

TRINITY VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE 's QEP

Engaged Learning: Pathways to Success,

Improving reading comprehension through the enhancement of student engagement

Trinity Valley Community College's (TVCC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) emerged from the campus community's responses to the question, "if you could do one thing to improve student learning, what would that be?" As patterns became apparent, a Council of well-respected and award-winning faculty and staff began to narrowly focus the QEP. In June 2005, a full-time director and staff were selected to provide the leadership for this effort. The QEP was renamed the Learning Initiative (LI), and the LI Council and staff clarified the purpose of the initiative as improving students' reading comprehension through the enhancement of student engagement. This fits well within the College's learning-centered mission.

The College has initiated several new projects to enhance reading and engagement. To foster student-to-student interaction, faculty form Student Networking Groups within classes. To further create a campus environment that engages learners, the College has developed three new in-house professional growth activities, including the Learning Academy Scholars Project, the Lunch and Learn programs, and Learning Day. Reading Teams have created discipline-specific reading tests from college textbooks to measure reading comprehension and are now executing plans to enhance student success. New supplemental instruction activities include an Open Learning Lab and Professionals Offering Departmental Study Sessions (PODS). These projects offer expanded access to computer-assisted learning, professional tutoring, and small group instruction with instructors outside of class. Additionally, the college has developed a website that centralizes all electronically accessible resources available from the publishers of textbooks used in key courses. In a project called Great Explanations, faculty research techniques to enhance engagement and reading and submit them to a central point for distribution across the campus.

At TVCC, academic engagement is viewed as the foundation from which to improve student learning. As such, the College established targets for improving student engagement in the benchmark areas identified in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The College also developed targets for producing gains in reading comprehension in developmental reading as well as in college courses with a high repeat rate (e.g. psychology, history, etc...). Given the College's philosophy of engagement and student learning, the correlation between engagement and reading is continually evaluated.

Performance is evaluated by comparing results on key assessment instruments with baseline data collected in FY06. The data being evaluated include results from administrations of CCSSE, Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), locally developed student engagement instruments, the reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Skills Program (Pre-TASP), locally developed discipline-specific reading tests, and the reading portion of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). Additionally, other measures are tracked using local student data (placement performance, grades, retention, etc...). Given the comprehensive nature of the activities, their evaluation, and the institution's genuine commitment to student learning, the Learning Initiative is now integrated as an ongoing part of the institution's activities.

For additional information, contact Dr. Jeremy McMillen, Assistant Vice President of Instruction for Academic Education and Institutional Planning, phone (903) 675-6371, email - jmcmillen@tvcc.edu.