

L.I.F.E. – Learning Is For Everyone
Southwest Georgia Technical College

The purpose of Southwest Georgia Technical College's (SWGTC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to increase student learning by enabling students to become effective learners through effective teaching. Through feedback gathered from both students and faculty at SWGTC, "effective students" and "effective teachers" have been defined as:

- Effective students are actively engaged and utilize higher order thinking skills.
- Effective teachers have knowledge about how to teach and are approachable.

From both traits listed for "effective students," two student learning outcomes were generated:

- **Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students participating in targeted courses will demonstrate increased engagement in the classroom.
- **Student Learning Outcome 2:** Students participating in targeted courses will demonstrate improvement in performing higher order thinking skills.

Student "engagement" is defined as students' willingness to participate in academic activities, application of successful cognitive strategies, and persistence through difficult tasks (Chapman, 2003). Higher order thinking skills are defined as skills involving creating (or synthesizing), analyzing, and applying. These are skills needed to resolve unfamiliar or complex situations and problems confronting students (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Goodson, King, & Rohani, 1998).

The two student learning outcomes are divided into various sub-outcomes to measure whether or not student learning is occurring. Direct and indirect, formative and summative measures have been identified for this purpose.

The vehicle for implementing these two student learning outcomes is a "Learning Is for Everyone" (L.I.F.E.) Center created on campus with the purpose of equipping instructors with pedagogical tools for increasing student engagement and improving student performance with higher order thinking skills. Specifically, new faculty and veteran faculty will have the opportunity to complete a semester long "Learning Is for Everyone" (L.I.F.E.) Seminar. Participants will select one of their instructional courses that will be taught the following semester and will redesign it using newly learned pedagogical strategies. This course will be re-designed to increase student engagement and improve students' higher order thinking skills, and is therefore referred to as a "targeted course" in which data will be collected.

Selecting and developing a QEP topic has been the product of campus-wide involvement at SWGTC. Student, faculty, staff, administrators, and outside community members were involved in providing feedback, selecting a topic, and developing the topic. SWGTC is committed to allocating adequate funds for personnel and resources, ensuring the QEP's success.

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