



Cornerstone Experience

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Update

Quality Enhancement Plan Logo Debuts!

The Cornerstone Experience logo (above) was recommended to District President Kenneth P. Walker by the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee based on a conceptual design by Edison State College student James Shears.

The **DIAMOND** duplicates the shape of the Edison State College logo, symbolizing quality of education.

The interlocking **BUILDING BLOCKS** highlight the four theoretical concepts framing the Cornerstone Experience course:

- Critical Thinking
- Relevancy
- Applied Learning
- Success Strategies

The words **CORNERSTONE EXPERIENCE** cradle the bottom of the logo to signify the supportive foundation that the course provides.

The **COLORS** designate traits of successful learners:

- Red: Fortitude, Determination
- Green: Optimism, Honesty
- Yellow: Intellect, Confidence
- Blue: Reliability, Honor

The **TORCH** symbolizes the enlightenment of learning.

The logo will be prominently displayed on all materials related to the Cornerstone Experience course, as well as on marketing pieces and promotional items.



Volume 1, Issue 3

April 2011

The July/August 2009 issue of Achieving the Dream Data Notes identified five risk factors jeopardizing student persistence and success:

1. **Low-income:** whether the student received a Pell grant during the first term
2. **Students of color:** those who are Hispanic; black, non-Hispanic; Native American
3. **Referred to developmental education**
4. **25 years or older**
5. **Part-time attendance during the first term**

The report suggests that as colleges develop strategies to help at-risk populations succeed in their postsecondary education, they need to consider the specific risk factors their students possess, and the varying ramifications of each risk factor. Also, for students with multiple risk factors, colleges should take into account the likely combinations of factors.

Getting Students to Read the Textbook

by Professor Myra Hale

Having problems getting your students to read their textbooks before an examination? You are not alone. According to the article, *Getting Students to Read* accessed on April 25, 2011 from the University of Concordia, Centre for Teaching and Learning Services, a consistent pattern of research findings has established compliance with course reading at 20-30% for any given day and assignment. Like it or not, students are spending time texting, working more and reading less. In the past, I have tried several solutions to remedy this problem. First, I decided to take what I call my "high road approach" by explaining how reading before class helps to enhance our class discussions, so that I would not have to resort to the "boring lecture." To prepare for these stimulating class discussions, I focused on a few key concepts that I wanted my students to understand from the text, and I developed a series of thought provoking discussion questions. After weeks of "talking to myself," I realized that the only thing my students were questioning and discussing was my sanity!! My next bright idea to get my students to read before each class was to give pop quizzes each day. Soon after implementing this idea, my family members started to inquire about my whereabouts after missing family gatherings, weddings, holiday celebrations, birthdays, baby showers, movie night with friends and book club evening, when my friends and I often discuss more than the book. After one semester passed, I realized that this was not the answer either. However, this method works well for losing weight. When you finally realize you have missed dinner because you were grading papers, you are so sleepy that you crawl into bed without eating.

During the month of February, while attending my first annual First Year Experience (FYE) Conference, I think that I discovered a method that is a win-win for both my students and me. I will share it with you in hopes that some of you may find it useful in your classrooms as well. It is not a new teaching method, but one that I had previously not experimented with until recently. It is called problem-based learning. Applying this method in the classroom requires you to design a problem around the concepts that you want your students to examine, understand and discuss. Upon disseminating the

problem to your students and making sure that they understand it, students are required to search for information to solve the problem. When using this technique in my classes, my students are given 15-20 minutes while working in groups of no more than 5-6 students to retrieve information from the chapters that have been assigned for that day. As usual, some students have read while most have not, but they all get to review information from the text and discuss how it applies to solving the problem. While the students are trying to solve the problem, I act as a facilitator by making sure that each group stays on task and by providing additional assistance to help students understand the concepts from the textbook. After the twenty minutes are up, (sooner, if all groups have solutions to share) I have all groups share their solutions and discuss how the concepts and information from the textbook were used to help them make their decisions. Afterwards, we often engage in a very spirited class discussion about which solution(s) are best based upon the content from the textbook. This allows me the opportunity to further clarify concepts to make sure that students understand what they are reading, and that they learn how to think in the discipline of Speech Communication. Although I have been using this approach for less than a semester, I am very pleased with the results, and I look forward to integrating it more fully into my classroom in future semesters.

Finally, as you may already suspect, there is no technique worth trying that does not come without some investment of time to be able to utilize it effectively in the classroom. If you are interested in this technique, I would suggest that you find out more information about problem-based learning. To learn more about the advantages and disadvantages, please follow the link below.

[http://www.edison.edu/accreditation/qep/problem based article.pdf](http://www.edison.edu/accreditation/qep/problem%20based%20article.pdf)



QEP Director's Corner

Kevin Shriner, M.A., M.Ed., Associate Dean, First Year Experience and Academic Success

Summer may be just around the corner, but that doesn't mean that QEP planning slows down. Quite the contrary, as QEP Committee members elected to meet each Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m., May through August. The Professional Development Subcommittee is putting the finishing touches on our "Understanding the First-Year Student" workshop to be held at the Lee Campus on June 9th. Mary Stuart Hunter from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at USC will lead the event. In July, the Critical Thinking group and the Professional Development Subcommittee will host a two-day conference at the Diamondhead Resort in Fort Myers Beach. The featured speaker is Dr. Gerald Nosich, professor, author, noted authority and presenter at over 200 workshops on all aspects of critical thinking. Watch for email announcements for both events. Also hard at work this summer will be the new QEP Marketing Committee, planning communications and events for the Fall semester. There is something for everyone to do, and if you'd like to be involved, please contact me, kshriner@edison.edu or Maureen McClintock, mmclintock@edison.edu. Happy summer to all!