

Volunteer State Community College
Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Title: Seek Problem Solving Solutions
Institutional Contact: Jane McGuire
Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness,
Research, Planning and Assessment
Jane.McGuire@volstate.edu

The Volunteer State Community College's (VSCC) Quality Enhancement Plan, Seek Problem Solving Solutions, is a rigorous academic plan that focuses on improving student problem solving skills in general education courses. Two primary initiatives will be implemented to accomplish this purpose. VSCC faculty will be trained in the pedagogy of problem solving and all general education courses will be re-engineered to integrate problem solving methodologies and strategies. Instructors teaching general education courses will learn three instructional strategies related to problem solving: Context-Rich Problem Solving; Faculty-Coached, In-Class Problem Solving; and Problem Solving Method. As a result, general education courses will integrate the pedagogy of problem solving and students will improve their problem solving skills following a defined process. In addition, a faculty mentoring program will be established to ensure that faculty who teach general education courses will become proficient in teaching problem solving skills. Faculty mentors will work with other faculty to assist with the integration of problem solving pedagogy into course instruction.

Faculty will use their new skills as part of a systematic implementation plan. After individual sections of each general education course have been piloted during one semester, all sections of those same general education courses taught by full-time faculty will be instructed using the problem solving methodologies the following semester. All general education courses will integrate pedagogy that focuses on the use of problem solving as an instructional strategy by the end of the fourth year of implementation. The remaining year will focus on the review of assessment information and the development of strategies to ensure continuous improvement in the plan resulting in improving student problem solving skills.

Student attainment of problem solving skills will be measured by both direct and indirect assessment tools including the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT), the Measure of Academic Proficiency, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, the National Community College Benchmark Project, Employer Survey and the Alumni Survey. In addition, process assessments will focus on the ongoing assessment of progress in meeting implementation strategies, collection and use of effective data, and the achievement of the measurable outcomes.