

**Brevard College**  
**Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary**  
**“Collaborative Learning”**

Brevard College is committed to providing an experiential liberal arts education that encourages personal growth and inspires artistic, intellectual, and social action. Because of the College’s commitment to experiential education, the College observed an opportunity to transform our institution by embracing, across campus, a core part of our experiential identity: the practice of collaborative learning.

**General Definition.** Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that invites and guides students to pursue inquiry and growth together. The cornerstone of this approach is that students actively participate in their learning by working together in pairs or teams to solve a problem, complete a task, generate new knowledge, or create a product (Laal & Laal, 2011).

**Essential Elements.** Having observed theoretical and practical similarities between cooperative and collaborative learning, the College believed that establishing certain tenants of cooperative learning would be necessary to advance a community-driven, collaborative learning model. According to Johnson and Johnson (2005), the five essential elements of cooperative learning are:

1. Positive Interdependence - Individuals perceive that they depend on others and others depend on them to be successful.
2. Individual Accountability - Sense of personal responsibility understood as needed to work towards group goals/outcomes.
3. Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction - Support and encouragement offered to facilitate one another's efforts toward completion of goals/outcomes.
4. Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills - Skills to provide effective leadership (decision making, trust building, communication, conflict management).
5. Group Processing - Reflection on group work to analyze functionality and plan to improve work processes and social skills.

The College believes that if we build institutional capacity in these elemental areas, we will see an improvement of student learning at our institution.

**Implementation.** Brevard College will embed the collaborative learning teaching strategy across our institution. Faculty *and* Staff will define student learning outcomes and goals based on the five elements and develop learning experiences in their areas in pursuit of those outcomes and goals. We will roll out collaborative learning progressively, beginning within pilot programs in Year 1 and increasing implementation across campus over subsequent years.

**Assessment.** The College will assess faculty and staff implementation and student understanding and performance of collaborative learning. We will do so through a series of direct and indirect methodologies, including, but not necessarily limited to: (1) Knowledge Surveys, (2) Faculty Focus Groups; (3) Faculty and Staff Focus Groups; (4) Student Focus Groups; and (5) A Student Practice Rubric.

**Opportunity.** In designing a QEP focused on collaborative learning, Brevard College will have the opportunity to transform our institution by embracing a core part of our experiential identity. We will enhance dialogue, community-building, and teamwork on campus, inviting students to build closer connections to other students, their faculty, and their learning.

**For more information, please contact:**

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