



## Math: The Bridge to Success

### Polk State College's Quality Enhancement Plan

October 2012 Newsletter

*Thank you to everyone for your continued support of Polk State College's Quality Enhancement Plan. We continue to focus mainly on professional development and incorporating learner-centered teaching into our classes. With the next phase of the QEP, we begin extending our QEP efforts to developmental math classes as well as Intermediate Algebra. We have been collecting data and a portion of this newsletter is devoted to sharing that data.*



**Kaye Betz**  
QEP Director

### Classroom Enhancement Grant

Sponsored by the Polk State College Foundation and administered by the QEP Implementation Team, each year one \$1,000 grant is awarded to a faculty member to purchase materials for learner-centered activities in the classroom. During the first year, the grant was open only to mathematics faculty. For the next two years, the grant is open to all faculty members who have three or more years of continuous, regular full-time faculty status. To apply for the grant, go to the QEP web page, [www.polk.edu/qep](http://www.polk.edu/qep), and select "Classroom Enhancement Grant." Use the password "learner" to retrieve the application. Applications are due October 8, 2012.

### Student Educational Plan

As part of the advisors and mathematics faculty joint meeting held each term, Terrance Hays (Winter Haven) and Jessica Buchanan and Michelle Sams (Lakeland) shared the new Student Educational Plan. While students still continue to have access to their degree audit, they now have the ability to plan their courses and make choices about which term they will take each course. This empowers students with the responsibility of planning each term of their education. Students can ask "what if" questions and see the effect. This is a beneficial tool we can encourage students to use so they can take on more responsibility for their learning.

## Mug Shots

In the previous newsletter, faculty were asked to share ways in which they use active learning strategies to make their classes more learner-centered. For their responses, Neal Steiger and Pal Good were awarded QEP mugs with the new QEP logo. Congratulations, Neal and Pal!

*"Sharon Bowman's visit had me redesigning most of my classes.*

*I now begin each session with a "Quick Start" activity. I'd been using more structured group and round-robin activities since last year's Kagan workshop, but I've also incorporated Bowman's "Myth or Fact" exercise, and at the risk of overloading the copy machine, I now used structured worksheets in my classes, which has caused even the most reluctant of note-takers to become active learners.*

*Bowman's workshop was the most useful staff development experience I've had in 25 years."*

*Neal Steiger*



*"I scanned the Internet for dance videos of hospital staff members dancing. Since I teach nursing 1 and I was hired on January 4, I was writing new lectures anyway. I found the pink glove dance, purple glove dance, and dancing for heart health. I was thrilled! I did not know these videos existed. I play them during breaks and before class. I believe the students have enjoyed the videos. At the end of one class, we even had a train of students and faculty all dancing to the music. It is even more fun for me when writing the lectures."*

*Pal Good*

If you did something different in your classes this term to include more active learning or to make your classes more learner-centered, please drop a note to Kaye Betz, [kbetz@polk.edu](mailto:kbetz@polk.edu), sharing what you did.

## **Data from the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning**

Results of the first year (2011-2012) of full QEP implementation are encouraging. While the QEP pilot phase (2010-2011) showed variation in outcomes and few student-learning gains, recent MAT 1033 results illustrate improvement.

The average student-success results, particularly for the last 2012 Spring Term, show significant improvement across pass rates and final-exam outcomes for MAT 1033.

- MAT 1033 Fall Term pass rates increased from 63.1% in 2010 to an all-time high of 65.6% in 2011 (QEP=70.2%).
- Spring Term pass-rates, traditionally lower, increased from 54.4% in 2011 to 60.6% in 2012 (QEP=64.0%).
- The gap in QEP vs. Non-QEP pass-rates significantly increased both Fall and Spring terms.
- 68.2% of 2012-1 QEP students passed the final exam whereas only 58.0% of the non-QEP students passed it. Average score for non-QEP students=61.5%. Average score for QEP students=67.4%.
- 2012-2 QEP final-exam results show inconsistencies that suggest the need for further review/analysis.
- A slight upward trend for MAC 1105 is inconclusive now. If validated, it could indicate the QEP is positively affecting subsequent course outcomes.

While these are inspiring results, it's time to examine College Prep courses that feed into MAT 1033. Recent data mining into MAT 0018 and MAT 0028 student-success rates indicates QEP teaching practices and support mechanisms could positively impact student success in developmental math.

### **Lunch and Learn ~ Breakfast and Learn**

Sharing among colleagues is one way of learning and keeping current with new instructional strategies and technologies to support instruction.

Beverly Woolery presented *The Big Bang Theory of Learning Styles* on Friday, September 28 in Winter Haven. The session will be presented again in February, so if you missed it last week, you will have another opportunity.

Please join us for the following October professional development activities presented by colleagues:

**PAL With Pizzazz!**

Kari Sabin

Tuesday, October 2, 1:30-2:45 - LLC 2293

**Wacky Ways to Prevent Plagiarism**

John Barberet

Thursday, October 11, 1:30-2:45 - LLC 2203

**Assessing Student Learning Outcomes**

Donald Painter and Cindy Freitag

Saturday, October 13, 10:00-11:30 - LTB 1310

**Using Pop Culture to Engage and Explain**

Orathai Northern

Thursday, October 18, 1:30-2:45 - LAC 1243

November sessions include: Using Yoga Principles to Enhance Teaching, Motivating Students for Success, Podcasting, Encouraging Critical Thinking While Handling Political Incorrectness, and Roundtable Discussion of Strategies for Involving Students.

If you would like to present a Lunch and Learn or a Breakfast and Learn for Fall or Spring term, please contact Courtlann Thomas, [cthomas@polk.edu](mailto:cthomas@polk.edu).

## **Developing Responsible Learners**

(Bridge Building Thoughts by Kaye Betz)

One of the main components of the Quality Enhancement Plan is learner-centered teaching.

### **What is learner-centered teaching?**

Learner-centered teaching intentionally and purposefully creates an environment that engages students as active partners in their own learning processes through meaningful interaction with course content, the professor, and each other. It presents opportunities for learners to take responsibility for their own learning with the goal of becoming self-directed, life-long learners.

### **How can we help students become responsible learners?**

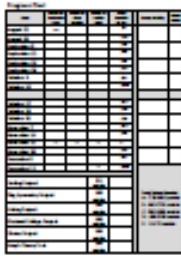
One point of view is that our students should be totally responsible for their own learning. They should take notes, do the assigned homework, study outside of class, and come to class prepared. That's what we aim for. However, many students do not come to Polk with these abilities.

Another point of view is that if students do not demonstrate responsibility, it's the instructor's job to do everything for them, short of taking the class for them. While many

students come to us with poor study skills, if we do everything for them, how can they learn to become self-directed, life-long learners?

As we plan our content and teach it, we should also devise and incorporate ways to help guide our students toward becoming more responsible learners. Here are two suggestions:

- **Include in your syllabus a progress tracking chart for students to fill in as the term progresses.**

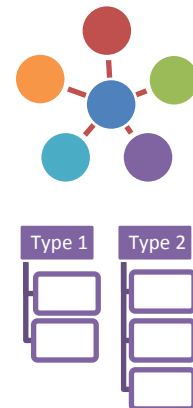


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Assignment 100		

When you hand back the first assignment, ask students to take out their syllabi to record their scores. Give them a minute to do this. After five or six times, students will be in the habit of recording their scores, so you won't need to focus on it as much as you progress through the term.

- **Give partially-filled outlines, PowerPoint slides, or concept maps.**

Taking notes completely from scratch is daunting to many students, a skill that many first-time-in-college students have not yet learned. However, providing pre-written notes doesn't help students develop note-taking skills. Try distributing partial outlines or structured concept maps students can fill in during lectures.



Think about additional strategies you currently use to help students develop responsibility for their learning. If you have a strategy you would like to share, please send it to [kbetz@polk.edu](mailto:kbetz@polk.edu) so it can be included in the next newsletter.

**For updates on the QEP, visit the QEP web page: [www.polk.edu/qep](http://www.polk.edu/qep).**