to them after attempting to start the process internally several times, a request for proposal (RFP) was sent out in order to engage consultants to lead the project. Both the ICCB staff members and the consultants who were interviewed described the RFP process which included the combination of two of the submitted proposals resulting in a stronger proposal with the three selected consultants.

The selected proposal outlined the process that would be used to evaluate the Program Review system and submit recommendations for modification. Specifically, the four steps proposed by the consultants were 1) define the Illinois Community College Program Review system, 2) gather constituent input, 3) compile the final recommendations, and 4) implement the modifications. Although the steps are listed sequentially, gathering constituent input was at the core of the process in how the evaluation of Program Review was accomplished and spanned the entire process. The creation of the Task Force from a cross-section of individuals involved with Program Review at ICCB and across the state served as a primary method of gathering constituent input. Both the ICCB staff and the college representatives that were interviewed related how members had been selected to serve on the Task Force in order to represent diverse backgrounds related to Program Review:

> Like any [ICCB] Task Force, what we were looking for were things like some geographic disparities, we wanted people from all over the state, we wanted representation from big institutions and small institutions, [ICCB] wanted people on the research side, people who were actually involved in doing the Program Review, so, administrators from the different program areas. We wanted some of them [from] the other services that are offered. We just tried to come up a broad enough group that we felt like every aspect of the colleges that was involved in Program Review would be represented adequately. (Staff A)

Further input provided near the beginning of the work of the Task Force involved the administration of a web survey that went out to each of the community colleges across the state. In terms of scope and number of people directly engaged in this process, this instrument provided the most feedback from constituents throughout the evaluation process—there were respondents from 32 colleges consisting mostly of institutional researchers and vice presidents from the Illinois community colleges resulting in an institutional response rate of 62.7%. The results of the survey also served as the foundation for much of the discussion and work of the Task Force and was a large part of the agenda for their first face-to-face meeting.

All of the participants also indicated that much of the background work in reviewing the

Program Review system was completed by the consultants and then feedback was provided by

the other Task Force members via e-mail and when they met face-to-face. Staff C indicated that

the process design was to

> Let [the consultants] do some of the work, the heavy load carrying, and then bring the
> Task Force in for validation and next steps. I do not think [the Task Force] met too many
> times . . . [it was] the consultants that formulated a lot of these ideas and then ran them by
> the Task Force and the Task Force gave their feedback and opinion and gave them
> marching orders. So the consultants kept improving in between and came back to the next
> meeting with some more revisions. (Staff C)

> As the work of the Task Force proceeded, the participants all indicated that further

constituent feedback was obtained through a variety of focus group sessions throughout the state,

with general interested parties, as well as specific groups such as institutional researchers,

college presidents, and faculty groups:

> We went to the northern part of the state and met with 20 or so interested individuals and
> went through some of the issues and suggested preliminary recommendations and had
> them respond to them, took their input. . . . We had a focus group at an institutional
> researchers meeting . . . we had one in the central part of the state and had one in the
> southern part of the state, and we had one in the northern part of the state. Again, the
> [Task Force] and ICCB notified people that we are going to have these so we scheduled
> them and had focus group meetings on some of the issues and some of the tentative
> recommendations. . . . [We] gave presentations . . . to the Council of Presidents and to the
> administrators group and the faculty association . . . to make them aware of what was
> going on so that they would not be surprised by any recommendations. (Consultant A)

More details of the process used by the Task Force and specifically the variety of input that was

provided through focus groups and other meetings was described in the final report submitted by

the Task Force:

> After meetings with the [Task Force] and ICCB staff, preliminary recommendations were
> developed and distributed to colleges. The preliminary recommendations and related
> analyses were posted to a website and comments invited. A presentation was made at the
> fall meeting of the Illinois Association of Institutional Researchers. The preliminary
> recommendations were then discussed in meetings with several ICCB committees—
> Program Advisory Committee, MIS and Research Advisory Committee, the Chief
> Academic Officers, and Chief Student Services Officers. After a second meeting with the

[Task Force], the preliminary recommendations were revised. The revised recommendations were then discussed at focus group meetings held at Heartland, Waubonsee, and Rend Lake Community Colleges and attended by academic officers, institutional researchers, and others responsible for on-campus Program Reviews. Based on the advice of the [Task Force], advisory committees, and focus groups, the recommendations were refined and revised. (Final Report)

While the Task Force used an iterative process with various opportunities for constituent feedback as the *how* ICCB went about modifying the Program Review system, the specifics of *in what ways* the Program Review system was changed included both conceptual and tangible modifications. In terms of conceptual aspects to the changes, the proposed modifications provided colleges a "lot more flexibility as far as what they tell us [ICCB] . . . Now they really have a flexibility to choose what they evaluate, the indicators they use to evaluate on campus, and then what they should tell us" (Staff B). The final report from the Task Force summarized the recommended modifications within five general topics:

[The recommendations] are designed to provide colleges with flexibility to incorporate the Program Review System into campus planning to provide both colleges and the ICCB with information needed to meet their respective responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner.
- Clarifying the purposes of Program Review and the roles of the colleges and ICCB.
- Integrating Program Review with campus planning and quality improvement processes.
- Developing a Web-based information system and reporting methods.
- Developing guidelines and schedules for reviews of academic disciplines and cross-disciplinary programs—general education, adult education, remedial/developmental programs, vocational skills, and transfer programs—in addition to occupational programs.
- Revising reporting requirements and sharing best practices. (Final Report)

Whereas the first two items noted above address the more conceptual modifications, the latter three relate to the more tangible changes to the Program Review system. The actually implemented and tangible changes to the Program Review system fell within the last two items

since the recommended development of a web-based information system and reporting

mechanism never came to fruition.

The ICCB Program Review had already required that all programs be reviewed on a five-

year cycle and career and technical education (CTE) programs had been on a coordinated cycle

wherein the same programs were reviewed at all Illinois community college in the given year.

However, there was some ambiguity in determining where certain programs fit in the cycle of

review. Therefore, the CTE cycle was "amended to reflect the transition to the revised

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP 2000)" (Final Report). Although transfer areas

were also required to be reviewed on a five-year cycle, the specific timing and grouping of those

programs had been left up to the individual colleges. The ICCB modified this requirement to also

have a coordinated five-year cycle of review for transfer programs based upon the IAI (Illinois

Articulation Initiative) clusters of programs.

In order to facilitate the flexibility that was desired in the Program Review system, the

forms and reporting requirements were significantly changed to be more streamlined with a

greater use of technology:

> One big difference was the use of technology. We were able to make use of that, where
> the [old forms] we were operating from, did not, the technology was not there. We were
> looking at making it easier on the people doing the Program Review and making it easier
> for us to receive the information. (Staff A)

The Task Force's final report described the new report format as follows:

- Summary Program Review reports submitted to ICCB should focus on the results of
  Program Review, presentation of best practices and exemplary innovations, and
  identification of programmatic issues that need to be addressed at the state level.
- While colleges should be expected to address need, quality, and cost of all
  instructional programs in their reviews of individual programs, detailed reports for
  local use on these reviews need not be submitted to ICCB. Instead, summary review
  reports should be designed for use in campus-level decision making and should be
  examined by ICCB staff in the recognition process.

- The Program Review summaries submitted by colleges to the ICCB should be simplified in substance and format to minimize paperwork for colleges and facilitate analyses by ICCB staff. (Final Report)

A-D-L-I Process Evaluation: In looking at how and in what ways ICCB modified the Program Review system through the lens of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle, the pertinent stages were the first two: approach and deployment. After ICCB had determined that the previous approach of Program Review was not well aligned with stakeholder needs, the engagement of the consultants and the formation of the Task Force were the first steps in determining what the modified approach to Program Review should be. The work of the Task Force was then focused on developing recommendations for the modification of the Program Review system and its further deployment by ICCB.

As the Task Force worked through the evaluation process, they began to address the questions that had been raised by looking at the efficacy of the Program Review system. Specifically, in addressing the question of approach and whether the Program Review was aligned with stakeholder needs, the Task Force administered a web survey, conducted focus group meetings, and received feedback from the diverse members who comprise the Task Force itself. The information that they gathered help them determine that the Program Review system was not deployed and applied consistently across the state and was not meeting stakeholder needs. As the Task Force worked with this feedback to develop their recommendations, they continued to cycle through refining their recommendations and gathering more constituent feedback that was used for further refinement.

Although the question of the specific ways in which ICCB modified the Program Review system would seem to be specifically related only to the approach stage of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle, the question of *how* ICCB and the Task Force went about evaluating the system appears to be more strongly related. In particular, the work of the Task Force throughout the

process seems to be an outworking of the approach and deployment stages of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle.

Driving Question 3: *What are the assessment strategies that ICCB is using to validate the new Program Review system?*

When answering questions related to the assessment strategies, the consensus from all of the participants was that the primary assessment of the ICCB Program Review system is through the Recognition process. This assessment has not changed with the modifications to the Program Review system. According to the ICCB Recognition Manual:

> Recognition is a statutory term describing the status of a district which meets instructional, administrative, financial, facility, and equipment standards as established by the Illinois Community College Board (Section 805/2-12f and 805/2-15). Community colleges must be recognized to be eligible for state funding. Based on a five-year cycle, ICCB staff conducts recognition evaluations to assure that colleges are in compliance with these standards. All colleges are evaluated on a select number of standards during the same five-year cycle. (ICCB, 2011)

Although recognition evaluations cover all aspects of the colleges under review, Program Review is a significant component of that process. Institutions are required to submit their local Program Review process documentation along with making the previous five years of submissions available for review. Particularly with the streamlined forms that are submitted after the new Program Review system modifications, taking a closer look at the full Program Reviews done at the local level during recognition evaluations is critical to ensure that colleges are meeting their obligation to complete robust evaluations of their programs.

ICCB performs a limited review of each college's Program Review submissions as staff utilizes those college reports to generate the overall statewide summary report. However, given that the new reports are more streamlined, this annual review is of necessity very cursory. Also, there is not a mechanism for regular feedback about the Program Review system other than anecdotal information gathered from the colleges that have questions or raise concerns.

As indicated in the Task Force's final report in 2005, it had been since the early 1990s that ICCB's Program Review system had been redesigned. One of the recommendations from the Task Force was that "a manual of instructions for Program Review should be developed and revised once every five years" (Final Report). This timeframe was recommended to allow for regular review and improvement of the Program Review system on the same five-year cycle for colleges were using to evaluate their own programs.

A-D-L-I Process Evaluation: The question of the assessment strategies that ICCB uses to evaluate the Program Review system lies directly in the learning stage of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle. The work of the consultants and Task Force was itself a formal assessment of the ICCB Program Review system. A primary reason why such a significant effort was undertaken stemmed from the fact that there had been no regular and ongoing assessment as more requirements were added to the Program Review reports and it had become less focused on its core purpose.

Although the work of the Task Force addressed the questions raised by the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle and set the stage for ongoing refinement, unfortunately the recommendation to build in a more structured review process of the system was not implemented beyond updating the Program Review manual on a five-year cycle corresponding to the five-year cycle of Program Review. Therefore, it appears that ICCB's assessment strategies for evaluating the Program Review system are not in keeping with the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle.

Driving Question 4: *Is the new Program Review system seen as an improvement by ICCB and what procedures are in place to ascertain its effectiveness?*

Although all the participants were asked questions in regard to whether the modifications to the Program Review system were improvement for ICCB, understandably Consultants A and

B were unable to provide input and the college representatives along with Consultant C (who

also worked at a community college) were limited to the perspective of their individual colleges.

However, given that a goal of ICCB was that the modifications would improve the Program

Review at the local college level, feedback like the following is seen as an improvement by

ICCB:

> I think it has improved since [the modifications]. Because of the focus in Springfield, it
> created a focus institutionally and we have done a lot more to integrate the Program
> Review with other areas of the college regarding institutional effectiveness and
> institutional advancement. . . . I think it has definitely enhanced just like any TQM
> process would enhance, like AQIP. . . . The impact is evident in the reports that we send
> back. Everybody is doing a better job of evaluating their programs and looking at
> strategies to improve. (College Rep B)

The ICCB staff participants were clearly in the best position to address whether the

modifications have been an improvement from ICCB's perspective. They were in agreement that

the basic outcomes of the modifications to the Program Review system were being achieved:

> [The modifications] are achieving the goals of what the Task Force set out to do. . . And a
> different way of looking at instructional programs have been accomplished. (Staff B)

Besides being an easier format for the colleges in their report submissions, the creation of the

statewide summary report that ICCB prepared was also made much easier:

> I know that [the modifications] did simplify the report writing from the staff's
> perspective. . . . The revisions have helped, because it has allowed a smaller staff to
> spend less time on it and that allowed our already small staff to concentrate on some of
> the other areas that [we] need to. (Staff C)

Furthermore, the feedback that ICCB staff had heard from colleges was very positive and Staff B

also noted that "Through recognition visits that I have been on and the conversations I have had .

. . the reformat seems to have accomplished that goal of making it more efficient as far as

aligning; that seems to have worked" (Staff B).

A-D-L-I Process Evaluation: After the implementation of the modifications to the ICCB

Program Review system, the application of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle would be

focused on the integration stage. This stage would include addressing the questions of how is Program Review integrated with other state level processes and is it integrated at the college level with other local assessment strategies? As indicated previously, there was some anecdotal evidence related by the college representatives (including Consultant C) and the ICCB staff that this was the case. However, without a more robust feedback mechanism beyond recognition evaluations which occur every five years on a subset of colleges each year, it was not possible in this study to determine the level of integration of the Program Review system and its modifications. Therefore, in addressing this final driving question it does not seem that there is much of a relationship between the A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric and this aspect of the ICCB Program Review system.

Emerging Themes

During the review of the findings in this study, there were a couple of themes that were unanticipated by the researcher at the outset of this study: (a) college reports were extremely varied in quality, (b) ICCB did not have a good mechanism for the assessment of the Program Review system. The first item became clear from the interviews with many of the participants that there was a wide spectrum of Program Review reports submitted by the community colleges which represented widely varying degrees of Program Review that was being done across the state. For those colleges that had always had a robust Program Review process at their institution, the modifications were expected to help those colleges be more efficient in their reporting requirements but would not have much more impact than that since they already had integrated processes. Similarly, there was also an indication from ICCB staff that the development of the statewide summary report was also seen as task oriented and sometimes completed as perfunctory as many colleges completed their reports.

The second area that the researcher did not expect was that ICCB did not have a good review process in place for the Program Review system itself outside of the recognition evaluations that are conducted on a five-year cycle. Furthermore, even though a more in-depth assessment of the college's Program Review processes and submissions is conducted during the recognition evaluations, the evaluation of Program Review is less of an emphasis currently then it had been prior to the work of the Task Force. The main reason for this lack of emphasis during recognition was indicated to be the result of a smaller staff at ICCB.

Chapter Summary

Findings from semi-structured interviews with the members of the ICCB Task Force that evaluated the program review were presented. Similar interview questions were grouped together and used to organize the participants' responses which were further sub-grouped according to the three types of participants in this study: (a) ICCB staff, (b) consultants, and (c) college representatives. Because rich interview data collected from these three distinct groups of participants, the findings were able to be triangulated and provided a richer picture of the processes used in evaluating the ICCCB Program Review system.

Providing even further data triangulation was the second set of findings presented: i.e., the documents that had been provided by one of the consultants who had maintained an archive of most of the work of the Task Force. These documents included the combined proposal from the three consultants in response to the ICCB request for proposals, the results from statewide web survey conducted by the consultants and Task Force, an overview of the various state program review systems, the Task Force meeting summary, and the final report from the Task Force.

After presenting the findings, the four driving questions served as the organizing structure for the analysis of the findings. For each of the driving questions, the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle was used as a lens to analyze the data that had been gathered. The chapter concluded with a brief discussion of emerging themes that presented themselves in this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

This qualitative study involved eight people who served on a Task Force that evaluated the ICCB Program Review system and provided recommended modifications to that system. Insights provided through semi-structured interviews with the participants along with relevant documents that were also obtained addressed the research purpose and driving questions. This final chapter includes the following: (a) a brief summary of the preceding chapters, (b) discussion of the findings, (c) implications and recommendations for the practice organized around the driving questions, and (d) recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to the purpose of this study and the driving questions that guided this research. Also included were the research assumptions, a brief description of the study design, and the significance to the community college field.

Chapter 2 began with an historical context for the Illinois community college system and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review system. Because both Program Review itself and ICCB's efforts to evaluate and modify the system are continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities, the primary framework for this study is process improvement and evaluation. Since the modifications to the ICCB Program Review system were influenced by the AQIP accreditation model which was based upon the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric served as the specific framework.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the design of this study which was an exploratory case study. Aspects of the design were presented including case selection, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter concluded with discussions of reliability and validity, limitations of the study, and the researcher as the research tool.

Chapter 4 presented the findings from participant interviews and extant documents from the Task Force that were provided by one of the consultants. Analysis of the findings was organized by the driving questions and evaluated through the lens of the Baldrige A-D-L-I (Approach, Deployment, Learning, Integration) process evaluation rubric.

Discussion

A unifying theme throughout all organizations is the need to respond to their stakeholder needs and expectations with consistent quality in a constantly changing environment. In order to maintain this quality, organizations of all sizes across every sector have implemented continuous quality improvement (CQI) strategies. Postsecondary educational institutions, including community colleges, have engaged in these improvement efforts as evident through their growing use of quality assessment tools and models.

Besides the intrinsic need for healthy higher education institutions to engage in these efforts, the general public and funding agencies continue to expect increasing measures of accountability. Another significant source of accountability for colleges and universities is their regional accrediting organization. For community colleges in Illinois, accreditation is granted through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) which coupled with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) constitute the two most significant bodies for accountability. Although there are similarities among the reporting requirements for these two organizations, they are not always aligned at the college level with each other nor with other quality initiatives that colleges may be practicing. As was found in this study, institutions may complete the required external reports as a necessary task during a reporting cycle but not achieve any institutional learning from the effort while the report is filed away until the next cycle arrives. This can be the case

whether it is a ten-year reaccreditation self-study to HLC or a five-year program review report submitted to ICCB.

Several years before the formation of the Task Force that evaluated the ICCB Program Review system, HLC undertook its efforts to develop the AQIP model for accreditation based on a continuous quality improvement framework and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA). As ICCB looked at this CQI model for accreditation and other quality initiatives that Illinois community colleges were engaged in, they sought to align their Program Review system with these institutional efforts to better serve the colleges and allow for better statewide reporting. The structure of the previous system had been in place for over ten years and had grown to include a variety of extra requirements that were artifacts of various initiatives that had been implemented over those years.

Just as individual colleges provided annual reports from the review of their programs, ICCB began to review the statewide system itself based upon their own concerns about the efficacy of the program along with anecdotal feedback they had been receiving from various colleges. Undertaking the significant effort to review the statewide system was made possible through an adequate level of resources at ICCB including staffing and funding to engage consultants who led and facilitated the efforts.

Overall, the study found that the goals of the Task Force to develop a more effective Program Review system which addressed both the concerns of the former system along with the challenge to be flexible and aligned with each college's other quality initiatives were, for the most part, achieved. However, at the point of the implementation of the recommended modifications to the Program Review system, staffing at ICCB was no longer at the same levels it was at the beginning of the evaluation process which impeded the implementation of all the

recommendations from the Task Force. Most notably, the recommendation to develop a web based submission process for the Program Review reports was never completed.

The level at which there was a relationship between ICCB's process to evaluate and modify their program review system and the Baldrige A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric also appeared related to the reduction in resources (e.g., staffing level) at ICCB by the time the recommended modifications were implemented. As ICCB began the process, there seemed to be a strong relationship to the application of the A-D-L-I rubric; however, by the end of the implementation of the changes, there appeared to be less of an application of the principles embedded in A-D-L-I. Specifically, at the core of the A-D-L-I cycle is the learning stage which begins the process and forms the basis to continue through the cycle iteratively on a journey of continuous quality improvement. The findings of this study indicated that there was indeed substantial learning that was done at the beginning of the evaluation process but that there was not a robust assessment of the system itself built in to foster and facilitate ongoing learning and thus further improvement. It is somewhat ironic that a system whose purpose is to encourage institutions to review and improve their own programs is not set up for the continuous quality improvement of itself. It was clear from the ICCB staff who participated in this study that their goal was for the program review system to have more assessment of itself but with limited staff and budget at a relatively small state agency, these goals as envisioned have yet to be achieved.

Driving Question 1: *Why was the modification of the Program Review system seen as a priority for ICCB?*

Conclusions: As the ICCB staff had growing questions about the Program Review system and had received feedback from colleges indicating frustration with the system, they effectively began the A-D-L-I cycle by deciding what to examine and engaging in the learning

stage. Starting at this learning stage, the initial means of evaluation of the Program Review system had a strong relationship to the A-D-L-I rubric:

- Learning—how are we refining our Approach? What is our key outcome?

- Integration—how is our approach aligned to ICCB's organizational strategy?

- Approach—who is being served? What do the internal and external stakeholders served by the process need?

- Deployment—how and to what extent is our Approach meeting stakeholder needs?

After looking at the Program Review system in this manner, ICCB staff concluded that in each of these A-D-L-I factors, the program review system was lacking: (a) there had been no systematic refinement to the system and the key reporting needs were burdened by additional requirements added over the preceding decade; (b) the system was not consistently aligned with other ICCB processes nor individual college improvement initiatives; and (c) the needs of ICCB and the individual colleges are not being fully met.

Based upon this initial assessment, ICCB determined that a thorough evaluation of the program review system was a priority. Therefore, beyond dedicating necessary ICCB staff time, funds were made available to issue a request for proposals (RFP) and then engage consultants to facilitate the process.

Implications: When faced with indicators that a process may no longer be meeting all of its intended goals, an organization needs to undergo an evaluation of that process. This includes individual processes within smaller units of an organization as well as broader processes that may be aggregations of other processes. In the case of the ICCB program review system, the system itself is a statewide process to ensure that local review processes are being carried out by

the individual colleges for their program areas. Even though colleges were expected to review all of their programs on a five-year cycle, the program review system itself has not been evaluated and updated in over ten years. It is important that organizations not neglect to review and refine broader processes while they work to improve smaller constituent processes.

As an organization determines a process which it desires to improve, the application of the A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric can be an effective strategy for that assessment. If the analysis indicates that the process is indeed lacking in its approach, deployment, learning, and/or integration, then that analysis can set the stage and provide a framework for the improvement efforts.

Driving Question 2: *How and in what ways did ICCB change the Program Review system?*

Conclusions: One of the key factors in the success of ICCB's evaluation of the Program Review system was the gathering of constituent input throughout the process. After determining that it was not going to be feasible for ICCB to conduct the evaluation themselves, they sought to bring in consultants through an RFP process. After receiving two submitted proposals that were similar in nature, in order to get the broadest outside assistance possible, ICCB invited those consultants to resubmit a combined proposal. This combination resulted in a consultant team that had a long history with Program Review at the state level as well as a current practitioner in institutional research at a local community college. The fact that ICCB looked beyond competing RFPs to just select one but pursued the combination of two of the proposals, along with the willingness of those consultants to combine their efforts, resulted in a much stronger team of consultant to lead the evaluation efforts.

The formation of the Task Force further expanded the input into the evaluation process. College representatives were selected from diverse colleges across the state who served in a

variety of positions and had different levels of experience with Program Review at their respective institutions. Also, the administration of the initial web survey that went to every community college in the state was foundational to the work of the Task Force as they evaluated the Program Review system. Furthermore, focus groups were used to gather feedback and presentations were made at a variety of professional groups where more input was obtained.

As the Task Force performed its work, an iterative refining process was used to incorporate feedback received through the various channels. Their findings and recommendations submitted in the final report addressed the A-D-L-I process evaluation factors. Specifically, the recommendations addressed updates and changes to the purpose of program review and the submitted reports (approach), how the updated Program Review system would be implemented across the community colleges (deployment), assessment of the Program Review system (learning), and the goal of Program Review being aligned with other college quality improvement initiatives and other ICCB reports/processes (integration). Therefore, there appears to be a strong relationship between the steps that ICCB took in the evaluation of the program review system and the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle in respect to this driving question.

Implications: Undertaking change in any organization is best done with significant communication and stakeholders input. The process that was used to modify the ICCB Program Review system included multiple layers of input from focus groups, web survey, diverse Task Force participants, external consultants, and general feedback through the website maintained throughout the work of the Task Force and implementation of the modifications. Because of these efforts to gather input and communicate throughout the process, there was no surprise or significant resistance when the changes were implemented by ICCB.

The specific changes that were recommended by the Task Force and implemented by ICCB involved streamlining of the reporting process. These changes were done in the context of the other processes and initiatives at the local colleges as well as the other reports and processes at ICCB. Indeed, it was this broader context that the Program Review reports had grown beyond their initial purposes that began the process to evaluate the Program Review system. As organizations refine and improve processes, the broader context and integration therein is a critical consideration.

Driving Question 3: *What are the assessment strategies that ICCB is using to validate the new Program Review system?*

Conclusions: Prior to the work of the Task Force, ICCB did not have a systematic assessment strategy for the Program Review system. In fact, it was this lack of an evaluation process for the Program Review system as a whole that resulted in there being 11 years since the previous update. The only two assessments that ICCB used to evaluate the efficacy of the Program Review system were (a) the brief review of annual college submissions and (b) a more in-depth review of those submissions and each college's local Program Review process through the Recognition evaluation. Recognition is a very important process conducted for each college on a five-year cycle which includes a comprehensive evaluation of the college's Program Review process—but only as a part of the full Recognition evaluation.

Although the Task Force included a recommendation for more assessment to be built into the Program Review system, this was not fully realized and the assessment of the Program Review system has effectively not changed. One aspect that was implemented in regard to assessment was that rather than going another ten years before updating, the Program Review manual would be updated every five years in parallel with the five year cycle colleges used to

evaluate their program areas. In this way, each time a college conducted a Program Review of a specific area, it would be based on an updated ICCB Program Review manual.

Because ICCB does not have an assessment strategy to evaluate the efficacy of the Program Review system beyond anecdotal feedback in the Recognition process, they are not set up as well as they could be to experience continuous improvement of this system. With only the single focused evaluation "event" that was conducted by the consultants and Task Force, the ongoing impact will be limited.

Implications: Although there is value to performing a comprehensive single assessment of the process, the results will likely be limited to a punctuated improvement. For more complete success, it is important to build ongoing assessment into the process otherwise even applying the A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric in effectively a one-and-done manner will have limited value and not result in *continuous* quality improvement.

Driving Question 4: *Is the new Program Review system seen as an improvement by ICCB and what procedures are in place to ascertain its effectiveness?*

Conclusions: Other than the development of a web-based submission process, the tangible outcomes related the colleges' report submissions were implemented and seen to be an improvement to the Program Review system. For ICCB, the development of the statewide summary report was improved and no longer took as much ICCB staff time to prepare. However, with staff reductions at ICCB, improvement beyond the task of preparing the summary report—such as more comprehensive and in-depth reports—was not realized.

Whether the program review system improved processes at the local level, ICCB had only limited anecdotal feedback. Also, without specific procedures in place to ascertain the effectiveness of the program review system let alone the modifications that were made, full

learning and on-going, continuous improvement was not achieved. Because of this deficit in the steps that ICCB took in this aspect of the process, there is not much of a relationship to the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle.

Implications: In order to have the continuous improvement, it is important to build systematic assessment into the process. This is encompassed in the learning stage of the A-D-L-I cycle which is the starting point for a process review and enhancement. The institutional learning that occurs at this stage is also what starts the cycle again so that there can be continuous improvement rather than just a one-time gain.

Recommendations

For the Practice

As a result of this study, the researcher offers several recommendations for the practice, including ones specifically for ICCB in regard to their Program Review system:

- Broad constituent input and communication throughout the improvement process are important to limit or avoid surprises and mitigate resistance or pushback. Similar to the efforts of ICCB, this can include a diverse and representative team, the use of focus groups, general solicitation of feedback, and the use of external facilitators or subject matter experts.

- The A-D-L-I process evaluation rubric is a valuable tool to use when seeking to update or enhance a process. Although not explicitly used by ICCB in the evaluation of the program review system, when the A-D-L-I principles appeared to be most strongly related to the efforts of ICCB and the Task Force, the results seemed more effective. The most critical aspect to applying the A-D-L-I cycle is to have a strong assessment and learning strategy as part of the ongoing process.

- It is suggested that ICCB develop an ongoing evaluation process of the program review system in order to engender continuous improvement. One potential means to accomplish this is to modify the web survey that the Task Force used to get feedback from the community colleges throughout the state and use this on a regular basis to measure the effectiveness of the program review system. In order to not be overly burdensome for the individual colleges, conducting this survey as part of the Program Review manual update process every five years should be adequate—especially when coupled with the annual feedback contemplated in the following recommendation.

- A further way in which ICCB could regularly evaluate the program review system and how well it is integrated into each college's other quality initiatives would be to have colleges include their program review process documentation with their annual reports. Currently, this documentation is only submitted as part of the five-year recognition evaluation cycle. Included as part of this documentation should be an enumeration of any changes or updates the college has made to the program review process over the preceding year. Having this information from every college each year would allow for an ongoing assessment of how well program review is integrated at each community college's campus.

Through this study about the way in which ICCB undertook the evaluation and modification of their program review system, the researcher has found that the application of the A-D-L-I process evaluation cycle was an effective approach. However, because of the critical aspect of the learning stage which includes the development of an ongoing assessment process, the researcher suggests that stage should be highlighted in the depiction of the cycle. Therefore, the Hagberg model for process evaluation as depicted in Figure 15 is offered as a

recommendation. As indicated, this model is an adaptation and simplification from the depiction presented previously from the Heartland Community College Office of Institutional Research. Besides being the critical starting point for a process evaluation, designed properly with a robust assessment strategy, the learning stage is also the key engine behind keeping the cycle moving through iterations of the cycle and thus have the capacity for continuous quality improvement. Without the assessment built effectively into the system, the result may be a one-and-done evaluation "event" that has some impact but does not facilitate a culture of improvement.

PROCESS REVIEW/ENHANCEMENT

APPROACH – WHO IS BEING SERVED AND WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

What do the internal and external stakeholders served by this process NEED?

How are the methods we're using to accomplish this process:
Aligned with the needs of our stakeholders?
Effective? Repeatable? Scheduled? Timely?
Meaningful? Ethical? Flexible? Formalized?

How are we building in opportunities for:
Evaluation? Improvement? Innovation? Sharing?

DEPLOYMENT – HOW WELL IS OUR APPROACH MEETING STAKEHOLDER NEEDS?

To whom are we deploying our APPROACH?
Is it being applied by all appropriate individuals/units?
Is the deployment of our APPROACH: Consistent?
Systematic?

START HERE by selecting a work process for examination

NEXT STEP:

LEARNING – HOW ARE WE ASSESSING AND REFINING OUR APPROACH?

What is our key outcome?
(What is the **specific result** we want?)

How do we define success in achieving our key outcome?
(What have we measured/what could we measure to know we've achieved our key outcome above?)
How will deployment of the APPROACH be evaluated?

Key sub-processes to analyze:

Use **measurables** to:
➢ Describe where we are in the process
➢ Explain how we intend to positively maintain or enhance the process through refined or innovative approaches

INTEGRATION – HOW IS OUR APPROACH ALIGNED TO THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION?

How does our APPROACH support organizational goals and enhance other processes?

Think about how this APPROACH:
Increases…
Improves…
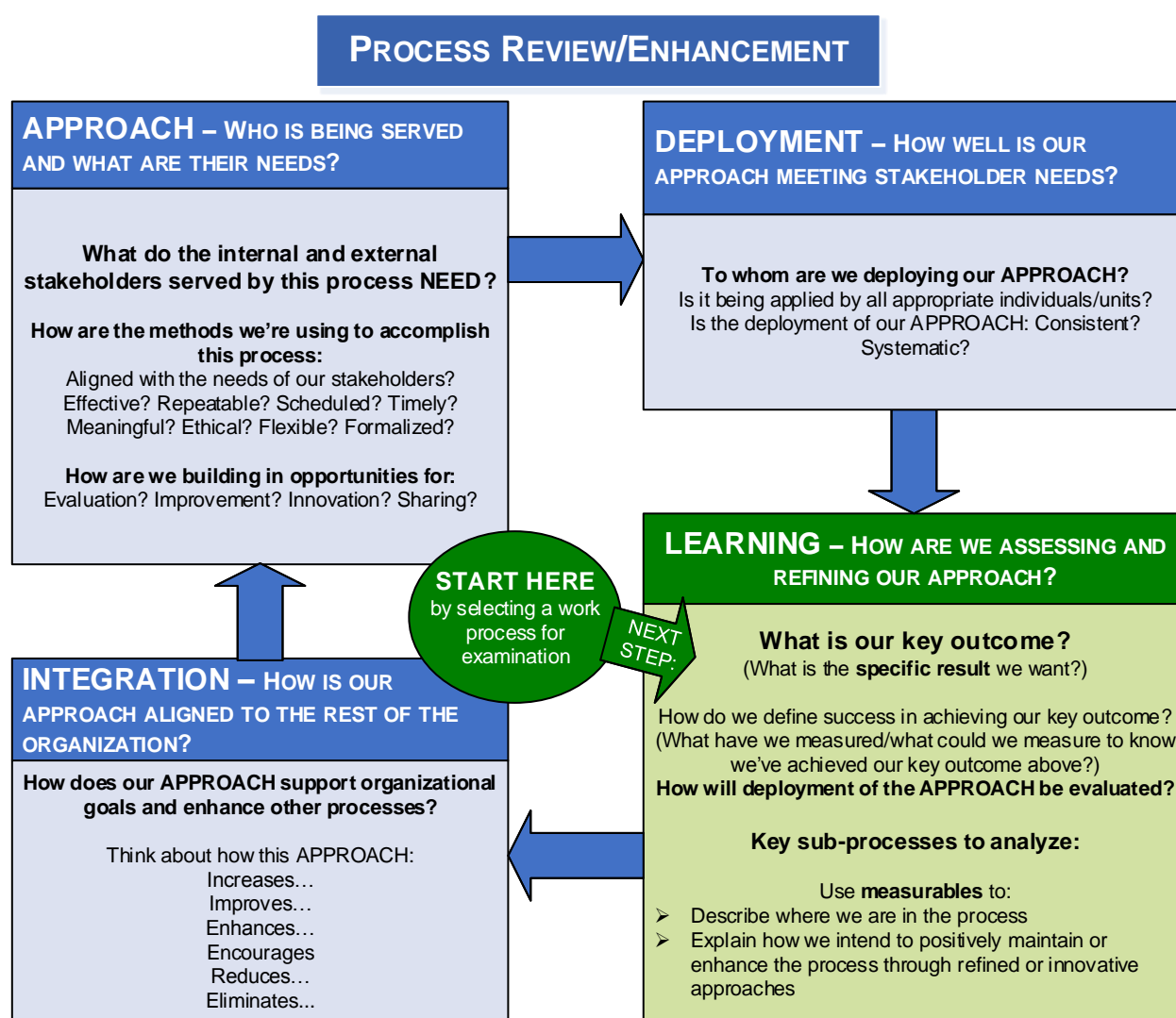Enhances…
Encourages
Reduces…
Eliminates...

Figure 15. *Hagberg model for process evaluation. Adapted from Heartland Community College office of Institutional Research application of the Baldrige A-D-L-I rubric.*

The stages of the Hagberg model for process review or enhancement align with the basic Baldrige process evaluation rubric:

- Approach – who is being served and what are their needs?

- Deployment – how well is our approach meeting stakeholder needs?

- Learning – how are we assessing and refining our approach?

- Integration – how is our approach aligned to the rest of the organization?

Emphasis in this model is placed at the Learning stage where the following sub-questions are addressed:

- How do we define success in achieving our key outcome?

- How will deployment of the approach be evaluated?

- What measurables will be used to explain how we intend to positively maintain or enhance the process through refined or innovative approaches?

Making sure to fully address the various aspects to the Learning stage in the A-D-L-I cycle will set an organization up best to avoid one-and-done evaluation and thus achieve continuous quality improvement.

For Further Research

This study looked at the modifications to the ICCB Program Review system and whether those changes were an improvement from ICCB's perspective. As such, participants in this study were limited to members of ICCB's Task Force that performed the evaluation of the Program Review system. Expanding the perspective to a broader set of stakeholders as well as conducting follow-up studies since the modified Program Review system has been in practice for longer affords several opportunities for further research:

- Because the Task Force included college representatives, there was opportunity for very limited anecdotal feedback from the community college perspective in regard to the changes that were made and the efficacy of the modified Program Review system. Therefore, it is suggested that a study which is focused on the community college perspective would be of value.

- A major goal of the modifications to the Program Review system was that it flexible enough to be well integrated into each college's other continuous quality improvement initiatives. Therefore, it is suggested that a study be conducted into how well Illinois community colleges are aligning and integrating the ICCB Program Review system with their other continuous quality initiatives on campus. The results of this study would be one of the best ways to determine the overall effectiveness of the Program Review system modifications.

- The web survey that was used by the Task Force at the beginning of their work could also form the basis of a more quantitative study about Program Review in the Illinois community colleges. The survey could be expanded and conducted over time to measure the improvement of Program Review processes at the individual institutions.

As noted previously, this could also be built into an ongoing ICCB process as part of their continuous quality improvement of the Program Review system.

- Finally, since a full five-year cycle of Program Review has occurred since the modifications studied herein have been implemented, a follow-up study could be of value. Such research could be coupled with the aforementioned exploration into the community college perspective of the Program Review system now that all of the colleges have had some time utilizing the current Program Review system.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questions for ICCB Research Participants

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

       Please complete demographic background questionnaire for this study.

1. **Sex:** _____ Male _____ Female

2. **Age Group:**

       25 – 30 years _____   46 – 50 years _____
       31 – 35 years _____   51 – 55 years _____
       36 – 40 years _____   56 – 60 years _____
       41 – 45 years _____   Over 60 years _____

3. **Ethnicity:**

       Asian or Pacific Islander   _____
       American Indian or Alaskan   _____
       Black, non-Hispanic   _____
       Hispanic   _____
       White, non-Hispanic   _____

4. **Current Employer:**

       Name: _____
       Job Title: _____
       City/State: _____
       # of years employed _____

5. **How many total years and in what roles have you participated in a community college?**
       As **faculty** member:
       Total Number of Years   _____

       As an **administrator:**
       Total Number of Years   _____

       Other role; please describe: _____
       Total Number of Years   _____

6. **What <u>departments</u> have you worked in a community college? Please list all departments throughout your career, as well as <u>length of time</u> (e.g., math department, student services, support services, advising, financial aid, etc.)**

Departments	Number of Years
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

7. **How long have you worked at ICCB?** _____

8. What departments have you worked at and approximately how long in each?

	Departments	Number of Years
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

9. In what way are you involved in the Program Review system/accountability report at ICCB?

10. Please list all degrees you have obtained, as well as where and when :

	Degree	School	Location	Year
Doctoral				
Master				
Bachelor				
Associate				
Other				

11. How were you selected to serve on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Task Force which evaluated the Program Review system in 2005?

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this form. The thoughtful sharing of your experiences are appreciated and are of great benefit to my research.

Dan Hagberg
Doctoral Student
National-Louis University

Appendix B: Demographic Questions for non-ICCB Research Participants

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

      Please complete demographic background questionnaire for this study.

1. **Sex:** _____ Male _____ Female

2. **Age Group:**
            25 – 30 years __
            31 – 35 years __
            36 – 40 years __
            41 – 45 years __
            46 – 50 years __
            51 – 55 years __
            56 – 60 years __
            Over 60 years __

3. **Ethnicity:**
            Asian or Pacific Islander   _____
            American Indian or Alaskan _____
            Black, non-Hispanic   _____
            Hispanic   _____
            White, non-Hispanic   _____

4. **Current Employer:**

          Name: _____

          Job Title: _____

          City/State: _____

          # of years employed _____

5. **How many total years and in what roles have you participated in a community college?**

          As **faculty** member:

          Total Number of Years _____

          As an **administrator**:

          Total Number of Years _____

          Other role; please describe: _____

          Total Number of Years _____

6. What <u>departments</u> have you worked in a community college? Please list all departments throughout your career, as well as <u>length of time</u> (e.g., math department, student services, support services, advising, financial aid, etc.)

	Departments	Number of Years
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____

7. Please list all degrees you have obtained, as well as where and when :

	Degree	School	Location	Year
Doctoral				
Master				
Bachelor				
Associate				
Other				

8. How and in what ways have you been involved in the Program Review process at your current and/or former institution(s) (e.g., writing all or part of your institution's report submitted to ICCB)?

9. How were you selected to serve on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Task Force which evaluated the Program Review system in 2005?

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this form. The thoughtful sharing of your experiences are appreciated and are of great benefit to my research.

Dan Hagberg
Doctoral Student
National-Louis University

Appendix C: Participant Informed Consent

Informed Consent--Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from October, 2008 to January, 2010. This consent form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Daniel S. Hagberg, a doctoral student at National-Louis University located in Chicago, Illinois.

I understand the study is entitled *ICCB Program Review: Assisting Illinois Community Colleges to Improve Quality*. The purpose of the study is: to explore if the strategic modification of the program review system by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) with a model similar to the academic quality improvement program (AQIP) is engendering the expected outcomes in Illinois community colleges.

I understand that my participation will consist of audio-taped interviews lasting 1 to 1½ hours in length with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 1 hour in length. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that only the researcher, Daniel S. Hagberg, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which will be kept all transcripts, taped recordings, documents, and field notes.

I understand that the results of this study may be published, but my identity will in no way be revealed beyond what is already available in the public record about ICCB program review.

I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be used to assist community college systems and individual community colleges with their continuous quality improvement policies and procedures.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Daniel S. Hagberg, 2710 Essington Street, Bloomington, IL 61705. Phone: (309) 827-3645 or E-mail: dhagberg@essington.us

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis K. Haynes, National-Louis University (Chicago Campus), 122 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603. Phone (888) 658-8632 or E-mail: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

Participant's Signature: _____**Date:** _____

Researcher's Signature: _____**Date:** _____

Appendix D: Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Data Transcription

This confidentiality form articulates the agreement made between Daniel S. Hagberg, the researcher, and [NAME OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMPANY OF A PROFESSIONAL TRANSCRIBER].

I understand and acknowledge that by transcribing the audiotapes provided to me by Daniel S. Hagberg, that I will be exposed to confidential information about the research study and the research participants. In providing transcription services, at no time will I reveal or discuss any of the information of which I have been exposed.

In addition, at no time will I maintain copies of the electronic or paper documents generated. Further, upon completing each transcription, I agree to provide the electronic and paper documents to the researcher:

> Daniel S. Hagberg
> 2710 Essington Street
> Bloomington, IL 61705
> (309) 827-3645
> dhagberg@essington.us

I understand that breach of this agreement as described above could result in personal and professional harm to the research participants for which I will be held legally responsible.

Transcriptionist's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Researcher's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Appendix E: Driving Questions Mapped to Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule	Driving Questions
1. How were you selected to serve on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Task Force which evaluated the Program Review system in 2005?	*Note: Questions 1 and 2 were only asked of non-ICCB participants.*
2. What was your involvement with the Program Review system prior to serving on the Task Force?	
3. What is your understanding of the purpose(s) of Program Review for Illinois community colleges?	Why was the modification of the Program Review system seen as a priority for ICCB?
4. How would you describe the previous Program Review process (i.e., prior to the changes made based on the Task Force's recommendations)?	
5. As the Task Force was formed, what did you feel were the reasons that ICCB wanted to modify the Program Review system and accountability report?	
6. What were the goals for the Task Force?	How and in what ways did ICCB change the Program Review system?
7. During the work of the Task Force, what did you feel was your role or responsibility and in what ways did you participate?	
8. What was the process that the Task Force used to determine its recommendations and report?	
9. At the completion of this Task Force's work, in what ways do you feel that the proposed modifications to the Program Review system differed from those previously in place?	
10. After the report, what was your understanding of the process that ICCB planned to implement the recommended modifications to the Program Review system?	
11. In what ways does ICCB assess the Program Review system?	What are the assessment strategies that ICCB is using to validate the new Program Review system?
12. How does ICCB asses the individual colleges' Program Review reports?	
13. What were the anticipated outcomes from the Program Review system modifications?	Is the new Program Review system seen as an improvement by ICCB and what are the procedures in place to ascertain its effectiveness?
14. Are the modifications to the Program Review system achieving their expected outcomes?	
15. Now that the new Program Review system has been in effect for a couple years, what are your thoughts about the modification and its impact?	