

Learning to Fish: Problem-Solving for Learning and Career Choices

Nunez Community College

The goal of Nunez Community College's QEP, ***Learning to Fish: Problem-Solving for Learning and Career Choices***, is to improve student learning by supporting students in the development of effective problem-solving skills. The focus of this project is on professional development for faculty and redesign of courses to provide enriched opportunities for problem-solving experiences across the curriculum. This topic arose from a desire to assist developmental students to navigate all the problems of higher education, including the problems that arise outside of the purely academic experience. Well developed problem-solving skills can be employed as a way for students to study and learn better in the classroom, make informed career choices, and navigate difficulties across the spectrum of student experiences.

In reviewing research and best practices in planning ***Learning to Fish***, solving real world, ill-defined problems emerged as a best practice in helping students to develop critical thinking skills. The ability to think critically is valued by the faculty of Nunez Community College and higher education faculty in general. This is especially critical for Nunez, as students at the College performed below the national average on the CAAP Critical Thinking Module and below acceptable on a scoring rubric developed by Tallahassee Community College for problem-solving skills. This, along with fall-to-fall persistence for both developmental and non-developmental students hovering below 50%, demonstrates a need for the planned interventions.

This project organizes faculty and staff into annual implementation teams to provide support and assistance as each team member develops and implements problem-solving interventions for identified courses or as part of the team member's regular interactions with students. Teams actively work together for one calendar year, and members remain a part of the project by refining interventions from the active year in subsequent years and by serving as mentors to subsequent teams.

By supporting Nunez faculty and staff as they develop and implement these experiences, the College will positively impact the success of students, develop mentors on campus, and support a culture of effective, collaborative problem-solving across the institution.

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