

Math: The Bridge to Success

Polk State College's Quality Enhancement Plan

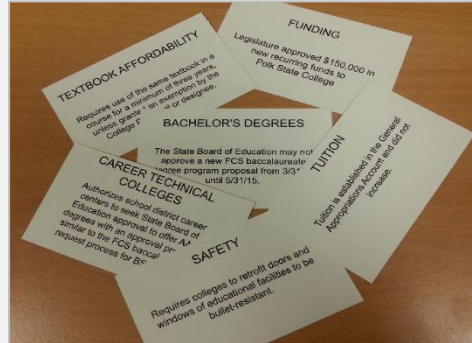
September 2014 Newsletter

Not Just for the Classroom

Learner-centered activities are not just for the classroom. At the August 14 college-wide faculty meeting, Dr. Dodie Cowan, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, led faculty in a type of interactive activity used in many classrooms that can also be applied to other areas.

Overview of Activity

Purpose	For faculty to become familiar with new legislation taking effect this year
Materials	30 sets of 6 note cards with a legislative bill written on each one: Textbook Affordability Funding Tuition Safety Bachelor's Degrees Career Technical Colleges
Grouping	In groups that had already formed naturally around round tables, approximately 30 groups with 6-8 people per group
Time	5 minutes for group discussions; 5 minutes for results to be given and explained
Directions	Each group is to decide which of the 6 bills passed and which did not
Strengths of activity	Group members are immediately engaged and sharing knowledge with each other; prior knowledge is utilized; upcoming explanations are more meaningful and relevant to faculty; participants are motivated to listen to find out if group was correct.
Preparation	Minimal
Increased delivery time by including the activity	Minimal
Transferrable to other topics/disciplines	Yes, the structure of the activity can be used with a variety of content.



Classroom Enhancement Grant

Do you want \$1,000 to spend on classroom materials or technology that will enhance your ability to use learner-centered teaching strategies and provide a supportive learning environment? If so, consider applying for the Classroom Enhancement Grant. The Polk State College Foundation provides support for this grant. Details and application, due Wednesday, October 8, 2014, can be found at www.polk.edu/qep/classroom-enhancement-grant.

Joining the QEP Mathematics Teaching Team this Term

Professor Carolyn Orr, who began teaching full time at Polk last year, has joined the QEP Mathematics Teaching Team this term. Her new faculty project last year examined the use of formative assessment. As one of her QEP goals, Professor Orr will focus on applying graphic organizational tools to help students identify relationships between various concepts in the course. Welcome Professor Orr!



Upcoming S.O.A.R. Sessions

S.O.A.R. (Student Orientation for Academic Readiness) began as a faculty initiative to help students develop skills for succeeding in college and beyond. Challenges of college can be overwhelming, so many students, especially first-time-in-college students, can benefit from learning relevant skills. Weekly sessions addressing study skills, communication skills, time management, and the responsibility of learning are offered the first six weeks of the semester to help our students develop strategies for success. All sessions are in LAC 1133.

Science Goes Wild – Presented by Dr. Rosa Walsh and Dr. Amanda Jones

Thursday, 9/11/14, 3:30-4:15 p.m.

Friday, 9/12/14, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

Best Practices: Note Taking Tips & Tricks – Presented by Professor Aaron Morgan

Wednesday, 9/17/14, 12:15-1:00 p.m.

Thursday, 9/18/14, 1:45-2:30 p.m.

Professional Development Workshops

Why Learner-Centered Teaching is a Best Practice and How You Can Use Learner-Centered Techniques

Dr. Phyllis Blumberg is the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center, University of the Sciences. A research professor in education and a professor of psychology, her interests in education are curriculum development, how to use learner-centered teaching approaches, educational leadership, faculty development, innovation in education, and problem-based learning.

Winter Haven
Tuesday, September 30, 2014
2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
WST 126

Lakeland
Wednesday, October 1, 2014
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
LTB 1310



Dr. Phyllis Blumberg

The Importance of Critical Thinking in the Learner-Centered College



Ms. Connie Wolfe

Lakeland
Thursday, October 23, 2014
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
LTB 2278

Winter Haven
Friday, October 24, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
WST 126

Connie Wolfe is Dean of Arts and Sciences at Surry Community College in Dobson, NC, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1999, she started at SCC as a faculty member teaching writing and literature. She also served as the Chair of the English Department, worked with the college's Academic Support Center, and from 2004-2009 directed the college's critical thinking-focused QEP.

- What is critical thinking?
Defining critical thinking skills, standards, and attributes
 - Why does it matter?
The importance of critical thinking to our roles as educators and to our students
 - How does critical thinking connect to learner-centered teaching?
Deep learning, self-regulated learning, instructors' modeling of learning skills, students taking responsibility for their learning, active and engaged learning, transfer of knowledge, learning for life, meaningful and authentic assessment
 - Strategies for improving students' thinking abilities and promoting deep learning
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