



# QE Reporter

Faculty Focus

May 2008

CTC's Quality Enhancement Plan: Creating a Culture that Focuses on Enhancing Student Learning

## A Dean's Perspective

By Ken Austin

Dean, Continental Campus

We have heard the term QEP used quite a bit within the CTC organization. I believe that this topic is often met with resistance and/or confusion. This topic may also be met with the idea that "QEP doesn't apply to me or to my job". This is most likely because we don't really understand what QEP is or the reasoning behind it.

QEP is something that everyone at CTC should be involved with. I believe that CTC does a very good job of providing for the educational needs not only of our students in the central Texas area, but also for our students all over the world. It is great to believe that we are doing a good job and meeting the needs, but how can we document that we are actually doing as good a job as we believe? This is the simple version of what QEP aims to do for us. This may not be as difficult as it sounds.

Continental Campus recently held a week-long workshop for our Site Directors. As we were discussing QEP, the policy regarding the waiver of the requirement for active duty military to take a placement test in English and Math prior to enrolling in these courses came up. While CTC allows this waiver, placement testing may still be required, depending upon the specific contract or MOU at a location. Therefore, we have some sites requiring placement testing and others not.

The site directors discussed comparing sites where placement testing is required with those without the requirement to determine if there is a real difference in the success of students. From this data, determinations can be made as to what changes, if any, should be made and if improvements are needed in this area.

This is only one example of how QEP can be utilized. I'm sure that everyone, regardless of their position or location, can come up with many other ideas to help us determine if we are truly meeting our goals and providing the best possible educational product and service to our students.

We must remember that even the best organization has room for improvement. Let's all work together to determine what we are doing extremely well and where we can make enhancements.

[We hope to feature a different dean's perspective in each future newsletter]

## Student Success Course ready to pilot

Contributor – Dawn Green, President, Faculty Senate

How many students are missing the boat because they don't understand what college is all about, and they don't possess the adult skills in life planning that lead to success? Responding to faculty senate discussion on students' college readiness, senate president Dawn Green convened a group to develop a course to help launch all those little boats and chart their way to new worlds.

From its initial meeting in January, the group has developed a course outline, selected textbooks, and had the course approved for offering next fall as PSYC 1300, Learning Frameworks. Two or three sections are scheduled for the pilot semester, and a DL version is planned.

Textbooks are *Focus on College Success*, by Constance Staley, and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Stephen R. Covey. Staley gave a short seminar on campus in January and has been invited for a faculty development discussion to be scheduled in fall.

Course modules cover knowing yourself, graduating debt-free, understanding how learning takes place, utilizing college resources, developing effective learning skills, and interdependence, the art of working well with others. Extensive exercises lead the students through recognizing their learning styles and creating a plan for college, and life, success.

## Faculty Professional Development

Contributors – Jan Anderson, Lynn Forster, Bertha Kondrak, Suzanne Morales-Vale, Jenny Shotwell, Larry Flegle

Faculty are pretty much assumed to have absorbed teaching skills on the way to gaining college and graduate degrees in their disciplines. This traditional path has produced an abundance of excellent teaching. It has also produced some teaching, though well intended, that misses the mark, as well as inconsistency in evaluating student accomplishment.

College teaching and assessment are increasingly discussed as a professional field. Nationwide, colleges are developing faculty academies for early career faculty and fresh challenges for experienced teachers.

The Faculty Senate Professional Development committee is working with other faculty and campus leaders on two projects.

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The first aims to revise the current Faculty Professional Development Plan, including reviving a QEP initiative to develop a Faculty Academy for Superior Teaching (FAST) for CTC on main campus and worldwide. A related initiative will develop a webpage to serve as the main information portal for all faculty Professional Development.

### **Calling all faculty, wherever you are!**

These groups are in the beginning phases and are actively seeking faculty members from all campuses to contribute their ideas and influence. Join us and be part of innovation at CTC!

Contact Faculty Senate President Dawn Green [dawn.green@ctcd.edu](mailto:dawn.green@ctcd.edu) or PD Committee Chair Suzanne Morales-Vale [suzanne.morales-vale@ctcd.edu](mailto:suzanne.morales-vale@ctcd.edu) for details and to discuss your interests. To lend your expertise to the Faculty Academy, please contact [jane.zimmerman@ctcd.edu](mailto:jane.zimmerman@ctcd.edu)

**Many details have yet to be worked out**, but a budget request was added to the Learning Outcomes Assessment office for a FAST incubator, to develop and pilot the academy. Key elements include seminar formats, use of CTC and peer college 'best practices,' possible outside speakers as well as current faculty presenters, and online discussion forums. Remember, at this stage this is a budget request!

Larry Flegle, DBA, DL mentor for the Business faculty teaching in Distance Learning, is on the leading edge of this effort. He is beta testing an online retreat to include three facilitated asynchronous weeklong discussions led by Dr. Jim Young (CTC adjunct), Dr. Theresa Pavone (guest) and himself, plus three (or more) one-hour synchronous chats to discuss specific topics.

Dr. Flegle says, *the overall purpose is to build the community of learners with the DL business faculty and to get everyone on the same page. I want to work on developing more robust and engaging discussions with our students, humanizing the online classroom, raising the quality and usefulness of grading feedback, increasing instructors' understanding in their role in retention, and ensuring that instructors understand how to get the most out of Blackboard.* An ambitious project.

## *Evaluation of Instruction (chiller)*

Contributor – Dawn Green, President, Faculty Senate

What are the important questions to ask when developing a new course evaluation questionnaire for CTC? A rapid-response task force has begun by declaring four rules for gathering the data:

- Rule 1: Don't collect it if you can't use it.
- Rule 2: If you collect it, use it.
- Rule 3: Define who will be responsible for using the information.
- Rule 4: Define how the information will be used.

The large and diverse work group currently includes only 6 faculty, plus 10 administrators with responsibilities for data and technical specialists who will design online implementation and analysis features. This is another committee looking for FACULTY to weigh in, on a project that will affect evaluation of their instruction.

Sections of the form will cover student preparedness and participation, feedback about course and instructor characteristics, books and course materials, and demographic and delivery mode information.

Faculty are invited to request a copy of the current draft by e-mailing [Dawn.Green@ctcd.edu](mailto:Dawn.Green@ctcd.edu). With this in hand, you can reply with your comments,

analysis, and suggestions. While we would welcome your shining face at the occasional meeting, your interest and input are important via whatever mode you choose!

## **FREE, FAST Ideas**

By Teresa Chavez, Director, Continuing Education

If you could spend 2.5 hours and gain three ideas to make your teaching life more effective, would you take it? CTC Continuing Education is offering this class free to faculty on August 18, 6 – 8:30 pm, on main campus. Just RSVP to [Teresa.Chavez@ctcd.edu](mailto:Teresa.Chavez@ctcd.edu)

## **Teaching Techniques for Adult Learners A Seminar for Corporate or College Instructors**

Concepts of adult learning theory drive the development of any education for adults. Adults have a task-centered or problem-centered approach to learning. Courses designed for adults will be structured around real tasks, practical application, and problem solving in addition to subject matter.

In this workshop you will learn adult learning styles and theories and how they benefit your course curriculum and teaching methods. Discover how practical techniques of assessments, simulations, and problem-based activities accelerate learning and build content retention. Participate in a fun and interactive environment and learn how to design learner-centered activities for your course content.

Dr. Wendy Flint has over 20 years experience in teaching and instructional design. She has written three books on teaching techniques, including her most recent - *Problem-based Learning: Welcome to the Real World*, which will be available for purchase at class for \$10. She is a corporate trainer and professor who is published in both education and business journals. Her paper on *Transfer of Learning* was published and presented at the 14th International Conference on Teaching and Learning. Her workshops are fun, highly interactive, and informative.