

**ADULT TECHNICAL EDUCATION PATHWAY (ATEP) PROJECT:
IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE PATHWAY FROM BASIC SKILLS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL
TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE AND DEGREES FOR DISLOCATED WORKERS AND WORKING ADULTS**

Introduction

Community and technical colleges are not only major gateways to postsecondary education but are pathways to high demand, higher wage careers for dislocated workers, the under-employed, and those wanting to develop skills and education to ensure they stay working. These individuals are reflected in the two-year college system's fastest growing population -- students that need adult basic skills. Revamping traditional basic skills instructional models to create higher student success rates and sustainable, cohesive education pathways is a critical need in higher education. Bellingham Technical College proposes the *Adult Technical Education Pathway (ATEP)* project -- to plan and implement a radical redesign of its traditional adult basic skills program. Research calls into question the validity and success of traditional adult education programs; work for this project will be based on research and practices that have demonstrated positive impact on student success levels. This three-year project will develop a cohesive structure for entering, transitioning and retaining basic skills students through the first year of college-level work, resulting in a credential.

During this economic downturn, enrollment nationally at community and technical colleges is burgeoning. At Bellingham Technical College (BTC), dislocated workers are enrolling in record numbers and numbers of students with low basic education skills are greater than the College has the capacity to serve. Eighty-six percent of the students who enter adult education classes in Washington State do so to get and keep a family-wage job, but Washington State researchers have found that in order for students to achieve that goal, they must reach the *Tipping Point* – one year of college level coursework and a credential that leads to a job. With

over 85% of its offerings in career and technical education (certificates and degrees in programs ranging from Accounting to Nursing to Welding), Bellingham Technical College has a unique opportunity to increase the number of basic skills students who reach the Tipping Point and get out of poverty.

The ATEP project fits well within BTC's Strategic Plan. The College's mission is to deliver superior professional technical education for today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities. BTC's vision is to be a recognized leader in providing innovative and effective technical education, creating options for career success, and developing a competitive workforce. The project addresses three of the College's seven strategic goals:

- Access - BTC will increase student access to seamless, educational pathways.
- Excellence & Innovation - BTC will support and promote excellence and innovation throughout the College.
- Student Success - BTC will increase students' goal achievement by providing activities and opportunities for learning, growth, and leadership.

Primary goals for the ATEP project will be sustainability and replication.

The Problem

The U.S. is the only country among the 30 OECD (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development) free-market countries where the current generation is less well-educated than the previous one (Reach Higher America, 2008). The number of Washington employers who identify lack of basic and English language skills among workers as a barrier to their success tripled in the last two years. One solution is to educate those adults who, for one reason or another, have not succeeded in completing a postsecondary certificate or degree.

Each year, community and technical colleges offer basic skills instruction to more than 2.5 million adults with limited skills and education. Yet few of these students advance

successfully to college level education and even fewer achieve a postsecondary certificate or credential. This is not only a loss for the individual but for our society. These individuals who do not successfully advance are not able to secure jobs that pay family supporting wages and are limited in their opportunity for career advancement. The Community College Research Center at Columbia University found that too few low-income adult learners in Washington State ever reach the Tipping Point – enough education to make a significant difference in economic self-sufficiency and to enter into the workforce. Bellingham Technical College’s data indicates that only 13-16% of its basic skill students transition from basic skills into a college level coursework and only 1-2 % of its basic skills students attain a certificate or degree. Basic skills students are a student population who are at risk within the higher education system; too often, the two-year college “gateway” for these students is more of a revolving door.

This issue is a critical one. There is a sense of urgency as college education becomes the prerequisite for middle-class life and remains a necessity for our society, which needs capable workers and engaged citizens. That urgency is sharpened by the economic downturn we are now experiencing, with higher numbers of dislocated workers and people in low skilled jobs threatened by unemployment and a significantly increasing population needing adult basic education. “America’s Perfect Storm,” a policy information report put out by the Educational Testing Service, describes three forces changing our nation’s future. The authors cite less educational achievement, an economic shift to high tech jobs, and a shift in demographics— increasingly older and more diverse population, with immigration significantly impacting the composition of the workforce (2007). In BTC’s service district, members of ESL populations and other underserved groups contribute to the county’s 30% high school drop-out rate and 15% poverty rate. Over 30% of the county’s population has no higher education. Data collected by

the local Workforce Council shows that the unemployment rate of those with a GED/high school diploma or less is more than twice their incidence in the population. These statistics include high numbers of under-employed adults and laid-off workers who need to retrain to get or keep a job.

Our adult basic education program is not achieving the outcomes students or our employers need to support a healthy economy. It is time to initiate a systemic change in BTC's adult education programming to move more students to the Tipping Point.

The Model

Educators have long subscribed to the concept of a teachable moment, a moment that must be sensed and seized by a teacher who is particularly disposed to learn something or be responsive to being taught or made aware. This moment is present at Bellingham Technical College, and especially in the adult education program. Faculty have taken the lead in participating in teaching and learning research, the department has new administrative leadership, and Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges has initiated several programs, including Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) and Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), that focus on moving students to the Tipping Point. The education community is more aware than ever before of the potential involved in developing educational pathways from basic education to improve the economic status of individuals. This is the *moment* to implement the ATEP project.

This ATEP project will integrate innovative and successful practices to systemically revamp BTC's adult basic education program and serve over 700 basic skills students. The project will focus on innovative strategies (each supported by research and successful practice) in four areas: professional development, student support, restructure of the teaching and learning

environment, and tracking of student progress along a continuum of momentum points toward the Tipping Point (one year of college coursework and a workforce credential).

Using what the Carnegie Foundation calls *powerful professional development*, Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs) --will be created as a foundation to make a systemic change. FIGs make professional development into a collaborative effort and will focus on evidence about learning that moves students toward specific outcomes. The second component is supported by successful lessons from a Washington State program called Opportunity Grants. The ATEP project will modify the program's student support components to design and implement an advising, entry and retention model for basic skills students that provides intensive support services and focuses on student planning, orientation and empowerment.

The third focus and core of the project will be the redesign of the teaching and learning environment. Principles from powerful classroom and metacognitive theory and integrated (contextual) learning will redress curriculum and instructional delivery. The principles of powerful classrooms include high-structure, high-challenge, intensity, intentionality, and learning how to learn, along with inquiry and assessment. Metacognitive theory focuses on teaching students to positively change their mindset, to understand the ways in which they can maximize their comprehension and retention of concepts and information, and to adapt and control their own thinking processes. Teaching basic skills in the context of materials that are of interest to students (sometimes referred to as contextual instruction), has been proven to improve the learning of basic skills by adults. Washington's I-BEST programs integrate basic skills with college-level career and technical coursework, resulting in these students moving towards the Tipping Point at a much faster pace than traditional program students. The final component of the teaching and learning environment revision will be to infuse advanced instructional

technology into the curriculum. The fourth element of the design of ATEP is to use the Washington State Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) to track student progress along a continuum of momentum points toward the Tipping Point (one year of college coursework and a credential).

Key Project Elements

This project will result in a sustainable model that can be shared and implemented by other colleges. Elements of this project are further defined in the following sections.

1. Faculty Professional Development

Basic skills educators are caring, dedicated individuals who see the positive impact of increased skills and education, but who may not recognize that what they are doing may not be meeting the long-term needs of their students. Changes in delivery and expectations about outcomes can be met with resistance, so it is important to implement changes and strategies where faculty take the lead and/or fully support. Faculty must be instrumental in decision-making and be recognized for their work. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching – Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (2008) found that “powerful classrooms do not come out of thin air.” It is critical to provide effective professional development to assist faculty in making this change.

BTC will implement Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs). FIGs have been found to create a professional community where educators can share what happens in the classroom, articulate and negotiate student learning outcomes, and use tools of classroom research to understand the student experience. Faculty share insights and findings to examine a wide range of evidence and invite and offer critical reflection and peer review for collaboration in the design of curriculum assignments and assessments. All of these efforts help build trust and support professional

identity and responsibility (*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2008*). FIGs encourage professional development as a collaborative effort. BTC’s faculty groups will build on prior research and work on student learning to develop processes and curriculum that moves students toward elevated outcomes and changes current learning environments to *powerful classrooms*. Providing faculty time to participate in FIGs and to gather and process research findings into practice will be critical to the success of this project.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK USING FACULTY INQUIRY GROUPS (FIGS)	
Year I	
Goal I: Assist basic skills faculty develop a Faculty Inquiry Group.	
Goal II: Increase the number of basic skills faculty participating in professional development.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a collaborative needs assessment for professional development. • Gather input from faculty regarding structural framework and components. • Develop FIG • Develop communication system for continuous feedback, input and information sharing. • Gather data and documentation • Increase faculty support and collaboration efforts as they implement curriculum and structural changes within their department. • Increase participation of faculty teams in professional development opportunities, including state and national training and conferences on instructional strategies effective for basic skills populations and conferences on increasing basic skill students’ success, retention and transition rates. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring by faculty project lead and program directors. • Regular communications and debriefs by project leader and directors. • Regular professional development approvals and reports. <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective was the new model for professional development? • How did this model assist the changes in the teaching and learning environment? • Did participation in professional development opportunities increase, change in scope and/or content focus?

Year II	
(As in Year I)	
Goal I: Assist basic skills faculty develop a Faculty Inquiry Group.	
Goal II: Increase the number of basic skills faculty participating in professional development.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and refine communication system for continuous feedback, input and information sharing. • Continue gathering data and documentation • Maintain faculty support and collaboration efforts as they implement curriculum and structural changes within their department. • Increase participation of faculty teams in professional development opportunities, including state and national training and conferences on instructional strategies effective for basic skills populations and conferences on increasing basic skill students' success, retention and transition rates. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring by faculty project lead and program directors. • Regular communications and debriefs by project leader and directors. • Regular professional development approvals and reports. <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective was the new model for professional development? • How did this model assist the changes in the teaching and learning environment? • Did participation in professional development opportunities increase, change in scope and/or content focus?
Year III	
(Same as Year I & II, with added goals)	
Goal III: Professional development framework becomes part of the basic skills departmental structure.	
Goal IV: Best practices from professional development efforts in this area begin to become part of the culture in the larger institution.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills department professional development framework becomes institutionalized within the department. • Framework becomes a model for the rest of the campus, state and national communities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of efforts by project faculty lead, project directors • Rate of dissemination of best practices internally and externally.

2. Advising, Entry and Retention

Lessons learned from Washington's Opportunity Grant will inform this element of ATEP.

Advising and Orientation

The current basic skills admissions process is largely focused on a seven-hour orientation, which includes three hours of testing and obtaining required paperwork from

students. BTC will radically revise its basic skills orientation to model a structured, empowering learning environment; the new orientation will follow the On-Course principles of success (Downing, 2004). These principles, including working with students on study skills, critical thinking development and self-motivation and management, will be incorporated into a mandatory three-day orientation course. The new orientation will also include career planning and allow students to begin work with their dedicated advisor; the advisor will help students begin to overcome their barriers to education. The learning culture modeled by this orientation will reflect high expectations and levels of student responsibility for their learning and academic planning, and will include graded assignments. If a student does not pass the orientation, students will be required to take a more intensive student success class in their first quarter.

Student Support Services

In 2006, Washington State created ten Opportunity Grant pilot programs. In addition to students being able to access non-traditional financial aid for basic skills students, individual student support services were implemented. The pilots demonstrated an impressive 73% retention rate for at-risk student populations. The ATEP project will use lessons from those pilots to design sustainable student support for basic skills students.

As is common to most college campuses, instructional areas at BTC tend to be separated into silos. This problem is exacerbated for basic skills students; for example, English as a Second Language (ESL) students are largely sequestered in their learning communities during the first four stages of their coursework, and although they transfer to the campus Learning Center for stages 5-7, they are with GED and Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners who are also separated from the rest of the campus. Most instructors and coordinators note that at these levels, students still tend to gather together in same-language groups. This combination of

factors is common in higher education, but leads to a significant disconnect between basic advising, career and outreach services available to “traditional” college students and those enrolled in basic skills courses. The role of the Student Case Manager will be to combat the isolation experienced by BTC’s basic skills students and provide intensive student support in a variety of ways.

The Student Case Manager will use in-person advising to help students into the program and assist with application processes, financial planning, and registration. This staff member will offer support and refer students to specialized services and resources, including counselors specializing in assisting and accommodating students with disabilities, and who are members of diverse and non-traditional populations. Additionally, the Case Manager will act as the students’ conduit to financial aid assistance and information, providing or connecting students to state, College and College Foundation funds for admissions and registration costs, tuition and books, and to help offset childcare and transportation costs.

Part of the Manager’s role will be to develop and implement peer tutoring services and integrated basic skills student learning communities that will support students as they move along their educational pathway. To further address significant student barriers, the Manager will set up a local network of students and families to help leverage time and effort for childcare. Staff will organize family nights so family members will be better able to support the working adult enrolled in the educational program.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT AN ADVISING, ENTRY AND RETENTION MODEL FOR BASIC SKILLS STUDENTS	
Year I	
Goal I: Increase rate of retention in basic skills programming.	
Goal II: Increase range of support services available.	
Goal III: Increase number of participants accessing tutoring and other support services.	
Objectives:	Evaluation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with faculty and advisors to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ develop a seamless plan for basic student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring by faculty project lead, Student Case Manager and program directors.

<p>entry processes, including testing and paperwork requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and implement the intensive orientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular communications and debriefs by Manager. ● Student outcomes for orientation retention and transfer rates. ● Student and faculty evaluations and feedback. <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the new orientation model improve student retention through orientation and transition rates into the next step of the pathway? ● Did the orientation have a positive impact on long-term student success?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a plan for on-going support services with input from students, advisors and faculty that addresses significant student barriers. ● Develop communication system for continuous feedback, input and information sharing between Manager, faculty and other advisors. ● Gather data and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring by faculty project lead, Student Case Manager and program directors. ● Regular communications and debriefs by Manager. ● Student evaluations (informal, focus groups and surveys) of on-going support services. ● Faculty and advisor evaluations (meetings and surveys) of how well the support services are meeting student needs. ● Student outcomes, including overall program retention and student achievement rates. <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the new student support model have positive short and long-term impact on student retention and success rates? ● Were services expanded, and did more students access support services? ● Was there a decrease in sense of isolation on the part of basic skills students?
Year II	
<p>(As in Year I) Goal I: Increase rate of retention in basic skills programming. Goal II: Increase range of support services available. Goal III: Increase number of participants accessing tutoring and other support services.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue and refine work on basic skills entry processes and orientation content in collaboration with students, advisors and faculty. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring by faculty project lead, Student Case Manager and program directors. ● Regular communications and debriefs by Manager. ● Student outcomes for orientation retention and transfer rates. ● Student and faculty evaluations and feedback.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine on-going support services with input from students, advisors and faculty. • Maintain and enhance communication system for continuous feedback, input and information sharing between Manager, faculty and other advisors. • Continue to gather data and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring by faculty project lead, Student Case Manager and program directors. • Regular communications and debriefs by Manager. • Student evaluations (informal, focus groups and surveys) of on-going support services. • Faculty and advisor evaluations (meetings and surveys) of how well the support services are meeting student needs. • Student outcomes, including overall program retention and student achievement rates.
Year III	
(Same as Year I & II, with added goals)	
Goal III: Interdepartmental student support services becomes part of the Instruction/ Student Service culture.	
Goal IV: Best practices from efforts in this area are implemented in broader campus initiatives.	
Objectives:	Evaluation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of basic skills instructional and student services support becomes institutionalized within the department and is disseminated. • Orientation becomes a model for the overall campus orientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of efforts by project faculty lead, project directors • Rate of dissemination of best practices internally and externally.

3. Revamping the Teaching and Learning Environment

Principles from powerful classrooms, metacognitive theory, integrated (contextual) learning and instructional technology will redress curriculum and instructional delivery.

Powerful Classrooms

While there are many models of instruction for BTC's adult basic skills offerings, most of these courses are taught in an open learning lab environment. Traditionally, basic skills courses have light structure and are based around independent learning. But as Patricia Cross (1976) notes, underprepared learners may lack the organizing frameworks need to understand difficult academic concepts. Learning experiences need to be explicit in their expectations and highly structured. BTC proposes incorporating the principles of powerful classrooms to change the traditional basic skills learning environment, focusing on high-structure, high-challenge, intensity, intentionality, learning how to learn, and inquiry and assessment. Faculty will analyze

the current offerings, identify needs (and any barriers) for change, and develop a plan for revision. It is expected that some components of the current program will remain consistent while others will reflect significant change.

Metacognitive Theory

Metacognitive theory focuses on teaching students to change their self image, to understand ways that they can understand, adapt and control their own thinking processes, and understand how their brains work. In recent case studies, outcomes have shown that teaching students that they *can* learn and how they can most effectively do so has had more impact on their success than targeted tutoring efforts or content assistance. This redevelopment of curriculum to include strengths-based training and instruction within courses and as companion courses to technical and academic courses will constitute a major change in instructional delivery and should lead to increased achievement levels. These techniques, focusing on student responsibility and empowerment, have been done for the “traditional” student populations, but rarely for basic skill learners. Integrating these techniques will emphasize the affective as well as the cognitive aspect of education.

Contextual Instruction

Eighty-six percent of students who enter adult basic education in Washington State come to get and/or keep a family-wage job. As a technical college, BTC has a prime opportunity to use career goals as the context for adult basic skill student learning and goal achievement. BTC will refine, for more effective delivery, the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model. I-BEST students achieve the Tipping Point at a rate that outpaces students taking traditional basic skills instruction. I-BEST is a departure from traditional assumptions about educational scope, sequence, and readiness to learn. This program integrates basic skills students

into college-level professional technical classrooms. An adult basic educator is in the classroom to assist the professional technical educator in delivering content instruction that will be accessible to basic skills students. I-BEST offers instruction that integrates job specific and basic skills for any student who is ready to succeed, whether or not they have a GED or high school diploma. Columbia University's Community College Research Center found that I-BEST students achieve more college credits within the same hours of instruction, and that 62% of the I-BEST students make significant gains compared to 45% of traditional ABE students. Unfortunately, the number of students currently being served by these innovative and highly effective programs is small, both across the state and on BTC's campus.

The ATEP project will refine and expand the I-BEST concepts. Career exploration and planning and computer skills will be integrated earlier and will be an ongoing focus. In the lower levels of basic skills courses, exploration of career pathways and career planning will constitute core elements of the curriculum. Student activities may include videoconferencing with industry representatives, touring facilities, participating in job shadows, and exploring program opportunities on campus. These activities will form a nexus from which to develop writing, reading, math, and verbal skills. In mid-level basic skills courses, integrated instruction will begin; short certificates such as Basic Weatherization, Basic Electricity or Nursing Assistant will be embedded with basic skills. Basic skills and technical program faculty will work together to support student success in achieving certifications for students. Finally, instruction for higher-level basic skills students will integrate first-quarter college level coursework in a technical program area with their basic skill instruction. Technical and basic skill faculty will work together to provide instructional support. To increase access to this training, the majority of the

seats in specific sections of professional technical programs will be reserved for students entering from ATEP.

Instructional Technology

Adult basic education curricular materials that incorporate advanced instructional technology are more available than ever before. This stems from an expectation throughout college-level courses that students will be comfortable with and use instructional technology. Accordingly, the use of computers, specialized software, information literacy, and the internet will be woven throughout the basic skills teaching and learning environment. Inexpensive computer notebooks will be made available for long-term checkout to students who meet instructional benchmarks; this use will form a strong incentive for students, particularly those who do not have easy access to computers. The use of instructional technology will also allow the development of hybrid instructional models where some content is delivered in person and some electronically. This will allow working basic skills students more flexibility in their course schedules.

REDESIGN OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
Year I	
<p>Goal I: Facilitate holistic curriculum revision and restructure of basic skills programming. Goal II: Increase rate of retention in basic skills programming. Goal III: Increase rate of transition. Goal IV: Increase student achievement levels.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign ABE/ESL program and curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop framework for curriculum using faculty inquiry groups for input, content changes, and instructional technology. ○ Assign faculty and staff components to develop with timelines for basic skills curriculum. • Complete career assessments and implement in occupational field trips and job shadowing • Strengthen connections with professional-technical faculty and programs • Develop revised curriculum. Purchase software and other materials for revised instruction 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring by Faculty Project Lead and program directors. • Regular communications and debriefs by Faculty Project Lead. • Student satisfaction surveys • Student and faculty evaluations and feedback. • Student achievement outcomes. • Outcomes for retention and transfer rates into professional technical programs. • Completion and achievement levels of students in professional technical programs. <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the revisions increased basic skill student outcomes for retention, completion and transfer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate instructional technology in basic skills courses. 	<p>rates?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are students earning more achievement points? How many students are continuing on for certificate and degree completion?
Year II	
<p>(As in Year I) Goal I: Facilitate holistic curriculum revision and restructure of basic skills programming. Goal II: Increase rate of retention in basic skills programming. Goal III: Increase rate of transition. Goal IV: Increase student achievement levels.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement all aspects of basic skills program redesign. Implement and refine career exploration and planning integration into basic skills curriculum. Implement reward system of long-term notebook checkout for continuing students. Continue to strengthen connections with professional-technical faculty and programs Implement and refine revised curriculum. Continue to purchase software and other materials to support instruction. Implement and refine integration of instructional technology in basic skill courses. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring by Faculty Project Lead and program directors. Regular communications and debriefs by Faculty Project Lead. Student satisfaction surveys Student and faculty evaluations and feedback. Student achievement outcomes. Outcomes for retention and transfer rates into professional technical programs. Completion and achievement levels of students in professional technical programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to refine on-going support services with input from students, advisors and faculty. Maintain and enhance communication system for continuous feedback, input and information sharing between Manager, faculty and other advisors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to gather data and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring by faculty project lead, Student Case Manager and program directors. Regular communications and debriefs by Manager. Student evaluations (informal, focus groups and surveys) of on-going support services. Faculty and advisor evaluations (meetings and surveys) of how well the support services are meeting student needs. Student outcomes, including overall program retention and student achievement rates.
Year III	
<p>(Same as Year I & II, with added goals) Goal III: Redesign of the basic skills department and curriculum becomes institutionalized. Goal IV: Best practices from efforts are disseminated internally and in local, state and national communities.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of basic skills instructional and student services support becomes institutionalized within the department and is disseminated. Orientation becomes a model for the overall campus orientation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of efforts by project faculty lead, project directors Rate of dissemination of best practices internally and externally.

4. Assessment – Tracking Student Progress

ATEP assessment will be aligned with the Washington State Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) to track student progress along a continuum of momentum points. Two years ago, the Washington State Board Community and Technical College (SBCTC) implemented the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI). In addition to tracking achievement measures the initiative provides funding based on the achievement of measures (points). The SAI initiative tracks four categories of achievement measures:

1. Building towards college level skills (basic skills gains, passing precollege writing or math)
2. First year retention (earning 15 then 30 college level credits)
3. Completing college level math (passing math courses required for either technical or academic associate degrees)
4. Completions (degrees, certificates, apprenticeship training)

Currently, BTC and other colleges are achieving a majority of their momentum points in measure one. Moving students from basic skills gains through precollege writing and math are accomplishments but do not go far enough. Developers of this initiative hope that there will be a wave of students that move out of measure one through the next three measures. Given past history, it is questionable whether students will progress out of category one without significant changes in the adult basic education program. This is the goal of the ATEP project – to move students through measures 2-4 to the Tipping Point.

Using best practices and efforts that research has already shown to increase success and combining them with an independent evaluation and assessment system outside the College will provide a model with proof of success. Washington State is a leader in basic skill education reform, and has developed and piloted integrated basic education and technical education programs in its two-year college system (I-BEST) and a program meant to better track

performance, Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), in an effort to *raise the knowledge and skills of the state's residents*. The ATEP project will combine these practices with those from the Carnegie Foundation (Powerful Professional Development and Classrooms) and metacognitive theory to systemically change the entire basic skills program at Bellingham Technical College. These efforts are in response to a widely recognized problem. Researchers agree that traditional and/or current approaches to serving this particular population (basic skills students) may be ineffective and that innovative approaches are needed. But efforts in this area have been largely piece-meal. It is not an easy task to attempt to change the culture established in a campus environment; as Bensimon (1989) observes, “entrenched ideas are hard to change.” Most colleges do not have a fully developed plan for assisting students to transition between basic and other programs and jobs or further educational outcomes (Jenkins, 2004).

Project Evaluation

Evaluation is a fundamental element of the ATEP project. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be used as well as both formative and summative evaluation. The outside evaluator will design a series of rubrics, survey and interviews to use with activities and stakeholders. These components are designed to guide the development and refinement of each of the project goals over the three years of the project.

1. Implementation of a professional development framework using Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGS)
2. Redesign of the adult basic education program to facilitate student movement towards the Tipping Point
3. Increase in the enrollment of students into integrated education (50% increase from baseline).
4. Increase in the achievement level in momentum points toward the Tipping Point. Development of a sustainable and replicable model.

For goals one, two and three, evaluation will be conducted using qualitative methods. Qualitative evaluation will be completed using interviews, surveys, focus groups, and rubrics. Assessment will determine if the model for professional development was successfully implemented and its impact; whether the systemic change in the adult basic education program was successful; what changes were accomplished; what challenges were encountered; how these challenges were addressed. Additional questions will revolve around what changes, if any, were made in the project design or process, why they were done; and discussion of plans for the future. Rubrics will be developed early in the project to define what the elements for sustainability and replication are and the evaluation will determine if they were accomplished. Data will be collected from project documents (e.g., minutes of staff meetings, dissemination documents), reports created, and biannual interviews with project staff.

Qualitative Assessment	Data Source
How effective was the new model for professional development? How did this model assist the changes in revamping the teaching and learning environment?	Surveys, rubrics, focus groups & interviews, project documents (e.g., minutes of staff meetings, dissemination documents), reports created and biannual interviews with project faculty, staff and College administration.
How was the teaching and learning environment changed?	
What challenges were encountered and how these challenges were addressed.	
What changes, if any, were made in the project design or process, and why they were done.	
What are plans for the future?	
Student assessment	Focus groups

Ultimately, in order for the project to be sustainable, a cultural shift within the adult basic education department will need to occur; internal stakeholders must embrace this new model.

For goals two and three, BTC will use quantitative data from the College Student Enrollment System, Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System (WABERS) and Washington State’s Student Achievement Initiative (SAI). Enrollment data will determine if more students are being served in an integrated model; most importantly, the SAI data will allow us to

determine if more students move forward on the continuum of momentum measures under this project than in the two years prior to the project. The goal will be to increase overall momentum points, with a 50% increase at the end of the second year. At the end of the third year, our goal will be a 50% increase in retention rates from the first year (with a 50% increase in ABE students receiving minimum of a certificate at end of 3rd year).

Quantitative Assessment	Data Source
Total enrollment in adult basic education	WABERS (Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System)
Total enrollment in integrated instruction program	Student Enrollment Data
Baseline - total momentum points 2008-09	WA SBCTC Student Achievement Initiative
Total momentum points by measure – annually, for each year of project	WA SBCTC Student Achievement Initiative

To reach the goal of replication, it will be critical to document steps in the process of this transition with data to support the changes in outcomes. This evaluation plan will provide that information and evidence.

Dissemination Strategies

With effective basic skills training in great demand, the need to share best practices is critical. Results of this work and products developed will be disseminated in collaboration with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in Washington State. A web site will be developed where results, products and practices will be posted. Faculty and staff will take part in regional and national conferences as presenters. In the third year of the project, a workshop will be provided to assist those colleges that want to make a similar transition; information on successes and challenges will be provided as well as access to products and practices.