Building a Critical Thinking Culture

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA-ASHEVILLE

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Goals of presentation

- Share overview of UofL’s creation of campus culture to support critical thinking across the curriculum
- Share conceptual frameworks & QEP principles of practice
- Provide opportunity for UNC-Asheville folks to reflect and share as they launch QEP journey
QEP is....

......is an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning. (QEP Handbook)

“...is a conversation on your campus about student learning.” (C. Luthman, Director, Commission Support)

“We expect you to make changes” and the key objective is that you “stay on top of your progress.” (C. Luthman)

“The aim then is to hold each institution accountable for providing evidence that directed efforts have been made to achieve the stated student learning objectives, including a discussion of adjustments that were made to environmental demands and exigent circumstances.” (R. Jackson, VP SACS)

Presentation structure

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- Phases of the project
- Emerging principles of practice
- Reflection/Application
University of Louisville

Mission: Kentucky’s premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university

- Established: 1798 in Louisville, KY
- Total Student Headcount: 22,031 (Fall 2009)
- Faculty: 2,125 and Staff: 3,961
- Operating Budget (2007-2008): $946 million
- Academic Programs (Degrees offered):
  - Undergraduate degrees, 78 programs (includes certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and post-baccalaureate certificates)
  - Graduate degrees, 106 programs (includes master’s degree, post-master’s certificates, doctoral degrees)
  - Professional degrees, 3 programs
- Source: University of Louisville’s
- “Just the Facts,” 2009-2010 (http://www.louisville.edu)
OUR QEP: Ideas to Action

Ideas to Action or i2a

- Twin focus on critical thinking and culminating undergraduate experiences (CUE) in the undergraduate curriculum

- SACS reaccreditation visit: April 2007
i2a Evolutionary Phases

Phase I
2005-2007: Conceptual Frame & Goals

Phase II
2007-2008: Laying the Groundwork

Phase III
2008-2009: Building Infrastructure

Phase IV
2009-2010: Building Capacity for Growth & Scholarship

Phase V
2010-2011: Curricular Structures For Sustainability

Phase VI and beyond: Implementing Innovation & Consolidating Artifacts
Early years: 2005-2007

- Broad-based involvement in topic development

- Convene QEP Task Group

- SACS Reaccreditation Visit

Phase I
2005-2007:
Conceptual Frame & Goals
Laying the Groundwork: 2007-2008

Diverse team to lead the effort

How will we define critical thinking?

Website, informational sessions, campus communications

Faculty ‘test drive’ innovations

Phase II
2007-2008: Laying the Groundwork
Make piloting process visible, explicit

Select your target → Try it out, gather data, information, address concerns.

Expand, improve, enhance for your next target and goal → Reflect, and make visible what you found out and what you still don’t know.

Share with your stakeholders and figure out what is next → SLOW
Take the Quiz Critical Thinking: T or F?
Critical Thinking Model Adopted for i2a

Richard Paul-Linda Elder framework

✓ Agreed upon by all reviewers (virtually perfect inter-rater reliability)

✓ Most comprehensive (many ‘models’ merely narratives)

✓ Discipline neutral terminology

✓ Provides a common language/terminology for discussing, modeling and measuring critical thinking that can be readily applied to all disciplines

✓ Has a wealth of discipline specific resource materials

http://www.criticalthinking.org
Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Model

**Intellectual Standards**
- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Relevance
- Logical Sufficiency
- Precision
- Depth
- Significance
- Fairness
- Breadth

**Elements of Reasoning**
- Purpose
- Question
- Point of view
- Information
- Inferences
- Concepts
- Implications
- Assumptions

**Intellectual Traits**
- Humility
- Autonomy
- Fair-mindedness
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Empathy
- Integrity
- Confidence in reasoning

Must be applied to develop

Which leads to deeper...
Faculty Perspective

“I think that for decades I have given my students many opportunities to engage in critical thinking, and I have modeled critical thinking in class discussions. But I don’t think I can claim ever to have taught critical thinking in a systematic way. The model gives me a way to share a critical thinking vocabulary with students and to chart their progress. I know and can tell my students exactly what I am looking for.”

Spring 2008 Pilot Program Participant, Department of English
Emerging Principles of Practice

We are flying the plane as we build it.

“Start small, do it well, then expand.”

-SACS

Phase II
2007-2008:
Laying the Groundwork
Describe the opportunities the QEP will provide for:
Your students:
Your campus:
Your faculty:

Describe or list the challenges you face, or will face, in launching the QEP.
What pieces can you “bite off” now?
What will you need to figure out as you go?
Building Infrastructure: 2008-2009

Small grant funding for innovation

Cross-disciplinary, cohort-based learning communities

Intensive training

Campus celebrations

Regional & national conversations

Phase III
2008-2009: Building Infrastructure
Emerging Principles of Practice

- Balance your approach between the pressure to accelerate change and a patient, long-term perspective (Eckel, Green and Hill)
- Institutions don’t make change; people at the institution do.
- Expect to face unexpected challenges and reap unexpected benefits

Phase III
2008-2009: Building Infrastructure

Find The On-ramp
Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovation Theory

S-Curve of Innovation Diffusion

Percentage of Adopters

Time of Adoption

Innovators
Early Adopters
Early Majority
Late Majority
Laggards
“Using the Paul-Elder framework when talking about my work enhanced my credibility when collaborating with faculty colleagues. It also gave us a common way to talk about our learning goals across disciplines.”

Karen S. Newton, MPH, RD
Director
Health Promotion & Education
Reflection: Building Blocks

Who are your faculty opinion leaders and innovators? Are they involved yet?

What are some of the “on ramps” that you can build for people (curricular cycles, career stages, disciplinary norms, institutional interests)

What do you anticipate will be the biggest roadblocks to joining the project from the point of view of:

A faculty member:
A staff member:
A chair or program head:
Student/other:
Building Capacity: 2009-2010

Early adopters share Exemplars & stories

Assessment structures and options

Experts come to campus

Presentations, articles, scholarship, conferences

Phase IV
2009-2010:
Building Capacity for Growth & Scholarship

Department-wide sustainable training, plans & funds
Emerging Principles of Practice

- Pay attention to readiness at every level
- Balance consistency of curriculum with autonomy for the units
- Focus on quality vs. quantity: who is “on the bus” is more important than how many (Collins)

Phase IV
2009-2010:
Building Capacity for Growth & Scholarship
Graduate Student perspective:

“While cleaning up/organizing teaching materials and writing my teaching reflections for the semester, I was struck by the fact that almost every single student in my advanced writing course mentioned critical thinking as the most important thing he or she is taking away.”

Shyam Sharma, Department of English
Reflection: Operationalizing Ideas

What must departments or programs need to do to make the QEP successful? Drill down: where are the decision points in the process? Who is involved?

Who needs to “be on the bus” for your first year so that the QEP can move forward? Do you need to build a team of change agents, or do you have one already that you can leverage?

What aspects of the QEP can be optional, negotiable for programs?
Sustainable curricular structures: 2010-2011

All units report on implementation plan toward 2013 goal

All students exposed day 1

U-wide reporting

i2a Progress Map

Physical presence

Units/program leadership setting expectations

Phase V 2010-2011: Curricular Structures for Sustainability
“I am so happy with our i2A implementation in our courses in the WHRE Program. This critical thinking component has really improved our curriculum.”

Antonette MacDonald, Ph.D.
Program Manager, Workforce & Human Resource Education Program
Department of Leadership, Foundations, & Human Resource Education
Emerging Principles of Practice

- Get comfortable with evolutionary change agenda
- Expect QEP will grow beyond original boundaries and conceptual frame
- Keep SACS and Five-Year Interim Report frame in mind
- Document everything
- Don’t wait for all change conditions to be “perfect”

Phase V
2010-2011:
Curricular Structures & Sustainability
Reflection: Changes Ahead

What are the changes that you know need to happen? What are your biggest fears about the change process ahead for you or your campus?

What are the resources (expertise, money, time) you or your campus have to navigate the change process? What’s missing?

What are you still wondering about concerning the QEP or SACS expectations?
Ride the Waves of Change

“The path of change… [is] never linear; unexpected events and unintended consequences of predictable occurrences shaped the course of change in every institution. The [change] process took twists and turns, sped up and slowed down, and the substance of the change agendas took on new dimensions over time.”

(Eckel, Green and Hill)
Implementing Innovations & Artifacts: 2011-2012

• Structure and resources are ready: now do it!
• Consolidating qualitative and quantitative artifacts of change
• Figuring out who is doing what and where
• Preparing to report out to SACS

Phase VI and beyond: Implementing Innovation & Consolidating Artifacts
The QEP Impact Report asks institutions to address the following as it relates to the QEP developed during its previous reaffirmation:

1) Title and brief description
2) Initial goals and intended outcomes
3) Discussion of changes and reasons for changes
4) QEP’s direct impact on student learning, including goals and outcomes and unanticipated outcomes of QEP
Modifications to our QEP

- Staffing changes
- Timeline altered
- Concept of “community engagement”
- Inclusion of student affairs, student services and co-curricular
- Rotation of Task Group members
- Statewide QEP network
Students and our QEP

- Student Interest Group (SIG)
- GTAs and i2a
- Summer Orientation
- Student panels & student testimonials
- Student impact data
- Life and Faith (LAF)
- Think. Decide. Succeed!
Student perspective:

“Doing this project helped me realize what this degree is all about.”

BSW student at capstone event
For more information on i2a:

Home Page:  
http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction

Faculty Exemplars:  
www.louisville.edu/ideastoaction/resources

Faculty Speak Video:  
www.louisville.edu/ideastoaction/resources/media

Assessment  
http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/what/assessment
Let’s share 10 ideas/insights or strategies that you are taking away from this session!
Enjoy the Journey!

QUESTIONS?

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