

The Learning in Action Project: Executive Summary

The mission of Roane State Community College's QEP is to help students achieve greater academic success through the development of stronger connections with each other and with their learning. Following a year-long process to select a topic that would have the greatest potential to enhance student learning and success, the college has embarked upon the **Learning in Action Project** to integrate collaborative and problem/project-based learning into the classroom. The five-year project to adopt these research-based, high impact teaching practices is designed to facilitate greater student engagement and persistence and attainment of key learning outcomes.

Improved outcomes for student engagement and success will be evidenced by:

- Increased fall-to-fall retention
- Decreased course withdrawal rate
- Increased course completion rate
- Increased gateway course success rate (A, B, C)

Additionally, as a result of exposure to the **Learning in Action Project** collaborative and problem/project-based teaching and learning strategies, students will be able to:

- Collaborate effectively on class activities/assignments with their peers.
- Identify and define central ideas or issues when presented with an open-ended problem, case or question.
- Evaluate sources for credibility and relevance
- Select and use appropriate concepts and methods from credible and relevant sources to solve a problem or put forward a thesis.
- Produce effective, evidence-based written, visual, or oral reports or presentations.

Extensive and ongoing professional development will prepare an incrementally increasing number of faculty to implement and share best practices for integrating active and collaborative learning activities into their classrooms. While **Learning in Action Project** activities will occur across the college curriculum, special focus will be placed on key first-year gateway courses in order to enhance engagement and retention of students most at risk for withdrawal and failure. Incoming students will be introduced to collaborative learning through low-stakes, informal classroom activities and will progress in their respective programs of study to more formal project and/or problem-based learning activities that will culminate in reports or presentations.

The **Learning in Action Project** is integral to the college's strategic plan as a critical element of its Achieving the Dream (ATD) implementation plan for student success. Having made significant strides toward transforming student and academic support and infrastructure, the final strategy in the ATD plan is the adoption of high impact practices in the classroom. Consistent with ATD's focus on the creation of a culture of evidence, the **Learning in Action Project** has developed an assessment plan, based upon a series of evaluation questions, to continually evaluate progress toward the accomplishment of the outcomes listed above. The assessment plan uses quantitative metrics to gauge retention, completion/withdrawal, and course success data, and common rubrics have been developed to assess student learning outcomes. Survey data will monitor student and faculty perception and satisfaction to guide ongoing project improvement.