

Background: Lubbock Christian University’s Quality Enhancement Plan, “Fostering Academic Tenacity” emerged from a robust institutional process that engaged constituents from across the university to identify needs or issues that could be addressed through a QEP. Feedback from constituents revealed a concern about the ability of students to effectively adjust to change, to persevere through difficulty, and to cope with academic and professional demands. An extensive review of the literature revealed a correlation between implicit theories of intelligence (fixed or growth mindsets), metacognitive acuity in students, and perseverance in academics. Knowing that students often face hardships that may derail academic progress, a determined focus to address these challenges was made a priority by the university.

Purpose and goals: The purpose of this QEP is to instill and foster academic tenacity among beginning undergraduate students in order to support persistence. Our goals include the explicit and purposeful development of a growth mindset in students coupled with key metacognitive skills that support self-regulated learning, and a focus on creating learner-centered environments that support them.

Implementation: Phase I of the initiative includes instruction in growth mindset principles to all freshmen in a required seminar course. This researched based, four-lesson module addresses concepts of neuroplasticity, fixed and growth mindsets, and the power of feedback. **Phase II** includes a three-semester long Learning Academy composed of faculty whose courses beginning undergraduate students traditionally struggle in. These faculty work together to explore and examine how students learn, the mindsets that influence them, metacognition, and classroom strategies and environments that support learning. The Scholars who complete the Learning Academy serve as resources for other faculty on campus, creating a deep, rich community of learners. Professional development opportunities that promote student-centered instruction, and grants that support and promote best pedagogical practices in higher education are offered to the faculty at large.

Assessment: The QEP has a comprehensive assessment plan. Direct and indirect evaluation measures include analysis of pre- and post-Implicit Theory of Intelligence questionnaires for Phase I students, and pre- and post-Metacognitive Awareness Inventory for students in Phase II courses. Additionally, the number of students seeking services from the Writing Center, one-year (freshman to sophomore) retention rates for first-year undergraduate students including first-generation and minority groups, the level of participation by faculty in the Learning Academy and other professional development opportunities, and post-Learning Academy rubric-guided analyses of key goals and learning targets are monitored and assessed.

Implications: This QEP supports the mission, vision, values and priorities of Lubbock Christian University and has the potential to transform the lives of students as they become academically tenacious, empowered in their own learning. The mindsets and skills acquired through our program of “Fostering Academic Tenacity” will help them overcome adversity and achieve in the classroom, on campus, and post-graduation.

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