

Newsletter

April 2004

Creating a Culture that Focuses on Enhancing Student Learning

Welcome to the third issue of the Quality Enhancement Newsletter, *FOCUS*, which will provide you with general information, updates, and progress reports as this dynamic process develops and grows. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a key component of our SACS-COC Reaffirmation, and will refine our ongoing process of assessment and improvement in enhancing student learning.

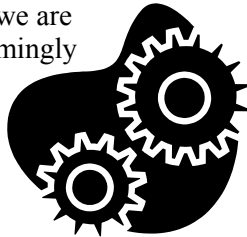
QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“If you want to succeed, you should strike out on new paths rather than travel the worn paths of accepted success.”

-John D. Rockefeller Jr.

Are We A Well-Oiled Machine?

As employees of CTC, we are very busy, sometimes overwhelmingly so. When we are so focused on our specific tasks, we tend to get tunnel vision and think of our roles as individual components, departments, activities, classrooms, or offices.



That perspective often manifests itself in these questions:

- What's that got to do with my department?
- How's that going to help me?
- Why do I need to be all tied up with the Strategic Plan? Institutional Effectiveness? The QEP?
- Here I am trying my best for the student; I don't have time for all that other stuff!
- Nothing I do will make a difference anyway.

Hmmmm. What if we flip things around and look at them from a different angle? What if we think about the entire machine instead of individual parts of the machine? The question is, of course, what is the machine? It is the sum total of all the classrooms, departments, personnel, and other components of campus. It is our institution.

Like a machine, all parts of the institution must operate well, but more importantly, they must operate well **together**. It really doesn't matter how

your department operates on its own if the other departments do not support your efforts. Students may be very pleased with the counseling and advising they receive but feel dissatisfied when they apply for financial aid or get into the classroom. All units are part of the student's collegiate experience, and they must work together to achieve good ratings from students. If you don't believe that, think of your experience in restaurants. You may have gotten good food, you may have liked the atmosphere and prices, but if the service was poor, perhaps you made a mental note to cross that place off your list. Why should colleges be different? Online education has laid the world of colleges and universities at students' feet, and students no longer have to attend the closest college in their hometown. In other words, our competition for students has increased exponentially. To attract today's students, we need to be well prepared, effective, professional in our roles, and cohesive.

How do we become cohesive? It starts with our understanding of the big picture. The more information we have about Strategic Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and the QEP, the better our insight on how we can work together in the most efficient manner. It is essential for us to understand how the entire machine works before we can fix some of the individual parts.

If you personally can not see how your cog meshes with the rest of the machine, you are the very person who should request to work on Strategic Planning or the QEP. The powerful realization you will gain with a broader view of the institution, its mission, and its vision will enable you to determine how your role best benefits the efficiency of the institution and, ultimately, our students.

MEASURING SUCCESS

One of the key components in the QEP process is ASSESSMENT. The "plan" is just the beginning of the process. And *saying* we've made improvements isn't enough; we must *SHOW* we have made improvements by using valid, measurable assessment of our progress.

As your unit identifies its focus area, it is most important to determine how to measure improvement. Each instructional unit will determine how best to measure improvements in student learning. Non-instructional units will determine how best to measure improvements in “learner-centered service.”

Measurement can take the form of pre-and post- research or comparisons against established standards or goals. After training, units will decide what type of measurement best fits their needs.

Remember that the QEP is intended to be a recursive, or circular, process—we establish goals, develop action plans, assess the results, incorporate the results into our future planning, and incur positive changes. Then we start all over again!



QEP Spring Dates to Remember

- April 2** **QEP Faculty Training—Student Learning Outcomes Workshop**
9 a.m.- 3 p.m., Bldg 152, Rm 101
(Faculty QEP Specialist)
- April 16** **QEP Faculty Training—Student Learning Outcomes Follow-up and Pre/Post Testing**
12-2 p.m., Bldg 152/Rm 101
(Faculty QEP Specialist)

QEP TIMELINE

SPRING 2004

Training, Focus Group Research, Quality Assurance

SUMMER 2004

Finalize QEP Document

FALL 2004

Pre/post tests or other measurements to establish control group

Action Plans due Nov 1

Action Plans final Dec 10

SPRING 2005

Implement Action Plans

Evaluate Action Plans

SUMMER 2005

Modify Action Plans based on results of tests

Prepare for Phase 2

FALL 2005

Implementation of Action Plan

Survey Phase II (DL6000 and C&I sites)

QEP Website Update!

Want more QEP information? Log onto http://www.ctcd.edu/home_qep.htm for background information, training updates, QEP Specialist tools and more.

A New Kind of Learner

Today elementary and high school teachers are required to have a number of courses in pedagogy. Oddly enough, even though college teachers are expected to be excellent, they are not required to have any formal training in teaching and learning; their expertise in their fields of study has always been considered adequate for college teaching. Moreover, although college faculty are universally interested in improving student learning, many faculty teach in the way that worked best for them when they themselves were students. It’s what they know, and it worked! Although this system worked well for a long time, 30 years of research says that we can do much better. Technology, as you know, has influenced today’s learner. Remote controls, cell phones, the Internet and other electronic devices allow today’s students to control their own learning. Today’s students are even different from just five years ago. It is no longer enough for the instructor to write a syllabus and present information. Today’s instructor is expected to create and sustain an effective learning environment using best practices. Join us in the QEP process as we assess our effectiveness, examine best practices, and incorporate changes to improve student learning.

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This newsletter is published by the QEP Core Committee. Please direct questions or suggestions to any member of the committee or email: quality.enhancement@ctcd.edu.