



Project Xtreme Academic Makeover- A Quality Enhancement Plan North Central Texas College

<http://www.nctc.edu/QualityEnhancementPlan.aspx>

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North Central Texas College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Project Xtreme Academic Makeover, addresses college readiness, a topic with tremendous potential to improve student learning in a meaningful way. The mission of this QEP is to ***transform students' academic behaviors and create a contextual learning environment to ensure college readiness and improve success in core curriculum courses***. This transformation, in turn, will reinforce and further the college's broader vision of "becoming a recognized leader in higher education and a catalyst for economic, cultural, and community development" by enhancing the personal, professional, and intellectual development of students through an emphasis on key academic behaviors and study skills. College readiness was identified as a major issue affecting retention and completion rates at NCTC. An analysis of local data for Fall 2009 identified three courses as producing the greatest number of students receiving a "W" or "F": HISTORY 1301–US History to 1865, ENGLISH 1301–Composition I, and MATH 1314–College Algebra. Therefore, these core curriculum courses were identified as "high risk" and chosen for renovation and redesign.

To ensure student success in the three "high risk" core courses, the following objectives were established. Students in Xtreme courses will:

- Assess their current skill levels and apply new strategies to improve performance in core curriculum courses
- Exhibit an increased awareness, utilization, and value of academic support services
- Participate in academic advising to progress academically.

The QEP is also linked to NCTC's Strategic Plan which identifies college readiness, learning, and success as an overall framework, with a primary goal of improving student success in "gateway" courses. To achieve this goal, sections of the "high risk" core classes incorporate elements of NCTC's college success course (PSYC/EDUC 1300- Learning Framework) into the curriculum, helping students integrate and apply effective learning and study strategies as they relate directly to their course content. Students in these sections of Xtreme courses are required to participate in structured academic support activities such as academic advising, tutoring/supplemental instruction and time management activities.

Other aspects incorporated from PSYC/EDUC 1300 include note taking skills, test taking strategies, and learning style and study strategies. Assessing students' current skill level and applying new strategies to improve performance in core curriculum courses are achieved by addressing specific learning outcomes in each content area. Specifically, students in Xtreme HIST 1301 courses will be able to demonstrate the effective use of the Cornell note-taking system. Students in Xtreme ENGL 1301 courses will be able to define and apply effective learning and study strategies assessed by the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, LASSI. Students in Xtreme MATH 1314 courses will be able to identify and apply test-taking strategies assessed by a specific instrument created by the faculty. Each content area has developed a specific Action Plan that outlines how each intervention will be implemented into the course.

The QEP was piloted in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 with full implementation in Fall 2012. In the following four years, Project Xtreme Academic Makeover will continue implementing the activities and services of academic and structured support. Revisions and modifications will be made to ensure the effectiveness of the program and student learning outcomes.