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A **Quinsigamond Community College**
White Paper

The Quad-A Tutoring Methodology: Supercharging Tutoring Effectively in Traditional and Online Modalities

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☑ *The Quad-A Tutoring Methodology inserts a structured means of student engagement maximizing the effects and outcomes of tutoring.*

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Introduction

The Quad-A tutoring method simplifies and mandates a consistent, unswerving process that helps to ease students' tutoring anxiety by offering a dependable and reliable product, specify and segregate areas needing development by means of uniform assessment, and ultimately create a self-sufficient, independent learner by installing self-government in the learning process. Albeit an awkward name, the **Quad-A** stands for **A**ssess, **A**ssist, **A**llow autonomy, **A**pproach again using authentic design. The tutoring system offers an uncomplicated consistency that allows a deep human style and attitude while directing the student towards good study skills and the security and ability to self assist. An interesting side-effect of the Quad-A is its efficiency and flexibility allowing tutors to assist multiple students at one time increasing tutoring center usage numbers without escalating payroll.

The process and implementation of the Quad-A authorizes each tutor to understand the learning process in a fundamental, primary scheme.

Problem Statement

Many community college students lack study skills, a firm understanding of academic responsibilities, and time management techniques leading to dependence and reliance on others to succeed. Often, these at-risk qualities lead to failure and/or dropout.

Rationale:

- ☑ *Identifying need*
- ☑ *Short and long-term assessments*
- ☑ *A means to insert self-sufficiency*
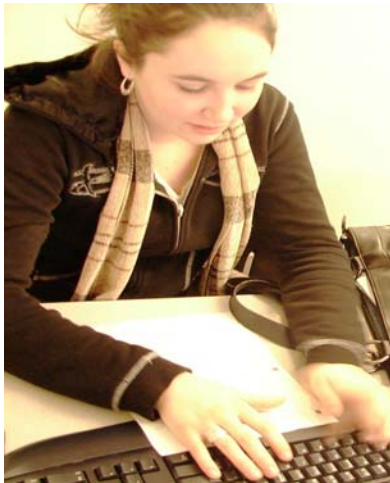
"…there are a number of things that can be done during the first year to prevent second year drop out." connectivity to the college is imperative (Schreiner, 2005).

"Contemporary American education, some argue, tends to lean on feel good answers rather than concrete ones; often with suffering results."*(Holland, 2005).*

Purpose

The underlying principle threaded throughout the development of the Quad-A tutoring methodology is to devise a process of identifying the needs of community college tutees, create an arrangement of short and long-term assessments, and develop a means to insert self-sufficiency within their academic routine. The goal is to serve this group in such a way that success and accomplishment replace uncertainty and academic anxiety.

The growing population of at-risk learners is at the center of a significant issue. Almost half of all community college students nationally may be considered part of the at-risk population, and those who are in need of and can most benefit from intensive tutoring (National On-Campus Report, 2005). Community college learners are a growing cohort across the nation. With the rising cost of education and the necessities of training local work forces, the importance of community college graduates and their mark on future generations has never been greater. A recent survey published in January, 2006, found a correlation between at-risk student **campus engagement**, including one on one tutoring, and potential academic success (Bradley, 2006).

The Quad-A Tutoring methodology is one **built to add a concrete base of absolute consistency** during each tutoring session, for every learner. This system of tutoring combines consistency, responsibility, and efficiency.

Quad-A Tutoring Method:
tactic narrative shown in qualitative stages

Stage 1

Assess

- ☑ *Successful assessment takes place through deep understanding*

- ☑ *Unfold the student's schema*

- ☑ *Encourage the student to talk*

Stage 2

Assist

- ☑ *Clarify the assignment*

- ☑ *Put the pen in the student's hand*

- ☑ *Point out something good*

Tutor's Role:

Separate all concerns and concentrate on the single issue that will make the most impact now.
Instant gratification = self assurance

Discuss the paper and pose specific questions to see if the student has developed a strong knowledge of the topic. Unfold the student's schema. Think of this as the "Tell Me What You Know" technique of assessment. Students write better about topics they know well. Listen and learn; successful assessment takes place through deep understanding.
Encouraging the student to talk creates an active learning, productive atmosphere.

Tutor's Role:

Coach rather than editor
Clarify the assignment by repeating it back to the learner. Begin reading the student's paper. Put the pen in the student's hand. Refrain from pointing out every error. Instead, get an idea of where the student needs the most work. (Which area of grammar needs the most work? Does the organization need work? Is the thesis or topic sentence developed? etc.)

Point out something good. Compliment their style, use of words, neat penmanship, interesting topic…

Begin with the most commonly made mistake. Point out an example of the mistake in the student's paper. Explain why the mistake is wrong, and then **show how** to make the corrections. Follow up by having the student practice a few sentences or a paragraph including the correction.

Stage 3

Allow autonomous learning

- ☑ *Autonomy allows the learner to build personal confidence and become self sufficient*

- ☑ *Autonomous education during an online tutoring session might be thought of as the time between sessions*

Stage 4

Approach again using authentic design

- ☑ *Rather than merely encouraging the student to come back for another tutorial, tell them that there is more work to do. Reach out and create a future scheduled meeting time.*

Each student needs self-regulating, independent time to practice and carry out the methods and the writing processes discussed. This autonomy, when inserted in a regulated environment, allows the learner to build personal confidence and become self sufficient. As educators, it is imperative to encourage, promote, and model autonomous learning. In person, this method comes natural. It is easy to coach a student to a point where she can maneuver alone, for a short time. Online, this element is more difficult. The level of autonomy is often overwhelming to some new online learners. Therefore, autonomous education during an online tutoring session might be thought of as the time between sessions; the hours or the days connecting each session.

It is important to verbally tell each student that you will return to check on them at a specific time

Tutor's Role: Motivator Offer effective feedback, develop an achievable goal, Encourage students to return Re-assess the student. Look for signs of enlightenment. Evaluate the student's understanding of the work now as compared to stage 1. Show the student evidence of growth. Re-explain areas in question. Likely, the entire paper will not be corrected. Rather than merely encouraging the student to come back for another tutorial, tell them that there is more work to do; reach out and create a future scheduled meeting time.

Tutor Experiences
In the words of the users:

Christine Burlingame,
English Tutor, QCC

☑ *Christine and Bridget have become top-performing, highly sought English tutors at QCC, and are veterans of the Quad-A Tutoring Methodology.*

"The goal of every tutoring session is to always allow autonomy. To step back and see as a tutor how the student has gained both knowledge and confidence. When the student is ready to learn independently I know that the tutoring session worked!"

"During the assisting stage I provide the students with information and examples (whether it is from books, handouts or online sites) and create short term, realistic goals for the student. The Quad-A is set up in such a way that I know when to use listening skills and when to assist. The idea of breaking down the tutoring session into specific tasks makes engagement easier."

Bridget Lever,
English Tutor, QCC

☑ *Proper assessment (knowing what is needed to be done), Mixed with collaborative assisting, and adding in autonomous learning helped this student to "totally get it"*

"This system is successful! I have worked with students using this method since I started tutoring and have seen scores of students show a greater confidence in their ability to learn and write."

"I had a student online a couple of times within a week. She had been struggling with developing a thesis statement. Using the Quad-A system, I worked her through the problem. The assessment was quick, but the assisting took some time. We chatted and exchanged ideas, as I showed her the steps to developing a thesis statement. Then I asked her to try it out on her own. The next time I saw her online (which was 1 week later) I asked how her thesis statements were coming along. She told me that she had "totally gotten it" and that since she began writing in college she hadn't been able to grasp it, but working with me and the way I explained and allowed her time to work it through, helped her see the light."

The Quad-A Tutoring Flow Chart

Assess, **A**ssist, **A**utonomy, **A**pproach again *using authentic design*

Assess:
- Vary the means to understand ability and need
- Listen
- constant response to student's work
- Distinguish higher and lower order concerns

Assist:
- Create a set of short, achievable goals
- Introduce topics and resources
- Offer authentic examples, illustrations, and models
- Observe comprehension and awareness
- Offer on-going, feedback and praise

Allow Autonomy:
- Encourage independent learning
- Increase self-confidence within a safe, structured environment
- Transfers control of learning and fosters personal responsibility

Approach again using authentic design:
- Re visit students quickly
- Positive reinforcement

Role:
Separate all concerns and concentrate on the single issue that will make the most impact now.
Instant gratification = self assurance

Role:
Coach rather than editor

Role:
Motivator
Offer effective feedback, develop an achievable goal,
Encourage students to return

The History of the Quad-A Tutoring Methodology

- ☑ *There was an underlying need for consistency within the tutoring genre.*

- ☑ *The addition of autonomous learning along with a consist approach shaped a four tier system that is useable and understandable by both professional and peer tutors.*

The initial analysis prior to the development of the Quad-A Tutoring Method in 2006 derived from the article, *Remedial Education and* Student *Attrition* from a 2002 Community College Review. This was the entry point to identifying a collective problem throughout community colleges regarding student connectivity. This article offered background information regarding research done on student retention.

The Quad-A Methodology was conceived under the name "Tell Me What You Know". This was the initial effort that coupled assessment with tutoring. The addition of autonomous learning along with the consistency value fashioned a four tier system that is useable and understandable by both professional and peer tutors.

Description of the Communication Skills Center

The Communication Skills Center at Quinsigamond Community College is an English-based tutoring center that serves a vast and diverse, largely urban population. Over the past academic year, the Communication Skills Center served over 32,000 student visits, averaging approximately 12,500 student visits each fifteen week semester.

Housed in a modern, state-of-the-art, three story learning center, the CSC is the home of progressive technology, hosts thirty writing workshops each calendar year, and performs an intensive student focus outreach each semester. New to the center in 2007 is online tutoring, serving the needs of hundreds of distance learners each semester.

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