

ST. Catharine College Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

rtl³: Read to learn. Read to lead. Read to live.

Evidence from two perspectives supports the idea that broad issues in student learning can be addressed through enhancing student reading skills and reading habits. First, national, state and local trends as isolated by ACT scores indicates students are entering college under-prepared in the area of reading. Poor reading skills affect all areas of engagement with learning. Secondly, numerous national studies have indicated an overall decline in habits of reading among the general population with the most severe declines being among age groups typically considered college-aged students. The breadth and depth of reading, including recreational reading, has been shown to correlate with both academic performance and civic engagement. Data confirms that SCC students perform poorly in these areas. Overcoming these gaps along with the overarching importance of reading in effective liberal education provide the impetus behind the SCC QEP.

The principal research framework for plan implementation are the concepts of modeling and self-efficacy set forth in Social Learning Theory proposed by Bandura and extended specifically to reading skills by McCabe and by Simpson, Stahl and Anderson-Francis. Modeling of desired behaviors and skills of reading throughout the college culture and curricula, supported by specific instruction aimed at improving the ability to read effectively, will reinforce the learner's confidence and willingness to engage in expanded habits of reading.

Implementing the rtl³ plan will focus on three fundamental areas of improvement: building internal capacity, academic initiatives, and environmental changes. The first stage of the project will build capacity through faculty training and professional development in methods and strategies. This phase will then lead to the development, first, of reading supportive and reading intensive courses and then to program-level reading maps. Simultaneously, emphasis on the campus physical and visual environment and co-curricular activities will keep reading in the forefront of the campus conversation as an everyday activity. This will further enhance the power of modeling in curricular activities.

Specific outcomes have been established in both the skills and habits areas and both national and locally developed measurements will be utilized to assess the impact of program activities and the overall program both during studies and longitudinally with alumni. Goals include both quantitative and qualitative increases in reading skills among graduates and evaluation of increases in reading habits and participation of graduates and alumni compared to baseline data from incoming students.

Contacts: Coordinator: Mrs. Evelyn Silliman esilliman@sccky.edu
 Vice President for Academic Affairs: Dr. David Arnold darnold@sccky.edu