

Name of Institution: Western Piedmont Community College
Title: Get REAL: Really Engaged in Active Learning- *Improving Student Learning by Using Active Learning Strategies*
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Executive Summary

Through broad-based institutional research, Western Piedmont Community College (the College) identified the following four needs related to student learning and chose to utilize the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to address them:

- Provide a coordinated effort to create active, engaged learners
- Raise the level of academic performance
- Bridge the gap between success in face-to-face and online classes
- Enhance instruction by providing a coordinated faculty development effort

The focus of the QEP is to improve student learning by using active learning strategies. This emphasis on active learning furthers the College's mission to provide accessible high-quality education that improves lives and promotes growth in our community. The Get REAL Plan also addresses the following institutional goals: Competent Citizenry, Student Potential, Safe, Supportive Environment, Professional Development, Distance Learning, and Data-Driven Decisions.

The College defines **active learning** as an instructional method that engages students in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, or new behaviors through participation. The College has determined that students demonstrate **learner engagement** when they are involved in the behaviors of listening and discussing, writing, reading, reflecting, and solving problems. These same behaviors concurrently describe the College's definition of **active learning strategies** to be utilized by participating faculty. Combining the results of research and best practices with institutional needs and definitions, the College established four Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) listed below that reflect the traits of active learners:

- SLO 1: Demonstrate understanding of the expectations of the assignment
- SLO 2: Practice effective time and work product management
- SLO 3: Assess the value of information learned
- SLO 4: Develop new models by synthesizing previous knowledge with new information

These SLOs are not only applicable within the academic setting but research confirms that they also apply within the broader contexts of future employability, citizenship, and lifelong learning. The SLOs are meaningful, measureable, and they apply across instructional methods, disciplines, and levels. The College will pursue these SLOs through the implementation of two well-defined and sustainable goals: (1) to improve student learning by integrating Get REAL active learning strategies into course instruction, and (2) to prepare faculty to implement Get REAL active learning strategies into course design.