

Yesterday Anne, Joan and I met during the work group lunch meeting time and spent some time doing a wrap-up of our work. I thought I would share my perspective on the ground we covered.

I began the conversation by acknowledging that as a facilitator, I did not push us to move quickly to action steps. I know that for some of you that made the process feel as if we were spinning our wheels, or covering ground you knew intimately. From my perspective, the process we went through to use RBA as an organizing tool was quite revealing about how we handle complex problems in this building. It is quite rare for us to have different committees work collaboratively and simultaneously on a single problem.

As I watched the first couple of meetings, it became clear to me that our experience on our committees does more than just inform us on specific issues under our jurisdiction, it also shapes the way we analyze problems and the conversational norms we bring to group engagement. Because of this, I was comfortable letting us take the time to do the pre-work of a normal RBA Turn-the-Curve exercise. Typically, a turn the curve exercise starts with a written population outcome and a number of possible baseline indicators already graphed. The group would select a graph or two and get to work on the fun part of RBA, discussing causal drivers and opportunities to turn the curve.

We started further back in the process for two reasons: my determination that the work would help us get to a place of common purpose and the common vocabulary that I thought was missing when we first started talking, and because it turns out that the challenge we had choosing a couple of baseline indicators revealed some important truths about the availability of useful data. We had the best of the advocate community, the administration and the House committees of jurisdiction, and we struggled. As a facilitator, I could not ignore this, yet it came with the risk that the time we spent would stall our movement. I also believe that had we jumped too quickly to solutions, the differences in our committee norms and knowledge would have undermined our attempt to get consensus on next steps.

All in all, I think we did good work and moved the process forward. Anne and I serve on the Government Accountability Committee and we are committed to bringing our work forward by using the GAC process. The GAC has been advocating for the increased use of RBA in the legislature and for an appropriation to build capacity within the building. One piece of testimony we heard consistently from the non-profit community and administration practitioners of RBA, is that it takes time to move people to a comfort level and easy facility with the tool. Our work group was, to my knowledge, the first attempt to use RBA as a tool for addressing a complex, contested and intractable problem. Anne and I are proud of all of our efforts in the work group and now have a better sense not only of what is possible but also how important it will be to have structured support for building RBA capacity.

Thank you.

Tristan

