Liberal Arts and Sciences (LA&S) work incorporated into Fitchburg State University Development Days: January 2011 – 2015

Executive Summary:

Beginning in the winter of 2011, Fitchburg State University has made a concerted effort to use regular January and May faculty Development Days as a tool for fostering dialogs about improving our Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum. This work has gone through three phases. In the first phase from 2011 until January 2013, the LA&S council has focused on engaging faculty in discussions around our existing learning outcomes, the ways in which we assess these learning outcomes, and the implications of our data for teaching and learning. In the seond phase from May 2013-2014 the LA&S council began to engage faculty with considering how reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking related to our existing learning outcomes, and discussing ways to improve these outcomes for students. In the third phase of this work from May 2014 – January 2015, the LA&S council has sought specific feedback from the campus community on our exsting LA&S outcomes, curriculum and potential future directions.

Through the first phase, the LA&S council was able to get valuable feedback on our rubrics, alter them and develop broader faculty support for their application to examine student learning. The second phase of the work provided the LA&S council with a series of concrete suggestions for promoting critical analysis and logical thinking through deliberate efforts to get students to take challenging positions, scaffolding this work through opportunities for pairing, sharing and peer review to avoid some of the fear of taking a position in front of the whole class, and "chunking" the process into individual explicit thinking steps such as brainstorming all of the prior knowledge you can bring to bear on a question. In addition, faculty generated specific strategies to foster reading skills including explicit training and feedback on annotation, analysis of in-text citations, the use of reading journals, and required reading summaries. Finally, the third phase of this work revealed that our existing LA&S outcomes may be too limited to capture the range of what we expect students to know and be able to do, that the courses in our LA&S curriculum need to be more explicitly linked to these learning outcomes, that we should explore intentional links across courses such as learning communities and community readings, and that our assignments in these courses should be more representative of what we want students to be able to do and demonstrate, perhaps in a comprehensive portfolio. Agendas and related handouts for each of the Development Days are provided in the Appendix that follows.

Taken together the results of these Development Days suggest that the LA&S council has developed a strong foundation for a process of learning outcomes assessment, constructive discussions of assessment data, and faculty development to promote improvements in student learning. However, it is also clear that the emphasis on and assessment of learning outcomes remains incomplete with the need to expand our learning outcomes into areas like critical thinking, information literacy, and Reading skills. As the LA&S council reviews and revises the curriculum, they will need to focus on making all of the learning outcomes explicit in the courses that we teach, linking them across multiple courses and evaluating these learning outcomes through substantive student assignments that can be readily assessed for the purposes of ongoing program improvement.

Phase 1: Assessing our Learning Outcomes

While our winter 2011 Development Day was snowed out, the LA&S council was able to hold a series of assessment afternoons at the CTL to reintroduce faculty to our LA&S learning outcomes, and to discuss how we could go about assessing each of them. The first of these sessions introduced the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) as well as the Valid Assessment of Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics designed to assess these outcomes. While the LA&S council had previously developed their own rubrics to assess the LA&S objectives, the LA&S council adapted the LEAP VALUE rubrics in cases where there were LEAP ELOs that corresponded to our LA&S Objectives. These individual, modified rubrics were shared at each of the subsequent sessions that spring, culminating in the May 2011 Development day when each of the rubrics that had been introduced earlier in the spring were applied to a sample of student work using the "Assessment Evaluation Protocol" and faculty were asked

for their thoughts on other appropriate assignments for use with the rubric and any specific changes to rubric language they would like to suggest.

At the January 2012 Assessment day, the LA&S council distributed the finalized rubrics whith cover-sheets intended to concisely explain the types of student work appropriate for submission with a particular rubric and to provide a faculty member the ability to specifiy which criteria on the rubric were most appropriate for assessment from student work they were submitting. LA&S council members ran more loosely-based meetings on each outcome at which they encouraged faculty to identify some of their own assignments they felt were appropriate and try the process of filling out the cover sheet. Both in the spring of 2012 and prior fall, the LA&S council collected cover sheets and samples of student work from faculty and scored the work at December and May Assessment "Hootenannies" using the rubrics.

At the May 2012 Development Day the first data generated using the new rubrics was shared with the faculty in breakout sessions related to each learning outcome. The ATLAS "Looking at Data" protocol developed by the School Reform Initiative (SRI) was used to guide faculty members through the process of engaging with the data and determing the implications for teaching and learning. While it was felt that this represented an important part of closing the loop. Some of the specific feedback from those sessions revealed that in spite of prior Development Days, faculty members still lacked a strong enough familiarity with the rubrics to appropriately interpret the data. As a result at the January 2013 Development Day the LA&S council once again invited faculty members to engage in using the rubrics to score samples of student work. Through a protocol for "Understanding what our LA&S data means" developed by Dr. Jennifer Berg, faculty members used their expriences scoring student work to gain a better qualitative understanding of relative student strengths and weaknesses revealed by the rubric than they could looking at the quantitative data alone.

Phase 2: Exploring Reading, Writing, Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking in our curriculum

In 2013 the LA&S council took on the task of evaluating the ways in which we were teaching Reading, Writing, Critical Analysis and Logical thinking in our curriculum as one of the priorities set forth in the Fitchburg State University Academic Plan. To begin this process at the May 2013 Development Day, the LA&S Council identified 4 areas of our learning outcomes: Citizenship through Critical Analysis of Events, Problem Sovling through both Inquiry and Data Analysis and Quantitative Reasoning, and Written Communication that overlapped with reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking in order to try to connect the existing work on improving learning outcomes with this new emphasis in the academic plan. The LAA&S council chose a set of presenters who had been doing work previously in these areas and using a protocol developed to explore "Strategies for improving student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking" faculty were able to discuss the presenters' work and reflect on the implications for their own teaching.

After this initial introduction to reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking in our curriculum, the LA&S council planned two different sessions for the January and May Development Days, a January focus on strategies for teaching Critical Thinking and a May focus on strategies for teaching Reading. Both sets of sessions were once again run by faculty with expertise developing these outcomes in their students, and involved breakout sessions that provided some level of focus by discipline and/or types of related learning outcomes. In each case faculty members followed a modified Consultancy protocol to explore what the outcome looks like in their disciplines, to identify pitfalls faculty and students encounter when developing the learning outcome, and specific strategies that can be used to overcome these pitfalls and support the learning outcome. Faculty presenters provided specific examples of strategies from their own classrooms and facilitators took detailed notes on the pitfalls and strategies discussed by the group as a whole. These notes were compiled and made available on Blackboard to support subsequent work on these learning outcomes.

In the January 2014 Development Day Presenters not only discussed Critical Thinking with the whole group of faculty assembled but also formed 4 break-out groups focused on critical analysis and logical thinking in the areas of Aesthetic Appreciation and Written Communication, Information Literacy and Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship, and Problem Solving and Quantitative Reasoning. While some interesting differences emerged across these different groups the final notes (attached in the Appendix) reveal common patterns as well. One important difference that emerged was

the fact that the Problem Solving and Quantitative Reasoning group emphasized the critical role of underlying content knowledge and skills to a greater degree than the other groups. It was clear that for many faculty in the STEM fields in particular, one of the greatest pitfalls for students was the inability to recall and apply important concepts and mathematical processes when trying to engage in critical analysis and logical thinking that required this underlying knowledge and skills. However, across all disciplines there was consensus that students struggle with using evidence to construct arguments, identifying assumptions and biases, and overcoming a fear or disinclination to commit to or rigorously critique a particular position. Faculty recommended creating more assignments in which students had to take on and defend viewpoints that were not their own, using small group work in pairs and peer editing to allow for critical thinking without some of the fear and stigma associated with taking a position in front of the whole class, and focusing on specific elements of critical thinking in isolation before expecting students to engage in all aspects of the process simultaneously.

For the May 2014 Development Day Reading skills were discussed by the whole group as well as in 4 breakout sessions similar to the ones created for the January Development day. Faculty presenters led breakout sessions on Citizenship and Ethical Reasoning, Communication and Aesthetic Appreciation, Critical and Creative Thinking for Problem Solving, and Information Literacy. Faculty provided a number of specific assignments they use with students to foster reading skills. As their colleagues discussed these and shared their own pitfalls and strategies, a number of themes emerged. First and foremost, it became clear that faculty have grave concerns about student reading skills and dispositions. Faculty also recognized that there exists a great disparity across faculty members in our expectations for student reading. However, a number of faculty structure writing assignments designed to help students develop their reading skills. Some faculty members noted the critical difference between simply asking discussion questions that students could potentially answer without doing the reading and structuring more open-ended assignments that really require them to demonstrate an engagement with the reading material. These assignments included reading journals, graded notes/annotations, and reading summaries. Faculty also encouraged assignments that foster close reading, including those focused on decoding the use of in-text citations and other evidence supporting arguments. Supporting students in understanding the use of evidence to support arguments was a common theme of both critical thinking and reading support strategies.

Phase 3: Examining Current and Future models for the LA&S curriculum

In the afternoon of the May 2014 Development Day, faculty chose from a series of breakout sessions to explore the LA&S curriculum. These included a session on potential models for a “utopian” LA&S curriculum, and the roles for interdisciplinary learning, global diversity, foreign languages and minors in the LA&S curriculum. Discussions of global diversity as an outcome for the LA&S curriculum recognized the need to better define this goal and perhaps one or more related learning outcome of exposing students to global diversity. Faculty also expressed an interest in fostering more student involvement in foreign languages and minors. Approaches were proposed for fostering interdisciplinary learning including using learning communities, explicitly linking LA&S courses with themes and/or learning outcomes, and encouraging the use of outside speakers and common readings across courses.

The discussion of the “utopian” LA&S curriculum revealed interest on the part of the faculty in exploring alternative designs including learning communities, sequencing through lower level and upper level LA&S courses, 4 credit LA&S courses to facilitate group work, and a focus on small class sizes. It was also proposed that students should be building a portfolio through their Liberal Arts and Sciences courses. This was echoed by faculty calling for more meaningful applied assignments rather than assignments in which students demonstrate knowledge predominantly through exams. In addition, there was an interest in developing shared expectations for common learning outcomes like written communication. Finally, as

faculty were asked to reflect on the goals of an LA&S curriculum, they expanded on our existing list of objectives with some new possibilities like financial literacy but also provided a number of goals for student learning dispositions such as interest in learning, current events and living a life of intention.

The September 2014 and January 2015 Development Days each featured a single breakout session focused on the collecting additional feedback on the LA&S curriculum. In September 2014 LA&S council members led a discussion of shared learning outcomes and teaching strategies in the LA&S curriculum. This was followed in January with a session on supporting departmental learning outcomes through the Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum. Faculty members were guided using a protocol to brainstorm important departmental learning outcomes and explore their overlap with the existing LA&S objectives. The feedback from each of these breakout sessions was shared with the LA&S council during the 2014-2015 academic year to generate recommendations for the LA&S review document. In the spring of 2015 in particular, the LA&S council worked through each of the existing LA&S objectives, reviewing learning outcomes data as well as the overlap between these objectives and common departmental learning outcomes. The feedback from the Development Day sessions suggested that the existing LA&S objectives had important elements such as oral communication, reading, critical thinking and information literacy that had not been emphasized in the process of assessing the LA&S curriculum.

Overall feedback on the LA&S curriculum gathered through development day illustrated the critical need to reexamine, refine and expand on the existing LA&S objectives, to make these objectives explicit in the design and sequencing of LA&S courses, to use these and other potential connections across different disciplinary clusters in the LA&S to foster interdisciplinary learning through learning communities and community reads, to encourage student learning dispositions through substantive assignments connected to real-world global and local issues, and to encourage students to develop a portfolio of such work that could be assessed to improve student learning in these areas.

Appendix:

Assessment Afternoons at the CTL continued

Wednesdays
3:30 AM – 5:00 PM

All meetings Wednesdays 3:30 – 5:00 PM	**Center for Teaching and Learning, Hammond Building**
FOCUS ON LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES ASSESSMENT	
4/6	**Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)Learning Outcomes and the Fitchburg State University LA&S Curriculum** Chris Cratsley and Ben Railton
4/13	**Assessing Art Appreciation** Ben Railton and the LA&S Committee
4/20	**Assessing Communication Skills** Ben Railton and the LA&S Committee
4/27	**Assessing Problem Solving and Synthesizing** Chris Picone and the LA&S Committee
5/4	**Assessing Ethical Reasoning** LA&S Committee
5/11	**Assessing Citizenship** LA&S Committee

ALL COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT DAY

PERCIVAL AUDITORIUM

MAY 23, 2011

8:00- 8:50 Coffee, Danish and fruit

Morning Session 9:00 –noon: NEASC AND YOU: HELP US TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY. The entire university community is asked to join us for a discussion of the NEASC self-study process and to provide feedback and suggestions on the draft chapters that the five sub-committees have prepared.

- ***Opening session: 9:00 to 10:15 Percival Auditorium***
- ***Comments on the Standards:10:30 to 11:15- choose a sub-group***
- ***Comment on the Standards: 11:15 to 12 - choose a second***
- ***Lunch: 12:00 to 1:00; Holmes Dining Commons: Please RSVP to Carla McGrath, ext. 3168 if you will be attending so we have an accurate lunch count.***

Afternoon Session 1:15 – 3:30 p.m. LA&S AND YOU: LINKING LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES ASSESSMENT TO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE DEPARTMENTS AND COURSES. Faculty from all disciplines will discuss rubrics for Communication, Problem-Solving, Art Appreciation, Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship that can be used to assess LA&S or program learning outcomes.

- ***Opening session: 1:15 to 2:00***
- ***Break-out sessions: 2:00 to 3:30 Each faculty member selects one of the five sessions for participatory discussion.***

Assessment Evaluation Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to provide opportunities for faculty to discuss student work, how we plan to assess student work, and to evaluate the process and implications. We will reflect on the types of assignments we give students in our courses, the ways in which we can assess those assignments, and the implications of our assessment results for potential course and curricular modifications.

I. Getting Acquainted – LA&S Assessment

1. **Introducing the Objective:** In each of our working groups we will be addressing one of the 5 LA&S Objectives: Art Appreciation, Communication, Problem Solving, Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship**.** Please use the two sticky notes provided to address
    - **How should this objective be accomplished in our courses?**
    - **How can we know if students are meeting this objective?**

2. **Introducing the work:** Group discussion leaders share basic information about a sample of student work, the assignment used to generate the work, and if necessary, the rubric we are using to assess the work, avoiding value description – e.g. provide information about the course, its level, the nature of the assignment and the rubric selected.

3. **Clarifying specific goal:** The discussion leaders will make sure that the goals for the conversation are clear.
    - We are trying to determine what the student work tells us about student knowledge, skills and dispositions related to one of the LA&S objectives.
    - We also want to understand how the structures of the assignment and the rubric support or hinder our understanding of student knowledge skills and dispositions.

4. **Looking at the work:** In silence, please read or observe the work brought in.

5. **Describing the work:** The group points out any aspect of the work noticed, with particular emphasis on describing what the student has produced, while withholding judgment about the quality of the product or comments about the appropriateness of the assignment or rubric.

6. **Valuing the work:** Group members share general qualities of the work that they notice (e.g. student demonstrates or fails to demonstrate specific knowledge, skills or dispositions related to the LA&S objective)

II. Zooming in – Targeting the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Assessment Process

7. **Discerning the purpose of the assignment:** Based on their reading of the work, and their knowledge of the assignment, group members describe what they view as the purpose of the work, pointing to the evidence in the work that makes them say so. Once the group has discussed the inferred purpose or purposes of the work, they can discuss the degree to which this purpose lends itself to assessing the LA&S objective.

8. **Revealing the purpose of the Rubric:** If it hasn't been introduced yet, the discussion leaders will introduce the rubric. Group members describe what they view as the disciplinary insights/modes of thinking or ability areas that are assessed by the rubric, pointing to the evidence or lack of evidence in the work that makes them say so. Focusing on one element of the rubric at a time, the group discusses how well the rubric aligns with the purpose of the assignment, and the LA&S objectives.

III. Stepping Back – Reflecting on Student Learning, our courses and our programs

9. **Hearing from the discussion leaders about sample assignments and student work:** After listening and charting faculty feedback without intervening, discussion leaders add their perspectives on the general and targeted assessment comments. If time and the direction of the discussion allows for it, they can distribute additional samples of student work to be evaluated by the faculty.

10. **Implications for our programs:** By examining student's work in this way, what have we learned about the assignments and rubrics we should be using to assess student learning, the LA&S objectives we are assessing, and our courses and programs designed to meet those objectives? Please put your name on an index card.
    - **On the front side of the index card, please describe an assignment that you might use to assess this LA&S objective in your own course (even if it is not an LA&S course)**
    - **On the reverse side of the index card, please provide any sample language that you would like included in the rubric or revisions to the existing language.**

11. **Reflecting on the protocol and session:** It is always helpful to leave time at the end to revisit the process and the protocol, considering what was helpful in the conference structure and what was frustrating. In particular, it would be useful to get feedback on how we can most efficiently use future professional development time.
    - **Please complete the evaluation form**

FIFTH ANNUAL WINTER ASSESSMENT DAY
JANUARY 17, 2012

USING ASSESSMENT DATA TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION AGENDA

Morning Address – NEASC Update

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Percival Auditorium

This session will review the self-study process and highlight the main themes of the final self-study with particular emphasis on changes that have been made since it was first released to the campus community in September.

10:00 – 10:15 a.m. – Break

Assessment Sessions – Focus on Program Reports

10:15- 11:15 a.m. – Concurrent Sessions

Percival 103 – Preparing Program Reports

- Describing the cycle of assessment and program improvement in an assessment report – Danielle Wigmore, Exercise and Sports Science
- Comparing assessment approaches and data from year to year in an assessment report – Jennifer Berg, Mathematics

Percival 210 – New Ways to Collect Program Data

- Juried Assessments: Experimenting with a new Function of TK20 for assessing student work – David Weiss, Criminal Justice.
- Using the ETS field test in Psychology and assessing student research with rubrics- Laura Garofoli and Tom Schilling, Psychological Sciences

Open Forum - Academic Plan

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. – Percival Auditorium

Please join VP Bowen to discuss the most recent iteration of the academic plan. We are in the process of establishing goals and actions for each of the areas of emphasis (posted on the Academic Affairs web page). Your input is needed and appreciated.

12:15 – 1:15 Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons. ***Lunch Ticket required. Please see Shirley Wagner for a lunch ticket.***

Afternoon Sessions – Focus on LA&S Assessment

1:15 – 1:45 p.m. – Percival Auditorium

- Closing the Loop or Spiraling in the Right Direction, LA&S Assessment at Fitchburg State University: Jennifer Berg, Chris Cratsley, Elizabeth Gordon, Joe Moser and Ben Railton

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Breakout Sessions – *rooms will be assigned at the beginning of the afternoon session*

- Please join one of a series of Focus Groups on each of the LA&S Objectives in which we will be sharing and discussing the types of student assignments that best demonstrate how well our students meet these objectives.

Please RSVP to Carla McGrath at cmcgrath@fitchburgstate.edu. Thank you.

Assessment Day 1-17-12 Breakout Sessions Agenda:

- Introductions
- Overview on the Objective (Aesthetic Expression, Citizenship, Communication, Ethical Reasoning, or Problem Solving).
- Discuss a sample assignment that could be used to assess this objective.
- Explain the Cover sheet and rubric and discuss how they would be used with the sample assignment.
- Brainstorm ideas about other sample assignments.
- Fill out sample cover sheets based on these assignments.
- Discuss including requiring a sample assignment and cover sheet as part of the LA&S course approval process.
- Collect Feedback Sheets

SPRING ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
May 21, 2012
Meeting our Mission through
Assessment, Scholarship and Instruction

Morning Address – Assessment in Support of the Academic Plan

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. – Percival Auditorium

This session will review the data we collect through our assessment system and highlight how this data can be used to support our academic planning process.

Assessment Sessions – Focus on using data to improve instruction

9:45- 10:45 a.m. – Concurrent Sessions in Percival Classrooms

Please join one of a series of Focus Groups on each of the LA&S Objectives: Communication, Problem-Solving, Art Appreciation, Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship, in which we will be sharing student data we have collected and discussing the implications for teaching and learning in these areas.

Percival 103 – **Written Communication**
Percival 209 – Problem Solving – Quantitative Lit.
Percival 211 – Aesthetic Expression
Percival 204 – **Ethical Reasoning**
Percival 210 – Problem Solving – Inquiry
Percival 212 - **Citizenship**

Open Forum – The Scholarship of Engagement

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. – Percival Auditorium

Panel Discussion: Meeting our Mission through Engaged Scholarship
Dr. John Chetro-Szivos, Dr. Aisling O'Connor, and Dr. David Weiss

12:15 – 1:15 Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons.
Lunch Ticket required. Please see Shirley Wagner or Paul Weizer for a lunch ticket.

Technology and Instruction

1:30-2:15 and 2:30-3:15 Two Repeated Sets of 4 Concurrent Sessions in Percival Classrooms

Percival 210 - Camtasia Relay lecture capture by Tom Schoenfeld. Tom Schoenfeld teaches a challenging course that often has very high enrollment. By attending this session you'll see how Tom uses Relay to record and present his sessions so that students can review his classes online. Not only does this help traditional students, it can be a life saver for disabled students and even allows you to "flip" your class environment.

Percival 211 - Using Mimio devices in the classroom by Nancy Murray. Mimio has two distinct classroom devices that allow you to turn virtually any classroom into a "smart" classroom, a bar and a wireless tablet. Nancy Murray will demonstrate how she uses these devices in her McKay classes.

Percival 212 Using Blackboard IM to connect with your students by Mike Leamy. Blackboard IM has an incredible ability to help your students: from being able to share your screen to discuss documents and setup software to hosting virtual office hours, Blackboard IM can help enhance your teaching and level the playing field with commuter and resident students.

Percival 103 - Embedded Librarians with Linda LeBlanc, Jenny Fielding, and Kate Wells. One of the greatest challenges we face is getting our students to avail themselves of all that the library has to offer them. With increased use of Blackboard as a vehicle to connect with our students and manage our courses, our librarians have been able to embed themselves within courses to provide as much or as little support as needed in the areas of library services, research skills, information literacy, and direct library instruction.

SRI SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

ATLAS
Looking at Data

Learning from Data is a tool to guide groups of teachers discovering what students, educators, and the public understands and how they are thinking. The tool, developed by Eric Buchovecky, is based in part on the work of the Leadership for Urban Mathematics Project and of the Assessment Communities of Teachers Project. The tool also draws on the work of Steve Seidel and Evangeline Harris-Stefanakis of Project Zero at Harvard University. Revised November 2000 by Gene Thompson-Grove. Revised August 2004 for Looking at Data by Dianne Leahy.

Protocol

1. Getting Started

- The facilitator reminds the group of the norms.
  Note: Each of the next four steps should be about 10 minutes in length. It is sometimes helpful for the facilitator to take notes.
- The educator providing the data set gives a very brief statement of the data and avoids explaining what s/he concludes about the data if the data belongs to the group rather than the presenter.

2. Describing the Data (10 minutes)

- The facilitator asks: "What do you see?"
- During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the data.
- Group members describe what they see in data, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made—e.g., "On page one in the second column, third row . . . "
- If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based.
- It may be useful to list the group's observations on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be listed in another column for later discussion during Step 3.

3. Interpreting the Data (10 minutes)

- The facilitator asks: "What does the data suggest?" Second question: "What are the assumptions we make about students and their learning?"
- During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the data says and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence.
- From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer: what is being worked on and why?
- Think broadly and creatively. Assume that the data, no matter how confusing, makes sense to some people; your job is to see what they may see.
- As you listen to each other's interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other's perspectives.

4. **Implications for Classroom Practice (10 minutes)**

- The facilitator asks: "What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?" This question may be modified, depending on the data.
- Based on the group's observations and interpretations, discuss any implications this work might have for teaching and assessment in the classroom. In particular, consider the following questions:
  - What steps could be taken next?
  - What strategies might be most effective?
  - What else would you like to see happen? What kinds of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
  - What does this conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice? About teaching and learning in general?
  - What are the implications for equity?

5. **Reflecting on the ATLAS-Looking at Data (10 minutes)**

Presenter Reflection:

- What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
- What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
- How can you make use of your colleagues' perspectives?

Group Reflection:

- What questions about teaching and assessment did looking at the data raise for you?
- Did questions of equity arise?
- How can you pursue these questions further?
- Are there things you would like to try in your classroom as a result of looking at this data?

6. **Debrief the Process (5 minutes)**

- How well did the process work?
- What about the process helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
- What could be improved?

SIXTH ANNUAL WINTER ASSESSMENT DAY
JANUARY 14, 2013
USING ASSESSMENT DATA TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
AGENDA

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Percival Auditorium: Spring Semester Opening Remarks – President Antonucci

9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Percival Auditorium: Assessing Reading, Writing, Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking Across the Curriculum

This session will review the assessment of reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking across the Fitchburg State University curriculum and discuss the approaches used at other institutions to assess and improve student learning in these areas. We will use student work and data from our Aesthetic Appreciation and Expression in the Arts rubric to explore how the assessment process can inform our classroom practice.

9:45 – 10:00 a.m. – Break

10:00- 11:00 a.m. – Percival 2nd floor classrooms: Breakout sessions on different ways of assessing reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking.

Please join faculty-led focus groups on a few of the LA&S Objectives related to reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking in which we will be examining student work and assessment data to discuss how well our students meet these objectives and what we can do to improve student learning.

- Citizenship Through Critical Analysis of Events: Laura Baker and Jennifer Fielding – **room 203**
- Problem Solving through Inquiry and Data Analysis: Liz Gordon and Chris Picone – **room 204**
- Problem Solving through Quantitative Literacy: Jenn Berg and Danielle Wigmore – **room 209**
- Written Communication: Joe Moser and Shana Goldwyn – **room 210**

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. – Breakout Sessions will be repeated in the same locations

Please attend a different session than the one you attended at 10:00 AM.

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons. ***Lunch Ticket required. Please see Paul Weizer for a lunch ticket.***

Afternoon Sessions – Using Data to Improve Instruction

1:00 – 1:45 p.m. – Percival Auditorium: Strategies for improving student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking

1:45 – 3:00 p.m – Concurrent sessions on using data to improve student learning

Percival 103 – Life After Google: Integrated Information Literacy in First Year Writing

This presentation will discuss preliminary findings from a pilot study of a semester-long collaboration between Research Librarians and English Studies faculty. The presenters will report on the effectiveness of integrating librarians in the Writing II research-based curriculum in order to teach for greater student engagement.

Percival 210 – Using Assessment to Improve Mathematics Instruction

- Presenters will discuss how they used data from the assessment of technology skills in math majors, to revise the technology assignments in their courses.
- Presenters will discuss how data on student success in our Developmental Math course, Basic Math II, and subsequent math courses, has inspired a pilot redesign of Basic Math II.

Please RSVP to Carla McGrath at cmcgrath@fitchburgstate.edu. Thank you.

Understanding What Our LA&S Data Means

Critical to the assessment process is the **use** of data to help faculty make choices in their teaching: which teaching approaches work well, which need adaption, which need chucking out altogether. At Fitchburg State the LA&S assessment process is done primarily by members of the LA&S council, making the interpretation of the data more challenging for faculty who do not do the assessment.

This session is constructed with the end goal of helping faculty understand the meaning of the aggregate data on our LA&S goals and as we all know, understanding requires **work** . Here we will look at sample(s) of student work through the lens of our LA& S rubrics. Applying the rubrics to student work yourself will help you interpret the campus-wide data, and thus make the data more useful to you in your own teaching.

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1. **Introduction to Protocol** **(5 minutes)**

   Facilitators briefly introduce the session's goals, guidelines, and schedule. The important note to make here is that it is important to stay focused on the question or task you are in at the specified time. Feel free to jot yourself notes as interesting thoughts arise, but focus your attention on the work at hand. Note where there will be time for questions, and open discussion on the rubric.

2. **Introduction to Rubric** **(10 minutes)**

   The facilitator goes over the main criteria of the rubric, then participants read the descriptors for each of the criteria. Participants then have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions in order to get information that may be unclear. Clarifying questions are matters of fact and require a brief reply (yes or no oftentimes). Deep questions on why some things appear and others do not are not appropriate at this time (but please save these thoughts for the **reflections on the rubric** portion of the session).

   Facilitators will let you know if your question is too probing.

   Facilitators may provide additional information here as they see fit.

4. **Reading Student Work** **(10 minutes)**

   Participants (individually) will read over the student work sample(s) provided, keeping in mind the criteria that are on the rubric. If you are a fast reader you may move on to the next phase.

5. Applying Rubric (Individual) **(5 minutes)**

Participants (individually) will try to make a judgement on the students performance level displayed in the student's work. Be prepared to justify your judgements using the language within the rubric. If you are finding any criteria hard to judge jot down some notes on why it is challenging and where you think the judgement should go (*e.g.*, "between a 1 and a 2" or "can't I give it a 0?!")

6. Applying Rubric (Group Discussion) **(10 minutes)**

Addressing one criterion at a time the facilitators will ask for judgements on each criterion. Participants should state what their judgement was on performance level, and briefly what language in the rubric led to that judgement. Not every participant needs to speak to each criterion, but if you disagree with the judgement, or agree but for a different reason, please speak up - this is often the most useful part of the assessment process.

7. Connection to Our Teaching **(10 minutes)**

Participants now discuss what issues this exercise raises for them in terms of their own teaching. How do the issues raised here make you think differently about your teaching? What teaching strategies might be useful in improving students' performance in these areas? What teaching strategies may hinder students' performance in these areas?

8. Reflections on the Rubric **(5 minutes)**

Participants have a chance to give LA&S council members feedback on the rubric. This should go in rounds and participants should prioritize feedback, giving both warm and cool feedback.

(Note that more detailed commentary can be provided on the session's survey)

9. Reflections on Process **(5 minutes)**

Participants now discuss the process of looking at the rubric and student work as we have. What would work better next time? Do you feel better prepared to interpret the aggregate data? Would a similarly structured conversation help you understand your program/departmental assessment data?

SPRING ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
MAY 20, 2013

ISSUES AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Percival Auditorium: Opening Remarks – President Antonucci

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Why Mobility Matters: How the Post PC era is impacting Higher Education
- Dr. Jon Landis

Dr. Jon Landis is the National Development Executive with Apple Inc. He is a former professor in the College of Education from Millersville University where he was the graduate coordinator of the Leadership Program and the Coordinator of the CyberSafe Institute. Jon holds his Ph.D. in Sociology, a Masters degree in Education Leadership, and a B.S. in Chemistry. He has served as a chemistry instructor, principal, curriculum director, and IT Director. Dr. Landis speaks nationally on the risks and opportunities associated with mobile technologies.

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. – Question and Answer Session with Dr. Landis
Dr. Landis will be available to answer questions on a range of topics related to how mobile technology is changing the landscape of higher education including assessment and the use of data to make decisions, technology in the classroom, MOOCs, online courses by non-accredited entities now approved by ACE, and the role of brick and mortar campuses in a world of increased mobility.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break

11:00- 12:00 p.m. – Percival Auditorium: Assessing Fitchburg State University's approaches to teaching reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking – Jennifer Berg and Amy Wehe

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons.
Lunch Ticket required. Please see Paul Weizer for a lunch ticket.

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Percival 2nd floor classrooms: Breakout sessions on Strategies for improving student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking

Afternoon Sessions – Using Assessment to Improve Instruction

Please join faculty-led focus groups on a few of the LA&S Objectives related to reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking in which we will be examining ways in which our faculty have refined their instruction to help our students better meet these objectives.

- Citizenship Through Critical Analysis of Events: Laura Baker– **room 203**
- Problem Solving through Inquiry and Data Analysis: Liz Gordon and Chris Picone – **room 204**
- Problem Solving through Quantitative Literacy: Mary Ann Barbato – **room 209**
- Written Communication: Joe Moser and Shana Goldwyn – **room 210**

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. – Breakout Sessions will be repeated in the same locations
Please attend a different session than the one you attended at 1:00 PM.

Please RSVP to Carla McGrath at cmcgrath@fitchburgstate.edu. Thank you.

SPRING ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
MAY 20, 2013

Strategies for improving student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking

1. Introduction to Protocol (5 minutes)
Facilitators briefly introduce the session's goals, guidelines, and schedule. The overarching goal of this session is to reflect on strategies our colleagues have developed for assessing and improving student skills. They will begin the session by highlighting some of the themes they would like you to reflect on during their presentation, particularly related to how we can assess and improve student reading, writing, critical analysis and/or logical thinking in similar ways in our courses, in our programs, and across the LA&S curriculum.

2. Presentation (15-20 minutes)
The presenter(s) will describe what they have been trying in their courses.

3. Clarifying Questions (5 minutes)
Participants then have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions in order to get further information on aspects of the presentation that may be unclear. Clarifying questions are matters of fact and require a brief reply (yes or no oftentimes). Deep questions on why the presenter used particular strategies are not appropriate at this time, but please save these thoughts for the probing questions section of the protocol. Facilitators will let you know if your question is too probing.

4. Probing Questions (5 minutes)
Once everyone has had a chance to ask clarifying questions, the facilitators will encourage probing questions on the course strategies described by the presenter. This will allow everyone the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which the presenters have addressed assessment and instruction to improve student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking.

5. Feedback on the Presentation (10 minutes)
Participants have a chance to give presenter(s) feedback on the work they have been doing. This should go in rounds and participants should prioritize giving both positive feedback and constructive criticism. The facilitators will ask for warm feedback first. Once everyone who wants to has had an opportunity to provide warm feedback, the facilitators will welcome cool feedback intended to provide constructive criticism.

6. Reflections on improving student reading, writing, critical analysis and logical thinking (10 minutes)
The facilitators will ask “What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?” This question may be further modified and refined depending on the preceding discussion. Based on the group’s observations and feedback, you will discuss any implications the presenter’s work might have for teaching and assessment across the campus. In particular, consider the following types of questions:

- What steps could be taken next?
- What strategies might be most effective?
- What else would you like to see happen? What kind of assignments or assessments could help?
- What does the conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice or about teaching and learning in general?

7. Reflections on Process (5 minutes)
Participants now discuss the process of reflecting on their colleagues’ work. How well did the process work? What about the process helped you to see and learn useful things? What could be improved?

WINTER ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
JANUARY 13, 2014
TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING AGENDA

8:30 – 9:00 Percival Lobby: Coffee, Danish and Fruit

9:00 – 10:20 Percival Auditorium: Integrating technology and teaching, Ruben R. Puentedura, Ph.D.

The iPad and other mobile devices have transformed the world of education technology, making ubiquitous intellectual exploration and creation available to students. These tools have the potential to address current challenges faced by higher education, while simultaneously opening new paths for faculty and students. Full realization of this potential requires models that can guide the integration of technology in the classroom. We will look at the role the SAMR model plays in this regard, and how it can be integrated into faculty teaching practice.

Dr. Ruben Puentedura is the Founder and President of Hippasus, a consulting firm based in Western Massachusetts, focusing on transformative applications of information technologies to education. He has implemented these approaches for over twenty-five years at a range of K-20 educational institutions, as well as health and arts organizations. He is the creator of the SAMR model for selecting, using, and evaluating technology in education, which currently guides the work of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, as well as multiple other projects worldwide. He is also the author of the EdTech Quintet, a categorization of the core technology toolset required for education derived from the Horizon Report. His current work explores new directions in mobile computing, digital storytelling, learning analytics, and educational gaming, focusing on applications in areas where they have not been traditionally employed. He can be reached at rubenrp@hippasus.com.

10:20 – 10:30 break

10:30 – 11:50 Percival Auditorium: Using Apple in the classroom, Lars Ljungholm

We are currently undergoing a fundamental shift in the education landscape. Students are now growing up in - and graduating into - a connected, information-rich world which presents both challenges and opportunities for educators. With the incredibly powerful and versatile mobile learning tools we now have available, faculty have the ability to truly personalize learning, engage and motivate students, and practice authentic assessment. This session, delivered by Apple Systems Engineer Lars Ljungholm, will demonstrates how faculty can use Apple TV, eBooks and native accessibility options built-in to the iPad to enhance learning and education.

Lars has been working with computers and personal technology for more than two decades. With a passion that started with BASIC programming in high school and continued work with an early Macintosh in college, Lars has enjoyed a successful career in the high-tech industry and has been working with K-12 and Higher Ed institutions across New England for the last 13 years. With several industry certifications and technical credentials, Lars is known for his dynamic delivery style and informative demos.

11:50 - Noon The Fitchburg State iPad Pilot, Steve Swartz

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons.

Lunch Ticket required. Please see Paul Weizer for a lunch ticket.

1:00 – 1:55 p.m. Percival Auditorium: Panel Discussion on Teaching Critical Thinking

We will begin our afternoon program with a panel discussion led by Dr. David Svolba who has presented a CTL Teaching Essential Skills session on critical thinking and Dr. Jane Fiske who has developed and is offering the course Critical and Creative Thinking this semester. The panel will be moderated by CTL Director Dr. Kisha Tracy.

2:00 - 2:55 p.m. Percival 2nd floor classrooms: Breakout sessions on Strategies for improving student Critical Thinking in the Disciplines

Please join faculty-led focus groups on the LA&S Objectives related to critical thinking in different disciplines in which we will be examining ways in which we can refine our instruction to help our students better meet these objectives.
- Problem Solving (Jennifer Berg, Danielle Wigmore, Chris Picone, Liz Gordon) **room 209**
- Communication and Aesthetic Appreciation (Jessica Robey, Zac Lee; Elise Takehana) **room 210**

- Information Literacy (Kisha Tracy, Frank Mabee, Jennifer Fielding) **room 204**
- Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship (Joseph Moser, Ben Lieberman, Eric Boehme) **room 203**

3:00 - 3:30 p.m. Percival Auditorium: Open Forum on Teaching Critical Thinking

We will conclude our afternoon discussion of critical thinking with an open forum including reports back from each of the focus groups sharing the strategies for teaching critical thinking that emerged from their breakout sessions.

Strategies for Improving Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines
A Critical Thinking Dilemmas Consultancy

Roles
Presenters/Facilitators
Recorder
Ambassador (to be selected from the group)

1. The presenters give overviews of their perspectives on Critical Thinking within the disciplines represented in the group, and frame questions for the Consultancy group to consider. The framing of these questions, should be in terms of what common stumbling blocks in critical thinking are encountered in our students, and what explicit teaching strategies we can use to improve critical thinking. If the presenters have brought critical thinking rubrics or other "artifacts," there is a pause here to silently examine the work/documents. (10-15 minutes)

2. The Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter — that is, questions that have brief, factual answers. (0-5 minutes)

3. The group provides warm and cool feedback on what they have heard from the presenters. (5-10 min)

- Warm feedback – what have you heard that matches what you think of as critical thinking?
- Cool feedback – where is there dissonance between what you have heard and your own thoughts on critical thinking?

4. Invite all members of the group to write down on the handout at least one common student pitfall in critical thinking that appears in their discipline. (5 minutes)
5. Chart or pass the pitfalls around to examine them with the following prompts in mind:

- What did we hear or see in terms of pitfalls?
- What didn't we hear or see that they think might be relevant?
- What questions do these pitfalls raise for us?
- What are the implications for our focus on critical thinking? (5-10 minutes)

6. Think, Pair, Share: Select a pitfall and discuss it with a partner in the group. Develop strategies to explicitly teach students to think critically in ways that address the pitfall. (5-10 minutes).
7. Debrief the process as a group and content of this experience. (5-10 minutes)

- What strategies will help you to teach critical thinking in your classroom?
- How can we share these insights into critical thinking with our colleagues and students?
- What else can we do to foster critical thinking across the disciplines?

8. Discuss the types of assignments that we can use in our courses to foster and assess critical thinking (optional, time permitting)

Critical thinking in Aesthetic Appreciation and Written Communication

Presenters: Dr. Jessica Robey and Dr. Elise Takehana

Discussion of "What does critical thinking look like in our discipline(s)?"

- As Graphic Designers – we are teaching investigative communication – the goal is to communicate and change people's minds. The juxtaposition of images creates meaning.
- The teaching of listening [to music] is "by the book critical thinking". Take that further and ask the student does the musical phrase x represent Beethoven better than the musical phrase y?

Pitfalls:

- The fight to push beyond the cliché
- Students rely on feeling versus critical assessment of text
- Students can analyze content, but have issues with structure.
- There is a lack of practice and instruction, so students like to over generalize. IE, they see a man and women and jump to "it must be a love story".
- Students have difficulty dealing with "gray" – the students want to know the rules, even when there are no rules.
- Students suffer from "I have nothing to say" syndrome.
- Students have a fear of being wrong and therefore do not push further nor take intellectual risks
- Personal biases and prejudices get in the way.
- Students have trouble putting it all together – they understand the individual components, but not the whole.
- Students fall into description over analysis
- There is a fear of emotional expression and appearing "non-ironic
- When trying to critique artwork – students are very protective of each other.
- Students have trouble finding the parameters. They struggle and push back because there are not clear-cut boundaries for evaluation.
- Students get stuck in one dimensional thinking – how do we push them to think three dimensionally?"

Strategies for teaching Critical Thinking

- Make a student write from various view points (i.e. Baroque vs Contemporary)
- Their current way of thinking is very linear – they surf the web and put it together. As a strategy have the students look up words that they do not understand and then translate it to words that they do understand. It forces close reading.
- The block to sharing thoughts is the fear of being wrong, [therefore] when teaching listening then [the students] talk in pairs and over time, they became more comfortable expressing themselves to the class as a whole.
- Coaching them on vocabulary to use: They need to know the language. Try to connect the technical with the narrative function - in other word, tying the small parts back to the big picture.
- Showing students [difficult or controversial] work that generates conversation and pushing them to respond to challenging works.
- Reinforcing the understanding that the classroom content connects to the world outside of the institution.

Information Literacy (IL) and Critical Thinking (CT)

Presenters: Jennifer Fielding, Frank Mabee, and Kisha Tracy

Discussion of "What does critical thinking look like in our discipline(s)?"

- IL and CT inextricably linked
- CT is reasoning about evidence, which is relevant to IL
- *Systematic* and *methodic* appear in both rubrics
    - Needs direct instruction, explicit modelling in courses
- Questioning: evidence/dissecting evidence
- Understanding that there is a reward in mastering the techniques
- Relevancy: identify what is relevant and how to use it appropriately
- Authority: questioning what makes an expert
- Scope: defining, what is the size of our argument
- Difference between mechanics and the evaluation thereof; CT comes in at evaluation
- Information literacy applies to a variety of situations, academic and otherwise
- Assumptions: bias, point of view
- Comparisons: how to compare, what the difference between comparing and contrasting is
- Context: what is a context, where the information might be located

Pitfalls:

- Telling the difference between an author's argument and another viewpoint/perspective they are bringing into their argument
    - Comparing and contrasting information between sources
    - Differentiating between varying voices in a text
- Contextualizing a primary source: generally, students only summarize source
- Applying information to other contexts
    - Contextualizing information
    - Identifying connected ideas
- Having support for opinions/assertions
    - Assertion leads to evidence, not evidence leading to assertion
- Using more than one source
    - Examining methodology of information (not just authority of author, but the methodology of the argument)
- Deciding what is authoritative
- Understanding that there is a process to thinking critically about IL
    - Knowing when to use sources
    - Knowing not to accept just the first source that shows up
- Evaluating a citation/bibliographies (their own and others)
    - Knowing there is a profound and important difference between citation styles

Strategies for Teaching Critical Thinking:

- The "How" of Citation
    - Read a paragraph out loud: inevitably skip over in-text citations
        - Discussion: why did they skip over? What can they tell you? Where can they lead you?
    - Trace citation back from bibliography to a previous source
    - Find/read article: how did this article inform the original article?
    - Take-aways: find out how to use a bibliography, how author A influences author B, shows how authors build context through sources
- Planet IL
    - Digital age: original sources can be easily obliterated
    - Social life is different than IL: need to see difference
    - 8 Degrees of Skinner exercise

        - Take a neuroscience article
        - Track backwards to one of the 5 “big” original theorists through every decade
    - Take-aways: actively seeking out the connections among sources over time, understanding how one source influences the next
- IL is not JUST plagiarism: the two should not equal each other
    - The “plagiarism discussion” should not be the only context in which information literacy is presented
    - Students think citation is purely about not plagiarizing
- Newspapers of varying types
    - Discussion of styles, topics in different parts of country, choices in terms of what gets promoted
    - Look at decisions in cropping of photos (or in setting up composition of photos)
    - Take-aways: understand that someone is choosing what information is being presented and how (mediation of information), comparison of sources
- Newspapers from Las Vegas/out West and New York/Boston during September 11th
    - Discussion about different approaches/editorial choices
    - Take-aways: understanding points of view, understanding roles of editors and the choices that they make (positive or negative) (knowing there is a “who” behind information)
- Need assignments that require close, detailed analysis

Critical Thinking: Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship

Presenters: Ben Lieberman, Eric Boehme, and Joe Moser

Ben Lieberman

Ben's focus in on using evidence and getting students to realize they can find evidence everywhere.
By putting evidence directly on the exam, so that student uses the short answer questions to answer other parts of the exam, it gets students to look for evidence everywhere.
Ben might give students the questions in advance, and then discuss HOW a student might answer the question rather than focusing on what the answers are.
It is like practicing hitting the ball off a tee, rather than going straight to hitting the fastball, that through repetition students learn it as a habit.
Instead of hiding the evidence, focus on making the argument. Use the evidence given to answer the questions.

Eric Boehme

Eric spoke about using Socratic questioning in the classroom as a way to get students to question authority more generally. By modeling the questioning of arguments, it encourages students to look for what is behind things, to go to the source, or analyze the background and the assumptions of claims.
Eric spoke about teaching a writing workshop in classes. Where the differences between editorial, narrative, summary, and argument genres of writing were spelled out. Particular emphasis was paid to the difference between summary and descriptive types of writing and argument writing, where students present evidence, weigh claims, and make judgments about those claims. Eric emphasized argument papers should get students to present multiple views on the same issue, to teach the importance of making arguments from different viewpoints and anticipating the opponent's claims.

Joe Moser

Joe also spoke about getting students to develop a habit of anticipating arguments in advance and anticipating the critical questions from their peers. In examining and analyzing how others use arguments, Joe developed the idea that students could begin to model and emulate critical thinking.
Joe discussed adding a RATONALE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT so students could see explicitly how the assignment fulfills class goals.
He also discussed the importance of getting away from the traditional research paper where students choose their own topic with a pre-ordained view in mind, where students then choose the sources to support their claims.
Rather, write assignments that ask them to find three different views on the issue, not just random people, but experts, while also discussing what makes someone an expert on this particular issue.
Thus students investigate different viewpoints and explore different options.
Joe also uses an In-class critical thinking activity, to focus on gender issues where students free associate and generate lists about what it means to be masculine or feminine and then have a discussion out of the lists.
Students then are synthesizing and extracting meaning out of the lists.
Joe also gets students to talk about him as a male professor, and identify all the "unearned privileges" he has as a white male. When they are first critical of someone else they then can they critique themselves. This strategy might facilitate moral and ethical reasoning, and discussing the "common good."
Get the students to turn the critical lens on us, before they turn it on themselves

Discussion of "What does critical thinking look like in our discipline(s)?"

- When is it appropriate to use "I" in writing? History and business use "the evidence," and ask students to "show the data says this" or argue that "trends tell us," but some claimed the reason to use "I" in writing is to key on differentiating summary from argument.
- Getting students to develop their voice and their claims is a part of the skill of citizenship.
- How explicitly do you foreground critical thinking? Is it better to use the words critical thinking or not?

- Do you lay out explicitly in the assignments what we are doing?
- Students often think critical thinking is saying something bad about something, and then they are finished. How do we get them to make an affirmative argument?
- There was some discussion about the Socratic method being linked to writing the argument as a way of internalizing the Socratic process. As students try to see what the counter is to their own case, they don't they just end up in an opinion or editorial but they start to think critically.
- Get them to make a claim and then make a counter claim against themselves, so they get used to the process of looking at their own work, where they say x and then someone says no, it is y, it gets them to see how they defend their claim against critics.
- How do we address students who think that if they speak up, they might be wrong? Get them used to criticism and be clear at that asking clarifying questions is about strengthening their claims.
- Do they have the skills? Do they have the HABIT OF MIND to engage in this activity?
- Do they have a tendency to question and to be critical?

Pitfalls:

- Asking to be critical means being negative to the students
- We are assuming students have mastered the basics of critical thinking in the first place
- Often students can't follow sustained arguments because they can't point out an argument.
- Inability to recognize assumptions or claims when they are being made.
- Inability to construct a model: Can't go from assumption to something bigger.
- Students summarize rather than make an argument.
- Students get lost in the argument, can't even point out what an argument is or the key parts of the argument.
- Students don't equate critical thinking or ethical reasoning with real life. Ethical reasoning is seen as not essential in "the real world." They see things as fact based, not an argument. It is either true or not. For instance, the content of business courses is mistaken as matters of fact. This leads to regurgitation and credulity.
- Inability to make judgments between kinds of evidence used to support an argument. Any source is of equal value to any other source: problems of information literacy.
- A fundamental problem is the dispositional gap; Students just don't care about GETTTING THINGS RIGHT
- They just don't care enough about the truth of their beliefs. All of our strategies don't matter if they don't care.
- In this sense, students do not take risks to be critical or to question the authority of the authors or the evidence.

Strategies for teaching Critical Thinking

- Write Position papers and have debates where they cannot choose which side on which they write and they don't know which side of the debate they will take.
- Short oral presentations on a current topic: after the presentation they have to ask questions on their views where students have to draw upon things you know when you are challenged. Ask tough questions, expectations are high. Students put more effort into work when they anticipate criticism/follow-up.
- Create High Expectations and get students out of their comfort zones
- Use the Socratic method to get students to see that the art of the question is important, to question everything relentlessly, where the goal is to get them to adopt a questioning or skeptical stance to truth claims and push them to question each other.
- Use more explicit and intentional peer review activities. Use Group work where they grade each other to show who the free riders are.
- Good citizenship means you need a whistle blower.

CRITICAL THINKING (CT): problem solving and quantitative reasoning

Presenters: Jennifer Berg, Danielle Wigmore, Chris Picone, Liz Gordon

Discussion of "What does critical thinking look like in our discipline(s)?"

- Having **students do an inventory** of their ability to think critically. E.g., views on evolution are hindered by student beliefs, so it would help to have students inventory their beliefs, and recognize possible biases.
- Combination of **critical and creative thinking is necessary for science labs.** We should start students with **observations**, then **make inferences** from those. Yet the way we teach some courses (e.g., A&P), there is no time for critical thinking.
- CT in Math: proofs, of course. Word problems. Solving equations. They assume there is a linear path from A to B. But there may be many paths. We teach prescription of steps. If we get away from that, it might help CT skills.
- CT takes time! Discussion on topics is limited due to time. And sometimes limited because most of the class is not advanced enough to keep up with advanced students.
- **How do we help students see connections** among topics? Books present math topics in units, and are not well connected.
- Some felt uncomfortable with the idea that critical thinking requires us to "Consider all possible choices". That can waste time! Some choices are rubbish. Similarly: "gather all relevant information" might be problematic.
- "In math, I feel I do **not use a lot of CT. "**We are **NOT evaluating** claims that we make in math. Math truths are binary: true or false!
    - But we CAN do CT in math! Evaluate if this model is the best model, the most useful model. Is there another way to look at that question? Etc.
    - Don't we ask students to evaluate how they solved the problem? Did you get the right answer? Was the logic correct? That is CT!
    - **Students should be able to ESTIMATE a reasonable answer in math problems. Then "carefully and deliberately" decide whether the calculated answer is best.**
- Definition of CT from the panel: Does it apply only to evaluate claims of others? But what about our own methods, our own claims? BUT: definition. does just say "a claim" so this should not be a problem.
- Definition of CT from the panel: what is the difference between critical thinking and understanding? Are students not really critical thinking in Blooms until they get to the top level(s)?

Pitfalls:

- Solve a word problem, and never look back. **Students do ask or recall if makes sense.** They do not **recontextualize**. A mathematical answer may be outside the relevant range; they are **not monitoring reasonableness.**
- Students do all steps correctly, but they interpret it incorrectly because they do not BELIEVE what the summary said.
- Misinterpret the content area of a problem. They fixate on equations about info that is not relevant to the problems at hand.
- They may have some general knowledge in science, but they do not **apply** that knowledge. **They do not self-evaluate from their own common knowledge!**
- They neglect assumptions in analysis: they do not state it, so do not understand when an answer makes no sense.
- Failure to see scientific concepts are interconnected.
- **They struggle to critically think because they lack the fundamental layers of knowledge and understanding in Bloom's Taxonomy.**
- Students are not little scientists. They do not portray trends, rather than focus on individual data points. Or they do not quantify their description. Or they perceive statistical error as a "mistake"

- **ARE WE REALLY teaching this stuff?** It comes out during office hours, but perhaps not in class. Office Hours may be the better teaching opportunity.

STRATEGIES (*heard from a partner following think-pair-share*)

- **We need to strike a BALANCE BETWEEN SKILLS, CONTENT, and CRITICAL THINKING**. But we are limited by time!!! What do we really want to teach?
- Importance of **basic math skills**: order of operation. Proper use of square roots, reciprocals, etc.
- Provide video **review of basic concepts** to use in more advanced course. Bring those out to "working memory files" not just in stored memory files. But there are time limitations to address these.
- **Be explicit** about mental operations involved to recall and apply general knowledge…Example: **write down what you remember** about X. Share it with a neighbor. Then **prioritize how to use that info to speak to the question at hand.**
- Practice "what technique do you use"? Independently attack the critical thinking skills of interest. Do not get lost in a larger lab report, for example.

SPRING ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
MAY 19, 2014

STRATEGIC PLANNING, STUDENT LEARNING, AND THE LA&S CURRICULUM
AGENDA

8:00 – 8:30 AM Hammond Main Lounge: Employee Appreciation Breakfast

8:30 – 9:30 AM Hammond Main Lounge: Open Forum– President Antonucci

9:30 – 11:00 AM Hammond Main Lounge: Strategic Planning and Campus Initiative Updates
Dr. Robin Bowen, Dr. Paul Weizer and others will provide updates on: The Strategic Plan, IPad Initiative, Revised IDIS major, Developmental Math, New Programs, and other news.

11:00 – 11:30 AM Hammond Main Lounge: Reading and the LA&S Curriculum
Drs. Laura Garofoli, Chris Picone and Kisha Tracy will begin discussions about student reading and the LA&S Curriculum and will explain our plans to review the LA&S curriculum.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM – Hammond conference rooms: Breakout sessions on improving student reading in the areas of:
Citizenship and Ethical Reasoning
Hammond 314 - Ben Lieberman and Joe Moser
Communication and Aesthetic Appreciation
Hammond S08 - Zac Lee and Elise Takehana
Critical and Creative Thinking for Problem Solving
Hammond G01 - Chris Picone, Liz Gordon, Jane Fiske and Laura Garofoli
Information Literacy
Hammond G19 - Kisha Tracy, Frank Mabee and Audrey Pereira

12:30 – 1:30 PM Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons.
Lunch Ticket required. Please see Paul Weizer for a lunch ticket.

1:30 – 2:30 PM Percival 2nd floor classrooms: Breakout sessions on the LA&S Curriculum with topics to include:
The LA&S Structure: Comparing alternative models – what would it look like in Utopia?
Hammond 314 – Ben Lieberman and Chris Picone
Teaching Across Disciplines: How skills and concepts travel
Hammond S08 - Elise Takehana and Jessica Robey
Engaging Diverse Perspectives: The role of the Global Diversity and Non-Western designations
Hammond G01 – Zac Lee and Frank Mabee
Intermediate and Advanced LA&S: Encouraging Foreign Languages and Minors – Can it work?
Hammond G19 - Kisha Tracy and Joe Moser

2:30 - 3:30 p.m. – Percival Auditorium: The LA&S Self-Study
Please join us as we debrief the afternoon sessions, review some of our LA&S data with Jenn Berg and discuss our plans to conduct a self-study of the LA&S Curriculum.

Please RSVP to Carla McGrath at cmcgrath@fitchburgstate.edu. Thank you.

Strategies for Improving Reading Across the Disciplines
A Reading Dilemmas Consultancy

Roles
Presenters/Facilitators
Recorder
Ambassador (to be selected from the group)

STEPS 1-3 (15 minutes) address "What should we emphasize about reading in our disciplines?"
1. The presenters give overviews of their perspectives on reading within the disciplines represented in the group, and frame questions for the Consultancy group to consider. The framing of these questions, should be in terms of what common stumbling blocks in reading are encountered in our students, and what explicit teaching strategies we can use to improve reading. If the presenters have brought reading rubrics or other "artifacts," there is a pause here to silently examine the work/documents. (5 minutes)

2. The Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter — that is, questions that have brief, factual answers. (5 minutes)

3. The group provides warm and cool feedback on what they have heard from the presenters. (5 min)

- Warm feedback – what have you heard that matches what you emphasize in reading skills?
- Cool feedback – where is there dissonance between what you have heard and your own thoughts on student reading skills?

Steps 4-5 (15 minutes) address "What are the reading pitfalls for students in our disciplines?"
4. Invite all members of the group to write down on the handout at least one common student pitfall in reading that appears in their discipline. (5 minutes)

5. Chart or pass the pitfalls around to examine them with the following prompts in mind:

- What did we hear or see in terms of pitfalls?
- What didn't we hear or see that they think might be relevant?
- What questions do these pitfalls raise for us?
- What are the implications for our focus on student reading skills? (10 minutes)

Steps 6-8 (30 minutes) address "What are the strategies we can use to improve student reading?"
6. Think, Pair, Share: Select a pitfall and discuss it with a partner in the group. Develop strategies to explicitly teach students to read more effectively in ways that address the pitfall. (10 minutes).
7. Debrief the process as a group and reflections on reading gained from this experience. (10 minutes)

- What strategies will help you to teach reading in your classroom?
- How can we share these insights into reading with our colleagues and students?
- What else can we do to foster reading across the disciplines?

8. Discuss the types of assignments that we can use in our courses to foster and assess reading (10 minutes)

Teaching Reading Skills: 19 May 2014

Overview
Laura Garofoli
We should not evaluate students for what we do not really teach them!

Yet we do not teach reading skills.

- How to identify critical content
- Students often have goal to get to bottom of page, rather than understand all content
- Trouble evaluating arguments
- Etc. Etc. See her slides.

How teach the skills to access the content, rather than teach the content directly? They need note taking/annotating skills on all their readings. Consider modifying the lecture to develop those skills?

How to teach reading (not talking about disabled students).
See her slides.
Teach about the book and format.
Converse with the author. "What you are saying is…" "What I really do not understand is…" [See 321 method below]
Teach metacognition: force them to think about their thinking.
Teach Bloom's Taxonomy!

- Have them think about which critical thinking skills they are using to study test questions.

Reading assignment is NOT to outline the text, but **annotate** the reading. Critical comments, summaries with the thought process behind their thinking.

Highlighting is too passive! It does not work. So **WRITE something in response.** Even a summary in margin, or notes, will help. There is LOTS of EVIDENCE that writing something down improves retention! (The jury is out whether keyboards help? But Laura did all this online and it was great.)

Laura can post examples of guidance for these reading approaches.

Kisha Tracey

What do we expect students to DO as they read?

Now consider the skills expected when they read paper texts vs. pdfs/e-texts.
We have to be deliberate about how students should approach these readings. How do we teach them to read digitally?

- How annotate? We must SHOW them!
- Check her blog on "electronic university"

Consider paper on laptop vs paper note taking (I have pdf).
TALK about strategies for taking notes from online sources.

Q&A

This expands remediation. Isn't that in conflict with PARCC?
Answer: College level focuses more on argumentation than K-12. Students think they just need to complete the assignment for an A.

NOTES on Improving student reading in critical and creative thinking/problem solving:

Steps 1-3: General feedback on the previous session on reading skills (5 min)

- Professors should "Stop and ASK: what do we know so far?"
- If you just give PPT all the time you cannot converse about the material.

- How do we cover content (for math and science)?
- Students focus on the formula, but we want them to think what the formula is FOR

- Train students to look up terms in dictionary/Glossary
- They may need to be taught to use the index and glossary, esp. if not hyperlinked in an e-text. But it can be confusing if we say "Look it up" because they will just Google the term. **We need to teach them the right sources and strategies that we want them to use.**

Steps 4-5: Pitfalls and challenges (roughly grouped by field of the faculty member speaking)

Math

- Students cannot read mathematics
- Students do not read **details** of the problem…
    - …nor how to see the **big picture**: to go back and see what is special, how the content fits a big picture
- Clear **definitions** are a struggle. Even when asked ahead of time to bring in an assignment.
- Reading is **only done in the academic setting**, not applied outside academia

Natural Science

Students ….

…**do not read** at all!

…have little motivation to read when most **testing comes from lecture notes**

…read to **"check the box"** but do not check if they understood. They do not notice or care when they do not understand something in reading (incl. lab preparation). If they take notes they **copy text** without understanding. Or they scan for answers when doing quizzes online.

…Cannot put things **in their own words**, so they cannot **think** in their own words

…struggle to **connect concepts** across the text

…struggle to **sort the relevant info/key point**

…become lost in words on a page

- In science, terms often are similar to a general English definition but that can lead to **misconceptions about the definition.** We should treat new terminology as if we are learning a foreign language, and expect the same slow rate of accumulating new terminology.
- Reading challenge: short **attention span** in a screen-addicted culture

Nursing

- Too much **highlighting**
- Students do not want to use "grit" to find solutions. They **want a quick answer** if they do not understand something.
    - They do not like the textbook. So they go to **YouTube for concepts**. (Prof response should be: "So let's talk about what you learned on YouTube…"
- Students do not go to first principles, so they **do not APPLY the concept**, do not integrate it. They are concerned ONLY about learning the **content in isolation**.
- **No innate curiosity** to find out if they do not understand something. No "fire in the belly" to read.

Social Sciences

- Struggle to find the **main argument** and **summarize/compress it**
- Students **do not answer questions** about reading content (during lecture) even when it is directly applicable to their lives (e.g., social science)

Humanities

- Expectations: some students **just want a C,** they just want to survive
- Lack of interest in "just an academic book"
    - So novels work better to get points across
- Lack of mental rigor and discipline

Steps 6-8: Strategies to improve student reading

321 reading summary.

- Have students write the THREE most important points they read, TWO points that were not understood and ONE applied discussion question that THEY must come up with. (The exact number is instructor's choice, of course.)
- Collect these as students walk into the room and check the applied question. That can be a basis for lecture/discussion. Students are proud when they discussion question is used in lecture.
- Students will struggle with "3 main points" because they may simply regurgitate the text outline.

Flip the classroom.

- Get away from PPT presentations. We still get through the **core concepts** (e.g., for Nursing NCLEX tests). This teaches them problem solving and critical thinking. We have a lively, energetic class as a consequence.
- Writing assignments are graded, knowledge-based. But reading over a full class of assignments is not fun. So have them due a few days before lecture, so you have time to review them.
- Provide a handout early in the course to show what reading skills are expected.
- "Textbook walk."

Miscellaneous

- Students who do not read the full [math] question: get 0 if they did not read. They will then go back and read more carefully.
- Have them restate the problem in their own words.

- **Don't work harder than your students do.** If you do, you are enabling poor reading skills.

[Submitted by Chris Picone, May 2014]

<u>Reading and Citizenship/Ethical Reasoning</u>—Dev. Day morning session (5/19/2014)

Questions in response to Ben Lieberman's presentation (on the decline of reading during adolescence in the U.S. and his use of specific reading questions for students to focus their preparations for classes):

--What kinds of pressures are there on individual students to answer reading comprehension questions? Do they think they can hide in a class of 30?

--Ben recommends demanding that students close laptops.

--Ben Railton's concern: disc. questions can make reading too content-driven, and he prefers reading journals, which put a greater emphasis on skills and students' own interpretations.

--Chris Dee: In U.S. History I, students report "too much reading" but also report gaining more depth of understanding in her courses.

--She uses students' notes in class.

--She recommends that we clarify our university-wide expectations for students' reading.

--Patricia Arend: My students report "You're the first professor who has ever made us read the book."

--Mike Turk: What about the **floaters**, or "those who imbibe the course content from the atmosphere around them"?

--Ben L. believes, based on surveys/evals of his students, that the number of "floaters" in his courses has grown in recent years.

--Many (an increasing number) of his students are not bringing assigned books to classes.

--Rala: "It's so important to have [establish] a baseline" so that we can get on the same page about our expectations for students.

--"Somehow students manage to squiggle by" getting notes from other students as well as Sparknotes.

--Chris Dee has used a reading pre-test and has found that about one-third of the students lack basic reading comprehension skills, particularly males.

--John Paul refuses to simply "teach the textbook" and wants to "expose students to a broader world."
--"The good students who are eager to learn do bring the textbook."

--Kate Jewell has been experimenting with a "flipped classroom" approach and has asked students to focus more on "arguments" in readings, as well as in class, rather than establishing facts first and getting to arguments second/later.

--Chris Dee has had students beg to do reading/homework in class, which is alarming.

--Patricia Arend: Our problems with student reading "are not rooted in education," but in social phenomena such as gender roles.
--Rala and others agree that adolescent development leads to disengagement from reading.

Mike Turk: We do need to get on the same page, as a faculty, about our expectations of students' reading skills.
--We need to address expectations in the context of respecting socioeconomic and cultural differences.

--Rala states that she will sometimes take an incremental approach to assigning readings during the course of a semester.

--Randy Howe says that this generation of students wants immediacy and quick answers.
--What's the expectation and what's the answer you want students to get to?
--If students can get there in other ways than reading, isn't that OK?

--John Paul: Am I hired to teach a skill, or to teach content, or both?
--Several respond: We should teach both skills and content.

--Kate Jewell: As an institution, how are we supporting, through the allotment of physical space, our students in actually sitting and studying for 2-3 hours a day?
--In many cases, study areas are placed in/near byways that leave studying students exposed to judgments and ridicule from peers. More out-of-the-way study areas could remedy this problem.

--Chris Dee talks about the reading-centric culture of her campus—specifically, the nice Reserve Reading Room on our campus.

--Ben L. asserts that reading skills/understanding arguments will continue to be important in the professional world.

<u>What has worked in the classroom to support students' reading</u>?

--Rala has assigned different reading tasks to students (writing disc. questions, finding related images, etc.).

--Patricia has done a <u>reading report</u>, requiring students to find three key points in the reading, plus compose a discussion question.

--This assignment has elicited 70% class participation.

--Ben R. has used graded email reading journals (like Laura G's assignments, graded according to completion); and he responds to students' insights in their journals.

--Kate Jewell has done a weekly writing assignment, but she thinks perhaps she made the assignment too formal.

--Like Joe M., she had many students fail to see the connection between weekly writing assignments and contributions to discussions of texts.

--Joe suggests remedying this problem by putting the many purposes of writing assignments (connections to success in exams and discussions, with course grade percentages, etc.) in course syllabi/policy statements, as well as periodically repeating/reinforcing these purposes throughout the semester.

--Chris Dee has found success by having students write questions on notecards to generate discussion.

Sample Reading Assignments

ENGL 3010: American Drama

Spring 2014

Guidelines for Analytical Reading/Viewing Journals = 30% of your course grade

1. 600-700 words, due every week (as indicated on the syllabus), addressing assigned readings and viewing since the previous journal due date and including readings and viewing assigned for the date that the journal is due.

   --Type, double-space and print all journal entries.

2. Analytical journals should contain your specific insights and reflections on plays, background readings, and films, as well as the connections you make between texts and films assigned for class.

3. Avoid reviews, opinions, and venting as much as possible. Respond in a manner that is intellectual and respectful, not emotional and dismissive. Avoid recycling class discussion as much as possible. Focus on ideas we haven't touched upon in class, or explore in greater depth a point that we only briefly addressed. In other words, teach me something by examining an aesthetic element or idea in greater detail or from an alternative perspective.

4. Close reading and (brief) quoting of texts and films is strongly encouraged. In general, be as specific as you can with your insights and consistently use specific examples and quotations to support your points.

   --Make sure to properly document each and every quote from a text with a properly formatted (according to MLA rules) parenthetical citation. You do not, however, need to include a Works Cited page with any of the analytical journal papers.

5. While being specific in terms of your insights, avoid summary as much as possible. Instead, focus on more specific ideas, literary and cinematic elements, etc.

6. During weeks with multiple primary texts and/or authors be sure to address the work of all authors and at least one work by each author, as well as the assigned film(s). However, don't sacrifice depth by trying to cover too much material. In general, for each journal you should spend at least 300 words analyzing specific elements of an assigned play and another 300 words analyzing specific aspects of background readings and/or assigned viewing (films).

7. Always use the present tense when discussing texts and films. Using "I" in speaking of your impressions and ideas is okay, as long as it is not used in every other sentence. **Please avoid using the second person ("you"), however.** Also, when discussing the words and ideas of any writer, always use the present tense, as in the following sentence: "Despite their dissimilar backgrounds, José Quintero obviously feels a personal connection to Eugene O'Neill's life and plays."

English 3220 Weekly Blackboard Posts

<u>General Guidelines:</u>

Each post will be roughly two paragraphs in length. In the first, shorter paragraph (really just a few sentences), you will state clearly what topic you have chosen to address for that week's subject, identifying it in such a way that your classmates and I can follow your post and then briefly noting why you have chosen that topic. You should also engage at least briefly here with the questions or topics raised by at least one of your classmate's posts. In the second, longer paragraph, you will flesh out your analysis of the subject and topic at hand, including at least a couple quotes/specific details to help you make your points. The entire post should be around one page double-spaced (in 12-point font). You must post your work to the blackboard site's designated discussion board by

10am on Wednesday to receive credit.

Subjects:
Week 2: Preference: Which Story You Like More, and Why

Week 3: Character: Pick One, and Make a Couple Points about Him/Her
Week 4: Symbols: Identify a Symbolic Element of the Novel, and Analyze It

Week 5: Narration: Pick a Passage, and Analyze Huck's Narration and Voice in It
Week 6: Paper 1: A Free Post in Which You Can Ask Any Questions

Week 7: Perspective: Pick a Particular Moment/Scene, and Analyze Perspective in It
Week 8: Connections: Connect the Novel to Any Earlier Reading, and Explain

Week 9: Setting: Pick an Aspect of the Novel's Setting, and Analyze It
Week 10: Paper 2: Another Free Post; This Time You'll Also Include Intro ¶ Drafts

Week 11: Language: Pick a Passage and Analyze Cather's Word Choices in It
Week 12: Structure: Describe and Analyze a Structural Choice of Cather's

Week 13: Style: Analyze a Few Choices of Faulkner's In One Passage
Week 14 [For Tu]: Imagery: Identify an Important Recurring Image, and Analyze It

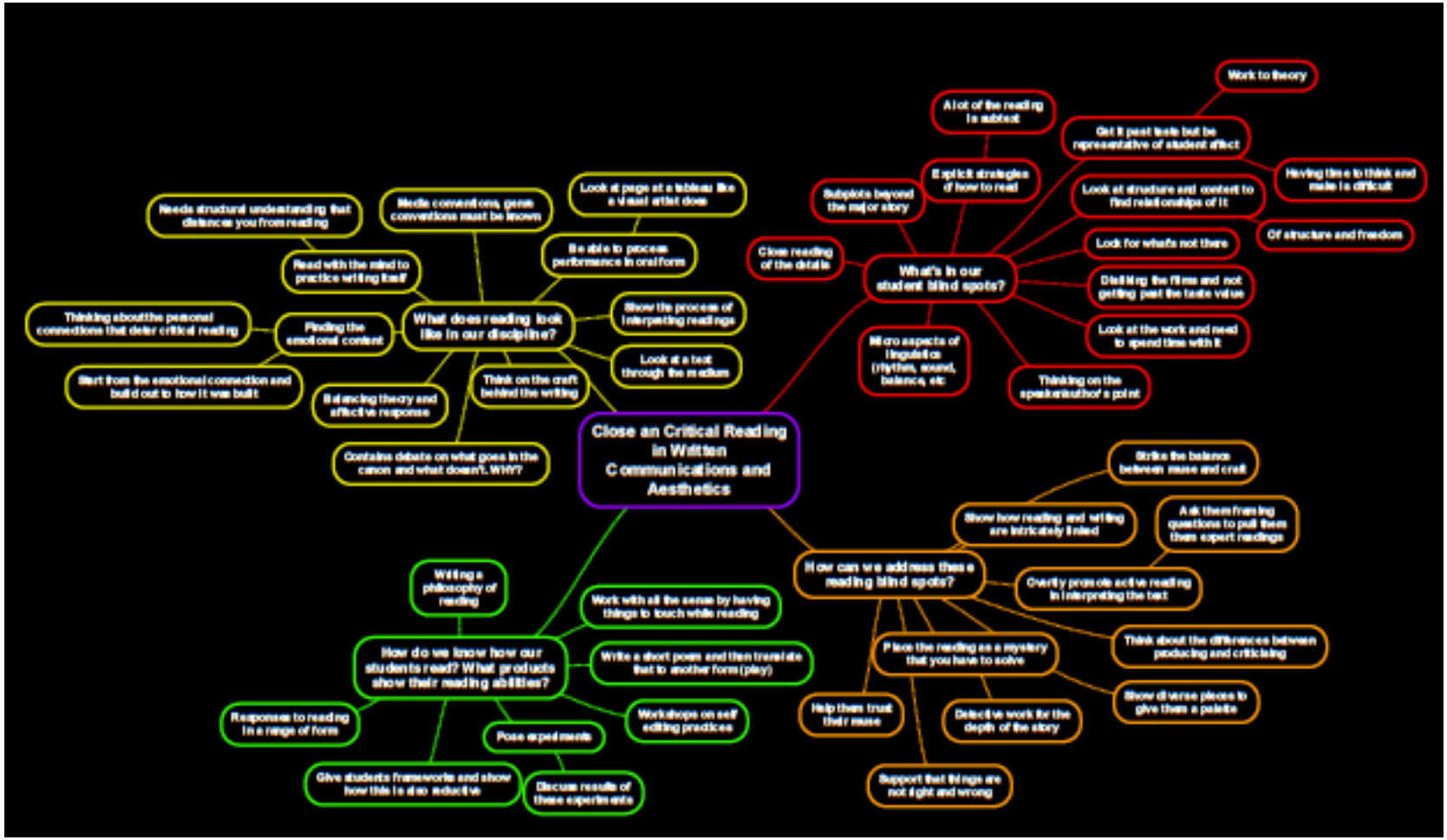
Week 15: Paper 3/Pairing: Connect Two of Our Readings to Make an Overall Point

JOURNAL FORMS

INDEX

Forms #1-#10 should be used for weekly journal entries.

Forms #11-#15 NOT for weekly journal assignments


Close an Critical Reading in Written Communications and Aesthetics
What does reading look like in our discipline?
Needs structural understanding that distances you from reading
Media conventions, genre conventions must be known
Look at page at a tableau like a visual artist does
Be able to process performance in oral form
Read with the mind to practice writing itself
Thinking about the personal connections that deter critical reading
Finding the emotional content
Show the process of interpreting readings
Look at a text through the medium
Start from the emotional connection and build out to how it was built
Balancing theory and affective response
Think on the craft behind the writing
Contains debate on what goes in the canon and what doesn't. WHY?
What's in our student blind spots?
Work to theory
A lot of the reading is subtext
Get it past taste but be representative of student affect
Having time to think and make is difficult
Explicit strategies of how to read
Subplots beyond the major story
Look at structure and content to find relationships of it
Of structure and freedom
Close reading of the details
Look for whats not there
Distilling the films and not getting past the taste value
Look at the work and need to spend time with it
Micro aspects of linguistics (rhythm, sound, balance, etc
Thinking on the speaker/author's point
How can we address these reading blind spots?
Strike the balance between muse and craft
Show how reading and writing are intricately linked
Ask them framing questions to pull them from expert readings
Overtly promote active reading in interpreting the text
Think about the differences between producing and criticizing
Place the reading as a mystery that you have to solve
Show diverse pieces to give them a palette
Help them trust their muse
Detective work for the depth of the story
Support that things are not right and wrong
How do we know how our students read? What products show their reading abilities?
Writing a philosophy of reading
Work with all the sense by having things to touch while reading
Write a short poem and then translate that to another form (play)
Responses to reading in a range of form
Workshops on self editing practices
Pose experiments
Give students frameworks and show how this is also reductive
Discuss results of these experiments

Notes: LAS in Utopia 19 May 2014

If you were to start a new University on Mars for a human colony, what would the Gen Ed requirement look like?

- We often come up with an idea…but there are always constraints. (Too little money, "they" won't allow that, etc.)
- There are MANY models for different Gen Ed programs.

Q: Is there evidence that LAS is not working well?

- Some, in that faculty report poor skills in reading, critical thinking, etc. even when students graduate.
- Learning communities were part of the original LAS plan, but have not been implemented fully

What would an ideal LAS program include?

Some schools assign students into a learning community.

Some course that checks basic student skills in reading, writing, quantitative analysis, etc. Our current system does not hold students accountable in a comprehensive way. We scatter courses around.

We have clear expectations for Math, and basic skills are tested. But we have no competency test for writing skills.

Portfolio with EVIDENCE for competence in each area of LAS?

- This is like what the Education majors must do now. Students have the standard and **must explain the evidence** for how they meet those standards.

- Reflection on the portfolio should be iterative. Reflect how they build on the skills from course to course. Students must not see that they are learning only from the introductory level.
- This could help students see how the LAS credits are meaningful, helping them towards their major and/or passions in some way.

- If students submit the evidence, where does faculty oversight come in? A juried portfolio could come at some point in the career. Not with a grade, but assess their skills. End sophomore, or early junior year?

Get rid of the grade? The grade becomes the only goal.

- Instead, students should have the conversation about what they do well.

LAS should be a venue for exploration of things they might not realize they are interested in. Balance with a skill set.

Final product of LAS classes is often a bunch of exams. Let's rethink what the class should build up to.

- **What kind of assignments should the course have?** What assignments do we remember from college? What were common aspects of those assignments? Do we use those types of assignments? (ex. projects that have choice and creativity; collaborative projects; some applications to a higher cause, etc.)
- Instructor must design assignments/assessments that are creative yet challenging.
- No course should only have exams: that leaves out active learning and engagement.

- But… when students are just learning a new field it is often difficult to teach with engaging assignments like this. Or…you can *always* come up with some project-based learning. Example: for an intro language course, write a children's story!

Many LAS classes appear like another High School class. So they get treated the same way. We need to **reconsider the course design** so students think of the class a different way.

Is there some way that some LAS classes could build on others, so students are not just taking intro level classes?

We need more conversations across disciplines, e.g., to know what students learn in writing courses.

How about small intro level classes, allowing larger upper-level classes? Or better: ALL classes will be small in Utopia!

Have students take fewer courses. That allows more time to go in depth. Do students need so many courses?

- **Project based learning** takes time. 4-credit courses make sense for that.

What are ideal LAS Goals?

- Grammatically correct, concise, organized **writing**. An ideal curriculum makes competent writers.
-
- Being knowledgeable and interested about the **world and current events.** Sustained, continuous engagement with events of the day.
-
- **Financial** literacy.
-
- How we build **scientific knowledge** and scientific consensus.

- Students who are interested in **learning**.

- Being able to explain their **role in their community.**

- Knowing **how to disagree** with others in an intelligent way.

- Appreciating how to live a **life of intention** with the choices they make. Life should not "happen" to them, but the LAS curriculum does just happen to them. How do they live with intention, if not passion?

[Submitted by Chris Picone, May 2014]

FALL ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DAY
SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

STRATEGIC PLANNING, STUDENT SUCCESS, STUDENT LEARNING, AND LA&S AGENDA

8:00 – 8:30 AM Hammond Main Lounge- Continental Breakfast

8:30 – 9:00 AM Hammond Main Lounge- Open Forum, President Antonucci

9:00 – 10:00 AM Hammond Main Lounge- Transforming Undergraduate Education: imperatives for higher education in the 21st century
George Mehaffy, Vice President for Educational Leadership and Change, American Association of State Colleges and Universities

10:00-10:30 AM Hammond Main Lounge - Strategic Planning Update
Paul Weizer and Jane Fiske

10:40 AM - 11:20 AM – Hammond conference rooms: Breakout sessions on strategic planning:
Academic Planning – Hammond G01
Academic Values – Hammond S08
Community – Hammond G11
Financial Structure – Hammond G19
Admissions/Marketing – Hammond S06
Student Services – Hammond Tower 214
Technology – Hammond G01B

11:20 AM – 12:00 PM – Hammond conference rooms: Breakout sessions repeated

12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch – Holmes Dining Commons.
Lunch Ticket required. Please see Jannette McMenamy for a lunch ticket.

1:00 – 2:00 PM Hammond Conference Rooms: Breakout sessions on Instruction, Student Learning and Success:
The LA&S Curriculum: Shared Learning Outcomes and Instructional Strategies
Hammond 214 – Eric Budd and Chris Picone
Managing Challenging Student Behaviors: Classroom Management for the College Professor
Hammond S08 – Jenn Berg
Assignment Redesign Workshop: Learning Outcomes, Assignment Prompts and Assessment
Hammond G01 – Kisha Tracy
Removing Barriers to Student Success: Improving Student Retention and Graduation Rates
Hammond G19 – Chris Cratsley

2:00 - 3:00 PM – Hammond Conference Rooms: Breakout sessions repeated

Please RSVP to Carla McGrath at cmcgrath@fitchburgstate.edu. Thank you.

SPRING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

JANUARY 12, 2015

A FOCUS ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION, DEGREE WORKS, STUDENT SUCCESS, CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

8:00 - 8:30 AM – Hammond Main Lounge, Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 8:45 AM – Hammond Main Lounge, Remarks, Paul Weizer

8:45 - 9:45 AM – Hammond Main Lounge, The Visible College: Four Futures for Higher Education, Bryan Alexander, Bryan Alexander Consulting LLC

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM – Hammond Main Lounge, Introduction to Degree Works, Michael Fox, Strata Information Group

10:45 AM - 11:15 AM – Hammond Main Lounge, Welcoming the Student Success Collaborative (SSC), Pamela McCafferty, Jannette McMenamy and SSC

11:15 AM - 12:00 PM Hammond Conference Rooms: Breakout sessions

- Preparing for the Future with Bryan Alexander – **S08**
- Delving into Degree Works with Mike Fox – **G02** (Ellis White)
- Exploring Student Success with SSC – **G19**

12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch – Hammond Hub
Lunch Ticket required. Please see Jannette McMenamy for a lunch ticket.

1:15 – 2:15 PM - Hammond Conference Rooms: Breakout sessions on Curriculum, Instruction, Student Learning and Instructional Technology:

Supporting Departmental Learning Outcomes through the LA&S curriculum – **S08**
Liz Gordon, Associate Professor of Geo/Physical Sciences, Chair LA&S council, and
Eric Budd, Professor and Chair History, Economics and Political Science

How to Support Constructive Student Behavior in the University Classroom – **Hammond 214**
Shari Stokes, Professor of Special Education

Redesigning Course Learning Outcomes to Improve Teaching and Learning – **G19**
Kisha Tracy, Assistant Professor of English Studies

Evaluating Instructional Technology for Teaching and Learning – **212** (the new CTL)
Sheryl Wolnik, Instructional Technologist, Center for Teaching and Learning, and
Kate Jewell, Assistant Professor of History and CTL Director

2:15 - 3:15 PM – Hammond Conference Rooms: Breakout sessions repeated

Supporting Departmental Learning Outcomes through the LA&S curriculum

The purpose of this session is to discuss student learning outcomes at the course and program level, review our LA&S objectives, consider ways that LA&S courses can support departmental outcomes, and discuss potential modifications to our LA&S program to ensure students achieve these outcomes.

1. Brainstorm student learning outcomes (10-15 minutes)

Each participant will list learning outcomes for a course they teach or for a major program in their department. Each outcome should be listed on a separate sticky note. Please also write your discipline and whether this is a program or course level outcome (or both). If a course outcome, indicate whether it comes from a major course or LA&S course.

2. Review LA&S objectives (10 minutes)

Session facilitators will present the five LA&S Objectives (Art Appreciation, Communication, Problem Solving, Ethical Reasoning and Citizenship). Participants will have an opportunity to discuss and clarify outcomes as they pertain to the five objectives.

3. Revisit and share learning outcomes (10 minutes)

Participants will examine the learning outcomes listed on their sticky notes and have an opportunity to modify their own outcomes in consideration of the LA&S outcomes. Participants will then match their course/program outcomes to the relevant LA&S objectives, if applicable.

4. Discuss learning outcomes alignment (10 minutes)

Session facilitators will provide examples of program-level learning outcomes and discuss their alignment with our LA&S objectives as well as with learning outcomes highlighted in our Academic Plan but not currently included in LA&S. Participants will revisit their own learning outcomes and modify groupings if appropriate.

5. Discuss LA&S learning outcomes (10-15 minutes)

Facilitators will lead a discussion specifically focused on:

Are there gaps in our LA&S program with regards to student learning outcomes? In particular, what outcomes did you list during our initial brainstorming that are not currently highlighted in our LA&S program (if any)?

Are there learning outcomes highlighted in our current LA&S program that do not belong? Are there learning outcomes that are better incorporated into a major program rather than in a general education program?

Do you think a LA&S program that focuses on the discussed outcomes will support student learning in your program? Do the outcomes defined by our current LA&S program contribute to student learning in the way your courses do?

6. Final thoughts and session feedback (5 minutes)

We want to make sure to capture your ideas about our LA&S program, particularly as it pertains to supporting student learning in your department. On the back of this sheet, please list in order of priority the top outcomes that our LA&S program should support. Please also comment on the session as a whole, particularly regarding whether or not you feel that this session met its own objective (to capture the ways that LA&S can support departmental outcomes). Any other comments/suggestions regarding our LA&S program are welcome.