

Title of Quality Enhancement Plan: Learning Environment Adaptability Project (LEAP)

Institution: McLennan Community College

Contact Information: Paul Illich, VP, Research, Planning, and Information Technology
pillich@mclennan.edu

Executive Summary:

The College's quality enhancement plan, the Learning Environment Adaptability Project (LEAP), seeks to improve course completion and student learning by improving adaptability to the learning environment. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature and best practices, LEAP strategies will target an array of emotional intelligence (EI) skills that have been shown to improve retention and academic achievement. LEAP will focus on entering students via two primary strategies: a revised and ongoing orientation process and faculty and staff development. The College's current orientation course will be replaced with PSYC 1100/EDUC 1100, a one-hour credit course that will incorporate EI skills along with other learning strategies. The course will cover a range of topics including emotional intelligence, critical thinking, listening, learning from college textbooks, writing and speaking effectively, making career choices, and maintaining wellness. The College's PSYC 1300, Learning Frameworks, course will be replaced with PSYC 1200/EDUC1200. This two-hour course will provide students advanced learning strategies needed to become effective and efficient learners. The PSYC 1200/EDUC 1200 course will use Nelson and Low's text, *Emotional Intelligence: Achieving Academic and Career Excellence*. The text is based on the Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) model developed by Nelson and Low. The course will cover the 10 EI skills and the 3 potential problem areas. As part of a pilot phase during the fall 2012 semester, entering students will be encouraged to enroll in the new PSYC 1100/EDUC 1100 course. Beginning in the spring 2013 semester, all entering students will be required to enroll in the new PSYC 1100/EDUC 1100 course. Students requiring two or more remedial courses to complete their Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements will be required to take PSYC 1200/EDUC 1200. Students will need to have completed or be concurrently enrolled in Reading 0302 to take this course. All students enrolled in either PSYC 1100/EDUC 1100 or PSYC 1200/EDUC 1200 will complete the online ESAP assessment instrument. The second part of the first LEAP strategy will involve the creation of an ongoing orientation process where a series of gateway classes will embed activities that promote the application of the ESAP skill set. The purpose of this initiative is to provide continued reinforcement of the EI skills addressed in the revised orientation classes. The second LEAP strategy will facilitate ongoing professional development opportunities to foster communication among faculty and staff about emotional intelligence skills to improve student adaptability, course completion, and learning. A primary goal of this strategy is to create a campus-wide culture of consistent and reinforcing messaging to students about best practices to enhance adaptability and learning. The College will assess the progress of LEAP via several performance indicators related to EI skills, successful course completion, critical thinking, student engagement in the learning process, student satisfaction with their educational experience, and fall-to-spring retention rates.