

# **Improving Student Reading Skills by Developing a Culture of Reading**

**A Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal**

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Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

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**Methodist University**

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MU has a QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN and we're asking students to  
**Get between the covers!**  
Improving student reading skills by developing a culture of reading.

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## I. Executive Summary

The selection of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Methodist University involved a lengthy, campus-wide dialogue about academic direction and change. It began as a disparate list of desired improvements solicited from and championed by individual faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Although initially an ambitiously inclusive but vague and incompletely articulated proposal, it finally emerged as a focused, widely-supported, well-researched, well-funded, and accessible initiative to improve the reading skills of students by developing a campus-wide culture of reading.

Our plan to create a culture of reading utilizes the existing freshman seminar course, IDS110: The Methodist University Experience, which has recently been revised to include a common freshman reading assignment. This assignment is a recently published book chosen from popular literature, selected for its thought-provoking potential. Our QEP will build on this course in several ways. Students will be required to enroll in a genre-based Reading Circle in the freshman or sophomore year. The object of these circles is to encourage students to read self-selected material outside of their assigned coursework. To support this goal, the Davis Memorial Library is creating a collection of fiction and other popular works. To support the development of a culture of reading, we will continue to set up “Reading Nooks” around campus to create reading-friendly environments in academic and recreational settings.

The project, which has the slogan “Get Between the Covers,” will be assessed both formally and informally at many levels, including the individual Reading Circles and student reading improvement and attitudinal changes. Instruments will include NSSE, Nelson-Denny, and the College Base, rubrics for assignments in IDS 110 and the Reading Circles, as well as internally generated attitudinal questionnaires and surveys.

## II. Choosing the QEP: Our Process

Selection of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) theme took four semesters and involved the entire Methodist University community. The process began with the creation of an *ad hoc* QEP Selection Committee, which met for the first time in the fall of 2005. The Committee's first job was to solicit proposals from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Proposals were solicited through a variety of media, including emails, announcements at faculty meetings, articles in the student newspaper, an announcement on the QEP website, a presentation to the alumni association, and presentations at student government association meetings.

The Committee received seventeen proposals. After consulting with the authors of the proposals, the Committee consolidated several proposals with complementary or supporting themes. The resulting five proposals, known as the "Big Five" were:

- An Internship project
- A "Big Idea" project
- A Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) intended to improve student reading, critical thinking, and writing skills
- An International Experience Project
- A Research Project

The "Big Five" were introduced to the faculty at a general faculty meeting in the spring of 2007, and the proposals were posted on the QEP website. Faculty, students, staff, and alumni were asked to read the proposals and to respond. These responses were then posted on the QEP website. Students favored the TLC by a slight margin, staff showed preference for the internship project, and alumni selected the research project. (See **Appendix A: Documentation of Project Development.**)

In March 2007, the faculty voted twice on the options because the first vote was inconclusive. The top three proposals – Internship, Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), and the International Experience -- were voted on again at the next faculty meeting. This time, the Teaching and Learning Center received the highest vote.

However, in June 2007, members of the Methodist University SACS Executive Leadership Committee who attended the Commission on Colleges of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Leadership Team Orientation Session met with our SACS vice president, Dr. Rudy Jackson. In conference with him, the committee decided that our QEP needed a more specific focus.

In August 2007, the faculty and representatives from both Academic Services and the Davis Memorial Library held an afternoon brainstorming session to choose a more specific focus. Using the original proposals that had been consolidated under the TLC umbrella (reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing skills), the faculty unanimously voted to focus specifically on improving reading skills.

The topic was further narrowed in response to Dr. Jackson's visit to campus. After listening to his comments, the committee decided that our project was still too ambitious and contained components that were quite difficult to assess. As a result, the committee narrowed the focus even further and decided to make the development of reading circles our main focus.

The QEP selection process generated a great deal of enthusiasm, so much so that other proposals were not abandoned. For example, the School of Arts and Humanities incorporated the "Big Idea" concept in its fall 2008 courses. The School chose "happiness" as the Big Idea for 2008-2009 and integrated the concept into its classes beginning in the fall of 2008. Faculty have been viewing films with the focus on happiness, and several faculty members have selected texts or designed syllabi to include the subject "happiness" for their fall courses. An *ad hoc* committee to examine

study abroad has been created and is currently working toward expanding international experiences for students, and the Academic Council has begun discussing ways to improve internship opportunities for students.

### III. Development of the Specific Topic

Reading for pleasure is way down in America among every group. [According to a] survey by the National Endowment for the Arts... people who read for pleasure are many times more likely than those who don't to visit museums and attend musical performances, almost three times as likely to attend sporting events. Readers, in other words, are active, while non-readers--more than half the population--have settled into apathy. There is a basic social divide between those whom life is an accrual of fresh experience and knowledge, and those for whom maturity is a process of mental atrophy. The shift toward the latter is frightening (Solomon, 2004, p. 33).

In the fall of 2007, the faculty of Methodist University voted to designate the improvement of student reading skills as the focus for the Quality Enhancement Plan. The faculty believed that improved reading skills would improve students' academic performance. In the fall of 2007, membership of the *ad hoc* QEP Selection Committee was expanded, and the QEP Development Committee (QEPDC) was formed. (See **Appendix B: Membership of QEP Committees and Subcommittees.**) Subcommittees were established to explore various aspects of the QEP. As the QEP Research and Writing Committee members began to research the literature on adult reading comprehension, they found that some strategies intended to improve reading comprehension (such as vocabulary building, word recognition, etc.) would require a project too large and expensive for our institution. However, Research and Writing Committee members were intrigued by research findings indicating that increased recreational reading could also significantly improve adult reading skills and could provide an effective alternative approach. When the Committee's findings were discussed at the QEPDC meeting, several members showed enthusiasm for a program to develop a campus culture of reading. As a result, the Research and Writing Committee began to research ways to develop such a culture. This research convinced the QEPDC that establishing a culture of reading through increased recreational reading

was the most practical and economical approach for achieving our goal of enhancing reading skills.

Anecdotal evidence from students and faculty shows both a need and desire among our student body for improved reading capability. In an informal cross-disciplinary survey of 2007 day and evening classes, students expressed an interest in reading faster, improving their comprehension, increasing retention, and improving vocabulary. A large percentage of those surveyed believed that they needed improved reading skills to achieve academic success. A majority responded that they believed good reading skills were critical for success in their chosen careers. (See **Appendix C: Informal Student Survey**.) Although members of the original QEP committee were concerned that students would see the plan as burdening them with additional work, the opposite has been the case. Students have responded with great interest and enthusiasm. Hoping to build these skills on their own, some of our more highly motivated students have already identified a need for enhanced reading ability and have purchased programs such as “EyeQ,” which is advertised as an effective tool to improve reading comprehension and speed. But most of our students are apparently unaware of their limitations, or if they are aware, have no idea how to improve their skills. Thus, the quality of their learning and their chances of academic success are drastically compromised. However, regardless of their awareness or lack of awareness, many of their comments suggest that they are “hungry” for a reading-friendly environment.

When the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was given to a group of our students at Methodist in 2006, the survey results reinforced the findings of the 2004 NEH report. (See **Appendix D: NSSE 2006 Engagement Item Frequency Distributions**.) Our students do too little in the way of recreational reading. The Assessment Resource Center Institutional Summary Report of 2006 shows that only 4% of our students taking the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (College

BASE) ranked in the “high” category in reading critically, 11% in the “high” category in reading analytically, and 8% in the “high” category of understanding literature. On the other end of the scale, 57% of our students ranked in the low category in reading critically, 45% in reading analytically, and 46% in understanding literature. Moreover, College BASE results in 2007 indicated that only 3% of our students ranked “high” in reading critically, 12% in reading analytically, and 9% in understanding literature. On the other hand, our students ranked 65%, 55%, and 53%, respectively, in the low category on these scales. These statistics support our anecdotal evidence that our students lack reading skills. For a more specific presentation of College BASE results for the University’s last three freshmen cohorts tested, please see **Appendix D: College Base Institutional Summary Report**. Also, additional data we have regarding our students’ preparation for college level reading come from the Verbal SAT scores of incoming freshmen. These scores are given in **Appendix D: Freshmen Verbal SAT Scores**. Scores are given for entering freshmen from fall 2004 through fall 2008. As can be seen in these scores, our freshmen score below the national average on the verbal portion of the SAT (but not markedly so), and they have a wide range a scores.

Our QEP is not designed to be a remedial reading program. We want to improve the reading skills of ALL of our students. Besides our regular academic program, we already have in place developmental English programs (the Academic Enrichment Program {AEP} and Academic and Social Success Program {ASSP})—to be replaced in the fall of 2009 by the Methodist Academic Achievement Program {MAAP}) and an honors program. A reading improvement program with a basis in creating a culture of reading would benefit our entire campus.

The University has already made a commitment to begin improving student reading and writing skills by remodeling the existing Writing Center, which in the fall of 2008 began identifying student reading deficiencies and offering reading tutorials. This

initiative allows us to identify student weaknesses for both students and instructors by way of a consultation form.

The QEP focus on improving reading skills by developing a culture of reading meshes well with our University Mission Statement: “The University’s programs are based on the conviction that a liberally-educated person is sensitive to the needs and rights of others. The university community seeks to develop whole persons who contribute substantially and creatively to the professions and to civic life” (Methodist University Academic Catalogue, 2008-2009, p. 9). The correlation between literary reading and such civic involvement has been substantiated by research findings (Rathe & Blankenship, 2005, p. 82; NEA, 2004). For example:

Readers are highly social people, frequently engaged in the arts, sports, and community life. Analysis of the 2002 SPPA [Survey of Public Participation in the Arts] data...show[s] that people who read literature are active in attending a variety of arts events, volunteering in their communities, and participating in sports. In fact literary readers are much more likely to participate than those who do not read. For example, literary readers are three times as likely to attend a performing arts event, almost four times as likely to visit an art museum, over two-and-a-half times as likely to attend sporting events, and over one-and-a-half times as likely to participate in sports activities. In fact, people who read larger numbers of books tend to have the highest levels of participation in other activities, especially arts activities. (NEA, 2004, p. 5)

In addition, “there is a striking difference between the rates of volunteer or charity work of literary readers (43 percent) and non-readers (17 percent). Frequently readers are most likely to have volunteered or done charity work in 2002” (NEA, 2004, p.6).

The goal for the Methodist University QEP is to establish a campus-wide culture of reading. Although the classroom certainly will be the central focus for this project, we will take our effort beyond the classroom to reach all levels of the campus community. Our intention is that, in the future, the entire Methodist University campus will be actively involved in reading both for intellectual pursuits and for pleasure. Eric J. Paulson, in his article on developing a reading culture, proposed:

that if we identify an important goal of ... reading programs for college readers as providing a foundation of life-long reading, a study-skills approach to college development reading falls short. Instead, we must focus on encouraging and instilling in ... students the belief that reading has intrinsic value. It is through this approach that solid academic progress can be obtained as well (Paulson, 2006, pp. 51-52).

We plan to administer the following instruments to assess the effectiveness of our QEP: the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, the College BASE, and the NSSE. The Nelson-Denny Reading test, which will be used as the primary assessment instrument, measures vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and reading rate. Currently, the College BASE is being used by the University as part of its assessment of general education competencies. This instrument indicates students' familiarity with traditional general education skills and knowledge in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The English portion of the instrument provides scores on critical reading, analytical reading, and literary comprehension. These scores will be used as additional assessment of the effectiveness of the QEP. The NSSE is a survey measuring students' self-reported levels of engagement in a variety of college activities and includes questions about reading (both course-related and recreational), study habits, and writing. Students' responses to these and related NSSE questions will also be used to assess the effectiveness of our QEP. Details regarding administration of these tests as pre-tests and post-tests to assess student learning outcomes are presented in **Section X: Assessment** of this proposal.

The assessment results from the Nelson-Denny, College BASE, NSSE, the rubrics (described later) for assignments in IDS 110 and the Reading Circles, and the attitudinal surveys will be communicated to (1) IDS 110 and Reading Circle faculty via workshops to discuss and plan adjustments to these courses, and (2) to students and faculty in meetings to generate suggestions and plans for increasing reading on campus and in coursework.

## **IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes**

To monitor our progress as we move toward our goal of developing an enhanced culture of reading by increasing recreational reading on the Methodist University campus, we have selected the following Student Learning Outcomes:

**Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students will engage in more reading-based activities, both recreationally and related to their coursework.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** Students will show improved reading skills over their course of study at Methodist University.

Assessment of these student learning outcomes is presented in **Section X: Assessment.**

### **The Importance of the QEP for Improving the Learning Environment**

Changing our campus culture to one that focuses on improving both student attitudes toward reading and their reading skills will make a profound difference in our institution's learning environment. Students who are skilled or expert readers tend to believe that they themselves hold the primary responsibility for their learning process. Experienced readers have an epistemology of text, while less skilled readers who read and think as novices expect to be force-fed. Therefore, improving the reading skills and increasing the willingness to read will enhance the learning environment by making students more responsible and more motivated learners.

When students graduate from Methodist University, we want them to be able to read with greater understanding, greater frequency, and greater appreciation for the value of reading. In essence, we want them to have internalized the culture of reading from their Methodist University experience. Additionally, we would like for the habits of reading developed at our institution to continue through their post-collegiate years.

## V. Literature Review and Best Practices

Studies show that recreational reading promotes better reading comprehension of academic texts, higher order reasoning skills, and civic participation, desirable attributes for college educated adults (Rathe & Blankenship, 2005, p. 82).

The literature shows that universities today inherit students who lack academic skills necessary for success. Simpson and Nist (2005) report that high school graduates entering college frequently “lack the mature strategies necessary to succeed academically. Many of these students are passive learners who possess rote-level strategies for reading and studying” (p. 528). Furthermore, “success in college depends to a considerable degree upon students’ ability to engage in strategic reading of extensive academic or informational text” (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2004, p. 25). Thus, our chosen goal of developing a sustained campus culture of reading recognizes both the deficits that students bring to their college experience and the remedy that excellent reading skills provide.

We believe that reading more than just assigned passages for academic purposes also will contribute to greater student success, and this belief has been validated by research findings. The 2004 National Endowment for the Arts report *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America* examined both public and private sources. The report points out that Americans are now reading less for pleasure than they have before. “The report emphasizes the social benefits of reading: ‘Literary readers’ are more likely to exercise, visit art museums, keep up with current events, vote in presidential elections and perform volunteer work” (Italie, 2007). Furthermore, Melanie Hubbard’s article in the *St. Petersburg Times* (2008) states that “according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 43 percent of Americans are literate enough to sign a form or read a TV guide – and that’s about it. Only 13 percent of us can read

well enough to compare viewpoints in two editorials.” Caverly et al. (2004) state that “in 2000, 35.2% of all undergraduate students receiving financial aid were enrolled in developmental reading courses and 11% of the first-year college students nationwide (i.e., over 843,000 students) received some form of developmental reading instruction” (p. 26).

Other studies reinforce the observation that student literacy is declining during college years. The average documented literacy score for college students dropped 11 percentile points between 1992 and 2003 (NCFHE, 2006). This limitation translates into impaired learning skills: “More than half of students at four-year schools and more than 75 percent of those at two-year colleges lacked the skills to interpret a table about exercise and blood pressure, understand the arguments of newspaper editorials, compare credit card offers with different interest rates and annual fees, or summarize results of a survey about parental involvement in school” (NCFHE, 2006).

Students who enjoy reading read more, and such practice hones their reading skills. Numerous studies describe the importance recreational reading plays in the development of reading abilities, vocabulary enhancement, and language acquisition (Paulson, 2006; Krashen, 1993; Krashen, 1989; Griswold, 2006). Many poor readers are placed in programs in which they read less, not more, and are “given less opportunity to read authentic texts and instead are given more drills and out of context instruction that involve little if any connected reading” (Paulson, 2006, p. 52). While it is true that many poor readers need extensive remedial work that includes drills, etc., one very effective way to improve student reading skills is simply to have them read more: “Reading is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and become good spellers” (Paulson, 2006, p. 53). This conclusion is supported by numerous studies (Bell, 2001; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Kembo, 1993; Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991; and

Constantino, 1994). If reading is perceived as a chore, as punishment, or as boring, it is obviously not an activity students will voluntarily select.

As we establish our culture of reading by promoting self-selected reading for enjoyment, defined by Paulson (2006) as “reading for the sake of reading – fiction works chosen by ... readers to read for enjoyment or other intrinsically motivated reasons” (p. 52), we intend to help our students become “pleasure readers.” The literature supports this approach.

To aid our goal of developing pleasure readers within our culture of reading, we wish to increase the number and availability of books and recreational reading materials on campus. This strategy is supported by numerous studies (Henry, 1995; Krashen, 1995; and Elley, 1996). In fact, Jeanne Henry eloquently provides evidence of developing a culture of reading in her book, *If Not Now: Developmental Readers in the College Classroom* (1995). We have all observed, as she did, the willingness of students to read popular literature of varying degrees of intellectual sophistication. Other studies show that college students are interested in books on “Best Seller” lists and those that are discussed in the news and the entertainment media (Rathe & Blankenship, 2005). “Studies convincingly show a positive relationship exists between college students’ academic achievement and the time they spend in recreational reading. Reading for pleasure improves reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical development” (Gauder, Gogliero, & Schramm, 2007, p. 2).

Moreover, student surveys indicate that students are more likely to read as a leisure activity when on campus and read less outside that environment. One study suggests that this inclination may be the result of the “wealth of leisure reading materials readily available in the academic setting” (Salter & Brook, 2007, p. 36). Other equally disturbing studies indicate that library “browsing collections” that include recreational reading material have been declining. In 1993, Linda Morrisett (as cited in Rathe &

Blankenship, 2005) surveyed academic libraries in twelve southeastern states. The results of this survey show that 55% of the respondents had a separate leisure or browsing collection. Morrissett notes that only one respondent made a negative comment about these collections and concludes that there is "significant interest and investment in leisure reading collections among academic libraries in the Southeast" (Rathe & Blankenship, 2007, p. 76).

College library administrators are being asked to respond to the vacuum left by removing recreational reading collections, and some libraries are now having to recreate these collections. Using a survey sent to 110 academic library directors, Wiener (as cited in Elliot, 2007) found that the majority of academic libraries provide their students services to meet their recreational or leisure reading interests. Thus, academic libraries are responding to meet the increasing demand for such services. In another study, Rathe and Blankenship (2005) describe how a popular reading collection can be created. In response to the survey question, "What purpose do books from this collection serve for you?" students responded in a variety of ways:

Twenty-eight students used the collection for leisure reading, while eleven indicated they used or also used it for books to support a class assignment. A follow-up survey could more clearly determine whether the Current Reading Collection stood alone in meeting recreational reading needs of students alone, or whether it functioned in combination with other sources, such as public library collections or bookstores (p. 79).

This study is especially important to Methodist University because we have had very little in the way of a popular reading collection, and the closest public library is Cumberland County North Regional Library on MacArthur Drive, approximately two miles from the campus. Although most of our students have cars, they are probably unfamiliar with the Cumberland County Library system and are unlikely to go off campus to check out and return books.

After a period of purging recreational reading materials from university library stacks, the pendulum has begun to swing in the other direction. Many university libraries are now actively rebuilding their recreational reading collections. For example, there are two recreational reading collections at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library "– a bestseller area featuring hard-covers, and an R&R (read and relax) paperback collection" (Elliot, 2007, p. 38). In a circulation study of the fifty-four different types of collections in their library, the R&R collection ranked eighth and the bestsellers third. Circulation figures are also very high for the popular reading materials at Butler University Library, notes Renee Reed: "The circulation figures are much, much higher than for any other area of the library collection except maybe the children's books and music CDs" (Elliott, 2007, p. 38).

College student populations are quite mixed, however, and while there are many students who are avid readers, there is a significant population of students who can be classified as alliterate "in the sense that they prefer viewing to reading as a spare time activity. [A 2006] survey indicates that watching TV is the prime leisure activity of respondents. Even many of these respondents listed a wide range of books and authors they enjoy reading with a strong preference for fiction" (Salter & Brook, 2007, p. 39).

Two successful projects that could serve as models for some of our culture of reading activities are the "Porch Reads" Program at the University of Dayton and the Recreational Reading Collection at the University of Northern Colorado. These plans emphasize the importance of providing a place for students to access reading material and to talk about books in an informal and relaxed setting, complete with refreshments.

"Porch Reads" started out with NSSE data, which showed that students were not reading much. With these data in mind, the University of Dayton developed a pilot project in which students were given free books and engaged in book discussion (food provided).

The program aimed to produce students who (1) were engaged as a community of learners on a common topic; (2) were challenged to raise the level of conversation with their peers; (3) would have a renewed or new found desire to read; (4) understood that learning takes place in a variety of contexts and that ideas in books have connections to a world outside of the campus; and (5) were less anxious when interacting with faculty in an informal setting. The groups met once during the first semester and three times during the second semester. After each meeting, students completed evaluations, and names were drawn for \$150 bookstore textbook vouchers (Gauder, et al., 2007, p. 8).

The Porch Reads project was “most successful with students who were already moderate or regular readers, reading a book or two a month during the summer or school” (Gauder, et al., 2007, p. 9). Additionally, “Female participants in the Porch Reads program outnumbered males by about 3 to 1. This finding may reflect the books chosen, despite an effort to select titles that would appeal to both genders....however, this gender difference is also consistent with research findings that women read more literature than men and that men are less likely to be frequent readers” (Gauder, et al., 2007, p. 9).

The Porch Reads project demonstrated that most “students were motivated to participate in Porch Reads by the free books, followed closely by the chance to read the book, in combination with one or more of the other incentives.” Interestingly, “ties between the library and Residence Education, which earlier existed to a degree, were strengthened by this effort (Porch Reads)” (Gauder, et al., 2007, p. 10).

At the University of Northern Colorado, an underutilized area within the library was equipped with comfortable furniture and additional shelving to house a 400-book collection of fiction and nonfiction works in a variety of genres. To keep the collection fresh, twenty books were rotated in each month as others were removed. This initiative received a good deal of favorable student reaction. Characteristics that appealed most to the students included the ease of browsing, the convenient location, and the availability of authors not generally found in academic collections (Rathe & Blankenship, 2005, pp. 77, 79-80).

The goal of the Methodist University QEP can be stated quite simply: We want our students to read more because increased reading will help students become better readers, better students, and better citizens, and we have chosen to increase student reading through creating a culture of reading. Research indicates that increased recreational reading plays a key role in developing improved reading skills (Paulson, 2006; Krashen, 1989; Krashen, 1993). We hope that our QEP will have an upwardly spiraling effect and that it will enhance our students' college experience as well as enrich their lives, well beyond their college years.

## VI. Actions to Be Implemented

Our initial target cohort will be the freshman class of 2009/2010. Our first point of contact with our students will be **IDS110: The Methodist University Experience**, a freshman seminar course required of all traditional incoming freshmen. This course will provide relatively easy access to our target group and an opportunity to familiarize students with our QEP resources, to immerse them in the culture of reading, and to administer standardized reading examinations (i.e., the Nelson-Denny Reading Test). As students progress through IDS110, they will encounter a myriad of opportunities to improve their reading skills. All of the students in this course are, as of fall 2008, required to read a modern literary selection. For the 2008-2009 academic year, our IDS110 book is *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky* by Benson Deng, Alephonsion Deng, and Benjamin Ajak (with Judy A. Bernstein) published by Public Affairs, 2005. We hope the IDS literary selections will provide a natural point of entry into reading not just texts but also recreational material. In order to increase interest in the book, two of the authors (Ajak and Bernstein) visited campus in October 2008 to speak to the students. Students' performance in the IDS course will be assessed using rubrics for their reading journals, papers, and reports. (See **Appendix E: Syllabus and Rubrics for IDS 110.**)

The next structured step will be to require students to participate in a **one-semester-hour reading circle** before the end of their sophomore year or the completion of 60 credit hours. Reading recreationally, as previously discussed in the Literature Review section, has the added advantage of improving academic reading skills, so the notion of formalizing a credit-bearing recreational reading program is a good next step. Moreover, students responding to our campus surveys were enthusiastic about the idea of reading circles. Some of their comments appear below:

- One student suggested “making out-of-class reading and study clubs, possibly required for freshmen that could each be specialized for a certain topic or ability and last for a set number of weeks or sessions. For example, freshman English majors could be required to attend a reading group one night a week for four weeks, which would be informal group meetings focusing on a topic (poetry, novels, nonfiction, etc.). There would be a leader who would guide students through material...who could be a full-time faculty member or an upperclassman.” The student continued, “bonds between students who enjoy the reading would be made and could carry over into student-created reading groups” (Austin Lehmann – ’09).
- Several students addressed the possibility of a reading class for credit “that would give students the opportunity to explore and improve their reading skills in their area of interest” (Salek Maoloud Lebaiki – ’10).
- Another student suggested “a reading class could be started, which is required, and in this class the student has to pick a book from a list and then at the end of the semester take a test. This class could be worth one credit hour. By making this class a requirement, students will be exposed to reading and many students may find out that they enjoy reading and read in the future” (James Smith – ’10).
- Another suggestion was for a “literature class which would also fulfill the core requirement that allowed students to read books or novels which were of particular interest to each individual student...[but] the focus of the class would be reading, comprehension, and the presentation of ideas and themes. Students [might] actually look forward to reading, possibly transforming them into new bookworms” (Stephanie Halbleib – ’10)

The interest reflected in these and other comments sparked the idea of required reading circles. However, these reading circles will not be literature courses; rather, they will be designed to encourage students to continue reading outside the context of a traditional academic discipline. Reading circles will begin in the fall semester of 2009. They will be offered in a variety of specific genres, and students will be able to choose one that appeals to them. The themes themselves will reflect the interest and expertise of the faculty but also will reflect current literary trends, popular genres and themes, and student interests. Reading circle topics currently being explored include British mysteries, science fiction, politics, biographies, graphic novels, fantasy, romance, murder mysteries, sports, westerns, and religious novels. The QEP Implementation Committee will be charged with designing the final version of these courses and

establishing rubrics for grading. However, a sample reading circle syllabus and sample rubrics are presented in **Appendix F**. We intend to submit a proposal for Reading Circles to the Curriculum Committee in the spring of 2009. As we intend for the Reading Circles to be a Core Requirement and be given an IDS course code, the proposal will then go to the full faculty for approval.

To assess the effectiveness of our QEP, the students will be tested at the beginning of the freshman year and again prior to graduation. We plan to use the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and an internally-generated instrument that addresses student attitudes. The data from these tests will give us an idea of how the additional recreational reading in the beginning years of the Freshman Experience has affected reading overall. Also, two other instruments, the NSSE and the College BASE, which are already being used to assess student engagement and general academic skills, respectively, will be incorporated into the QEP assessment as pre- and post-measures in the freshman and senior years.

We believe that our student readers must continue to be nurtured, and that the IDS and Reading Circles are not enough to develop a complete campus culture of reading. Therefore, in addition to our formal measured plan, we have an informally assessed phase that will help establish the infrastructure for the culture of reading. This phase will also focus on recreational reading to improve reading skills. The campus will be saturated with recreational reading opportunities. From their first semester until graduation, Methodist University students will be encouraged to take advantage of the many reading opportunities available as part of our new culture of reading. We find it exciting to note that this initiative has been a grass-roots one; all of our ideas were proposed by our students, faculty, alumni, and members of the university staff. While we will continue to informally monitor and improve the following activities, we will not be formally measuring them. We hope these activities will help wean students away from

their dependence on passive entertainment and help them become more active learners within the academic community. Almost certainly, we will both add and delete activities as we learn which approaches are, or are not, successful.

Members of the library staff, students from a variety of academic programs, and especially the faculty members who attended the QEP Town Hall Meetings (spring, 2008) have showered us with far more ideas than we could possibly incorporate in our formal plan. Some of the suggested projects would be inexpensive and easy to implement, while others would be both more comprehensive and more expensive. The following list summarizes the most practical of these suggestions. We will attempt to implement as many of these as possible.

### **Student-targeted Suggestions**

Making our campus more reader-friendly was a suggestion that students repeatedly made in their early QEP input. Many students supported establishing reading centers or nooks around campus. Some of their comments were:

- “I miss [nooks] so much from my old school” (Stormie Souter – ’08).
- “I would recommend that each building have a room, which is for reading and studying...[these] could be set up as a reading room for certain hours of the day where it is not conflicting with a class....A good time...would be at 11 o’clock on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays” (James Smith – ’10).
- One student firmly supported the idea of reading nooks but suggested that “most students would probably use these lounges as a nice place to take a nap” and that the areas would need signs that they are “for reading only, not for sleeping” (Ethan Smith – ’10).

**Reading nooks in campus buildings, including the Berns Student Center and outside areas.** These nooks could be placed in lobby areas or in other common areas such as the entrances in the Trustees’ Building (a major academic building).

These spaces would need to be inviting and user-friendly. As Stephen Krashen notes: “The physical characteristics of the reading environment are important” (Krashen, 1993, p. 63). We would create an environment that would be easily accessible but also

comfortable and relatively quiet. We are planning to install in these spaces comfortable chairs or couches and additional lighting where needed. Outside reading areas should have adequate shade and could include benches under the trees, perhaps a few more gazebos, or other shade-producing structures. Students also suggested we designate picnic areas for reading and that these reading areas be kept free from fire ants. All outdoor reading areas should have nearby trash cans to help keep reading areas clean. We would like to add reading areas every year, perhaps as many as five of them over a year for the next five years to the campus.

**A Reading Café in the Davis Memorial Library.** Such a cafe with comfortable chairs has already been completed in support of the QEP. In the fall of 2008, as a result of a student contest, the café was named “Novel Brew.” Popular magazines have been moved from the shelving for periodicals and placed in the “Reading Café.” Popular fiction will also be moved to that location. The Library offers coffee, tea, and cocoa in the area as well as light snacks. The café has opened and will continue to be monitored and updated.

**A Library QEP Website.** This site is being created by Kathryn Zybek (the Davis Memorial Library Systems/Reference Librarian) and was fueled by comments from students requesting something along this line. The site contains a blog where users can post comments about any book that they read. The site will also contain regularly featured polls, such as “What types of books do you like to read?” and “Who is your favorite author?” Responses to these questions will be used when choosing future books for the recreational reading collection. The site also has a Rich Site Summary (RSS) feed about new books as they are added to the collection, and an “add this” button to let people add the blog or RSS to their favorites or bookmarks. The site will also have a calendar promoting activities in the library and at the café.

**Campus Reading Groups.** These groups could be continuations of the “Reading Circles” that students will participate in as part of the QEP, or they could be independently developed. These groups would include one or more **Faculty Reading Groups** as well as student groups, or mixed faculty-student groups. A previous faculty reading group was disbanded a few years ago when the funds for purchasing books were no longer available. Since one function of faculty is to serve as role models for students, we believe that students should be able to observe faculty members reading recreationally. Some other ideas include a variety of **campus reading seminars** tied to majors. Student comments indicated much support for this idea. Additionally, students suggested creating a **Student Bible Study group** that would provide an opportunity to discuss fictional works based on biblical topics. Another related possibility would be a discussion group in which members read and compared various translations of the Bible.

**Student Reading Groups.** These would be informal groups functioning to give students a chance to read and discuss books that they themselves have selected. Another reading group with positive student support involves reading and discussing newspapers at breakfast.

**Expanded Reading Materials.** The bridge between improving our students’ reading skills and developing a culture of reading would be created by providing a wider selection of reading materials for our students. To achieve this, we suggest that the library increase its current best sellers and popular fiction collections. Data from several studies show that the importance of quick and easy access to a variety of popularized reading material is critical in building student engagement. One of these studies used a multiple regression analysis of data from 41 states to show the connection between National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading comprehension test scores and the number of books per student available in school libraries. The same study provided evidence for a strong connection between the duration of a voluntary

reading program and its effectiveness. The more time students spend in such a reading program and the more convinced they become that reading is interesting and valuable, the greater the chance these students have of experiencing increased academic success (Paulson, 2006, p. 55). The Davis Memorial Library has already begun a limited campaign to add more popular fiction to the library's holdings. Perhaps faculty members in various departments could help by suggesting fiction books that would be particularly attractive to students within their discipline. Additionally, Ms. Zybeck, the Systems/Reference Librarian, has suggested the possibility of purchasing "easy reading" nonfiction like biographies, interesting histories, inspirational books, etc. We need to keep in mind that we will need a variety of levels and types of reading materials to best reach all our students.

**Offerings in the Bookstore.** In the future we will have a greater variety of reading materials on sale at the campus bookstore. The bookstore could also stock **supporting materials for on-campus lecture series** such as the Lowdermilk Lecture, Bullard-Templeton Lecture, and Womack Lecture Series. The same could be done for the other funded campus lecture series, including the Stone Lyceum. Students proposed that there be a **program for the buyback of novels purchased in the bookstore** and a program to sell used novels to other students.

Other suggestions include **increased use of non-textbooks in courses.** The Physical Science course taught by the Science department includes books such as a biography of Linus Pauling and Steven Hawking's *Brief History of Time* that students can read for extra credit. A course in the History department, HIS215: Barbarian Invasions, uses pieces from classic fiction to show the development of the modern view of the "barbarian." Students also support the following: establishing a **website where they could buy and sell books** without going through the campus bookstore; expanding the

**library's free book exchange program**; making **e-books** available through the Library; and engaging in the "**Free the Books**" program.

Other reading-related suggestions include a **Word of the Week** program in which students would choose a word for each week of the academic year and post it around the campus. Instructors would be encouraged to use the word in their classes. A particularly interesting suggestion involved a **system of incentives for student reading** that would be called "Caught Reading." Students seen reading around campus would have their names put in a lottery, and at the end of a week or a month, names would be drawn, and winners would receive credit at the campus bookstore or receive pre-paid cards for Barnes and Noble or for other local bookstores. Some students suggested a University-sponsored **computer gaming club involving intensive reading** that could be made available at no cost to students. Others supported **reading-based group competitions** that involved small prizes. Faculty members were interested in having more **book authors visit campus** and lead discussions about their works. This effort could be coordinated with our reading circles. The Southern Writers' Symposium bi-annually sponsors authors to come to campus for readings, and their works could be included in a reading circle. Additionally, Longleaf Press (a press created and operated by two University English faculty members) sponsors poetry readings and workshops, and the work of Longleaf Press poets could be featured in a reading circle. The University could take interested students by bus to the local library or to other book signings at Barnes and Noble or the Special Operations Museum.

### **Faculty-targeted Suggestions**

**Faculty Workshops.** One of the most frequent suggestions has been for general workshops focusing on innovative ways to motivate students to read more. There is often a workshop component of our faculty meetings at the beginning of each academic semester, and some kind of reading-related workshops could be easily introduced. We

suggest bringing in a reading specialist who deals with college-age students, who could help motivate the faculty at the beginning of each academic year.

Other workshops could deal with helping faculty who lead the Reading Circles in the second phase of our QEP plan. We believe that some instruction and some sharing of ideas would be highly beneficial.

**Mini-Grants.** To encourage the faculty to develop activities for their specific courses that tie into the culture of reading, we hope to provide a number of mini-grants. Faculty would submit proposals to incorporate aspects of the culture of reading in their courses or to link their courses to the culture of reading. As part of their proposal, each faculty member would discuss the implementation and assessment plan of his or her project. These proposals would be submitted to the QEP Implementation Committee, which would review them and award the QEP mini-grants. After completing a project, each faculty member would submit a 3 to 5 page report to the Committee, and this report would be posted on the QEP website. In addition, the grant recipient would participate in a workshop for others who might wish to submit a proposal in the future. (See **Appendix G: Advertising.**)

### **Publicity and Marketing**

As evidenced by the amount of input, there is a good deal of interest on campus regarding the QEP. However, we wish to reach all the various groups on campus, so publicity will be a key part of our implementation plan. On April 2, 2008, the QEP Writing and Research Committee met with Kerry Jenkins of the Art Department about developing advertising materials. We discussed the need for a logo that could be scaled up or down for use on posters and other materials. We also recognized the need for an appropriate and appealing slogan to support our publicity campaign. To that end, in the beginning of the fall 2008 semester, we invited all faculty and staff to make QEP slogan suggestions. We had an excellent response, and seriously considered the following

slogans: “Book ‘em,” “Turn up your volumes,” “Get between the covers,” “Caution: Now Entering Reading Zone,” “Get caught reading,” “What page are you on?,” “Enter a new Chapter,” “Text this,” “START – Students and Teachers are Reading Together,” and “READ – Reading Enhances Academic Development.” We wanted a title that would capture student attention and would be easy to remember. After a good deal of discussion by the QEP Development Committee and with university administrators, including the president, the winner and the catchy slogan for the QEP was “**Get Between the Covers!**” While there were a few initial reservations about the sexual connotations of this title, the title has proved very memorable for both faculty and students.

In the fall of 2008, a Publicity subcommittee of the QEPDC was formed. It will oversee the marketing of the QEP and the culture of reading initiative to students, faculty, and staff.

### **Marketing and Promotion to Students**

The University will use posters, articles, website announcements, and other media as well as student activities to promote reading to the student body. Many students have already commented on the lack of time for leisure reading and the competition of other media for their attention. Below, are two such comments:

- “Students are so concerned with the Internet, chatting on instant messenger, playing video games, sports, and the numerous other challenges of being a college student in today’s society, reading really just does not fit in the picture, or so they think” (Leighton Bull – ’08).
- “Some students may not even be aware of the limitations that their lives exist within, but I suspect that most have a sense that there is more available inside them that they are unable to reach, yet have no idea how to reach it or even what exactly they are missing” (Austin Lehmann – ’09).

From these comments, it is apparent that any marketing effort for our QEP will have to take into account various competitors for students’ time and attention. Also,

marketing efforts will have the additional challenge of reaching those students who most need to improve their reading skills. (See **Appendix G: Advertising.**)

## VII. Timeline

<b>Preliminary Year (2008-2009):</b>	<b>Responsible Person/Organization</b>
February 2008: Library begins acquiring popular fiction	Library staff
May 2008: Rough Draft of the QEP proposal due	QEP Writing Subcomm
July 2008: Dr. Rudy Jackson visits and assesses our progress	
August 2008: College Base for Freshmen	Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE)
September 15, 2008: QEP Publicity Subcommittee begins designing campaign	QEP Publicity Subcomm
September 25, 2008: QEP Development Committee begins meeting Title for QEP project approval	QEP Development Committee (QEPDC) QEPDC
October 1, 2008: Select outside consultant Initial Reading nooks established	VPPE Library staff
October 19, 2008: Draft QEP proposal completed QEP Publicity campaign launched	QEP Writing Subcomm QEP Publicity Subcomm
October 19-31: QEP proposal editing	QEP Writing Subcomm
November 7, 2008: QEP proposal sent to consultant	QEP Writing Subcomm
December 1, 2008: QEP consultant's feedback report due QEP Lead Evaluator selected	Consultant VPPE
December 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009: Final Editing of QEP Proposal Library continues to buy books QEP budget projected for next five years	QEP Writing Subcomm Library Staff QEPDC Chair/VPPE
February 2009: Submit QEP proposal to on-site Committee no later than February 1, 2009	VPPE
February/March 2009: NSSE for sample of Freshmen and Seniors Nomination for QEP Co-Chairs sent to President and VPAA	IRE QEPDC
April 2009: Budget for 2009-2010 finalized College Base for Seniors QEP Co-Chairs appointed	QEPDC Chair/VPPE IRE President and VPAA

May 2009: Annual Assessment of data to establish baselines and benchmarks	VPPE/Institutional Research/ QEPDC Chair
May 2009: The QEPDC prepares an annual report	QEPDC
<b>Year I (2009-2010):</b>	<b>Responsible Person/Organization</b>
July-August 2009: More Reading Nooks set up over the summer Library acquires more popular books for the collection	Culture of Reading Subcomm  Library staff with consultation from the QEPDC
August 2009: Appoint QEP Implementation Committee (QEPIC) Subcommittees for QEPIC appointed IDS 110 classes begin	VPAA with recommendation of the QEP Co-Chairs QEP Co-Chairs AVPAA
August/September 2009: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for Freshmen and graduating Seniors College Base for Freshmen  Ongoing publicity for academic year	QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Publicity Subcomm
September 2009: Reading Circles begun	Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm/QEP Co-Chairs
January 2010: Faculty Reading Workshop Reading Circles continue	QEP Development Subcomm QEP Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm
February/March 2010: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for graduating Seniors NSSE for sample of Freshmen and Seniors College Base for Seniors	QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE  QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE
May 2010: Assessment of data will be held to determine baselines and benchmarks Suggestions for improvement or changes to the implementation strategy to be implemented the next year	QEP Assessment Subcomm/ QEP Co-Chairs  QEPIC to the QEP Co-Chairs/ VPAA/VPPE and Curriculum Curriculum

**Year II (2010-2011):**

July-August 2010:	More Reading Nooks set up over the summer Library acquires more popular books for the collection	Culture of Reading Subcomm  Library staff with consultation from the QEPIC
August 2010:	Appoint QEP Implementation Committee  Subcommittees for QEPIC appointed IDS 110 classes begin	VPAA with recommendation of the QEP Co-Chairs QEP Co-Chairs AVPAA
August/September 2010:	Nelson-Denny Reading Test for Freshmen and graduating Seniors College Base for Freshmen  Ongoing publicity for academic year	QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Publicity Subcomm
September 2010:	Reading Circles begun	Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm/QEP Co-Chairs
January 2011:	Faculty Reading Workshop Reading Circles continue	QEP Development Subcomm QEP Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm
February/March 2011:	Nelson-Denny Reading Test for graduating Seniors NSSE for sample of Freshmen and Seniors College Base for Seniors	QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE  QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE
May 2011:	Assessment of data will be held to determine baselines and benchmarks Suggestions for improvement or changes to the implementation strategy to be implemented the next year	QEP Assessment Subcomm/ QEP Co-Chairs  QEPIC to the QEP Co-Chairs/ VPAA/VPPE and Curriculum

**Year III (2011-2012):**

July-August 2011:	More Reading Nooks set up over the summer Library acquires more popular books for the collection	Culture of Reading Subcomm  Library staff with consultation from the QEPIC
August 2011:	Appoint QEP Implementation Committee  Subcommittees for QEPIC appointed IDS 110 classes begin	VAA with recommendation of the QEP Co-Chairs QEP Co-Chairs AVPAA

August/September 2011: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for Freshmen and graduating Seniors College Base for Freshmen	QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office
Locate outside evaluator Ongoing publicity for academic year	QEP Assessment Subcomm QEP Publicity Subcomm
September 2011: Reading Circles begun	Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm/QEP Co-Chairs
October 2011: Outside evaluator visit	VPPE
January 2012: Faculty Reading Workshop Reading Circles continue	QEP Development Subcomm QEP Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm
February/March 2012: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for graduating Seniors NSSE for sample of Freshmen and Seniors College Base for Seniors	QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE
May 2012: Assessment of data will be held to determine baselines and benchmarks Suggestions for improvement or changes to the implementation strategy to be implemented the next year	QEP Assessment Subcomm/ QEP Co-Chairs  QEPIC to the QEP Co-Chairs/ VPAA/VPPE and Curriculum
<b>Year IV (2012-2013):</b>	
July-August 2012: More Reading Nooks set up over the summer Library acquires more popular books for the collection	Culture of Reading Subcomm  Library staff with consultation from the QEPIC
August 2012: Appoint QEP Implementation Committee  Subcommittees for QEPIC appointed IDS 110 classes begin	VPAA with recommendation of the QEP Co-Chairs QEP Co-Chairs AVPAA
August/September 2012: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for Freshmen and graduating Seniors College Base for Freshmen	QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office
Ongoing publicity for academic year	QEP Publicity Subcomm

September 2012: Reading Circles begun	Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm/QEP Co-Chairs
January 2013: Faculty Reading Workshop Reading Circles continue	QEP Development Subcomm QEP Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm
February/March 2013: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for graduating Seniors NSSE for sample of Freshmen and Seniors College Base for Seniors	QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE  QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE
May 2013: Assessment of data will be held to determine baselines and benchmarks Suggestions for improvement or changes to the implementation strategy to be implemented the next year	QEP Assessment Subcomm/ QEP Co-Chairs  QEPIC to the QEP Co-Chairs/ VPAA/VPPE and Curriculum
<b>Year V (2013-2014):</b>	
July-August 2013: More Reading Nooks set up over the summer Library acquires more popular books for the collection	Culture of Reading Subcomm  Library staff with consultation from the QEPIC
August 2013: Appoint QEP Implementation Committee	VAA with recommendation of the QEP Co-Chairs
Subcommittees for QEPIC appointed IDS 110 classes begin	QEP Co-Chairs AVPAA
August/September 2013: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for Freshmen and graduating Seniors College Base for Freshmen  Ongoing publicity for academic year	QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Assessment Subcomm and IRE Office QEP Publicity Subcomm
September 2013: Reading Circles begun	Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm/QEP Co-Chairs
January 2014: Faculty Reading Workshop Reading Circles continue	QEP Development Subcomm QEP Reading Circle Oversight Subcomm
February/March 2014: Nelson-Denny Reading Test for graduating Seniors NSSE for sample of Freshmen	QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE  QEP Assessment Subcomm/IRE

and Seniors  
College Base for Seniors

May 2014:

Assessment of data will be held to  
determine baselines  
and benchmarks  
Suggestions for improvement or  
changes to the implementation  
strategy to be implemented the next  
year

QEP Assessment Subcomm/  
QEP Co-Chairs

QEPIC to the QEP Co-Chairs/  
VPAA/VPPE and Curriculum

## VIII. Organizational Structure

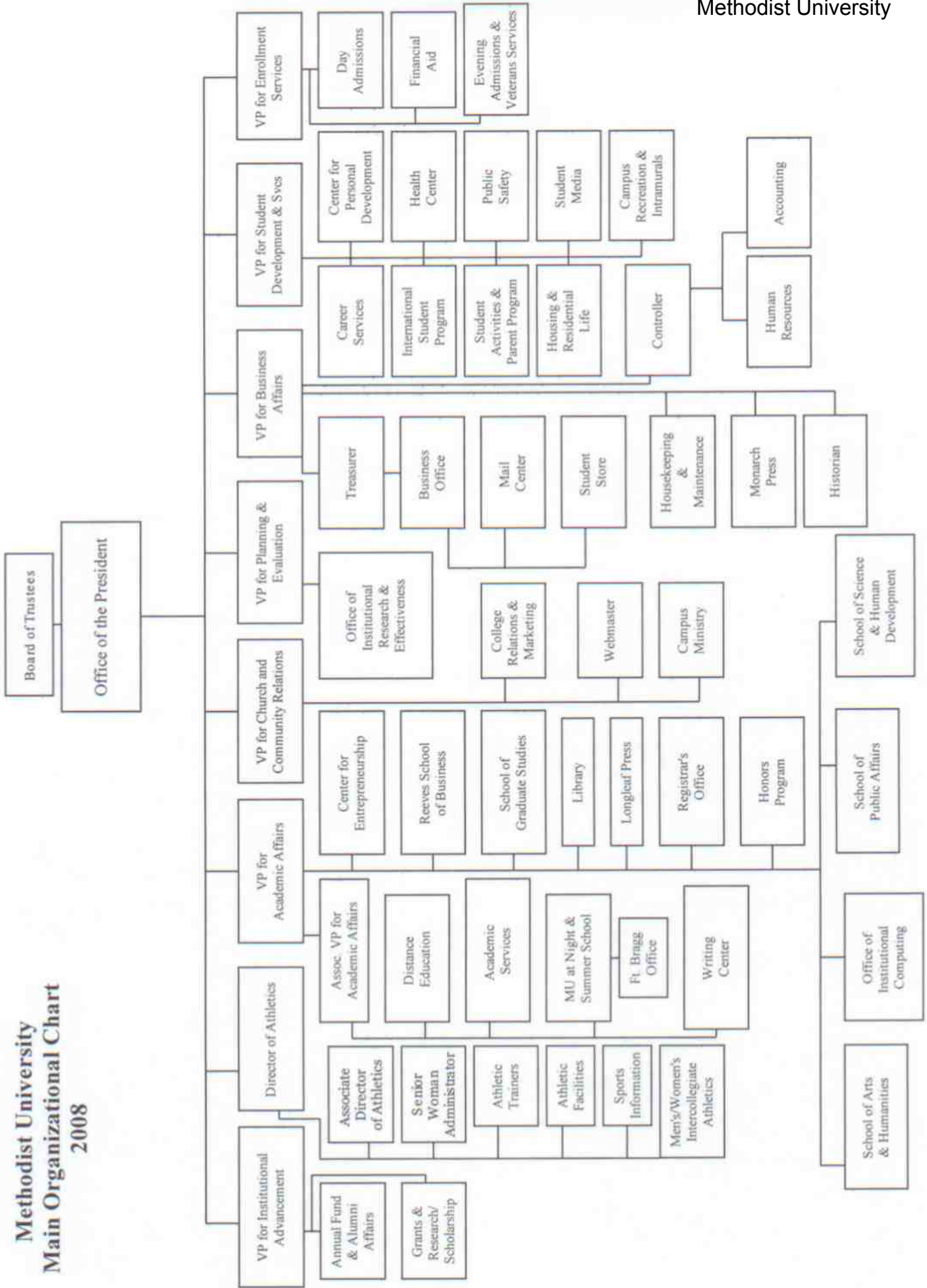
As of fall 2009, the QEP Implementation Committee will consist of representatives from the student body, the faculty, the alumni, the Academic Administration, and Student Services. This committee will report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Planning and Evaluation.

The QEP Implementation Committee will have the following permanent Subcommittees:

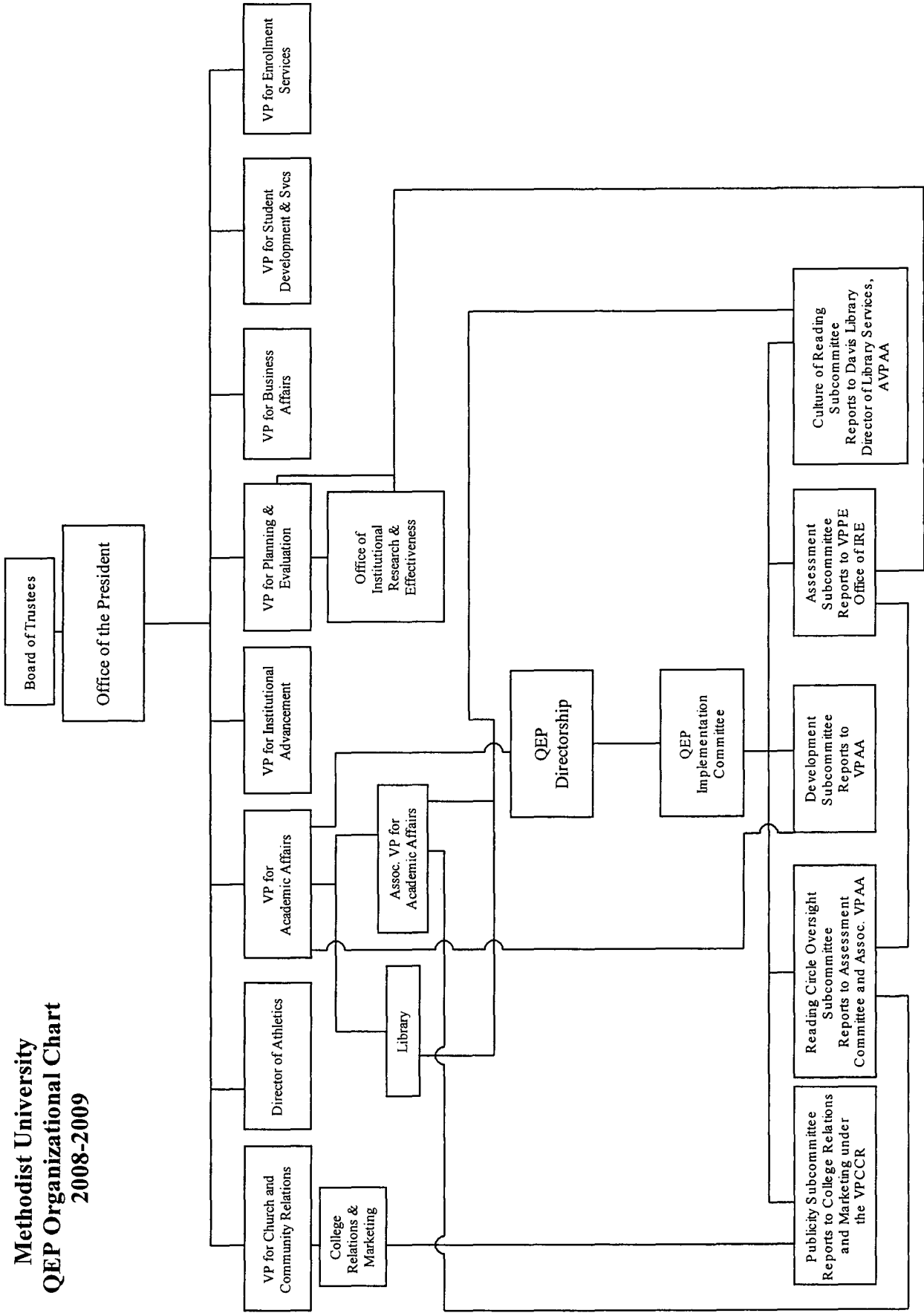
- A **Publicity Subcommittee**, which will, with the approval of the Implementation Committee as a whole, set up a publicity program to market the QEP to the University at large. This committee will consult with the University's Public Relations Department and Student Life.
- A **Reading Circle Oversight Subcommittee**, which will monitor the scheduling of the reading circles to ensure access for our diverse student body. The subcommittee will also make sure the circles are meeting regularly and are doing what they are supposed to do. This subcommittee will work closely with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) and the Vice President for Planning and Evaluation (VPPE), who also serves as the SACS Liaison for the University.
- A **Development Subcommittee**, which will review mini-grant proposals and set up and run workshops for faculty.
- An **Assessment Subcommittee**, which will perform the annual assessment of the QEP with the Assistant Dean for Institutional Research and Effectiveness after accumulating the appropriate data. They will write an annual report on the QEP and present it to the QEP Implementation Committee as a whole. They will report to the VPAA and VPPE. At the end of



**Methodist University  
Main Organizational Chart  
2008**



**Methodist University  
QEP Organizational Chart  
2008-2009**



## IX. Resources

### Budget

Startup funding for the 2007-2008 academic year:

Sample tests and instructional materials to review	\$1000.00
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For 2008-2009:

Reading Materials for the library	\$2000.00
Testing of students (baseline for reading skills)	1000.00
Publicity	1500.00
Workshop on reading instruction (internal presenter)	500.00
Fee for outside consultant	500.00
Reading nooks	2500.00

Total	\$9000.00
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### Expenses to Date for 2008-2009:

See Following Page

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Page 1

**Methodist University, Inc.**  
**Summary Expenditure Budget Report**

As of One Day Prior to Today's Date

	Current Period Actual	YTD Actual	YTD Encumbrance	YTD Actual & Encumbrance	Total Budget	Total Budget Variance	Percent Total Budget Remaining
<b>30 - Academic Dean Expenses</b>							
00-5212-10-3990 Library- Book & AV Stock-QEP	\$93.66	\$1,817.60	\$0.00	\$1,817.60	\$0.00	(\$1,817.60)	0.00%
00-5235-10-3990 Supplies-QEP	\$0.00	\$5.72	\$0.00	\$5.72	\$9,000.00	\$8,994.28	99.94%
00-5250-10-3990 Accreditation Expenses-QEP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$0.00	(\$800.00)	0.00%
Totals for Department(s) 3990 - QEP:	\$93.66	\$1,823.32	\$800.00	\$2,623.32	\$9,000.00	\$6,376.68	70.83%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$93.66	\$1,823.32	\$800.00	\$2,623.32	\$9,000.00	\$6,376.68	70.83%

**PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR QEP BUDGET****Year One 2009-2010****Direct Expenses**

Nelson-Denny Reading Test	\$8,000
NSSE	4,000
College BASE	6,205
Reading Materials for the Library	4,000
Publicity	2,000
Mini-Grants	2,000
Workshops on Reading Instruction	1,500
Reading Nooks	2,500
Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders	3,900
Course Releases/Stipends for QEP Implementation Co-Directors	17,800
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$51,905</b>

**Indirect Expenses**

IDS 110 Instructor Time	\$31,750
OIRE Personnel Time for Assessment Support	21,612
Library Staff Time for Acquisitions	17,615
Reading Nook Maintenance	1,000
Printing Costs for Reading Circle Materials	600
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$72,577</b>

**Total Year One****\$124,482****Year Two 2010-2011****Direct Expenses**

Nelson-Denny Reading Test	\$8,400
NSSE	4,200
College BASE	6,515
Reading Materials for the Library	4,000
Publicity	2,000
Mini-Grants	2,000
Workshops on Reading Instruction	1,500
Reading Nooks	2,500
Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders	13,000
Course Releases/Stipends for QEP Implementation Co-Directors	17,800
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$61,915</b>

**Indirect Expenses**

IDS 110 Instructor Time	\$32,703
OIRE Personnel Time for Assessment Support	22,260
Library Staff Time for Acquisitions	18,143
Reading Nook Maintenance	1,000
Printing Costs for Reading Circle Materials	2,000
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$76,106</b>

**Total Year Two****\$138,021****Year Three 2011-2012****Direct Expenses**

Nelson-Denny Reading Test	\$8,820
NSSE	4,400

College BASE	6,840
Reading Materials for the Library	4,000
Publicity	2,000
Mini-Grants	2,000
Workshops on Reading Instruction	1,500
Reading Nooks	2,500
Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders	13,000
Course Releases/Stipends for QEP Implementation Co-Directors	17,800
External Reviewer	1,000
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$63,860</b>

**Indirect Expenses**

IDS 110 Instructor Time	\$33,684
OIRE Personnel Time for Assessment Support	22,928
Library Staff Time for Acquisitions	18,688
Reading Nook Maintenance	1,000
Printing Costs for Reading Circle Materials	2,000
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$78,300</b>

**Total Year Three** **\$142,160**

**Year Four 2012-2013****Direct Expenses**

Nelson-Denny Reading Test	\$9,260
NSSE	4,620
College BASE	7,200
Reading Materials for the Library	4,000
Publicity	2,000
Mini-Grants	2,000
Workshops on Reading Instruction	1,500
Reading Nooks	2,500
Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders	13,000
Course Releases/Stipends for QEP Implementation Co-Directors	17,800
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$63,880</b>

**Indirect Expenses**

IDS 110 Instructor Time	\$34,694
OIRE Personnel Time for Assessment Support	23,616
Library Staff Time for Acquisitions	19,248
Reading Nook Maintenance	1,000
Printing Costs for Reading Circle Materials	2,000
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$80,558</b>

**Total Year Four** **\$144,438**

**Year Five 2013-2014****Direct Expenses**

Nelson-Denny Reading Test	\$9,720
NSSE	4,850
College BASE	7,560
Reading Materials for the Library	4,000
Publicity	2,000
Mini-Grants	2,000
Workshops on Reading Instruction	1,500

Reading Nooks	2,500
Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders	13,000
Course Releases/Stipends for QEP Implementation Co-Directors	17,800
External Reviewer	1,000
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$65,930</b>
<b>Indirect Expenses</b>	
IDS 110 Instructor Time	\$35,735
OIRE Personnel Time for Assessment Support	24,324
Library Staff Time for Acquisitions	19,826
Reading Nook Maintenance	1,000
Printing Costs for Reading Circle Materials	2,000
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$82,885</b>
<b>Total Year Five</b>	<b>\$148,815</b>
<b>Five-Year Total Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$307,490</b>
<b>Five-Year Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$390,426</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL FIVE-YEAR BUDGET</b>	<b>\$697,916</b>

## Notes

Nelson Denny Reading Test costs reflect testing 450 freshmen and 300 seniors annually. Also, year-to-year costs reflect an estimated 5% price increase annually.

NSSE costs reflect surveying 149 freshmen and 83 seniors (sample determined by NSSE based on institution size). Also, year-to-year costs reflect an estimated 5% price increase annually.

College BASE costs reflect testing 450 freshmen and 100 seniors annually. Also, year-to-year costs reflect an estimated 5% price increase annually.

Mini-grant costs reflect awarding mini-grants at \$500 each, four per year.

Compensation for Reading Circle Leaders is based on 3 one-hour reading circles per semester for two semesters in Year One, at \$650 per credit hour, then increasing to 10 reading circles per semester in Years Two through Five.

Annual costs for course releases and stipends for the QEP Implementation Co-Directors are based on the following: one Co-Director will receive a stipend of \$5,000 (\$2,000 each for fall and spring semesters and \$1,000 for summer), plus two course releases (one each for fall and spring semesters) with a budget impact of \$3,900. The other Co-Director will receive no course releases, but will receive a total stipend of \$8,900 for the year. Thus, a grand total of \$17,800 per year for the QEP Implementation Co-Chairs.

The External Reviewers in Years Three and Five are needed to check progress.

Indirect expenses are for estimated financial impact associated with the IDS 100 instructors' time devoted to the reading component of these classes, OIRE personnel time for testing and assessment activities, library staff time for acquisitions, maintaining reading nooks, and printing costs for reading circle materials at \$100 per reading circle. Year-to-year indirect expenses for personnel time reflect an estimated 3% increase annually.

## X. Assessment

We intend both to assess the effectiveness of our QEP as a project and to measure the improvement of our students' reading skills. Some of the measurements we use will be specific for one of these components; others will be more holistic and intended to measure student attitudes and abilities in general. These approaches include standardized tests that will provide normed quantitative data in addition to informal assessment instruments. Benchmarks for standardized tests will be set after the preliminary year's testing and used to establish a baseline. Using a variety of these methods and mechanisms will enable us to determine which QEP strategies are immediately successful and which will need to be modified or restructured.

### **Standardized Tests**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be administered to incoming freshmen and to graduating seniors and used to help assess changing student attitudes toward reading. There are several survey items that directly and indirectly relate to student reading. (These items, along with the results of student responses to them during our last administration of the NSSE in 2006, are presented in **Appendix D**.) The responses to these items will be used to measure the effectiveness of our project, specifically the number of books read for personal enjoyment and academic enrichment.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test will be used for assessing the skills component of our QEP. The Nelson-Denny measures critical and analytical reading in addition to vocabulary, comprehension, and reading rate. This test is published in two parallel forms (G and H) that can be used in a pre-test/post-test methodology, which we plan to do in order to determine students' baseline reading skills (pre-test) and improvements (post-test) in these skills after implementation of the components of our QEP. Data from these tests will be used to assess improvements in student reading capability.

The University already gives the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (College BASE) to incoming freshmen in the fall semester and graduating seniors in the spring. One-quarter of each of these groups also takes the English test, which includes measures of critical reading, analytical reading, and literary comprehension. These measures, along with the pre-test and post-test scores of freshmen and seniors, will provide an additional data set for assessing the impact of our QEP on reading capability. Results from the 2006 and 2007 College BASE administrations to our freshmen were presented in **Section III**.

### **Internal Measurements**

We will use an internally-generated Cloze Tests that can be individually designed for each genre- or theme-specific Reading Circle. These tests, described in **Appendix H**, can be used for assessing a variety of reading skills, including comprehension and vocabulary. Additionally, we will use an internally-generated instrument for assessing student attitudes toward reading in their freshman and senior years. This instrument, titled "Methodist University Reading Survey," is presented in **Appendix I**. This instrument will provide an additional data set for assessing changes in the attitudes of students toward reading and the success of creating the culture of reading initiative.

### **Analysis of Data**

The QEP Assessment Subcommittee and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will conduct data analyses and report to the QEP Committee, the VPAA, and the VPPE.

### **Instruments Used to Assess Student Learning Outcomes**

**Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students will engage in more reading-based activities both recreationally and related to their course work.

- a. Davis Library "Popular Collection" circulation figures

- b. Internally generated survey of student attitudes toward reading  
(See **Appendix H**)
- c. Feedback from students involved in Reading Circles
- d. Feedback from facilitators in Reading Circles
- e. NSSE data (specifically, comparison between freshman baseline testing (pre-test) and senior testing (post-test)). (Note: NSSE also is used to assess levels of student engagement in several areas of the University.)

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** Students will show improved reading skills over their course of study at Methodist University.

- a. Nelson-Denny Reading Test – specifically, comparison between freshman baseline testing (pre-test) and graduating senior testing (post-test)
- b. College BASE – specifically, comparison between freshman baseline testing (pre-test) and graduating senior testing (post-test). (Note: College BASE also is used for assessing student learning outcomes regarding general education competencies.)

**Orientation for Reading Circle Facilitators:**

Faculty participating as Reading Circle facilitators will meet for a series of pre-course workshops in grade-norming, rubric application, and discussion facilitation. These workshops will be under the auspices of the Reading Circle subcommittee and the QEP Leadership. The Davis Memorial Library has already begun collecting books dealing with how to run books circles and discussion groups to help prepare the initial workshops. As facilitators develop expertise, they will be called upon to participate in and help lead future workshops. As we continue to assess and refine our Reading Circle project we

expect to develop a facilitator's guide which will summarize what we have learned, to include both successful and unsuccessful facilitation strategies.

As students are keeping a journal of their reading processes, each facilitator will likewise keep a journal which will outline his or her thoughts and observations on each group meeting to include questions and strategies that worked especially well, things that did not seem to work, and comments made by students. Journals should also contain any revisions that facilitators make to their teaching strategies as a result of their observations.

**Assessment of Reading Circles:**

The Reading Circles are only one component of our Culture of Reading project. In order to show that the Circles have been an effective and positive influence on student attitudes, we will need to assess student attitudes before and after their participation. This will be done through and an internally-generated attitudinal survey which will be prepared by the QEP Assessment Subcommittee, the Reading Circle Subcommittee, and the QEP Leadership after consultation with the University's Institutional Research and Effectiveness Department.

**Use of Assessment Results:**

As stated earlier in Section III, assessment results are to be used to improve student reading performance and increase reading activity. More specifically, the results of the Nelson-Denny, College BASE, and the rubrics developed for assessment in the IDS 110 and Readings Circles will be discussed in the QEP Implementation Committee and then communicated to IDS 110 and Reading Circle faculty via workshops designed to discuss and plan adjustments to these courses to improve student reading skills. The results of the more subjective measures like the NSSE and the internally-generated reading survey will be communicated to both students and faculty via student meetings

and faculty workshops to get more suggestions how to increase reading activities on campus and in coursework.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Documentation of Project Development

Notes from the 17 March 2008 Town Hall Meeting

Those present: Gabie Kerr, William Walker, Lynn Clark, Darl Champion, Emily Wright, Peggy Batten, Eric See, Nancy Alexander, Linda Szulc, Shivappa Palled, Theresa Zuccherro, Michael Sullivan, Carl Dyke, Valaria Russ, Hugh Harling, Bonita Belcastro, Robin Green, Lori Brookman, Rebecca Wendelken, and Bill Watt. (20 total and all were faculty or staff)

Ideas discussed:

1. Will there be measurement of the reading level before and after implementation? It was mentioned that everyone should check back periodically to the website as the “working” paper is updated periodically. There will be testing, which test is still being determined, of incoming freshman and also testing prior to graduation. It will indeed be reading specific. College Base data is also available for review.
2. Have we considered Transfer students and how we would assess their reading? Will our current testing represent the “representative sample”? The suggestion was offered that we could use transfer students and evening students as a control group.
3. Darl Champion discussed the Watson-Glazer test and its relation to critical thinking. Emily Wright discussed the use of a California based test in the IDS 110 class that could also be cost effective and related to this idea. Could be used as a pre/post test. We were reminded that assessment identifies “correlation, not a cause”.
4. It was recommended that we bridge the gap between recreational and academic reading. We need to address the “stigma” associated with being a book worm. It was mentioned that we need to create a culture where people WANT to read. We have to be sure that we are addressing and trying to improve all students and not just the poor readers.
5. Many thought that when we had the newspapers available, many read them. Not sure if the subscription ran out but would recommend getting that funded.
6. It was recommended that the IDS 110 text should be available for all (faculty, staff, athletic coaches/staff, etc). Recommended that it should be available to check out at the library and available for purchase at the university bookstore.
7. Should encourage and incorporate the Big Read into the QEP idea. Sully mentioned that in the Business School, they create a “Theme”, in his case related to Ethics and it created this combined effort to emphasize and create a culture. He also recommends we consider incentives to change the culture.
8. Robin Green reminded us that we should approach this carefully and with the idea that we need the “buy in” and that it isn’t viewed as an “add on”.
9. Emily Wright mentioned two concerns: 1) it is hard to teach reading, and 2) it is hard to find time for workshops and sharing of ideas.
10. Hugh Harling mentioned that it is imperative to talk with athletic coaches, athletic director specifically, in relation to their role in this initiative. Hugh also mentioned that we would all need some training on how we can incorporate this into our existing efforts.
11. Lastly, it was asked if we truly know what the students want to read. We should provide students with more outlets to purchase books. We should engage students and faculty with workshops and training sessions.
12. Possible QEP school meeting at the end of April to get input. Sully mentioned that the EVENT is key and we should lure people with food and interesting material.

Notes from the 20 March 2008 Town Hall Meeting

Those present: Pres. Elton Hendricks, Gabie Kerr, William Walker, Darl Champion, Valaria Russ, Bill Watt, Spence Davis, Eleanor Ninestein, Jennifer Purvis, Drew Ziegler, Mary Deyampert-

McCall, Deborah Murray, Lysa Holbrook, Daniel Bennett, Stephanie Hooper, Robin Davenport, Dawn Ausborn, Michael Hadley, Tanya Davis, Robin Greene, Michael Safley, Jane Gardiner, Ron Foster, Del Crisp, Don Lassiter, Margaret Folsom, Ashley James, Katharine Snyder, Beth Butler, and Sandy Combs. (30 total and all were faculty or staff)

Ideas discussed:

1. Announced that members of the QEP committee will attend Student activities meetings on Mar 30 and 31<sup>st</sup>.
2. Margaret Folsom discussed how is Fall 07 this process began and emphasized the need for these programs and outcomes. The question now is how to implement. She wanted to dispel two common misconceptions in regard to the QEP: 1) we don't want this initiative to be punitive to the students, and 2) we don't want there to be extra work for the faculty. We do not envision this as a remedial program.
3. Dr. Hendricks stated that with the invention of the printing press, we moved from oral culture to a reading culture. Now he feels as though we are moving from the reading culture into the "sound bite" culture. What is the correlation between the abundance (books stores, i.e. Barnes N Noble, etc) verses the simple lack of interest. He also asked if through research we have identified reading as the focus of the QEP?
4. It was recommended that we appeal to the computer staff to set up possible email groups, chat rooms, and additional computer space for students to interact. This can be associated with common reading or otherwise.
5. It was suggested that we discuss the idea with the library of downloadable media (books on tape, etc). The idea is that students listen to music on their iPod and elsewhere, maybe they can have something to listen to as well. This may also take some of the "effort" out of getting students to read.
6. Bible Study, this may increase analytical reading.
7. Print Media, newspapers in areas for all to see and read. Have seminars for "Hot Topic" ideas.
8. Dr. Hendricks mentioned that we should blend pleasure with accountability. Not to burden them, but hold them accountable. It is like blending oil and water. On that note, someone mentioned we should put emphasis on "availability of opportunity". Provide a step where students know they are accountable for knowing and having read the material. Focus attention on reading and the lack of attention. Use things like "My reading lab" as this helps with skill building.
9. Bookstore should sell pop culture literature.
10. Dr. Crisp described how when he was in the classroom, he moved from the lecture style of teaching to a discussion based approach. This encouraged them to read because he would tell them he was responsible for covering 50% of the material in class and the other 50% they would be responsible for learning.
11. Jane mentioned that we should encourage a component that would stimulate new teaching styles. We can support these with the Teaching & Learning Center. Strategies that might facilitate this could be faculty forums, newsletters, and information sharing. On this note, Dr. Hendricks mentioned he asked his students to outline the chapter and this may be tedious but works.
12. Dr. Hendricks stated that we should identify poor readers and do this early so we can then target their learning. How can we in turn determine that? Once you determine this, what do you do then with those students? **He suggests that we ought to propose programs that would respond to those students with reading difficulty.**
13. To what extent does poor vocabulary correlate with reading. We want them to read more as this in turn makes them a better citizen.
14. We need a catchy theme as identified at Berry College.
15. We should require students to own a dictionary when they come to college.
16. Dining Hall Table Toppers with reading information
17. USA Today and other newspapers available as mentioned previously.
18. The Bern's should also include some study area and not all the pool tables.
19. We need to encourage students in non traditional ways to get involved and we can't spoon feed them. It should be powerful and FUN! Create a climate where all types of readers feel comfortable, regardless of talent.
20. Again, accountability.....ask them to do oral reports.

21. Reading nooks
22. Need comfortable chairs, not the plastic ones, in and around Trustees as they seem to congregate there and if they feel more comfortable they will stay a bit longer and return more often.

#### Notes from QEP Meeting with SGA 3 30 08

These were the ideas generated by the SGA members. There were about 12 in attendance. There is no priority associated with the order they are presented, just the order that the ideas were mentioned. Dr. Watt and I first gave them a brief summary of what the QEP initiative is, as well as the topic. Several were aware that the focus was on improving reading skills.

1. Environmental Support
    - Reading areas in library – the students were excited about the “library café”
    - Outside shaded areas for reading
    - Picnic areas for reading
    - Keep outside reading areas free from fire ants (a real concern)
    - Outside reading areas should have trash cans nearby
  2. Find book authors to visit campus and give talks/lead discussions on their work; coordinate a group reading activity featuring the author
  3. Sponsor an “author in residence” for a semester or an academic year
  4. Classroom
    - Instructors need to give “worthwhile reading assignments” – what they mean is that too many instructors require texts that are rarely used and hardly ever covered in testing; if you are going to require students to buy a text, at least make it worthwhile to the class instruction
    - One SGA student commented that this semester, 3 of the 5 texts he has for his five courses he does not use
    - Instructors have even said that even though this is the text, I am only going to test you on the lectures
    - If textbook is not going to be well utilized, put it on reserve in the library
  5. Instructors can print out a journal article and distribute to students to read
  6. Have an arrangement with the Cumberland County Library – let students be able to get a library card – have a promotion of this arrangement
  7. Bring back the *Fayetteville Observer* – provide for free to students like it used to be – outside the cafeteria/student center; also provide *USA Today*
  8. Have departmental discussion events on books – offer food for these gatherings
  9. Students want to be on the QEP Committee next year
- (Bill and I gave them our phone and email, and told them of the April 3 meeting)

I wanted to give you the feedback that Professor Davis and I collected from the students who were present during our meeting with the Residence Hall Association on Monday, April 21 at 9:00 p.m. in the basement of Garber Residence Hall. Eight students were in attendance.

1. Students agreed with purchasing and selling best sellers in the University bookstore. They felt like students would purchase and read the books.
2. Create an area on campus where students could read and drink hot or cold beverages like Barnes & Nobles.
3. Make sure there are adequate reading assignments for each class taught at Methodist University.
4. There should be some uniformity among professors and each class some have some basic reading.
5. Do not teach so much from text books, but use case studies and real world scenarios to engage students.
6. Students said they would read local, regional and national papers if they were available in various places. (They should be famous or well known papers). Online subscriptions would be well used as well.
7. Create an outdoor area on the Quad which will allow students to relax and read on the outside.
8. Establish different book clubs for individuals who have like desires and interests. Give an hour of academic credit to students who join and are active in these book clubs.
9. The students endorsed the common reading program for freshmen, and they suggested a common read for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

William H. Walker  
Senior Associate Dean for Student  
Development and Services  
Methodist University  
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## **Appendix B: Membership of QEP Committees and Subcommittees**

### **QEP Development Committee – 2006-2007:**

Co-Chair: Lori Brookman, Department of Biology  
Co-Chair: Spencer Davis, Reeves School of Business  
Darl Champion, Department of Justice Studies  
Dawn Congleton, University Registrar  
Megan Friend, Office of Admissions  
David Hodgins, Davis Memorial Library  
Tom Inczauskis, Reeves School of Business  
Jerry Jackson, Alumnus  
Dee Dee Jarman, Assistant Athletic Director  
Don Lassiter, Vice President for Planning and Evaluation  
Valeria Russ, Academic Services Associate  
Amber Smith, Student  
Marilyn Vital, Department of Sociology  
William Walker, Associate Dean for Student Development and Services  
Willis Watt, Department of Organizational Communication and Leadership

### **QEP Development Committee 2007-2008:**

Co-Chair: Spencer Davis, Reeves School of Business  
Co-Chair: Willis Watt, Department of Organizational Communication and Leadership  
Co-Writer: Lori Brookman, Department of Biology  
Co-Writer: Margaret Folsom, Department of Biology  
Co-Writer: Rebecca Wendelken, Department of History  
Darl Champion, Department of Justice Studies  
Delmas Crisp, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University  
Robin Greene, Professor of English & Writing, and Director of the Writing Center  
Jerry Jackson, Alumnus  
Gabie Kerr, Academic Services Associate  
Don Lassiter, Vice President for Planning and Evaluation  
William Walker, Associate Dean for Student Development and Services  
Tenille Woodward, Student  
Kathryn Zybek, Davis Memorial Library

### **QEP Development Committee 2008-2009:**

Chair: Robin Greene, Professor of English & Writing, and Director of the Writing Center  
Co-Writer: Lori Brookman, Department of Biology  
Co-Writer: Margaret Folsom, Department of Biology  
Co-Writer: Rebecca Wendelken, Department of History  
Darl Champion, Department of Justice Studies  
Delmas Crisp, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University  
Angela Duncan, Alumna  
Jane Gardiner, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Jerry Jackson, Alumnus  
Kerry Jenkins, Department of Art  
Dee Dee Jarman, Assistant Athletic Director  
Gabie Kerr, Academic Services Associate  
Don Lassiter, Vice President for Planning and Evaluation  
Pam McEvoy, Director of Public Relations  
Alicia Secord, Student  
William Walker, Associate Dean for Student Development and Services  
Kathryn Zybek, Davis Memorial Library

## Appendix C: Informal Student Survey

STUDENT POLL  
METHODIST UNIVERSITY  
Spring 2008

Please circle the answers that apply to you. In some cases you may want to circle more than one answer.

1. How I feel about reading:
  - a. I like to read and read for pleasure (includes newspapers).
  - b. I only read assigned material.
  - c. I only read for exams.
  - d. I never read texts but depend on class notes to pass exams.
  - e. I hate to read.
  
2. I read material that is not required for class
  - a. daily.
  - b. 3-4 times a week.
  - c. maybe weekly.
  - d. as seldom as possible.
  
3. How I take notes:
  - a. I take notes in class.
  - b. I take notes in class and go them after class.
  - c. I sometimes take notes in class.
  - d. I never take notes.
  - e. I use someone else's notes.
  
4. How I rate my ability as a reader:
  - a. I read on a college level, have a good vocabulary and retain much of what I read.
  - b. I read OK, there are often words I don't understand, and I retain some of what I read.
  - c. I read the text but don't understand it and don't remember much of it, if any.
  
5. When I find a word in assigned materials and I don't know its meaning the first thing I do is
  - a. check the glossary of the text and then look in a dictionary.
  - b. try to figure out the meaning from the context.
  - c. ask someone else.
  - d. ask my professor.
  - e. skip it and go on.
  
6. I would like to be able to (you can circle three answers)
  - a. read faster.
  - b. have better comprehension.
  - c. be able to remember more of what I read.

- d. improve my grades.
  - e. improve my vocabulary
  - f. None of the above.
7. How important do you think reading will be in your chosen career?
- a. Critical.
  - b. Fairly important.
  - c. Somewhat important.
  - d. Unnecessary.
8. Circle the following items that you think are true:
- a. People with poor reading skills cannot improve.
  - b. Everyone can improve his or her reading skills.
  - c. You can be a good writer without being a good reader.
  - d. Good readers are generally good writers.
  - e. Vocabulary skills are over-rated.
  - f. Increasing your vocabulary will enhance your reading skills.
  - g. Grammar is unnecessary in today's world.
  - h. Studying history is unnecessary in today's world.
  - i. I don't need to read; I will have people who will do that for me.
  - j. Illiteracy has been virtually wiped out in the United States.
  - k. A college or university diploma means something in the business world.

## Appendix D:

### **NSSE, COLLEGE BASE, AND VERBAL SAT DATA**

On the following pages are the following data tables:

1. Results from the last administration of the NSSE to our students. Results are shown for selected items relevant to our QEP topic of improving reading skills and developing a culture of reading on our campus. These results provide data about the performance of freshmen and seniors. They also include comparisons between the performance of our students and those of students from three groups of institutions: peer institutions that we selected, Carnegie peer institutions, and all institutions which participated in the NSSE administration on that occasion.

NOTE: The university changed its name from “Methodist College” (hence “MC” in the NSSE date) to “Methodist University” in November 2006.

2. A College BASE institutional summary report showing freshmen scores on the English subtest of the College BASE. Scores relevant to the topic of reading are the three Reading and Literature subscores.

3. Entering freshmen Verbal SAT scores for the years from Fall 2004 through Fall 2008. Reading comprehension and vocabulary skills are two key verbal abilities reflected in the Verbal SAT score.

**NSSE 2006 Engagement Item Frequency Distributions<sup>a</sup>  
Methodist College**

Response Options	First-Year Students										Seniors									
	MC		Selected Peers		Carnegie Peers		NSSE 2006		MC		Selected Peers		Carnegie Peers		NSSE 2006					
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%				
3a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	0	0%	8	0%	45	1%	646	1%	0	0%	13	1%	93	1%	1,361	1%				
	15	30%	270	16%	1,583	25%	20,682	20%	25	35%	411	23%	1,663	28%	29,792	26%				
	18	36%	724	41%	3,111	42%	49,422	43%	23	30%	749	41%	2,347	38%	47,000	39%				
	11	22%	532	29%	1,690	22%	34,239	25%	14	20%	427	23%	1,213	19%	27,243	21%				
	6	11%	255	14%	729	10%	16,480	11%	13	16%	261	13%	740	12%	17,845	13%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,789</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,158</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>121,469</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,056</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123,241</b>	<b>100%</b>				
3b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	8	21%	420	24%	1,826	25%	29,131	25%	9	10%	351	18%	1,270	21%	23,965	20%				
	32	63%	1,065	59%	3,953	54%	68,021	55%	49	67%	1,047	56%	3,240	54%	67,005	54%				
	5	8%	200	12%	872	13%	15,907	13%	10	14%	307	17%	910	15%	19,801	16%				
	1	2%	47	3%	244	4%	4,489	4%	5	6%	73	4%	306	5%	6,520	5%				
	4	5%	58	3%	272	4%	3,954	3%	3	3%	83	4%	336	5%	5,975	5%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,167</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>121,502</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,062</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123,266</b>	<b>100%</b>				
9a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	0	0%	2	0%	19	0%	325	0%	0	0%	2	0%	21	0%	360	0%				
	9	21%	244	14%	1,220	20%	17,593	18%	20	29%	290	17%	1,150	20%	20,360	18%				
	19	40%	443	26%	1,932	29%	30,303	27%	20	30%	509	28%	1,561	27%	31,224	26%				
	8	16%	415	22%	1,508	21%	25,999	21%	16	18%	379	20%	1,122	19%	23,952	20%				
	5	9%	321	18%	1,116	14%	20,117	16%	11	14%	303	16%	923	15%	18,950	15%				
	3	4%	163	9%	607	8%	11,872	9%	5	6%	173	10%	536	9%	11,487	9%				
	3	5%	79	5%	303	4%	6,253	5%	2	2%	81	4%	300	5%	6,699	5%				
	1	3%	75	5%	259	4%	5,558	4%	1	1%	101	5%	354	6%	7,832	6%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,742</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,964</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>118,020</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,967</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>120,864</b>	<b>100%</b>				
10a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	2	5%	28	2%	117	2%	2,250	2%	5	7%	33	2%	125	3%	2,661	2%				
	9	17%	290	18%	1,192	18%	20,216	19%	12	18%	303	17%	1,065	18%	21,558	19%				
	27	55%	821	48%	3,263	48%	54,793	47%	32	46%	858	48%	2,750	45%	55,042	46%				
	10	23%	594	32%	2,323	31%	39,719	31%	24	29%	639	33%	1,989	34%	40,881	32%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,895</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>116,978</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,833</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,929</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>120,142</b>	<b>100%</b>				
10b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	3	6%	30	2%	203	4%	3,220	3%	1	2%	46	2%	213	4%	5,226	5%				
	17	35%	280	16%	1,354	21%	23,526	23%	12	17%	327	17%	1,278	23%	28,809	27%				
	17	35%	778	46%	3,088	44%	52,735	45%	43	58%	786	44%	2,624	43%	53,238	44%				
	11	23%	645	36%	2,248	31%	37,446	29%	16	22%	675	36%	1,812	30%	32,848	24%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,893</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>116,927</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,834</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,927</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>120,121</b>	<b>100%</b>				
11j. Learning effectively on your own	4	9%	93	5%	412	6%	6,662	7%	3	4%	85	5%	320	6%	6,624	6%				
	12	24%	424	24%	1,856	27%	30,233	26%	15	21%	313	18%	1,196	20%	23,691	21%				
	22	47%	773	47%	2,922	44%	49,968	43%	34	45%	768	43%	2,461	42%	48,427	40%				
	10	20%	411	24%	1,568	23%	27,844	24%	22	30%	650	34%	1,891	33%	39,996	33%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,758</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114,707</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,816</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,868</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>118,738</b>	<b>100%</b>				

**COLLEGE BASE INSTITUTIONAL SUMMARY REPORT  
ENTERING FRESHMEN STUDENTS FALL 2006-FALL 2008**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>FALL 2008</b>					
<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>225.55</b>	<b>48.119</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>331</b>
READING & LITERATURE	97	226.94	49.184	126	333
reading critically	97	234.96	44.057	147	355
reading analytically	97	252.48	50.630	156	359
understanding literature	97	269.31	44.316	185	383
WRITING	97	246.22	47.253	137	363
writing as a process	97	253.20	48.074	146	350
conventions of written English	97	265.36	39.070	179	343
<b>FALL 2007</b>					
<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>228.23</b>	<b>62.022</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>429</b>
READING & LITERATURE	107	230.73	62.259	87	416
reading critically	107	238.03	51.160	147	375
reading analytically	107	258.99	56.445	156	359
understanding literature	107	266.81	47.610	185	366
WRITING	107	246.15	58.821	117	387
writing as a process	107	253.71	52.136	146	350
conventions of written English	107	263.84	52.260	179	389
<b>FALL 2006</b>					
<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>239.59</b>	<b>53.412</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>385</b>
READING & LITERATURE	95	241.89	54.255	144	378
reading critically	95	245.71	48.585	147	375
reading analytically	95	270.08	46.670	173	359
understanding literature	95	270.34	46.736	185	355
WRITING	95	255.38	52.098	165	382
writing as a process	95	265.71	44.986	166	350
conventions of written English	95	266.17	49.749	179	389

**FRESHMEN VERBAL SAT SCORES\***

**First-time Freshmen Fall 2004**

VSAT

N	Valid	316
	Missing	202
Mean		482.06
Minimum		300
Maximum		690
Percentiles	25	430.00
	50	480.00
	75	530.00

**First-time Freshmen Fall 2007**

VSAT

N	Valid	319
	Missing	118
Mean		482.04
Minimum		300
Maximum		780
Percentiles	25	430.00
	50	480.00
	75	530.00

**First-time Freshmen Fall 2005**

VSAT

N	Valid	276
	Missing	163
Mean		489.60
Minimum		320
Maximum		700
Percentiles	25	440.00
	50	490.00
	75	547.50

**First-time Freshmen Fall 2008**

VSAT

N	Valid	335
	Missing	133
Mean		485.25
Minimum		280
Maximum		690
Percentiles	25	430.00
	50	480.00
	75	540.00

**First-time Freshmen Fall 2006**

VSAT

N	Valid	329
	Missing	156
Mean		480.97
Minimum		300
Maximum		690
Percentiles	25	430.00
	50	470.00
	75	520.00

## Appendix E: Syllabus and Rubrics for IDS110

### IDS 110 The Methodist University Experience Fall 2008

**Instructor:**

**Office Location:**

**Office Hours:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Email:**

**Class Location and Time:**

**Texts:**

Strike, Kenneth A., and Pamela A. Moss. *Ethics and College Student Life: A Case Study Approach*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. 2005.

Deng, Benson, Deng, Alephonsion, and Benjamin Ajak, with Judy A. Bernstein. *They\_Poured Fire on Us From the Sky*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005.

**General Education/Core Goal:** Critical Thinking

**Course Description:** This course is designed to develop freshmen students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. It is also intended to assist first-year students in the transition to college life. The subject matter of the Freshman Reading Program selection is deliberately chosen for its thought-provoking potential. The textbook related to college transition topics is presented in a case study format in order to facilitate class discussion and analysis of various relevant issues.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Goals:**

The goals of this course are to

1. prepare students for the Methodist University experience by acquainting them with key resources, information, and strategies for a successful transition into college life;
2. pique their interest in intellectual endeavor by engaging them in reading and discussion of interesting texts that are relevant to their lives; and
3. prepare them for college-level academic work by reviewing basic skills in reading, writing, discussion and critical thinking and by having them apply those skills in meaningful ways.

These goals partially support Methodist University General Education/Core Goal 1, improving students' skills "in written and oral communication." They also support General Education/Core Goal 3, improving students' "ability to think critically about complex subjects."

**Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are for students to

1. demonstrate knowledge of key Methodist University resources and information;
2. indicate increased interest in engaging in college-level intellection;
3. read and discuss texts that are relevant to their lives as young people and as college students;
4. produce satisfactory written work on topics related to this course;
5. take an active part in civil class discussions;

- demonstrate improved critical thinking skills.

**Assessment:**

Objective 1 will be assessed by means of a quiz on the college catalogue and a passport assignment requiring students to participate in/locate various campus events/services.

Objective 2 will be assessed by means of a brief attitude survey administered at the beginning and end of the course.

Objective 3 will be assessed by means of a journal on the reading.

Objective 4 will be assessed by means of four short response papers and one longer, thesis-driven essay, graded according to the rubrics included in this syllabus.

Objective 5 will be assessed by means of the Class Participation Sheet included in this syllabus.

Objective 6 will be assessed by means of reporting and analyzing the series of scores earned on the "Analysis/Development" portion of the rubric used in grading the four short response papers.

**Grading Criteria:**

1. Participation	15%	
2. Passport assignment	15%	
3. Catalogue assignment		10%
4. Quizzes on the reading		10%
5. Reports		10%
6. Reading Journal		10%
7. Four short papers		20%
(first 2 = 5%, 3-4 = 15%)		
8. One longer essay		10%

**Further Explanation of Assignments:**

1. Participation. This grade will be based on the Class Participation Sheet included in this syllabus.

2. Passport assignment. This assignment requires you to visit and/or participate in a variety of campus events and services. It will be explained at the beginning of the semester, checked twice during the semester, and submitted at the end of the semester.

3. Catalogue assignment. This assignment requires you to locate specific information in the Methodist University Catalogue. You will be given a list of questions at the beginning of the semester and will submit your answers in week 3.

4. Quizzes. I will give you occasional quizzes on assigned readings in *Ethics and College Student Life* and *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky*. These quizzes will be short (5-10 questions) objective (usually multiple choice) tests that will be easy to ace if you have read the assigned pages with a reasonable degree of attention.

5. Reports. In the process of discussing *They Poured Fire*, we will generate questions. Because both the situation and the location described in this book are very foreign to most of us, we will discover that we have questions of a factual nature. For example, we might wonder how many times a day a Moslem is supposed to pray or where Ethiopia is in relation to Congo or what refugee aid programs are available around the world, etc.

Whenever such a factual question comes up in class discussion, I will ask for a volunteer to research the answer. If no one volunteers, I will assign the question to someone on the basis of alphabetical order, starting at the end of the alphabet. (That is, if your name is Winters, you'll be assigned a topic earlier than if your name is Jones.)

When this happens, the class will decide what it wants to know about this question and will generate ideas about where the information can be found. At the next class session, I will give the reporter an assignment sheet summarizing the class's discussion.

During weeks 11 and 12, everyone will share the research of his or her research in the form of 3-5-minute reports. The rubric by which these reports will be graded is included in this syllabus.

6. Reading Journal. From week 8 on, you will keep a reading journal, which you will submit at the end of the semester.

7. Short Papers. You will submit four short (1-2-page) papers, as assigned, in response to our reading in *Ethics and College Student Life*.

8. After we have finished reading and discussing *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky*, you will write a 3- to 5-page paper on that text. Before you start the paper, a Writing Center tutor will come to class to review the principles of essay structure that you will be expected to follow in the paper.

## Policies

### 1. Grading Scale

93-100	A	78-79	C+	60-62	D-
90-92	A-	73-77	C	below 59	F
88-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-87	B	68-69	D+		
80-82	B-	63-67	D		

**1. Attendance:** See participation sheet for impact of attendance on your grade for the course. Also note the following statement from the university catalogue: "Credit will not be awarded for any 100-level course in which a student is absent for whatever reason (sickness, family emergencies, University athletic events, etc.) for more than 20% of the first thirteen weeks of the semester. When absences, for whatever reason, exceed 20% during the first thirteen weeks of the semester, the registrar will drop the student from the class."

**2. Honor Code:** The Methodist University Honor Code prohibits cheating (including plagiarism), theft, and academic misrepresentation. These terms are thoroughly defined in the University catalogue, and all students are responsible for thoroughly understanding the material on those pages. Students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty often claim that they did not know that what they were doing was a violation of the Honor Code. This is not an excuse! You are required and expected to know what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Penalties and procedures regarding infractions of the Honor Code are outlined in the University catalogue. In [this course](#), the following apply:

- students who violate the Honor Code will receive either an F for the assignment in question, a zero for the assignment in question, or an F for the course as a whole, depending on the severity of the infraction;
- plagiarism is defined as the deliberate or accidental borrowing of another's words or ideas without giving credit to the source from which the words or ideas are borrowed.

**3. Students with Disabilities:** Any student requiring accommodations due to one or more disabilities must bring the appropriate documentation to the Methodist University Center for Personal Development (Pearce Hall/630-7150 or 7402) no later than the first week of classes during the semester in which the accommodations are required. Together, the student and the Director of Disability Services will decide upon the accommodations to be implemented.

## Report Rubric

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Report Topic:

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1. Was the report at least three minutes long and no longer than five minutes? (25%)
2. Did the report answer all of the questions embedded in the assignment sheet provided by the instructor? (25%)
3. Was information provided clearly? (25%)
4. Was information accurate? Were reliable sources used? (25%)

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

## IDS Paper Rubric

1) Content/ Concept <sup>1</sup>	2) Purpose/ Focus	3) Analysis/ Development <sup>2</sup>	4) Organization	5) Source Handling/Citation	6) Writing
5--Is appropriate to the requirements of the assignment. Shows insight, understanding, awareness of perspectives and contexts.	5--Clearly focuses on a central point. Maintains consistent focus on that point.	5-Develops the central focus amply and persuasively with appropriate reasoning and evidence. Sources are used effectively and appropriately. <sup>3</sup>	5-Each sentence and paragraph has a clear, focused purpose and coherent relation to the whole.	5-Every point and statement of fact is reliably attributed. Every fact, point, paraphrase, and quotation is completely and helpfully documented.	5-Clear and correct. Few errors in grammar, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.
3-Is appropriate to assignment but ideas and contexts are poorly understood and/or described.	3-Seems to have a central point but does not focus clearly and consistently on it.	3-Develops the central focus more through summary and/or assertion than through supporting analysis or evidence. Sources are not used as effectively as they could be.	3-Some important organizational elements are missing, inadequate, or garbled. Difficult to follow.	3-Citations are mostly complete, but some are sloppy. There is some confusion about the source of ideas or information.	3-Mostly correct. Occasional minor errors may be present, but prose is generally at college level.
1-Is inappropriate to assignment and/or ideas are simplistic, narrow, without context, perspective, or interpretive depth.	1-Lacks a clear point.	1-Consists of vague generalizations and assertions. Is illogical. Fails to use sources when necessary and/or uses them inappropriately.	1-Lacks logical structure and flow; random or disjointed; makes little sense.	1-Elements of paper meet the definition of plagiarism.	1-Major pattern of errors or many sloppy errors.
Points:					
Comments:					

<sup>1</sup>In order for one of the short papers to score well on this criterion, it must make intelligent reference to one of the criteria for moral reasoning presented in chapter 1 of *Ethical Issues*.

<sup>2</sup>The five-page paper and the short paper will differ in this regard. The former can and should develop its thesis more thoroughly than the latter can.

<sup>3</sup>You may or may not require or allow your students to consult secondary sources. Whether they do or do not use secondary sources, they should cite the text.

## Appendix F: Syllabus and Rubrics for Reading Circles

The Reading Circle  
Spring Semester 2010  
Instructor:  
Office Hours:

### Course Description:

The Reading Circle is a one-semester-hour credit reading group designed to promote self-selected reading and to enhance the development of critical reading and thinking skills. Each course focuses on a particular genre or theme. This course focuses on [name that genre]. Over the course of the semester students will read a total of five books: one facilitator-selected book to be read as a group; three student-selected books to be read as a group; one student-selected book to be read independently. Students will participate in critical discussions of the selected books and complete written assignments described below..

### General Education/Core Curriculum Goal:

Critical Thinking

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of IDS 110 or exemption.

### Goals:

Goal 1: To pique students' interest in intellectual endeavor by engaging them in reading and discussion of popular books in a genre of their choosing.

Goal 2: To prepare students for college-level academic work by enhancing reading and critical thinking skills.

These goals partially support Methodist University General Education/Core Goal 1, improving students' skills "in written and oral communication." They also support General Education/Core Goal 3, improving students' "ability to think critically about complex subjects."

### Objectives:

The objectives of this course are for students to:

1. indicate increased interest in engaging in college-level intellection;
2. read and discuss texts of interest;
3. actively participate in class discussions;
4. demonstrate improved critical thinking skills.

### Assessment:

Objective 1 will be assessed by end of class survey.

Objective 2 will be assessed by class participation and evaluation of students' journals.

Objective 3 will be assessed by Class Participation Sheet included in this syllabus and by attendance.

Objective 4 will be assessed by evaluation of students' journals and short response papers.

### Grading Criteria:

Participation	50%
Attendance	10%
Response papers	20%
Journals	20%

**Grading Scale:**

The course will be graded on an A, F, or P basis.

90-100	A
60-89	P
Below 60	F

**Further Explanation of Assignments:**

**Participation** includes reading the assigned and self-selected books and engaging regularly in meaningful classroom discussions. **Attendance:** Students missing more than two classes will be dropped from the course. **Response papers:** The response papers will be short 1-2 page papers in which students analyze the four common readings and the one self-selected reading. These are not to be book reports but should demonstrate close reading, comprehension, and engagement. **Journals:** Students will make regular entries into their journals as they progress with their reading. Journal entries can include things like new vocabulary, questions about the reading, and reading provoked questions.

**Rubrics:**

See Reading Circle Rubric and Reading Circle Journal Rubric at the end of this syllabus.

**Policies:**

**Honor Code:**

Remember that the Honor Code is in effect at all times. The Honor Code covers violations such as cheating, plagiarism, academic misrepresentation, and theft. If you are unfamiliar with the Honor Code and penalties for violation, please refer to your student handbook. All work submitted for this class must be “pledged” to show that it conforms with the Honor Code.

The first time you break the Honor Code in this course I will give you an “F” for that assignment and write a letter on the offense to the Honor Board. If you err a second time, you will be removed from the course with a final grade of “F” and there will be a mandatory Honor Board hearing.

**Students with Disabilities:**

If you are a student with a disability, please contact the Director of Academic Development at 630-7033 as soon as possible in order to make the necessary arrangements.

**Rubric for Reading Circle Journal**

1) Reading	2) Content	3) Connections	4) Questions	5) Vocabulary
5-Shows evidence of reading (Based on number of pages agreed upon)	5- Shows evidence of consistently making entries	5-Makes connections with other books student has read for the circle	5-Student consistently asks 2-3 well thought out questions with each journal entry.	5-Student consistently lists several new vocabulary words with definitions.
3-Evidence of some reading, based on the number of pages assigned.	3- Entries are random and inconsistent	3-Makes some connections or connections are simplistic	3-Has one to two questions which lack sufficient thought.	3-Few vocabulary words listed or definitions are inadequate.
1-Obviously hasn't done the reading or has done very little reading.	1-Rarely makes entries	1-No connections with other books or readings	1-No questions, or questions are simplistic and show little thought	1-No vocabulary listed or vocabulary lacks definitions.
Points:				
Comments:				

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### Rubric for Reading Circle Response Paper

1) Content	2) Focus	3) Analysis/Argument	4) Organization	5) Writing
5-Is appropriate to the requirements of the assignment. Shows insight, understanding and awareness of perspectives and contexts.	5-Clearly focuses on a central point. Maintains consistent focus on that point.	5-Develops the central focus amply and persuasively with appropriate reasoning and evidence.	5-Each sentence and paragraph has a clear, focused purpose and coherent relation to the whole.	5-Clear and correct. Few errors in grammar, structure, and usage
3-Is appropriate to the assignment but ideas and contexts are poorly understood and/or described.	3-Seems to have a central point but does not focus clearly and consistently on it.	3-Develops the central focus more through summary and/or assertion than through supporting analysis or evidence.	3-Some important organizational elements are missing, inadequate or garbled.	3-Mostly correct. Occasional minor errors may be present, but prose is generally at college level.
1-Is inappropriate to assignment and/or ideas are simplistic, narrow, without context, perspective, or interpretive depth.	1-Lacks a clear point.	1-Consists of vague generalizations and assertions. Is illogical.	1-lacks logical structure and flow; random or disjointed; makes little sense.	1-Major pattern of errors or many sloppy errors.
Points:				
Comments:				

## Appendix G: Advertising

QEP Marketing and Publicity Subcommittee Report

Re: Subcommittee Report

10 October 2008

To: Members of the QEP Committee

From: Gabie Kerr, Subcommittee Chair

**Our Charge:** To market the slogan and purpose of the QEP, “Get Between the Covers: Improving Reading Skills by Encouraging a Culture of Reading” to the entire Methodist University community.

**Membership:** Currently, the following people serve as members of this committee: Gabie Kerr -Chair, Pam McEvoy-Vice Chair, Angela Duncan, Kerry Jenkins, Mark Kendrick, and Vanessa Gault (student). We have been continually recruiting new members for the subcommittee.

**Marketing Update:** We have recruited Dr. Greg Combs' Senior SMA 421 Marketing class to create a marketing and publicity campaign for the QEP. They have asked for a \$200 contribution to their SIFE Marketing club for conference support. We support this request and would like to have this money allocated for this purpose. This expense, we believe, will be money well-spent: by using University resources with its excellent talent, we are fostering community support and “buy-in” and accomplish the desire to reach the students in a unique and creative way. Moreover, the class promises to have a plan and campaign to submit to the October QEP meeting. Along with this presentation, the class has agreed to supply a student representative for the QEP committee and subcommittee. The students in this class have a unique perspective on how to reach the MU student population and since it is now part of their course work, they have a vested interest in the campaign. We all hope that this results in an increased willingness of others students to participate.

**Marketing Plan:** We intend to reach the MU community by employing some of these tactics: a catchy logo, faculty meetings and staff meetings, student communication through email and the ROAR, flyers, posters around campus, academic avenues (advisors, syllabi, posters in the classroom, blackboard), communication with residential life and student life, communication with coaches, athletic events, website revitalization, Facebook and Myspace social networking websites, table tents, reading nooks, Small Talk paper, MU radio station, use of mascot, suggestion boxes, screensavers, mouse pads, provide attractions for non-traditional students, Mustard Magazine, t-shirts, bookmarks, and many more.

**Current Budget:** As our current budget of \$1,500 will not extend very far, we have solicited and received approval from the Development office to pursue other donations from Books a Million, Barnes and Noble, and two other local bookstores.

**Timeline:**

October – create a plan, receive approval of the committee, and determine responsibilities.

November – reach out to staff and faculty and begin marketing.

December – continue publicity and ensure we are ready for big launch in January.

January – big Kick-Off and major publicity in the classroom and with student life. Make presentation at Faculty meetings and organizational meetings.

February/March – Continue publicity throughout SACS visit 16 March.

## Appendix H: Cloze Tests

For our internal assessment of IDS210: Reading Circles, we have chosen to use the Cloze Test. This test, devised in 1957 by W. L. Henry, can be used for assessing a variety of reading skills, including comprehension and vocabulary. A Cloze Test consists of a selection of text (approximately 250 words), and every *n*th word is replaced with a blank. For testing comprehension, *n*= a particular number. For testing vocabulary, *n*= the number of words that are selectively removed. For comprehension, the deletion of every fifth word seems to be canonical, but the test can be made more difficult by deleting every third or fourth word, or it can be made less difficult by deleting every eighth or ninth word. Once the appropriate test had been devised, the test subject is asked to fill in the blanks with the appropriate words (Datta and Macdonald-Ross, 70). Scoring can be done in two ways: Either the blank in the text must be filled with the exact word that was deleted; or the response can be scored more liberally with words that (1) are the correct part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) or with (2) synonyms or words that make contextual sense. Test subjects should be allowed misspellings because test results will be skewed otherwise.

As an example of scoring for an “exact word” test, Datta and Macdonald-Ross used the following rubric:

Gaps left blank did not score. The points scored, as a percentage, were calculated for each of the two passages for each respondent.... A score of less than 40% suggests inadequate comprehension, 40-60% suggests partial comprehension, and more than 60% suggests satisfactory comprehension of the passage. (Datta and Macdonald-Ross 72-74)

Datta and Macdonald-Ross found that there was “significant correlation between success in the Cloze Tests and book reading habits: those who have not read a book for 3 months or more score lower marks on the cloze passages” (Datta and Macdonald-Ross 86). This correlation suggests Cloze Tests might help to assess vocabulary and comprehension as well help to assess the effectiveness of formal tests and informal student surveys that present questions regarding student reading habits.

### Sources:

- Data, Saroj and Michael Macdonald-Ross. (2002). “Reading Skills and Reading Habits: A Study of new Open University Undergraduate Reserves.” *Open Learning* 17(1), 69-88.
- Sachs, J., Tung, P, Lam, R. (1997 Spring). “How to Construct a Cloze Test: Lessons from testing measurement theory models.” *Perspectives* (City University of Hong Kong) V. IX.
- Taylor, W. L. (1953). “Cloze Procedure: A new tool for measuring readability.” *Journalism Quarterly*, 30, 415-433.

## Appendix I: Methodist University Reading Survey

### METHODIST UNIVERSITY READING SURVEY Fall 2009

Below are statements regarding reading. For each statement, please give the scale value (1 through 5) that best represents your opinion. Scale values have the following labels:

**1 – Strongly Disagree   2 – Disagree   3 – Neutral   4 – Agree   5 – Strongly Agree**

1. I like to read and read for pleasure (including newspapers).
2. I only read assigned material.
3. I only read for exams.
4. I never read texts, but depend on class notes to pass exams.
5. I read material that is not required for class:
  - a. daily.
  - b. 3 to 4 times a week.
  - c. maybe weekly.
  - d. as seldom as possible.
6. I take notes in class.
7. I take notes in class and go over them after class.
8. I sometimes take notes in class.
9. I never take notes in class.
10. I use someone else's notes.
11. I read on a college level, have a good vocabulary, and retain much of what I read.
12. I read OK, there are often words I don't understand, and I retain some of what I read.
13. I read the text, but don't understand it and don't remember much of it, if any.
14. When I find a word in assigned materials and I don't understand its meaning, the first thing I do is:
  - a. check the glossary of the text and then look in a dictionary.
  - b. try to figure out the meaning from the context.
  - c. ask someone else.
  - d. ask my professor.
  - e. skip it and go on.
15. I would like to be able to:
  - a. read faster.
  - b. have better comprehension.
  - c. remember more of what I read.
  - d. improve my grades.
  - e. improve my vocabulary.
16. I think that reading will be \_\_\_\_\_ in my chosen career.
  - a. critical
  - b. fairly important
  - c. somewhat important
  - d. unnecessary
  - e. People with poor reading skills cannot improve.
17. Everyone can improve his/her reading skills.
18. Good readers are generally good writers.
19. Vocabulary skills are over-rated.
20. Increasing one's vocabulary will enhance one's reading skills.
21. Grammar is unnecessary in today's world.
22. I don't need to read; I will have people who do that for me.
23. Illiteracy has been virtually wiped out in the United States.
24. A college or university diploma means something in the business world.