

Chowan University

Lit Sphere: Creating a Culture of Reading

The Chowan University Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to create a culture of reading by increasing students' pleasure and enjoyment in reading, leading to an increase in the overall quantity of material read. The title of the QEP, 'Lit Sphere' (Literature Spheres), is derived from Ronna Levy's research on literature circles in college (Levy 2011). The University's concept developed through a comprehensive and methodical process over a two and a half year period. The process identified reading as the area most important to improving student success at Chowan University.

The goals of the program are to increase students' enjoyment and pleasure in reading and to increase the quantity of material students read. These goals are accomplished through the following three student learning outcomes:

1. Students will increase reading.
2. Students will apply appropriate reading strategies.
3. Students will increase reading proficiency.

Initiatives designed to achieve the goals include Lit Sphere (LS) courses, reading programs, and reading friendly spaces across campus. A key feature of the one credit hour LS courses is student choice of reading materials. Students vote on several books to be offered in LS 201 and then enroll in a section that corresponds to their preferences. Likewise, students vote in LS 201 for the books for LS 202. LS 301 sections are designed by genres and students enroll in sections based on their interests.

In addition to the Lit Sphere courses, the QEP creates a culture of reading on campus through tri-annual reading challenges, partnering with local elementary schools to encourage students to share their love of reading, and providing reading friendly spaces on campus (Reading Nooks).

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