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INTRODUCTION TO WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Wilkes Community College (WCC), established in 1964, is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and provides educational opportunities for students in the northwest region of North Carolina. As a public, two-year, "open door" institution, Wilkes Community College is committed to providing comprehensive education and educational support services for people in Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany Counties and beyond. As a member of the North Carolina Community College System, WCC seeks to enhance intellectual, economic, cultural, and social development by providing the following:

- quality education, training and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills education, occupational, technical, and pre-baccalaureate programs;
- support for economic development through services to business and industry, both public and private; and
- a variety of services, cultural activities and recreational opportunities that improve the quality of life.

The wooded and beautifully landscaped 150-acre main campus is located in Wilkesboro, just off highways US 421 and NC 268 West. Ashe and Alleghany County Centers are located in West Jefferson and Sparta. The Wilkes County campus has grown from three buildings on the current site to include over 297,000 square feet of classrooms, laboratories, shops, student areas, and offices in 14 buildings. A new science and technology building is scheduled for completion on the Wilkes campus in 2006. Also located on the Wilkes campus is the 1,130-seat John A. Walker Community Center. The center provides a wide variety of cultural and entertainment performances throughout the year. WCC also hosts MerleFest, an internationally known Americana music festival, held annually during the last week of April. The Ashe Center is presently expanding with construction of a new building and the Alleghany Center has recently relocated into the remodeled Blue Ridge Economic Development Center.

Wilkes Community College offers a variety of programs through four curriculum divisions: Arts and Sciences, Business and Public Service Technologies, Health Sciences, and Industrial and Engineering Technologies. The college also provides basic skills and continuing education opportunities. During the 2004-2005 academic year, 3,474 curriculum students and 10,552 continuing education students took advantage of the programs and courses offered by the college. Wilkes Community College offers courses via the traditional classroom structure as well as alternative format courses including Internet courses, teleconferences, cyber (two-way video) classroom courses, and those with hybrid and web-enhanced course formats.

OVERVIEW OF THE WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE QEP

Focus: The Wilkes Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is comprehensive in that it serves to transform the institutional culture as well as improve student achievement. The focus is to enhance student learning by engaging the college wide community in critical thinking with an emphasis on increasing student disposition to use critical thinking skills. The plan leads the college further in the direction of a learning centered institution in which students acquire effective thinking and learning skills to aid them academically, professionally, and personally.

Wilkes Community College's foundation for enhancing student learning begins with professional development for all personnel by creating a common language of critical thinking elements, standards, and skills to ensure consistency and quality in serving students. A common model of critical thinking is used and reinforced throughout the college community with personnel and students. It provides a means of communicating for instructing, serving, and assisting students in their learning. Faculty, staff, and adjuncts participate in professional development also involving the topics of disposition and assessment.

The plan consists of one goal (*Increase student's disposition to use critical thinking in their academic, professional, and personal lives*) and two objectives (*Create a common understanding of critical thinking foundations throughout WCC and Implement practices to increase student's disposition to use critical thinking*). Each objective has comprehensive strategies with assessment measures and assessment criteria. The implementation plan begins in phases as to allow for improvement. Groups of three programs of study will be Pilot Projects in 2006 – 2008 and 2007 – 2009. Other phases consist of professional development, syllabi construction, assignment and evaluation construction, courses other than pilot projects with the critical thinking emphasis, and ACA 115 implementation. A *Strategic Implementation Document* containing the goal, objectives, strategies, assessment measures, and criteria is located in Appendix A.

Students are introduced to the concept of critical thinking within their first 13 hours of instruction in a newly designed Success and Study Skills course, ACA 115. The course content is taught with active learning strategies through a framework of critical

thinking. Critical thinking with an emphasis on truth seeking behaviors is reinforced through all subsequent courses as well as in services and policies. The Plan calls for Capstone Courses to be developed in each program with interdisciplinary projects utilized as demonstrations of critical thinking abilities as well as knowledge of course content. Critical thinking and the disposition to use it are also reinforced through services the student encounters.

Assessment of the Plan: Assessment measures and criteria are an integral part of each phase and element of the QEP. Four specific student learning outcomes offer the framework for rubrics on student performance, instruction, and assignment and evaluation design. Student surveys, *The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory*, employer and alumni surveys, and ACA course content evaluations are some of the measurement tools to reflect student achievement of both knowledge and behavior.

Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan: Wilkes Community College Administration and Board of Trustees have demonstrated financial support for the Plan and budgeted for the necessary additional expenses. Professional development and the addition of two positions are the major expenditures. Two QEP Co-Directors provide oversight of the implementation. These positions are located in the Instructional Services Division under the Dean of Instruction and Student Services. A detailed Implementation Timeline in Chapter 2 provides the timeframe for implementation and addresses responsible parties for each action. The Co-Directors are supported by four QEP Subcommittees: Assessment, Professional Development, Learning Circles, and ACA. Persons from these subcommittees, representing all areas of WCC, combine to form the QEP Implementation Team headed by the Co-Directors.

Broad Based Involvement of the Community: From the outset, WCC has involved the college-wide community in the development of the QEP. A campus-wide survey was administered to students, staff, and faculty in May of 2004 to identify the greatest need for enhancing student learning. A QEP Team consisting of 26 representatives from across the college, including an alumnus, students, and personnel from off-campus centers, analyzed the surveys and arrived at the QEP focus. The QEP Team has continued to work under the direction of a QEP Coordinator to develop the plan for enhancing student learning. Ongoing communication with the college community has

been maintained through in-house newsletters, meetings, specific emails and notifications, web postings, and open Learning Circles.

CHAPTER 1: FOCUS OF THE QEP

Critical Issue to be Addressed

Wilkes Community College approached the QEP through the institution's planning and evaluation process to select the topic: "***WCC will embrace critical thinking throughout the college community in order to enhance student learning.***" The QEP Team developed a survey based upon the *WCC Purpose* (Appendix B) and *WCC Vision 2010* (Appendix C) *Statements*. The survey instruments for students (Appendix D), faculty (Appendix E), and staff (Appendix F) consisted of questions based upon key initiatives from the *WCC Vision 2010 Statement*. The key initiatives are based upon these three primary areas of the *WCC Purpose Statement*: Quality Education, Training and Retraining for the Workforce; Economic Development; and Culture and Quality of Life Enhancement.

Students, faculty, and staff on the Wilkes campus and the Ashe and Alleghany Centers responded to questions about how student learning could be enhanced. Through analysis of data collected from the surveys (a summary is available from the Institutional Effectiveness Officer), the QEP Team identified the emerging themes of enhancing "Educational and Intellectual Growth," and the "Learning Environment." Specific questions under the theme of "Educational and Intellectual Growth" presented informative data. When students were asked if their curriculum prepared them to use critical thinking and problem solving, 49% replied "most of the time" and 43% replied "some of the time." Sixty-three percent (63%) of faculty indicated they prepared students for critical thinking and problem solving "most of the time" and 30% replied "some of the time." It is noteworthy that a discrepancy exists between faculty and student perspectives. Three percent (3%) of staff indicated they prepared students for critical thinking and problem solving "most of the time" and 18% "some of the time." QEP Team members researched these topics to identify relevant best practices, professional development activities, potential consultants, and assessment methods. The immense impact of a college-wide initiative that focused on student learning was considered and the data and research on critical thinking kept emerging. It became clear that critical

thinking would enhance both “Education and Intellectual Growth” and the “Learning Environment” as well as transform the culture of our college community.

The focus on critical thinking continued to evolve and become refined with further research and examination of WCC students’ specific needs. Ample evidence of its importance in academics was found in educational literature. According to Perkins (1992), an expert in the educational and learning field, “Learning is a consequence of thinking. Retention, understanding, and the active use of knowledge can be brought about only by learning experiences in which learners think about and think with what they are learning” (p. 8). Perkins brings to light that this is a different perspective from the conventional one that implies students first acquire knowledge and then think about the knowledge. He asserts that, “Far from thinking coming after knowledge, knowledge comes on the coattails of thinking.” The implication of Perkins’ thoughts is that we must first train students to think about the information they are presented. Therefore, “. . . instead of knowledge-centered schools, we need thinking-centered schools” (Perkins, p. 8).

O’Banion (1999) states that there is an educational reform taking place across the country, which calls for institutions of higher education to make learning their highest priority. In this “Learning College” (O’Banion) or “New Academy” (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2002), the learner is the primary agent (Barr and Tagg, 1995). The role of critical thinking skills in this learner-centered paradigm is evidenced by “the need for analysis and integration” of knowledge to enable students to apply knowledge and skills to “new situations, new problems, and new environments” (American Association of Colleges and Universities, p. 12).

O’Banion (1999) lists these six key principles for the “Learning College:”

- The Learning College creates substantive change in individual learners;
- The Learning College engages learners in the learning process as full partners who must assume primary responsibility for their own choices;
- The Learning College creates and offers as many options for learning as possible;
- The Learning College assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities;
- The Learning College defines the roles of learning facilitators in response to the needs of the learners;

- The Learning College and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for learners. (p. 5)

Embracing critical thinking across the college community allows WCC to address these key principles by attempting to create substantive change in individual learners. Embracing critical thinking in all areas will lead to more learning options inside and outside of the classroom.

The QEP Team next determined what changes were desired in students as a result of learning critical thinking skills. Eight traits were identified. Students will:

1. Be active learners so that they take responsibility and control over their ongoing learning.
2. Be more eager to learn and will value learning.
3. Demonstrate a more deliberate thought process by questioning assumptions, addressing different perspectives and formulating relevant questions.
4. Be able to systematically sort and analyze information to solve problems.
5. Construct their own knowledge, thus making it relevant.
6. Be adaptable to new and changing situations.
7. Be able to assess their own outcomes.
8. Be able to understand concepts as opposed to memorizing facts.

These traits focus on motivation and students' disposition to use critical thinking skills beyond just having the skills. Research supports the QEP Team's premise that a student who not only acquires the tools to successfully solve problems and reason through information, but also is motivated and has the habit to do so, will be equipped to improve his/her quality of life. Bers, McGowan and Rubin (1996) support this idea by referring to Jones' 1995 work: "There also appears to be general agreement that critical thinking comprises two main components, a cognitive component and a disposition to think critically" (p. 197).

Facione, Facione and Giancarlo (1996) define the overall disposition to use critical thinking as "the consistent internal motivation to employ one's critical thinking abilities in judging what to believe or do in any situation" (p. 4). They continue by explaining "if one is inclined or disposed toward thoughtful and intellectually honest problem-solving and if one is also skilled and knowledgeable, there is a much greater chance that one will be consistently successful" (p. 4). Thus, it was determined that

student learning could be maximized if students are provided the tools to critically think along with an environment where they can observe and be encouraged to use the skills.

Facione suggests in his *Executive Summary of The Delphi Report* (1990) that:

Because CT helps students with a wide range of educational, personal, and civic concerns in a rational way, the academic goal of CT instruction, regardless of the educational level, should be furthering students in the development of their CT cognitive skills and affective dispositions. (p. 14)

In determining how to incorporate disposition into the WCC plan, the work and research of Peter Facione was closely examined. Facione (1990) describes how 46 professionals with expertise in critical thinking used the Delphi Method to work toward a consensus resolution as to the ideal critical thinking instruction:

The education of good critical thinkers is more than training students to execute a set of cognitive skills. For example, in terms of pedagogy, modeling how to evaluate critically that information which students would normally accept uncritically and encouraging them to do the same can do wonders for developing their confidence in their CT ability. With this confidence students are much more likely to try thinking for themselves. Just as instruction should not focus on skills only, assessment which focuses on skills only may give a misleading or incomplete picture of someone's strengths as a critical thinker. (p. 14)

WCC's QEP involves not only teaching and assessing CT skills, but also modeling and encouraging students to use CT and assessing their disposition to do so. The Delphi Panel's 14th recommendation states that, "Teaching CT is most effective if the instructor models CT dispositions and the proper use of CT skills in every process of instruction. Regardless of the subject area, students should be encouraged to be curious, to raise objections, ask questions, point out difficulties in the instructor's position" (p. 17).

WCC's students' greatest need as related to critical thinking was ascertained with the use of a valid and reliable instrument to measure the disposition to use critical thinking, *The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory* (CCTDI). It is

published by The California Academic Press, 217 La Cruz Ave., Millbrae, California and appears frequently in the literature as a sound instrument. The CCTDI consists of seven scales based on the characteristic dispositions of the ideal critical thinker as identified by “The Delphi Report”: Truth-Seeking, Open Mindedness, Analyticity, Systematicity, CT Self-Confidence, Inquisitiveness, and Maturity. This instrument correlates well with the Paul and Elder Model of critical thinking from The Foundation of Critical Thinking that has been adopted for use in creating a common language across the campus.

The CCTDI was administered to a random sample of 270 students with varying levels of completion within diploma and degree programs. The results revealed that of the seven scales, students performed lowest on truth seeking with an aggregate score of 35.194. “A score of 30 and below on any of the scales indicates consistent opposition or weakness in relation to the given attribute or characteristics; a score of 40 indicates minimal endorsement on average, and scores above 50 indicate consistent endorsement or strength of the given characteristic.” (Bers, McGowan, and Rubin, p.199).

Facione, Sanchez and Facione (1993) describe truth seeking as “being eager to seek the best knowledge in a given context, courageous about asking questions, and honest and objective about pursuing inquiry even if the findings do not support one’s self-interests or one’s preconceived opinions,” (p. 7). The QEP concentrates on the truth seeking element of critical thinking centered on four student learning outcomes based on “best knowledge.”

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Pursue best information.
2. Examine underlying assumptions.
3. Engage in inquiry.
4. Analyze different points of view.

The QEP focuses on aiding students in acquiring these skills which result in both affective and cognitive outcomes. Strategies for the transmission of professional development equip faculty and staff to instruct, guide, and serve students in the area of truth seeking. The Student Learning Outcomes address a much needed skill in the 21st Century information literacy. Skills in information literacy assist students with assessment of knowledge by knowing what information to accept and what to reject.

Information literacy and seeking the best knowledge fit well with the culture and needs of our community. Our three county service area has been heavily impacted with the loss of industrial based employment. For instance, Ashe, Alleghany, and Wilkes counties have lost over 6,500 manufacturing jobs, representing 10% of the workforce over the past seven years. As a result, many persons are left without adequate skills and education for being competitive in the marketplace. The responsibility of training a qualified workforce lies with WCC as a rural institution that serves three counties. Preparing the workforce by providing quality education is consistent with the *WCC Purpose Statement*.

The focus on increasing students' disposition to use critical thinking relies heavily upon students observing the use of critical thinking by instructors and staff. Facione (1990) says, "For critical thinking to infuse the K-12 and college curriculum, teacher training should give way to teacher education. If teachers are to model critical thinking, so must those who have an instructional role in teacher preparation or staff development. In all instruction and particularly in critical thinking, both faculty and leaders of faculty development should model critical thinking," (p. 18). WCC's QEP involves all personnel in professional development which provides them with the understanding and skills to model and encourage the use of critical thinking among students. Faculty also receive training for the development of instructional techniques which encourage and motivate students to use critical thinking.

Wilkes Community College faculty members are well trained in their specific subject disciplines. However, discussion within the QEP Team faculty representatives of all campus areas indicated that formal instruction on teaching and learning is not a current focus of graduate or post-graduate work. This is consistent with findings of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (2002), which notes that most college professors are not trained to teach. Based upon this finding and the initial survey analysis, the QEP Team identified professional development addressing the use of varied teaching strategies to improve the learning environment as a primary need. The QEP Team perceived that professional development must be the beginning point of any improvement towards enhancing student learning. In several of the early Learning Circles sponsored by the QEP, this theme emerged: *It is important for faculty and staff to*

demonstrate commitment to and engagement in critical thinking before we ask the same of students.

The QEP is the impetus for strengthening our commitment to placing learning first and creating the mindset and motivation to prepare for change. As a critical thinking and learning institution, WCC emphasizes the use of critical thinking which will aid and promote learning.

Critical Thinking and Student Learning

Perkins (1992) conveys that, “Learning is a result of thinking” (p. 8). Paul and Elder (2005) echo Perkins’ emphasis on the importance of thinking in that “The only capacity we can use to learn is human thinking. If we think well while learning, we learn well. If we think poorly while learning, we learn poorly” (p. 11). WCC has used the development of the QEP as a “trigger event” (O’Banion, 1999, p. 11) to launch a transformational change from being a teaching-centered institution to being a learning-centered one. This endeavor is consistent with calls from O’Banion (p. 2) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities, *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002) for institutions of higher education to create a culture centered on learning. Through the QEP, WCC addresses the identified areas of “Education and Intellectual Growth,” and transforms the “Learning Environment.”

Consistent with the WCC Purpose Statement (Appendix B), the QEP Team defines **student learning** as “**the acquisition of the appropriate habits, skills, and information to construct and purposefully apply knowledge in the academic, professional, and personal areas of life.**” Through critical thinking, as noted by Chaffee (1997), we initiate “a developmental process that transforms the way we view ourselves and how we live and conduct our business in the world” (p. 6). The focus on critical thinking enhances student learning by providing students with the tools and information to “acquire knowledge, understanding, insights, and skills in any given body of content. It enables us to construct the system in our minds, to internalize it, and to use it in life-related situations” (Paul & Elder, 2005, p. 12).

The further defined concentration on truth seeking with the Student Learning Outcomes of: 1) Pursue the best in information, 2) Examine underlying assumptions,

3) Engage in inquiry and 4) Analyze different points of view provides students with skills and motivation for learning in all disciplines. Implementing critical thinking throughout the campus creates opportunities to practice not only within curriculum, but also within services. For instance, service providers such as Student Support Services and advisors will encourage more student responsibility in their work with students which will require students to critically think through issues and thus become more proficient as well as disposed in their use of critical thinking. Critical thinking facilitates learning (Perkins, 1992; and Paul and Elder, 2005) and impacts how we work and live (Chaffee, 1997). The ultimate goal of the QEP is to affect student learning outcomes.

Goal, Objectives and Strategies to Improve Student Learning

The *WCC Purpose Statement* (Appendix B) is to assist students in not only their academic lives, but also in their work and personal lives. Consistent with this purpose, Chaffee (1997) notes that “. . . the thinking process is such an integral part of who we are as people, the prospect of expanding students’ thinking implies expanding who they are as human beings – the perspective from which they view the world, the concepts and values they use to guide their choices, and the impact they have on the world as a result of those choices” (Critical Thinking: The Cornerstone of Education, November 1997, Stanford). To that end, the QEP Team has designed a goal, objectives and strategies for the successful implementation of critical thinking for transformational change from a teaching-centered institution to a learning-centered institution. The overarching goal of WCC’s QEP drives the entire process. The objectives and strategies follow.

Goal: Increase students’ disposition to use critical thinking in their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Objective 1: Create a common understanding of critical thinking foundations throughout WCC.

This objective addresses the first step in altering the learning environment which is training those who control it: faculty, staff, and administration. In order to make needed adjustments in the college learning environment, our personnel must understand the need for change, the new environment, and how to make the changes. Objective 1 is necessary to give personnel the tools and understanding to assist students in achieving the Student Learning Outcomes.

Although WCC faculty and staff are versed in many different critical thinking models, strategies, and skills, the development of a common language and use of consistent principles are needed to communicate effectively across programs, curricula, and work areas. Consistent use of a single model of critical thinking with a common vocabulary allows students to make connections between various subjects of study and WCC support services. A common model facilitates and reinforces the use of critical thinking strategies and skills throughout the learning environment. It makes it possible to have a streamlined focus and continuity for QEP implementation.

The consistent and pervasive use of the selected model of critical thinking to enhance all aspects of college life is supported by Brookfield (1997). He notes the importance of modeling critical thinking for students by emphasizing the importance of faculty and staff demonstrating “commitment to and engagement in critical thinking before they ask their own students to engage in critical thinking” (p. 28). Faculty and staff’s engagement in critical thinking begins with professional development by Dr. Linda Elder from the Foundation of Critical Thinking beginning in May 2006 on the WCC campus. She will return in October 2006 with the focus both times being on the importance of critical thinking and the elements, standards, and intellectual traits of the Paul/Elder Model. *The Implementation Timeline* (Chapter 2, pg 44) indicates additional training on the common language as well as on disposition, motivation, assessment strategies, staff and administrative applications, pedagogy and educational techniques, and on practices to promote critical thinking.

Professional development with a student learning focus is a new trend for Wilkes Community College. In common with schools across the nation, we have been “teaching” focused and are just beginning the transformation to a “learning” focused institution. In the past, professional development was offered without strategic focus. The QEP Team identified professional development as the foundational building block for a successful QEP at WCC.

Critical Thinking Model

The WCC QEP Team selected The Foundation for Critical Thinking (Paul & Elder, 2003) Model to create a common language. The Foundation for Critical Thinking is respected and prevalent in the academic world, and Paul and Elder are well published

in national journals. In addition, Paul and Elder have sponsored 25 International Conferences on Critical Thinking which have exposed thousands to their model and research. The conferences have attracted people of notoriety such as Carol Tavris, noted social psychologist; Neil Postman, critic, writer, communications theorist, and professor of communication arts and sciences at New York University; Henry Steele Commager, an American historian who taught at New York University, Columbia, and Amherst College; and David Perkins, a professor of education at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking and the sister non-profit organization, The Center for Critical Thinking, which conducts advanced research and disseminates information, are educational non-profit organizations that work together to promote educational reform. In addition, Dr. Paul chairs The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, which consists of approximately 8,000 leading educators and operates to articulate, preserve, and foster intellectual standards in critical thinking research, scholarship, and instruction.

The Paul and Elder Model is an integrative approach to critical thinking that is “. . . easier to study, easier to practice and easier to teach” (Guillot, 2004, p. 3). The model has broad application, lending itself to all academic disciplines as well as personal and professional life.

Strategy 1: Provide ongoing professional development for faculty, staff, and adjuncts to learn a common language, a disposition to use, and assessment of critical thinking.

The professional development component of the QEP is intended to be, as advocated by The Foundation for Critical Thinking (Long-Term Professional Development, 2005), *ongoing, long-term* and *college-wide*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking offers numerous affordable and quality resources along with their professional development activities to assist WCC in embracing critical thinking. Other experts in disposition, motivation, assessment, and pedagogical practices are also being identified.

The need for specific professional development activities, identified in the formative stages of the QEP, is further evidenced in the *California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations* (Paul, Elder, and Bartell, 1997). The 1997 study, involving 48 public and 38 private

colleges and universities, found that while 89% of professors who responded identified critical thinking to be a primary objective of their instruction, only 19% could give a clear explanation of “critical thinking.” Only 9% were found to be clearly teaching for critical thinking on a typical day in class.

Professional development provides a cornerstone upon which improvements to enhance student learning must be built. Kopp (2005) notes that in order “to internalize critical thinking as part of the institutional culture, it must be pervasive within the institution.” It is essential that the college-wide community be engaged. Kopp (personal communication, July 23, 2004) conveys that, “transformational change begins with a compelling vision, one that is shared, embraced and made actionable on a large scale when people at the grassroots level of the organization are empowered to take initiative and contribute to its realization. It is imperative to recognize that integrative and systems thinking (a landscape perspective) absolutely are required in this process.” Through professional development, faculty and staff share a common language and framework regarding the many facets of critical thinking which provide a broad applicability to integrate critical thinking into the classroom, the workplace, and in personal life circumstances. Faculty integrate critical thinking into course instruction and assessment. Through planning sessions and the annual performance enhancement and planning process, staff will identify areas within which to apply critical thinking as they interact with students, perform job duties, and pursue career goals.

Other elements of professional development included in the QEP are: Learning Circles, written communication, resources, training, WCC Experts, new employee/adjunct training, and a QEP Resource Room. O’Banion and Milliron (2001) recommend that institutions desiring to move toward a learner-centered college create “conversations on learning” across the college. Learning Circles provide a venue for faculty to share and examine teaching experiences and reflect upon the process in which they are engaged (Chaffee, 1997). Likewise, the Learning Circles afford staff an opportunity to explore ways in which critical thinking can enhance their role in supporting education. O’Banion and Milliron (2001) view such opportunities as a key feature of professional development, affording “faculty and staff [the chance] to probe

issues of learning seldom addressed in a substantive way through the usual one-shot workshops provided by the typical staff development program” (p. 2).

During the first four months after Learning Circles were initiated in March 2005, 169 staff and faculty participated in 18 sessions. They have continued to thrive during the 2005-2006 academic year with new facilitators being trained. A variety of topics have been discussed at the Learning Circles, including *Sharing Critical Thinking Ideas*, *How Do I Believe the QEP Is Going to Affect Me?*, *Ideas for Implementing Critical Thinking into Staff Areas of Wilkes Community College*, *Intellectual Empathy and Its Use in Our Work Areas*, *How Does Our Thinking Help us Adapt to Change?* and *Dialogue on a Peter Facione Article*. Learning Circles are offered at multiple times and days each month to accommodate employee schedules. On-line Learning Circles are also being developed. Wilkes Community College has discovered that these “conversations,” or Learning Circles, have created awareness, expanded knowledge and understanding, and motivated action on the part of participants just as O’Banion and Milliron predicted.

QEP relevant information is provided through WCC’s newsletter, *The Open Line*, Microsoft Outlook®, and *CampusCruiser*[™] (WCC’s web portal). An intranet is under construction for postings of journal and research articles. Minutes of meetings and Learning Circles will be posted along with other relevant materials.

In addition to the training provided to full- and part-time faculty and staff, professional development is extended to orientation for new faculty and staff. O’Banion and Milliron (2001) advocate that “. . .in the recruiting and hiring process, we should engage new faculty and staff members in conversations about the importance of learning and signal to them early on that our institutions take learners and learning outcomes seriously” (p. 9). Research on community college part-time faculty, by Keim and Biletzkey (1999), found that faculty development is desperately needed by part-time community college faculty, but seldom provided. In examining the teaching methods used by part-time faculty, Keim and Biletzkey found that “faculty who had participated in professional development activities were more likely to use small group discussions, demonstrations, and instructional methods to encourage critical thinking than those who had not” (p. 733). They state, “Administrators and faculty responsible for faculty development must provide appropriate workshops to educate their part-timers about

newer teaching strategies and technologies . . .” (p. 736). Until progress is made in the area of professional development for adjuncts, “it is possible that students at two-year institutions may suffer at the hands of their part-time faculty” (p. 736). Approximately one-third of curriculum instruction is delivered by part-time faculty at WCC (167 were employed in Spring Semester 2005 to meet the demand for courses). WCC recognizes the valuable contribution and important role of adjunct faculty. The college has demonstrated its commitment to support professional development for adjunct faculty by compensating them for attending the critical thinking sessions. From Spring 2005 through September 2005, 122 adjuncts participated in professional development activities on the basics of the QEP and critical thinking. An introductory session on critical thinking was provided in January 2005 for all full-time faculty and staff. Subsequent sessions were held in March for part-time staff and adjunct faculty, with adjunct faculty being compensated for participation. Administrative and institutional support was further indicated by a willingness to modify the 2006-2007 academic calendar to accommodate QEP training in critical thinking. A strong program of professional development is essential in order to ensure that faculty and staff have the skills to provide ample opportunities for students to apply, integrate, and reinforce the critical thinking skills.

A reference area for the QEP and professional development is located in the WCC Library. The reference area houses books, articles, and resources to support professional development of faculty and staff.

Strategy 2: Establish a panel of critical thinking experts within WCC.

To enhance implementation, a core group of faculty and staff will receive intensive training. The core group will serve as “resident experts” and as resources for departments and divisions. ACA course faculty, Capstone Course instructors, Pilot Project instructors and members of the WCC QEP Implementation Team will make up the majority of the core group. These WCC Experts will spend extra time with external experts, participate in special training such as The International Critical Thinking Conference, and take part in relevant in-house training. The criteria states that they participate in all training with The Foundation for Critical Thinking and 90% of other offered training.

Strategy 3: Provide students with introductory and ongoing visual exposure to critical thinking.

In Objective 1 students are introduced to the concept of critical thinking beginning with the orientation video at time of enrollment. The *WCC Orientation Video* will be revised and have ten percent of the video designated to critical thinking in 2009. Informational articles will be published in the student newspapers and posted on CampusCruiser™, the college web portal. Additional information about critical thinking will be included in the *WCC Student Handbook*. Posters will also be displayed in classrooms and throughout campus to reinforce understanding and disposition.

Objective 2: Implement practices to increase student's disposition to use critical thinking.

Facione, Facione and Giancarlo write in *The Disposition Toward Critical Thinking: It's Character, Measurement, and Relationship to Critical Thinking Skill*, ".....a human disposition is a person's consistent internal motivation to act toward, or to respond to, persons, events, or circumstances in habitual and yet potentially malleable ways" (p.6). He states the importance of considering disposition in regards to critical thinking: "Leading figures in the history of CT theory, persons who deserve the greatest credit for shaping the field, for bringing it international attention, and for leading educational reforms toward a pedagogy based on teaching for and about thinking, have advanced theories that hypothesize a link between CT skills with CT dispositions" (p. 31). This article draws conclusions based on empirical results that when teaching for and about thinking, it is most effective to include strategies for building intellectual character rather than just teaching cognitive skills.

Strategies in Objective 2 are developed around this premise. By providing opportunities for continued practice and application of critical thinking skills, WCC is focused on building the intellectual character and disposition of students.

Strategy 1: Identify greatest student need, in regarding to critical thinking.

Truth seeking was identified with the use of *The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory*. The next step is to develop three institutional rubrics based on the student learning outcomes developed as a result of identifying truth seeking. The *Student Performance Rubric*, *Assignment/Evaluation Rubric*, and *Observation Rubric* are used to

assess the process and student achievement. The rubrics are designed to provide data to indicate progress of the QEP goal. They are first used in the Pilot Projects.

Strategy 2: Implement critical thinking with a focus on truth seeking in phases beginning with Pilot Projects in order to receive data for improvement toward full implementation.

The phased implementation provides data based on student learning outcomes for informed analysis and corrective measures in order to refine and improve full implementation. Two Pilot Projects which include the newly-designed ACA 115 will precede full implementation.

Pilot Projects

- Programs have been strategically chosen so at the end of the projects, all four instructional areas plus Ashe and Alleghany Centers will have a mentor/expert. The first Pilot involves Medical Assisting in Health Sciences, Accounting in Business and Public Service Technologies, and Industrial Systems at the Ashe Center. These first Pilots were chosen based on instructor involvement and enthusiasm for the QEP and critical thinking. These instructors will participate in additional training during the next year including the International Critical Thinking Conference in July 2006. The instructors will also spend a full day with Linda Elder during the Paul/Elder professional development in May. The second Pilot involves Arts and Sciences, Industrial and Engineering Technologies, and the Alleghany Center.
- The program instructors within Pilot Project I begin using critical thinking components in Spring 2007. Their syllabi will reflect critical thinking language; at least one assignment will require students to demonstrate critical thinking skills; at least one test item/evaluation will require critical thinking; and they will model critical thinking and truth seeking during instruction. Following spring semester, student assignments/evaluations are reviewed for evidence of the WCC model of critical thinking. The *Student Performance Rubric* will serve as a guide for evidence of critical thinking and truth seeking. If indicated, the *Student Performance Rubric* will be adjusted. Capstone Courses are identified in each program for students to take during their final semester. An interdisciplinary

project is designed within each Capstone Course to reflect general education competencies and QEP Student Learning Outcomes.

- What is learned from Pilot Project I determines adjustments for Pilot Project II. Three additional programs will participate, thus increasing the dissemination of the critical thinking emphasis throughout the WCC instructional community. Data continues to be gathered, reviewed, and analyzed to inform full implementation.

Strategy 3: Introduce WCC students to the concept of critical thinking and truth seeking in ACA 115.

Chaffee (1997) posits that a course providing “a *comprehensive and coherent introduction* to critical thinking and critical literacy abilities that students need for academic and career success” (p.19) provides a foundation in critical thinking skills. WCC provides the primary introduction to critical thinking for students through a redesigned college student success and study skills course. ACA 115 provides the initial venue for student acquisition of critical thinking skills. An ACA Subcommittee redesigned this course as an orientation and study skills course taught through critical thinking. All graduating degree and diploma students at WCC have been required up to this point to complete ACA 111, a one contact hour class. ACA 115 replaces ACA 111 and increases the contact hours to two while maintaining the one credit hour which fits all programs of study. Although some students will likely enter the course as passive, uncritical, and unmotivated thinkers, the goal is to transform students into active learners who are confident in reasoning and analytical, problem-solving, and critical thinking abilities (Chaffee, 1997). ACA 115 has a heavy emphasis on critical thinking, truth seeking, and information literacy and by the end of the course, students should have 32 hours of experiences related to critical thinking. The instructors will also model these skills.

Objectives under consideration for the course are:

1. Identify WCC resources through visiting student support areas throughout campus as well as listening to representatives from various areas.
2. Develop systematic problem-solving approaches related to learning, stress, career, and personal issues.
3. Assess personal learning style and explore strategies to maximize learning.

4. Understand the difference between memorization and learning and consider precise techniques for different courses and assignments.
5. Explore test-taking strategies based on various testing formats.
6. Develop the habit of critical thinking or seeking the best information in research, discussion, reading, and study.
7. Enhance reading skills by reflecting, monitoring, questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing, and evaluating information.
8. Locate information in the WCC Library and through other sources while focusing on the purpose, questions, concepts, and consequences associated with relevant research.
9. Seek clarity, accuracy, relevance, and significance in available information with the intent of developing the best knowledge possible.
10. Determine the appropriate depth and breadth of information needed based upon the purpose of assignments.
11. Recognize different points of view within written information/discussion and summarize advantages and disadvantages of each.
12. Explore the assumptions that affect one's reasoning and logic.
13. Recognize that learning issues are complex and that the best knowledge may require changes in attitudes, points of view, and/or assumptions.

ACA 115 is not a stand-alone course but rather the entry point to a critical thinking focused institution. Students encounter critical thinking and truth seeking in subsequent classes as well as in contact with staff and student support personnel. The ACA course is designed to be an intensive introduction with intentionally designed critical thinking experiences which provide a foundation as students continue to practice the skills and disposition in later courses.

ACA 115 is first piloted with the Pilot Projects beginning in 2006. It will also be piloted with a group of general students in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 to compare to ACA 111 students on student achievement and disposition to use critical thinking. Data from these classes will be used for improvement for Pilot Project II in 2007. In Fall 2008, half of the offered ACA courses will be ACA 115. Full implementation of ACA 115 will take place in Fall 2009.

An ACA Lead Instructor's position has been developed as part of the QEP and filled in January 2006. This position includes the role of QEP Co-Director. The ACA Lead Instructor is responsible for maintaining consistency within ACA classes by training and assisting ACA instructors in their instruction. ACA instructors are part of the WCC Experts.

Strategy 4: Implement critical thinking and truth seeking in phases throughout WCC instructional divisions.

After participating in adequate professional development:

- Faculty are required to develop and submit one course syllabus by mid-semester Fall 2007 designed to increase students' disposition to use critical thinking with a focus on truth seeking. Assistance will be offered through professional development sessions, WCC Experts, resources, and Learning Circles.
- Mid-semester Spring 2008, faculty are required to submit one assignment and one evaluation designed to increase students' disposition to use critical thinking with a focus on truth seeking.
- Fall 2008, faculty are required to teach one course with a syllabus, assignments, and evaluations focused on engaging students in critical thinking and truth seeking. These courses are assessed in Spring 2009 and assistance and support offered faculty in the process.
- All syllabi are to reflect truth seeking behavior and skills in Fall 2009.
- Capstone Courses in each instructional program are identified and relevant assessment measures developed 2008-2009.
- All WCC courses include a minimum of one assignment and one evaluation reflecting critical thinking and truth seeking in Spring 2010.
- Capstone Courses are implemented campus wide Spring 2011.
- Continuous review of process and student achievement occurs.

Strategy 5: Model truth seeking behaviors and skills to reflect critical thinking in services and responsibilities throughout the college.

This area of the QEP focuses on the integration of critical thinking and truth seeking throughout the college including staff. To ensure the maximum benefit, Brookfield (1997) emphasizes the importance of having all personnel involved in learning and utilizing critical thinking. Critical thinking is of benefit not only in the classroom but on the job as well. WCC staff will not only benefit directly from learning critical thinking but will also model the tools and concepts of critical thinking for students. The QEP calls WCC staff to model critical thinking and truth seeking in their

everyday duties and services to students. For instance, Administrative Services will be aware of how to lead students through the process of seeking the best information in determining payment methods for their education. The staff will model inquiry and encourage students to ask questions as well as examine underlying assumptions such as “not being able to afford to go to college” or “student loans are better than deferred payment plans.” The same type of modeling and engagement of students is incorporated in all areas, including career counseling, the bookstore, advising, security, registration, the library, and Student Services. This will be accomplished by:

- Holding annual planning sessions in each work area to identify where critical thinking and truth seeking strategies may be applied.
- Practicing critical thinking behavior in daily tasks.
- Recognizing employee modeling of critical thinking behavior and submitting observations to the QEP Team by peers and supervisors for recognition and use in determining future professional development needs.
- Revising policies to reflect the critical thinking emphasis.
- Communicating in writing using the language of critical thinking and truth seeking in materials such as letters, *CampusCruiser*TM, the catalogue, and websites.
- Interacting with students through demonstration of critical thinking skills and disposition for the purpose of guiding students towards increased personal responsibility. Through this interaction, students should demonstrate increased responsibility in completing tasks associated with the role of student.
- Modifying individual work strategies to reflect critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors. Each employee is required to set annual goals related to critical thinking on the Performance Enhancement Plan beginning Spring 2007.

Strategy 6: Establish external means of assessment.

- Current advisory groups of community employers, leaders, and citizens are utilized beginning Fall 2008 to communicate WCC plans and progress, and to engage in dialogue regarding needs.
- Student focus groups are held beginning Fall 2009 to receive student feedback and assess the critical thinking effort from a student’s perspective.

Strategy 7: Prepare students for successful employment by giving them the transferable skill of critical thinking through truth seeking.

- Educational work experience evaluation forms are revised to reflect the student learning outcomes in Spring 2006.
- Employer surveys for post-graduate employment are revised to reflect critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors in Spring 2006 and used to gather baseline data.
- Alumni surveys are revised to include questions including critical thinking and truth seeking behavior for first use in 2007.

WCC has a strong allegiance to preparing students for successful employment and lifelong learning. An increased disposition to use critical thinking offers students a means for experiencing a more successful professional and personal life.

Strategy 8: Communicate student progress, opinions, and concerns internally and externally.

Through adequate, regular, and accurate communication internally and externally, WCC further involves the entire community in the QEP process which leads to more success for students. For instance, the three county public school systems are involved in major training initiatives with WCC which will inform them of the focus. With this knowledge, the public school systems can better prepare not only graduating seniors, but students throughout the system of the expectations in college and how to be successful. Dual enrollment of high school students is increasing as well. Communication between WCC and the high schools allows consideration of appropriate students to be dually enrolled who are developmentally able to meet the challenges of critical thinking activities, assignments, evaluations, and expectations.

Another important external communication is that with four-year institutions to where WCC students transfer. Critical thinking will add to the quality education offered at WCC. Student financial constraints and stricter entry requirements at the number one transfer choice have resulted in an increase in the number of WCC college transfer students. Communication with the four-year institution allows WCC to continually improve student success upon transfer. WCC will communicate progress by:

- Publishing regular reports of student progress as related to the QEP goal.

- Providing the Board of Trustees with regular reports of student progress as related to the QEP goals.
- Providing the WCC communities with information about student progress as related to the QEP.

Importance of the QEP in Improving the Learning Environment

The WCC QEP improves the learning environment through comprehensive institutional cultural transformation. WCC has deviated from the assumption that a college learning environment consists of only the classroom. The QEP defines the WCC learning environment as the college-wide community. Because the QEP makes this important distinction, it redefines “learning environment” and provides WCC the vehicle to transform learning in a comprehensive way. This raises the question, however, of how to affect the broad-based learning environment. As previously described, critical thinking was identified as the best approach to address the topics of “Education and Intellectual Growth” and the “Learning Environment.” Professional development provides the foundation upon which improvements to enhance student learning must be built. Therefore, critical thinking transforms the learning environment through ongoing dialogue, institutional modeling, common language, classroom dynamics, services, and a clear link from the classroom to professional and personal life.

Learning Circles are a staple of professional development activities that provide ongoing dialogue which affect the learning environment. O’Banion and Milliron (2001) note the value of these opportunities to more deeply probe issues in a substantive way than more traditional approaches to professional development (p. 2). As an outgrowth of the QEP development process, WCC has implemented “conversations on learning” (O’Banion, 1999), referred to as Learning Circles. Staff and faculty from all departments, divisions, and campuses/centers have attended a variety of Learning Circles voluntarily since their inception in March 2005. The Learning Circles have created awareness, expanded knowledge and understanding, and increased interest on the part of participants. The Learning Circles have, as described by Senge (1994), provided opportunities for faculty and staff to see each other as colleagues and for “learning how to learn together” (p. 243).

Once faculty and staff gain an understanding of the concepts of critical thinking and disposition and begin applying them, they will be modeling the type of thinking that enables students to be more effective learners. Paul (24) notes, “If we understand critical thinking substantively, we cannot only explain that idea intuitively to our students, we can also use it to give order and meaning to virtually everything we do as teachers and learners” (p 5). Cultural transformation to a learning-centered institution enhances the learning environment throughout the college--inside and outside the classroom.

Brookfield (1997) advocates total involvement of personnel in learning and utilizing critical thinking, and he notes that it is important for faculty and staff to demonstrate “commitment to and engagement in critical thinking before they ask their own students to engage in critical thinking” (p. 28). A stronger impact upon student engagement in critical thinking can be acquired when students observe “. . . respected leaders in positions of power and authority model these processes in their own lives” (p. 28). To model and reinforce the benefits of critical thinking, the QEP is designed to be implemented throughout the college community.

Frequently, classroom learning environments reflect those in which faculty were taught under an instructional paradigm with the emphasis on inputs. The proposed professional development activities give WCC faculty multiple and varied strategies and tools for strengthening student engagement and going beyond current instructional practices. An increased emphasis on being a critical thinking and learning institution exposes students to an environment in which they become more active in the learning process and in constructing knowledge (O’Banion, 1999, p. 5). Syllabi, assignments, course design, instructional methods, and assessment reflect consistent and improved critical thinking strategies and truth seeking behaviors within the classroom which focus on learning output. “Without critical thinking guiding the process of learning, rote memorization becomes the primary recourse, with students forgetting at about the same rate they are learning and rarely, if ever, internalizing powerful ideas” (Paul & Elder, 2005, p. 10). It would follow then that critical thinking in the form of truth seeking influences assessment practices that reflect learning instead of memorization.

Outside of the classroom, critical thinking will affect the learning environment of the college-wide community. In addition to the common language that is created for use

in all communication, each area on campus will have the opportunity to incorporate truth seeking and critical thinking into their everyday activities and responsibilities. Student Support Services provides an example of implementing methods for increased encouragement and requirements for students to be disposed to critical thinking. Students are guided through processes to search for their own answers in academic advising, counseling, and skills building rather than simply being offered answers and solutions. Students are given more responsibility for success which better equips them as learners. Other areas of the campus-wide learning environment which are affected include the library, administrative services, student services, basic skills, and student organizations. Furthermore, the intellectual traits and habits of disposition such as “Intellectual Empathy,” will allow better understanding of student needs in all areas. Auxiliary services, such as the bookstore, business office, facilities management, maintenance staff, grounds staff, and other areas of the college also apply critical thinking and incorporate strategies that place the learner at the forefront. Critical thinking is applicable to everything done in the college community.

Thinking and the quality of thinking are essential elements that affect learning (Perkins, 1992; Paul & Elder, 2005) and how we live and work (Chaffee, 1997). With an emphasis on critical thinking, current employment needs will also be addressed. A report from the Committee on Research in Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education (as cited in Chaffee, 1997) indicates:

Employers today complain that they cannot count on schools and colleges to produce young people who can move easily into more complex kinds of work. . . . These abilities go well beyond the routinized skills of the old mass curriculum. Although it is not new to include thinking, problem solving, and reasoning in *someone's* school curriculum, it is new to include it in *everyone's* curriculum. (p. 2)

The QEP promotes critical thinking skills across the college community. With the implementation of the skills and strategies learned, the learning environment is directly improved. The QEP has already stimulated professional development at WCC with renewed energy and interest as reflected in high levels of full- and part-time faculty and staff participation. The QEP and the shift to a learning-centered institution have the

potential to impact instructional methods, level of student engagement, and “policies, programs, and practices” (O’Banion, p. 2).

Benefits to Be Derived from the QEP

The QEP is designed to provide students with the critical thinking skills that affect learning (Perkins, 1992; Paul & Elder, 2005) and how students live and work (Chaffee, 1997). Paul and Elder (2004) assert that by internalizing the critical thinking competencies, students will be able to raise vital questions and problems, gather and assess relevant information, come to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, think open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, and communicate effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems (p. 1-2). The comprehensive approach creates consistent and constant opportunities for students to be engaged in and encouraged to use critical thinking which benefits them more than a classroom only approach.

Benefits Already Realized

A number of benefits have already been realized via development of the QEP. The process has resulted in the design of a new ACA 115 course, collaboration with area colleges, invigoration of professional development, creation of Learning Circles, increased emphasis on adjunct faculty training, and dialogue campus wide focused on learning. Select faculty and staff members participated in professional development activities at Surry Community College conducted by Gerald Nosich and at Southwestern Community College conducted by Richard Paul; both Nosich and Paul are affiliated with The Foundation for Critical Thinking. Five members of the QEP Team attended The International Conference on Critical Thinking in 2004 and 2005. Co-Directors attended an Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) Seminar on motivation, course design, and assessment in February 2006. The campus culture has also begun to change with professional development taking on greater significance. All campus offices were closed for a professional development activity on January 7, 2005, to introduce the basics of critical thinking. The session was extremely well attended with 242 faculty and staff participating. Numerous sessions are scheduled for 2006 and in the future as indicated on the *Implementation Timeline* (Chapter 2). The majority of adjuncts for

2005-2006 participated in the QEP and Basics of Critical Thinking training sessions. Adjunct faculty members were compensated for the time spent in training. Regular sessions for adjuncts and new employees are included in the *Implementation Timeline*. The well-attended Learning Circles were initiated in March 2005 and have covered a variety of topics. As of February 2006, a total of 66 Learning Circles have been conducted with approximately 721 employees participating. The Learning Circles have provided an opportunity for faculty and staff to see each other as colleagues and engage in “learning how to learn together” (Senge, 1994, p. 243). These activities, coupled with a poster campaign, have created awareness, expanded knowledge and understanding, and motivated action on the part of participants just as O’Banion and Milliron (2001) have proposed. The Arts and Sciences Division Chairperson reports instances of faculty enthusiasm for critical thinking strategies in courses and demonstration as well as incorporation of critical thinking strategies into the WCC Performance Enhancement Plans. Another realized benefit is that of a designated space in the WCC Library as a critical thinking reference area for staff, faculty, and students. Areas such as Basic Skills, The Development Office, Continuing Education, specific instructional areas, and departments have incorporated a focus on critical thinking and student learning. Communication across the entire campus has been one of the most beneficial realizations.

Anticipated Benefits and Changes

Improved thinking which enhances student learning is the major benefit to be derived from the QEP. Paul (2004) describes the strong connection of critical thinking to learning, noting that “the skills in upgrading thinking are the same skills as those required in upgrading learning” (p. 8).

Major consequences and implications, all of which benefit students and the learning environment include:

- **Assessment of educational practices** and student achievement is brought to the forefront and improved. Surveys and instruments will be improved to better reflect student learning.
- **Pedagogy practices** are likely to change and include more active learning experiences. Interactive experiences between students and instructors are likely to increase.

- **Course design** will have an increased emphasis on learning outcomes. As a result, syllabi and course assignments, evaluations, and documents will change.
- **Faculty will spend additional time** on planning courses and instruction. Faculty workload will need to be reviewed so as to enable faculty to provide quality instruction.
- Students may need **additional support** time from faculty.
- Instructors will have **higher expectations** for students.
- **Multimedia** will be more in demand as new instructional strategies are implemented. Additional professional development and assistance will be needed to respond to faculty needs.
- **Adjuncts** will be required to have more involvement and training. WCC will need to continue budgeting for compensation to adjuncts for required time.
- **Classroom physical parameters** will change to accommodate new instructional strategies. New furniture and re-modeling may be necessary.
- Future **building projects** will require a learning focus.
- **Capstone Course** projects will demonstrate students' critical thinking and general education competencies.
- **ACA 115** will double the time students have to learn critical thinking and strategies for success in college. More sections of ACA may be required as well as instructors.
- **Students will be required to be more responsible** for their learning and success.
- Students will have a need for increased **access to computer labs** and writing centers that offer support for the **increased demand in writing** assignments.
- **Library use** will increase as more emphasis is placed on information literacy. Additional personnel may be needed.
- **Support personnel** such as academic, personal, and financial counselors will have more demands on their time as they assist in guiding students to

critically think through individual situations. Higher student frustration levels due to higher expectations will demand counseling.

- **Student retention rates may drop** in the beginning as students become frustrated with increased demands of time and thinking through assignments and projects.
- **Student retention rates will eventually level off and even increase** as students become more confident and skilled. It will be important to track retention rates and trends.
- **Faculty and staff will be more effective** in their responsibilities by setting specific goals focused on student learning in relation to critical thinking.
- **Performance Enhancement Plans** become more critical and are utilized more in merit increases and promotions. Participation in professional development will be reported on these.
- Supervisors and administration must stress the **importance of participating in professional development** so that personnel in all areas have the skills to serve students with a critical thinking/truth seeking focus.
- **Communication** about student learning with public school systems, employers, and external leaders will increase.
- **Policies** will be reexamined and revised according to their influence on student learning.

CHAPTER 2: INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY FOR THE INITIATION AND CONTINUATION OF THE PLAN

Timeline for Development Process of the QEP

The QEP development process began in January 2004 and has evolved into one with involvement of many committees and subcommittees from across the college community. In the formative stages, with an emphasis upon awareness of the QEP and QEP topic, all faculty and staff, including adjuncts, were introduced to the basics of critical thinking. The awareness of critical thinking as the QEP topic has resulted in employee recognition of and involvement in the QEP process as evidenced by the following statements made by the On-Site Committee in October 2005: “The Committee has also been impressed by the breadth of support and enthusiasm from all constituencies in the Wilkes College Community...This emphasis on professional development is new to the institution. ‘Buy-in’ by institution personnel and their enthusiasm for the QEP are very high” (pages 27-28).

The introduction to critical thinking as the QEP topic was initiated via a January 2005 campus-wide professional development meeting, with ongoing publication of articles in the bimonthly *Open Line* (WCC employee newsletter), *CampusCruiser*TM (WCC web portal for students, faculty and staff), WCC student newspapers, and the WCC website. This college-wide session was well-attended, with 242 faculty and staff present. The importance of professional development was underscored by the closing of all WCC’s Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany offices for the college-wide training. A subsequent session was offered for those who could not attend. Five training sessions were conducted for adjunct faculty and new employees during Fall 2005. Also, adjunct faculty were compensated for their participation which is a shift in practice for the college.

Another avenue of professional development has been the establishment of Learning Circles which are open to all WCC employees and function as a forum for dialogue. Since March 2005, the QEP Team has conducted a total of 66 Learning Circles with approximately 721 participating.

The following is a summary of significant events that have taken place since January 2004:

QEP Development Timeline

January 2004	<p>*Leadership Team attended the COC Orientation Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia</p>
March 2004	<p>*Leadership Team met and mapped out plan to proceed *Assemblage of the QEP Team from across the campus began *Plans for a campus wide survey were initiated</p>
April 2004	<p>*Dean and Belinda continued regular meetings to develop survey for faculty, staff, and students to identify the greatest area of need for the QEP. Designed power point presentation for QEP educational use. *Information dissemination about the QEP process *Dean Sprinkle, Chad Bledsoe, and Belinda met with all departments and divisions including Faculty Senate and Staff Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week of 4/13 – 4/20: Belinda met with Jeanne Griffin, Chair of Business and Public Services Technology, Larry Taylor, Chair of Health Sciences, Blair Hancock, Chair of Arts and Sciences, John German, Chair of Industrial and Engineering Technologies, Kim Faw, Director of Student Support Services, and Chris Robinson, Director of Ashe and Alleghany Centers. Dean met with Calvin Dull, Dean of Continuing Education. • Dean, Belinda, and Chad spoke at division meetings: Faculty Senate on 4/16, Health Sciences and Academic Council on 4/19, Business and Public Service Technologies on 4/22, and Administrative Council on 4/13. <p>April 26: The first QEP Team meeting occurred Distributed WCC survey draft (based on the vision statement) to identify area of need for enhanced student learning and assigned work groups.</p>
May 2004	<p>*Distributed questionnaire surveys to each faculty and staff member and student on all three campuses to gather information for the QEP topic. *Meetings continued with divisions: Arts and Sciences on 5/4, Staff Council on 5/4, Continuing Education on 5/14, Office of Administrative Services and Facilities and Purchasing on 5/18.</p> <p>May 25: The QEP Team met and received the results of the QEP Survey. Team members formed small groups to analyze the results along the areas of Economic Development, Learning Environment, Advising, Leadership, Assessment of Learning Outcomes, Cultural/Social Development, Personal Development, Lifelong Learning, Educational Readiness, and Educational and Intellectual Growth. *Survey numbers collected were: Faculty – 89, Staff – 34, and Student – 1253.</p>

- June 2004
- June 4: The **QEP Team** met with purpose of identifying a topic. Groups reported on analysis of surveys and identified the emerging themes for improvement as *Education and Intellectual Growth* and the *Learning Environment*. Team was divided into areas for exploration regarding the emerging themes: Best Practices, Professional Development, Consultants, Comparable Institutions; Practices, Assessment Methods. Groups met before next general meeting so as to present their findings.
- July 2004
- Professional Development:** Nolan Belk and Belinda Smithey attended International Conference on Critical Thinking in Palo Alto, California July 11 – 15. Chad Bledsoe, Sherry Shaw, and Joyce Minton attended the Summer Institute on First Year Assessment in Asheville, North Carolina July 18-20.
- July 23: The **QEP Team** met for purpose of narrowing topic. A statement: *“to enhance student learning, WCC will provide professional development for the purpose of implementing critical thinking skills throughout the college community which will give students the educational tools for lifelong learning,”* was developed for further refinement.
- August 2004
- August 6: The **QEP Team** met. Reviewed possible goals for the QEP. Revised purpose was constructed: “WCC will implement critical thinking skills throughout the college community in order to enhance student learning.” Preliminary goals created: 1. To provide professional development focused on critical thinking strategies. 2. Develop a campus-wide culture that promotes critical thinking, life-long learning, and diversity.
- August 11: The **Leadership Team** of Dr. Burns, Dean, and Belinda reviewed the QEP process, purpose, goals, and timeline.
- August 17: Belinda presented overview of QEP and reaffirmation of accreditation to WCC Adjunct and New Faculty Meeting.
- August 18: Belinda spoke to personnel during Fall Professional Development day at the Walker Center; explained and updated the QEP process and topic.
- August 19: Belinda and Dean met with Dr. Steve Atkins, Dr. Jamie Woods, and Connie Wolf at Surry Community College to gather information about QEP process and incorporating critical thinking. Surry has been through the process and is also working with critical thinking skills in curriculum.
- September 2004
- September 8: Progress reviewed with SACS staff, Dr. Rudy Jackson. The **Leadership Team** met to discuss a training session in November for administrative staff and QEP Team with purpose of creating broader knowledge base with faculty and staff to assist in formulating QEP.
- September 16: Belinda contacted Linda Elder with The Foundation for Critical Thinking and obtained permission for the Interview Protocol to be used with faculty and the International Critical Thinking Test to be used with students and staff for baseline data.
- September 17: The **QEP Team** had luncheon meeting. Updates on November training and conversation with Dr. Jackson were given. An assessment question was designed to place on instructor evaluation form for baseline data purposes. Two major committees formed: Assessment and Implementation.

September 28: **Professional Development** for entire campus arranged by the QEP Team. *Learner-Centered Teaching: An Audio Conference* by Dr. Maryellen Weimer was hosted. A total of 26 persons attended.

Throughout September and October contact was maintained with Surry Community College personnel assisting us in developing the November training. Belinda maintained contact with Dr. Linda Elder.

October 2004

October 4: **Leadership Team** members, Dean and Belinda met and devised general timeline and issues for Assessment and Implementation committees.

October 6: **Assessment Committee** had initial meeting under leadership of Chad Bledsoe. Main item of discussion was assessment tools to gather baseline data from staff, faculty, and students. Goal is to administer before persons are exposed to material in the Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking sessions in November and January.

October 8: Invitations went out to all administrators and Chairs for Introduction to Basics of Critical Thinking workshop in November.

October 15: **Implementation Committee** had initial meeting under leadership of Nolan Belk. Main items addressed were development of an information gathering document for administrators and persons attending the November 5 training and organization of Learning Circles.

October 26: Email sent to all staff and faculty (full-time and part-time), including hard copies to personnel without computer access from Dr. Burns requesting participation in surveys to gather baseline data. Email included link to website where participants could complete survey and submit anonymously.

October 27 – 29: (**Professional Development**) Members of QEP Team, including Joyce Minton, Christy Earp, Nolan Belk, and Belinda Smithey attended Eastern Regional Competency-Based Education Consortium at Myrtle Beach, SC. Numerous workshops related to development, implementation, and assessment of QEP were attended.

Questions were placed on Instructor Evaluation forms to gather baseline data.

November 2004

November 2: **Leadership Team** met in Dr. Burns' office. Upcoming and future training was discussed along with other issues.

November 5: The first *Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking and the QEP* session was held with 35 administrators and the QEP Team. Dr. Woods, Dr. Atkins, and Connie Wolfe from Surry Community College led session about The Foundation of Critical Thinking Model. Belinda gave update on QEP and asked for questions.

November 12: **QEP Team** met. Three new members joined: Kim Faw, Marty Franklin, and Julie Mullis. Among issues addressed were: future and past training, student learning definition.

November 16: **Leadership Team** met.

December 2004

December 4 – 7: (**Professional Development**) Dean Spinkle, Cinnamon

Martin, Chad Bledsoe, and Belinda Smithey attended annual SACS meeting in Atlanta with Dr. Burns, Dr. Plexico, and Larry Caudill.

December 13: Memo went out from Dr. Burns office announcing luncheon and professional development activity, Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking scheduled for January 7. Individual invitations sent prior to email.

December 13: Chad Bledsoe attended Academic Council regarding collection of Fall 2004 artifacts from faculty for baseline data.

December 19: **Leadership Team** and others who attended SACS meeting met to share information and gain further direction.

Article about QEP appeared in Christmas issue of student newspaper.

January 2005

January 5: (**Professional Development**) QEP Team members: Cinnamon Martin, Julie Mullis, Eddie Carter, Nolan Belk, and Belinda Smithey attended session at Southwestern Community College conducted by Richard Paul of The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

January 7: Luncheon and **professional development** session, *An Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking*, held for Wilkes, Alleghany, and Ashe at John A. Walker Center. College offices were closed to allow all persons to attend. Attendance was 242 persons. Update and information given on QEP. QEP Team members and administrators served as facilitators at tables.

January 11: **Leadership Team** of Dr. Burns, Dr. Plexico, Dr. Sprinkle, and Belinda met to review recent training and other issues.

January 13: Belinda presented summary and update to **Board of Trustees**.

January 14: **QEP Team** met addressing goals, student outcomes, student learning, and assessment. Terminology and language of critical thinking used to conduct meeting.

January 15: Regular articles in **Open Line** began addressing questions raised at January 7 training. *Open Line* published bimonthly for all employees.

January 18: Correspondence began with 167 **adjunct faculty** through Campus Cruiser™ and departmental hardcopy notices for purpose of arranging *Introduction to the Basics* sessions at their convenience.

January 19: **Assessment Committee** met to develop guidelines for assessment of student learning.

January 28: **Implementation Committee** met to address professional development issues in 2006.

Work began on placing resource articles and materials regarding critical thinking on website for WCC.

February 2005

February 8: **Student Learning Definition** sub committee of Cinnamon Martin, Chad Bledsoe, and Belinda Smithey met to work out a definition based on suggestions submitted by Team members. Following definition was adopted: *Student Learning is the acquisition of the appropriate*

tools and information to construct and purposefully apply knowledge in the academic, professional, and personal areas of life.

February 9: **Leadership Team** of Dr. Burns, Dr. Plexico, Dr. Sprinkle, and Belinda Smithey met to review professional development training dates for 2006 as well as current and future adjunct training.

February 11: **Implementation Committee** met regarding professional development, Learning Circles, ACA, and poster awareness contest.

February 15: **Adjunct Training Sub-Committee** consisting of Julie Mullis, Joyce Minton, Wesley Poplin, Kim Faw, Dave Greenwood, and Belinda Smithey met to plan *Introduction to Basics Training* for adjuncts on three campuses.

February 25: Julie Mullis represented QEP at the **Faculty Senate** meeting to discuss recommended change in calendar to accommodate professional development in Spring and Fall of 2006.

Three separate **Goal Committees** began meeting in February and continued through April on revising goals, objectives, and strategies.

Input from all staff and faculty solicited in regards to 2006 calendar changes to accommodate professional development.

Article appeared in February issue of the **Cougar Cry**. Also placed on **Campus Cruiser™** for all students and personnel to view.

March 2005

March 2: Belinda attended **Academic Council** meeting to inform.

March 3: The first **Learning Circle** held with 7 participants.

March 14: **Adjunct Training** conducted at Wilkes campus from 6 to 8 pm. Kim Faw, Dave Greenwood, Belinda led 18 participants. .

March 16: **Learning Circle** with 9 participants (Wilkes campus).

March 17: *Learning Circle* with 8 participants.(Wilkes campus)

March 18: **QEP Team** met with **Goal Committees** presenting their objectives and other committees giving reports. Revised topic was adopted: **WCC will embrace critical thinking throughout the college community in order to enhance student learning.**

March 19: **Adjunct Training** conducted at Wilkes campus on Saturday morning. Joyce Minton, Wesley Poplin, Kim Faw, and Belinda led 20 adjuncts.

March 23: **Learning Circle** with 12 participants. (Ashe campus)
Learning Circle with 7 participants. (Wilkes campus)

March 23: **Assessment Committee** began meeting with individual goal committees. Goal 1 presented their information.

March 30: **Assessment Committee** met with Goal Committees 1 and 2.

March 31: **Learning Circle** with 3 participants. (Wilkes campus)

Total of 46 participants in March Learning Circles.

Goal Committees continued to regularly meet.

April 2005

Detailed QEP update placed on **CampusCruiser™** for all.

April 1: **ACA Redesign Committee** initial meeting under leadership of Cinnamon Martin. Committee composed of present ACA Instructors, past lead instructor, curriculum Division Chairs, interested QEP Team members, and prospective ACA instructors and interested persons. Course description developed for submission to state for approval.

April 6: **Assessment Committee** met with Goal 3.

April 7: **Leadership Meeting** between Belinda and Dean. Updates on training, conferences, and consultants discussed.

April 12: Belinda met with Dr. Byrd, Director of Learning Resources regarding designated QEP resource room. Space will be available in June.

April 13: **Assessment Committee** met with Goal 3.

April 18: **Learning Circle** with 11 participants. (Wilkes)

April 19: **Learning Circle** with 6 participants. (Wilkes)

April 19: **Leadership Meeting** between Belinda and Dean held on committee progress.

April 20: **Learning Circle** with 8 participants. (Wilkes)

Learning Circle with 9 participants. (Ashe)

April 21: **Adjunct Training** held during afternoon hours in cyber classroom on Wilkes campus and transmitted to Ashe and Alleghany Centers. Dave Greenwood, Julie Mullis, and Belinda conducted training in Wilkes (11 participants). Eddie Carter and Chris Robinson facilitated in Ashe (11 participants) while Jayne Boger-Phipps and Sherry Shaw facilitated in Alleghany (13).

April 21: Two Wilkes **Learning Circles** with 2 and 9 participants.

April 22: Scott Johnson met with Chairs of Goal, Assessment, and ACA Committees to finalize timeline.

April 25: **Learning Circle** with 13 participants (Wilkes).

Scott Johnson took over leadership of Implementation Committee in April.

May 2005

May 2: Dean and Belinda of the **Leadership Team** met.

May 3: Scott Johnson met with Chairs of Goal, Assessment, and ACA Committees to finalize timeline.

- May 6: **QEP Team** met and approved Timeline, Goals, and Objectives.
- May 18: **ACA Team** met and approved new course description and position description for fulltime ACA Lead Instructor.
- May 20: Belinda and Dean of the **Leadership Team** met.
- May 23: **Leadership Team** met regarding proposed positions and financial feasibility.
- May 25: **Learning Circle** with 11 participants (Wilkes).
- May 26: **Learning Circle** with 17 participants (Wilkes).
- June 2005
- June 16: Dean Sprinkle and Belinda met with chairpersons of four Curriculum divisions and Dean of Continuing Education to review goals and objectives of QEP.
- June 16: **Learning Circle** with 10 participants (Alleghany Center).
Topic: "Intellectual Empathy."
- June 20 and 21: **Professional Development** – All WCC personnel given opportunity to attend workshops presented on Surry CC campus by Gerald Nosich of The Foundation for Critical Thinking. Jayne Boger-Phipps, Kim Faw, Blair Hancock, and Belinda Smithey attended the 20th. Belinda Smithey, Kristen Macemore, Jeanne Griffin, and Arlene Handy attended 21st. Total of 7.
- June 21: **Learning Circle** with 7 participants (Ashe Center).
- June 28: **Learning Circle** with 8 participants (Wilkes).
- June 29: **Learning Circle** with 12 participants (Wilkes).
- July 2005
- July 6: Belinda attended Knowledge Coalition meeting hosted by Continuing Education on Wilkes campus
- July 8: Dean and Belinda met regarding draft of QEP.
- July 9 – 15: **Professional Development:** Scott Johnson, Julie Mullis, Cinnamon Martin, and Belinda Smithey attended International Conference on Critical Thinking in Berkeley, California. Belinda presented at concurrent session with Surry Community College.
- July 18: Dean and Belinda reviewed second draft of QEP.
- July 26: Dave Greenwood, Jan Huggins, Kim Faw, and Belinda reviewed and edited the QEP.
- August 2005
- QEP document revised and edited multiple times.
- August 4: Belinda did Introduction to the Basics session with 43 Basics Skills instructors and staff.
- August 5: Final draft sent to QEP Team members for review.
- August 11: QEP document sent to college at large for comments.

August 17: Update given at the professional development activity for all staff and faculty.

August 19: **Professional Development:** seven persons participated in a teleconference, "Booting up the Brain: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills."

August 22: **CT Scan** contest began.

August 23: Email sent to all adjunct faculty members informing about Introduction to Basics training and Learning Circles.

August 26: **QEP Team** met. See minutes.

August 29: **CT Scan** Question.
Learning Circles met at 2:00 (12 participants) and 3:00 (15 participants) (Wilkes).

August 30: **Learning Circles** met at 10 (27 participants) and 5:00 (12 participants) (Wilkes).
Dean and Belinda met with Scott Lakey to plan the Intranet site for the WCC QEP.

August 31: **Learning Circles** met at 12:00 (24 participants), 2:00 (17 participants), and 3:00 (12 participants) (Wilkes).

September 2005

September 1: Dr. Bryan Brooks met the Administration and QEP Team to assist in planning for the On-Site Visit.

Learning Circle / Introduction to the Basics Session was conducted by Belinda with 34 Child Development Center staff members at 6:30 pm (Wilkes).

September 2: **Learning Circle** met at 11:00 (12 participants).
Notices went out to Adjunct Faculty about training.

September 6: **CT Scan** Question.
Adjunct Training Committee met to prepare.

September 7: **Membership Committee** Meeting with Scott Johnson.

September 8: Group met to design QEP nametags.
New Employee and Adjunct Introduction to the Basics
Training session at Wilkes at 3:30.

September 9: **Learning Circle** (16 participants) (Ashe Center).

September 12: **CT Scan** Question.

September 13: **Introduction to the Basics** training session in Ashe with adjunct faculty and new employees (19 participants).

September 14: **Learning Circle** at 2:00 (22 participants) (Wilkes).

- September 15: **Introduction to the Basics** training session in Alleghany with adjunct faculty and new employees (9 participants).
- September 16: Belinda and Dean met in regards to plans for the On-Site visit. Belinda met with **Continuing Education** staff in regards to plans for training part-time instructors.
- September 17: **Introduction to the Basics** training on Wilkes campus on Saturday (4 participants).
- September 19: **CT Scan** Question.
Dean and Belinda met for further plans for visit.
Introduction to the Basics Training on Wilkes campus in evening at 6:00 (7 participants).
- September 20: **Learning Circle** with the Development Office (12 participants).
Learning Circles met at 2:00 (28 participants) and at 5:00 (8 participants) (Wilkes).
- September 21: **Learning Circle** met at 3:00 (10 participants) (Wilkes).
- September 23: **QEP Team** Meeting.
- September 26: **CT Scan** Question.
QEP Team group met from 2 – 4 to work on preparation for visit.
- September 27: Dr. Burns, Dean Sprinkle, B.J. Burcham, Angela Bond, Tom Caudill, Chad Bledsoe, and Belinda Smithy met to finalize logistics for the visit.

Learning Circle with the Facilities and Purchasing Staff (27 Participants) (Wilkes).
Learning Circle met at 2:00 (19 participants).
- September 28: **Learning Circles** met at 12:00 (30 participants) and at 3:00 (20 participants) (Wilkes).
- September 29: **Learning Circle** met at 2:00 (30 Participants) (Wilkes).
- October 2005
- October 3 – 5: The On-Site SACS visit.
- October 28: Members of the Assessment Committee attended Dr. Larry Kelley’s Training on assessment at Winthrop University.
- October 31: Membership Committee meeting.
- November 2005
- November 4: Membership Committee and Learning Circle Facilitator’s meetings.

CCTDI administered to random sample of WCC students.
- November 9: Campus-wide Audio Conference by Dr. Linda Suskie on *Teaching and Assessing Thinking Skills*.
- November 10 – 29: Learning Circles conducted in Wilkes and at Ashe Center.

December 2005	December 4 – 6:	Attendance at Commission on Colleges Annual Meeting in Atlanta.
	December 7:	The Assessment Committee met to analyze data from CCTDI and determined focus of truth seeking.
	December ?	ACA Re-design Subcommittee met and requested hiring of ACA Lead Instructor in Spring 2006.
	December 12:	The Professional Development and Learning Circles Committees met jointly.
	December 16:	The Assessment Committee met.
January 2006		Belinda Smithey and Jan Huggins working as QEP Co-Directors: Smithey continues as Lead Instructor/Sociology and Huggins appointed ACA Lead Instructor.
	January 11:	The Professional Development and Learning Circle Committees met jointly.
	January 13:	Learning Circle Facilitators' Training was held.
February 2006	February 27	QEP Co-Directors attend IDEA Seminar involving student motivation, effective grading and assessment, active learning, and course design.
April 2006	April 6 – 8	IEO and QEP Co-Director to attend NCSU Assessment Symposium.

Timeline for Implementation and Completion of the QEP

The following *Implementation Timeline* provides a detailed time frame for carrying out the goal, objectives, strategies, and assessment of the QEP. Responsible parties are designated for each action. The process has been and will continue to be recursive in nature.

QEP Implementation Timeline for Activities (August 2005–2011)

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2005 – 2006			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	New Employee	Fall 2005	QEP Professional Dev. Comm.
	Establish QEP Resource Room	Fall 2005	“ “ “ “
	Conduct Monthly Learning Circles	Fall/Spring	“ “ “ “
	Begin Learning Circle Facilitator Training	Jan. 2006	“ “ “ “
	IDEA Seminar on Student Motivation in Savannah	Feb. 26-28, 2006	QEP Co-Directors
	Begin Online Learning Circles	March 2006	QEP Co-Directors
	NCSU Training on Assessment IEO and QEP Co-Director	April 2006	QEP Co-Directors
	Training on Critical Thinking with Foundation of Critical Thinking/ Linda Elder: All Staff and Faculty attend two half-day sessions	May 17-18, 2006	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Training for WCC Experts with Foundation of Critical Thinking Linda Elder: ACA Instructors, Chairs, Pilot Project Instructors, QEP Team, and other interested and designated persons.	May 19-20, 2006	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Pilot Project Instructors, QEP Co-Directors	July 2006	QEP Professional Development Subcom.	
Display CT Posters throughout college	July 2006	QEP Professional Development Subcom.	
QEP Assessment	Determine Area of Greatest Student Need within CT: Administered CCTDI	November 2005	QEP Assessment Subcom. and IEO
	Administer CCTDI to group of graduates	May 2006	“ “ “ “
	Revise Employer Questionnaire for Student Work Exp.	Spring 2006	“ “ “ “
	Revise Employer Questionnaire for Post-graduate employers	Spring 2006	“ “ “ “
	Administer Employer Questionnaire for Student Work Exp.	Summer 2006	“ “ “ “
	Administer Employer Questionnaire for Post-graduate employers as baseline data	Summer 2006	“ “ “ “
Establish <i>Observation, Student Performance, and Assignment/Evaluation Rubrics</i>	Summer 2006	QEP Assessment Subcom. and QEP Co-Directors	
Communication	Regular Communication through <i>Open Line</i> , Outlook, <i>CampusCruise™</i> , and WCC Website	Fall/Spring	QEP Co-Directors
Instruction	Plan Pilot Project I Implementation	Spring/Summer	Pilot Project Instr. & QEP Co-Directors
	Redesign ACA 115 to reflect CT & Truth seeking	Spring/Summer	ACA Lead Inst. and ACA Subcom.

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2006 – 2007			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	New Employee/Adjunct QEP Orientation	Fall/Spring	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Conduct Learning Circles monthly	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Learning Circle Facilitator Training	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Training on Critical Thinking with Foundation of Critical Thinking/Linda Elder: General Focus on Elements and Standards/Faculty Focus on Syllabi with CT	October 12-13, 2006	“ “ “ “
	Training for WCC Experts with Foundation of Critical Thinking	October 10-11, 2006	“ “ “ “
	Introduction to Disposition to Use CT Training	Jan. Prof. Dev. Day	“ “ “ “
	In-house Training Sessions on Syllabi and Assessment	Spring 2007	“ “ “ “
	Assess Professional Development Activities and Learning Circles	On-going	QEP Team and Co-Directors
	Add to and monitor QEP Resource Room	On-going	QEP Team
	Display CT posters throughout college	On-going	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Training on Critical Thinking with Foundation of Critical Thinking Expert: Focus on Disposition	May 2007	“ “ “ “
	Training for WCC Experts with Foundation of Critical Thinking: Focus on Assessment	May 2007	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Pilot Project Instructors, ACA Lead Instructor	July 2007	“ “ “ “
QEP Assessment	Critique and Revise <i>Observation, Student Performance and Assignment/Evaluation Rubrics</i>	Fall 2006/ On-going	QEP Assessment Subcom & QEP Co-Directors
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot I ACA students and students in one ACA 111 class	August 2006	QEP Assessment Subcom. & IEO
	Revise Alumni Questionnaire to Reflect CT and TS	Fall 2006	“ “ “ “
	Assess Pilot I ACA Cohorts with Article Analysis and Course Content: Compare with Assessment of Same on ACA 111 Students	December 2006	ACA Instructors & QEP Assessment Subcom.
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot I Cohorts	January 2007	QEP Assessment Subcom. & IEO
	Assess Pilot I Project and ACA 115	Spring/Summer	Pilot/ACA Instructors, Assessment Subcom. & WCC Experts
	Conduct Alumni Survey with New Questionnaire	Summer 2007	QEP Assessment Subcom. & IEO
Administer CCTDI to Pilot I Cohorts	May 2007	“ “ “ “	
Communication	Keep Board of Trustees Informed about QEP Implementation	On-going	QEP Team
	Publish Regular Reports of Student Progress as Related to QEP	On-going	“ “
	Regular Communication through <i>Open Line</i> , Outlook, <i>CampusCruise™</i> , and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Co-Directors
	Provide WCC Communities with Information about Progress	On-going	QEP Co-Directors Public Information Off.

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2006 – 2007 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
Instruction	Pilot Project I Implemented with ACA 115	Fall 2006	ACA Lead Instructor
	Pilot Project I Implemented in Program Courses	Spring 2007	Pilot Project Instructors QEP WCC Experts
	Revise ACA 115 Based on Analysis	Spring 2007	ACA Lead Instructor, Pilot Instructors, QEP Experts
General College	Revise PEP to Reflect CT/TS	Fall 2006	QEP Team/IEO
	Policies Begin to Reflect CT/TS	On-going	Administration
	College Communication Reflects Language of CT/TS	On-going	All Responsible Parties
	Begin Observations of Employees Using CT/TS submitted to QEP Team	Fall 2006	All Personnel/QEP Team
	Individuals Set CT/TS Goals on PEP for Next Year	Spring 2007	All Personnel/ Supervisors

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2007 – 2008			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	New Employee/Adjunct Orientation	Fall/Spring	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Conduct Monthly Learning Circles	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Learning Circle Facilitator Training	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Training on Critical Thinking with Foundation of Critical Thinking: Focus on Development of Materials	October 2007	“ “ “ “
	Training on Development of Assignments and Evaluation for Faculty	October 2007	“ “ “ “
	Training for WCC Experts with Foundation of Critical Thinking	October 2007	“ “ “ “
	All Departments and Divisions Have a CT Expert	Fall 2007	“ “ “
	Add to and Maintain QEP Resource Room	On-going	QEP Team
	Train ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Training on Assessment Measures	Jan. Prof. Dev. Day	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Continual Assessment of Professional Development and Learning Circles	On-going	QEP Team Co-Directors
	Display CT Posters throughout college	On-going	QEP Professional Development Subcom.
	Training with Foundation of Critical Thinking	May 2008	“ “ “ “
Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Designated Personnel	July 2008	“ “ “ “	

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2007 – 2008 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
QEP Assessment	Critique and Revise Rubrics	Fall 2007	QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot II ACA Students and Students in one ACA 111	August 2007	QEP Assess. Subcom. & IEO
	Assess Pilot II ACA Cohorts with Article Analysis and Course Content: Compare with Assessment of Same on ACA 111 Students and Pilot I Cohorts	December 2007	ACA Instructors QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Analyze Submitted Syllabi	Fall 2007	Peer Groups, Assess. Subcom., Chairs, IEO, Learning Circles
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot II Cohorts	January 2008	QEP Assessment Subcom. & IEO
	Analyze Submitted Assignments and Evaluations and Compare to 2004 Artifacts	Spring 2008	Peer Groups, Assess. Subcom., Chairs, IEO, LC
	Utilize New or Revised Student Opinion Survey	Spring 2008	IEO
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot I Graduates	May 2008	QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Compare Student Performance Artifacts of Pilot Project I Cohorts to Non-Pilot Cohort Performance and to 2004 Artifacts	Summer 2008	QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Assess Pilot I Interdisciplinary Project Student Performance	Summer 2008	QEP Assess. Subcom. Pilot Project Instructors
	Administer Employer, Work Experience, and Alumni Surveys	Spring/Summer 2008	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO.
Communication	Keep Board of Trustees Informed about QEP Implementation	On-going	QEP Team
	Publish Regular Reports of Student Progress as Related to QEP	On-going	QEP Team
	Regular Communication through <i>Open Line</i> , Outlook, <i>CampusCruiser™</i> , and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Co-Directors
	Provide WCC Communities with Information about Progress	On-going	QEP Co-Directors Public Info. Officer
	Constant Presence of CT Emphasis on <i>Campuscruiser™</i> and WCC Website	Fall 2007 On-going	QEP Team Professional Development Subcom.
Instruction	Pilot Project II Implemented with ACA 115	Fall 2007	ACA Lead Instructor
	Pilot Project II Implemented in Program Courses	Spring 2007	Pilot Project Instructors QEP WCC Experts
	Continue Pilot Project I with Full Course Implementation	Fall/Spring	“ “ “ “
	Revise Pilot Project II and ACA 115 Based on Analysis Data	Spring/Summer	Pilot/ACA Instructors QEP Assess. Subcom. WCC QEP Experts
	Pilot Project I Capstone Courses Identified	Spring 2007	Pilot Project Instructors Division Chairs
	Faculty Submit One Syllabus each with CT Emphasis	Mid-Fall 2007	Faculty/Chairs and Dean of Instruction, QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Faculty Submit One Assignment and One Evaluation with CT/TS Emphasis	Mid-Spring 2008	“ “ “ “

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2007 – 2008 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
General College	Work Areas Meet to Identify CT/TS Emphasis for Year	August 2007	Supervisors/Admin of Each Area
	Individuals Report Goals and Accomplishments on PEP	Spring 2008	Personnel/Supervisors/ Administration
	Work Areas Assess Progress on Goals	Spring 2008	Supervisors/Admin of Each Area

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2008 – 2009			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	New Employee/Adjunct QEP Orientation	Fall/Spring	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.
	Conduct Monthly Learning Circles	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Learning Circle Facilitator Training	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Training on Critical Thinking with Foundation of Critical Thinking	October 2008	“ “ “ “
	Training for WCC Experts with Foundation of Critical Thinking	October 2008	“ “ “ “
	On-going Training on CT, Disposition, and Assessment	Fall/Spring	“ “ “ “
	Add to and Maintain QEP Resource Room	On-going	QEP Team
	Train ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Continual Assessment of Professional Development and Learning Circles	On-going	QEP Team Co-Directors
	Display CT Posters Throughout College	On-going	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.
	Training with Foundation of Critical Thinking	May 2009	“ “ “ “
Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Designated Personnel	July 2009	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.	
QEP Assessment	Analyze Interview Protocol and International CT Test Compare to 2004 Interview Results	Summer 2009	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Administer CCTDI to Pilot II Graduates	May 2009	“ “ “ “
	Compare Student Performance Artifacts of Pilot Project II Cohorts to Non-Pilot Artifacts and to 2004 Artifacts	Summer 2009	“ “ “ “
	Assess Pilot II Interdisciplinary Project Student Performance	Summer 2009	“ “ “ “
	Conduct Observations of ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor Qualified Peers
	Assess Courses Taught by Faculty	Spring 2009	Faculty, Chairs, QEP Experts, Learning Circles
	Conduct Classroom and Online Observations	Fall 2008	Chairs, QEP Experts, Chair of Distance Learning
	Student Opinion or Other Relevant Survey	Spring 2009	IEO

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2008 – 2009 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
Communication	Keep Board of Trustees Informed about QEP Implementation	On-going	QEP Team
	Publish Regular Reports of Student Progress as Related to QEP	On-going	QEP Team
	Regular Communication through Open Line, Outlook, CampusCruiser™ and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Co-Directors
	Provide WCC Communities with Information about Progress	On-going Fall 2008	QEP Co-Directors Public Info. Officer
	Constant Presence of CT Emphasis on <i>CampusCruiser™</i> and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Team Professional Dev. Subcom.
Instruction	ACA 115 Increases to 50% of all ACA Courses	Fall 2008	ACA Lead Instructor and ACA Instructors
	Administer Article Analysis to ACA 115 Students for Comparison to Prior Cohorts	Fall 2008	ACA Instructors
	Faculty complete Interview Protocol of 1997 California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in CT	Spring 2009	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Continue Pilot Project II Full Course Implementation	Fall/Spring	Pilot Project Instructors QEP WCC Experts
	Assess Pilot Project II	Fall/Spring	“ “ “
	Faculty Teach One Course with Full Emphasis on CT	Fall 2008	Faculty, Chairs, Dean of Instruction
	Identify Capstone Courses in Pilot Project II and all Programs	Fall/Spring	Faculty, Chairs
	Analyze Reflect, Review, and Revise Course Taught in Fall	Spring 2009	Faculty, Chairs, QEP Experts, Learning Circles
General College	Establish Advisory Groups	Fall 2008	QEP Team
	Work Areas Meet to Identify CT/TS Emphasis for Year	August 2008	Supervisors/Admin of Each Area
	Staff Complete International Critical Thinking Test	Spring 2009	QEP Assessment Comm. IEO
	Individuals Report Goals and Accomplishments on PEP	Spring 2009	Personnel/Supervisors Administration
	Work Areas Assess Progress on Goals	Spring 2009	Supervisors/Admin of Each Area
	Policies Reflect Emphasis on CT and Learning	On-going	Administration

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2009 – 2010			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	Student Orientation Video Represents CT 10%	Fall 2009	Student Services, QEP Prof. Dev. Subcom.
	New Employee/Adjunct QEP Orientation	Fall/Spring	QEP Professional Dev. Subcommittee
	Conduct Monthly Learning Circles	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Learning Circle Facilitator Training	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Ongoing Training on CT, Disposition, and Assessment and Related QEP Topics	Fall/Spring	“ “ “ “

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2009 – 2010 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
	Add to and Maintain QEP Resource Room	On-going	QEP Team
	Train ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Continual Assessment of Professional Development and Learning Circles	On-going	QEP Team Co-Directors
	Display CT Posters Throughout College	On-going	QEP Professional Dev. Subcommittee
	Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Designated Personnel	July 2010	QEP Professional Dev. Subcommittee
QEP Assessment	Administer CCTDI to Representative Sample of Incoming Students	Fall 2009	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Observation of ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Assess Course Syllabi and Compare to 2007 and 2004 Artifacts	Fall 2009	Peer Groups, Assess. Subcom., Chairs, IEO, Learning Circles
	Conduct Classroom and Online Observations	Fall 2009	“ “ “ “
	Administer Article Analysis and CCTDI to Random Sample ACA 115 Students for Comparison to Pilot Project Cohorts	Fall 2009	ACA Instructors, QEP Assessment Subcom.
	Administer CCTDI to Representative Sample of Graduates	Spring 2010	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Assess Capstone Course Projects	Spring 2010	Peer Groups, QEP Asses. Subcom.. Chairs, IEO, Learning Circles
	Utilize Student Opinion Survey Data to Analyze Impact of CT Focus on Student Learning	Spring 2010	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
Communication	Keep Board of Trustees Informed about QEP Implementation	On-going	QEP Team
	Publish Regular Reports of Student Progress as Related to QEP	On-going	QEP Team
	Regular Communication through <i>Open Line</i> , Outlook, <i>CampusCruiser™</i> , and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Co-Directors
	Provide WCC Communities with Information about Progress	On-going	QEP Co-Directors Public Info. Officer QEP Team
	Constant Presence of CT Emphasis on <i>CampusCruise™r</i> and WCC Website	On-going	Professional Development Subcom.
Instruction	All Course Syllabi Reflect Critical Thinking and truth seeking	Fall 2009	Faculty, Chairs, Dean of Instruction
	Instructors Develop Capstone Course Interdisciplinary Projects	Fall 2009	“ “ “ “
	Full Implementation of ACA 115	Fall 2009	ACA Lead Instructor, Chairs, Dean of Instruction
	All Course Contain a Minimum of One Assignment and One Evaluation Reflecting CT and TS	Spring 2010	Faculty, Chairs, Dean of Instruction

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2009 – 2010 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
General College	Advisory Groups Meet	Fall 2009	QEP Team
	Conduct Student Focus Groups	Fall 2009	QEP Team
	Work Areas Meet to Identify CT/TS Emphasis for Year	August 2009	Supervisors/ Admin of Each Area
	Individuals Report Goals and Accomplishments on PEP	Spring 2010	Personnel/Supervisors/ Administration
	Work Areas Assess Progress on Goals	Spring 2010	Supervisors/Admin of Each Area
	Policies Reflect Emphasis on CT and Learning	On-going	Administration

WCC QEP TIMELINE – FULL IMPLEMENTATION 2010 – 2011			
Area	Task/Activity	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Professional Development	New Employee/Adjunct QEP Orientation	Fall/Spring	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.
	Conduct Monthly Learning Circles	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Learning Circle Facilitator Training	On-going	“ “ “ “
	Ongoing Training on CT, Disposition, and Assessment and Related QEP Topics	Fall/Spring	“ “ “ “
	Add to and Maintain QEP Resources Room	On-going	QEP Team
	Train ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Continual Assessment of Professional Development and Learning Circles	On-going	QEP Team Co-Directors
	Display CT Posters Throughout College	On-going	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.
Training at International Conference on Critical Thinking in California: Designated Personnel	July 2011	QEP Professional Dev. Subcom.	
QEP Assessment	Administer CCTDI to Representative Sample of Incoming Students	Fall 2010	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Observation of ACA Instructors	Fall/Spring	ACA Lead Instructor
	Conduct Classroom and Online Observations	Fall 2010	ACA Lead Instructor
	Assess Article Analysis and CCTDI to Random Sample ACA Students	Fall 2010	ACA Instructors, QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Assess Capstone Course Projects	Spring/Summer	Instructors, QEP Assess. Subcom.
	Administer CCTDI to Representative Sample of Graduates	Spring 2011	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO
	Utilize Student Opinion Survey Data to Analyze Impact of CT Focus on Student Learning	Spring 2011	QEP Assess. Subcom. IEO

WCC QEP TIMELINE 2010 – 2011 (Continued)			
Area	Area	Area	Area
Communication	Keep Board of Trustees Informed about QEP Implementation	On-going	QEP Team
	Publish Regular Reports of Student Progress as Related to QEP	On-going	QEP Team
	Regular Communication through <i>Open Line</i> , Outlook, <i>CampusCruiser™</i> and WCC Website	On-going	QEP Co-Directors
	Provide WCC Communities with Information about Progress	On-going	QEP Co-Directors Public Info. Officer
	Constant Presence of CT Emphasis on CampusCruiser® and WCC Website	Fall 2007 On-going	QEP Team Professional Dev. Subcom.

In 2010, the college will submit a report summarizing progress of the QEP implementation, assessment of impact upon student learning, and identification of “next steps” to further quality enhancement of student learning at Wilkes Community College.

Qualified Individuals to Administer and Oversee Implementation

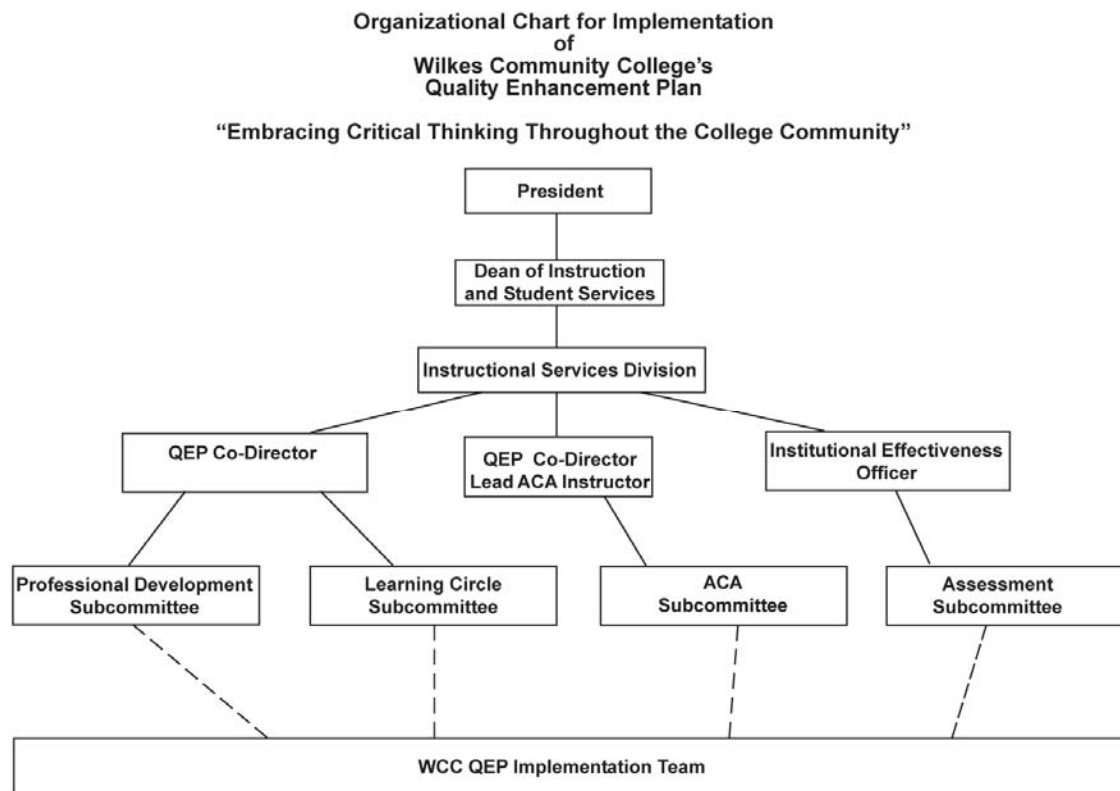
Wilkes Community College recognizes the need for strong leadership and institutional support for successful implementation of the QEP. To this end, the WCC Administrative Council has approved QEP Co-Director positions to coordinate and direct implementation of the QEP. Belinda Smithey serves as a Co-Director and chairs the subcommittee for Learning Circles and the Professional Development Subcommittee and remains Lead Sociology Instructor. She was instrumental in the total QEP effort, having led the college through the QEP process since January 2004. Jan Huggins began as QEP Co-Director and ACA Lead Instructor in January 2006. She chairs the ACA Subcommittee and will oversee the implementation of ACA 115 as it unfolds. Both Co-Directors lead the QEP Implementation Team.

Academic and Administrative Resources and Systems to Implement the Plan and Sustain Outcomes

Elder (2004) emphasizes the importance of the administration’s commitment in addition to its support in creating a college climate that places thinking at the heart of teaching. Elder indicates that to develop a deep and lasting interest, “. . . administrators must work their way slowly and methodically through the theory of critical thinking and apply it in their work and in their lives. Only then do they see it as the heart of teaching and learning. Only then can they begin to persuade others to take a similar interest in it” (p. 3). Wilkes Community College administration began demonstrating support and commitment to the process of moving to a critical thinking institution in November 2004. The first Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking session which targeted only administrators and the QEP Team resulted in an overwhelming response. Administrative support continued with the allocation of resources to sustain outcomes through creating QEP Co-Director positions to direct the WCC Quality Enhancement Plan.

The QEP Co-Directors administer and coordinate the activities with support of the broad-based QEP Implementation Team. In addition to the existing broad representation, the WCC QEP Implementation Team includes the ACA Subcommittee chair, the Institutional Effectiveness Officer (chair of the Assessment Subcommittee), and one or more members of the Learning Circles, ACA, Assessment, and Professional Development Subcommittees (Chart 1). Each of these subcommittees consists of a broad representation of the college at large, including all divisions/departments of faculty and staff. Team members serve as liaisons with their respective areas. A rotation schedule will be established to rotate present members off and bring new members onto the WCC QEP Implementation Team and related subcommittees. The rotation will begin in April 2006 with the WCC QEP Implementation Team and will be staggered to maintain a core of experienced members.

Chart 1: Organizational Chart for QEP



The QEP Co-Directors work closely with the Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Chair of Instructional Services and the Dean of Instruction and Student Services. They work with division chairs and work area supervisors in order to assist with implementation plans and attend Academic Council and/or Administrative Council meetings as needed. They serve as liaisons among all subcommittees and monitor activities and progress according to the QEP.

Assessment Subcommittee

The WCC QEP Assessment Subcommittee, headed by the Institutional Effectiveness Officer, is in charge of establishing, adopting, and putting into place the assessment of all parts of the QEP. Additional subcommittees will be established as needed. For example, although the entire committee will be responsible for establishing the critical thinking competencies that will be required, a subcommittee may be responsible for establishing assessment of the final projects in the designated courses. The Assessment Subcommittee will also be working with the newly established WCC General Education Competency Committee. Assessment Subcommittee members are part of the core group of extensively trained persons who will have a depth of critical thinking disposition and assessment.

Professional Development Subcommittee

The Professional Development Subcommittee, chaired by one of the QEP Co-Directors, is responsible for establishing the type and amount of professional development that is needed to fulfill the QEP. This subcommittee makes the arrangements for and determines the content of professional development activities. The Professional Development Subcommittee will also arrange adjunct and new employee orientation in regard to the critical thinking model. The subcommittee will coordinate activities with the WCC Distance Learning/Professional Development Chairperson. All professional development will have evaluation and assessment measures built in to monitor institutional transformation that is occurring as a result of the QEP.

Learning Circles Subcommittee

The Learning Circles Subcommittee, chaired by one of the QEP Co-Directors, includes persons from the Wilkes campus and the Ashe and Alleghany Centers who are trained as Learning Circle facilitators. Plans are for three groups of Learning Circle

facilitators to rotate through Learning Circles facilitation every third month. The responsibilities of the Learning Circles Subcommittee are to arrange, conduct, and evaluate the Learning Circles which are a vital part of succeeding in the transformational change being brought about by the QEP.

Monthly topics are established for Learning Circles, with some requiring preparation and others involving dissemination of information or stimulation of dialogue. To ensure broad access, multiple sessions are conducted at various times and on different days. Minutes are taken by the facilitators and participants complete an evaluation card at the end of the session. Minutes are posted on the in-house website and pertinent information is shared and acted on at the monthly Learning Circles meetings. The documentation related to Learning Circles is an example of future implementation and is informed through process measures.

ACA Subcommittee

The ACA Subcommittee is formed from the present ACA Redesign Committee. WCC is currently redesigning ACA 115 to eventually replace ACA 111. To further demonstrate the importance of ACA 115, WCC now has a Lead ACA Instructor who is responsible for overseeing the administration and implementation of the ACA component of the QEP. The ACA Redesign Subcommittee suggested in a December 2005 meeting that the Lead Instructor position be filled as soon as possible instead of waiting until Fall 2006. The QEP Co-Director/ACA Lead Instructor chairs the ACA Subcommittee which has representation from all instructional areas of the college. The Subcommittee is responsible for setting class objectives and devising a text. Once ACA 115 is underway, the ACA Subcommittee will assess instructional consistency and evaluate the course continuously.

Summary

Establishing the QEP Co-Director positions and addressing the structures described by Chaffee (1997) as essential elements of a successful critical thinking program, i.e., “faculty collaboration” (Learning Circles), “a well-designed and effectively taught critical thinking course” (ACA 115) and “a critical thinking curriculum” (Long-term Professional Development; pp. 17-18) provide the support and structure for successful implementation and transformation.

Financial and Physical Resources to Implement, Sustain and Complete the QEP

From the initial stages of development, the intent has been to strive for a QEP that is substantive but attainable. The college has approved funding for a QEP Co-Director and QEP Co-Director/Lead ACA Instructor and is committed to funding professional development activities for the QEP. The current plan requires a minimum of additional physical resources in the form of office space for the QEP Co-Director/ACA Lead Instructor. Expenditures through June 2005 are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: QEP Budget for July1, 2004 - June 30, 2005

2004-2005	
QEP Coordinator (prorated)	\$37,668
International Conference on Critical Thinking (\$2,906.50 x 2 attendees)	\$5,813
Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment	\$2,316
Travel to Surry Community College	\$30
Travel to Southwestern Community College	\$498
QEP Team-September Luncheon Meeting	\$72
Learner Centered Audio Conference	\$254
Eastern Regional Competency Based Education Conference (\$606.75 X 4)	\$2,427
Administration and QEP Team Introduction to Basics of Critical Thinking - November Luncheon Meeting	\$165
Assessment Conference-Virginia	\$687
SACS Annual Meeting (7 individuals)	\$4,473
Critical Thinking in the Classroom Conference-SWCC (4 individuals)	\$337
WCC Faculty/Staff Introduction to the Basics of Critical Thinking-Luncheon and Training	\$4,233
Training Notebooks	\$683
Adjunct Training (materials and refreshments)	\$283
SACS Off-Site Review Committee Expenses	\$2,300
Professional Development (Travel; Surry Community College)	\$53
SACS Publications	\$728
Cameras for Meeting Documentation	\$20
Foundation for Critical Thinking MiniGuides and Materials	\$1,756
Subtotal Salary	\$37,668
Subtotal Other Costs	\$27,128
Total 2004-2005	\$64,796

The college has funded professional development activities for the QEP Team members, provided compensation for adjunct faculty who attended a critical thinking professional development activity, and purchased critical thinking guides and notebooks

for all faculty and staff participating in training. The college is committed to funding additional training proposed for the current year throughout the implementation process.

Tables 2 – 5 provide budget summaries for academic years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. Training in critical thinking skills, disposition, and assessment will continue but the costs are expected to subside after the first three years of intensive training. The salaries for the QEP Co-Directors and ACA Lead Instructor will be integrated into the college's annual budget.

Table 2: Proposed QEP Budget for July1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

2005-2006	
QEP Co-Directors Salaries and Benefits	\$61,700
Training	
A. Adjunct and New Employee Training (Fall 2005)	
Adjuncts \$40 x 90 adjuncts	\$3,600
Notebooks and materials	\$200
B. The Foundation for Critical Thinking (May 2006)	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
International Conference on Critical Thinking (6 attendees @ \$1,600)	\$9,600
Materials (100 booklets-Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools; 400 Analytic Reasoning, 200 How to Improve Student Learning guides at ½ price)	\$850
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation-Spring 2006 (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
CCTDI Expense	\$2,000
IDEA Training	\$2,000
NCSU Assessment Symposium	\$920
Subtotal Salary	\$61,700
Subtotal Other Costs	\$46,134
Total 2005-2006	\$107,834

Table 3: Proposed QEP Budget for July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

2006-2007	
QEP Co-Directors Salaries and Benefits	\$93,000
International Conference on Critical Thinking (\$1,600 x 4 attendees)	\$6,400
Information Posters (200 Foundation posters @ \$3.00/each; 200 in-house produced posters @ \$2.00/each for classes and offices)	\$1,000
Training (Fall 2006) The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation Fall 2006 (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
Training (Spring 2007) The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation Spring 2007 (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
Training – January – Disposition	\$1,000
CCTDI Expense	\$800
Subtotal Salaries	\$93,000
Subtotal Other Costs	\$64,128
Total 2006-2007	\$157,128

Table 4: Proposed QEP Budget for July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

2007-2008	
ACA Co-Directors Salaries and Benefits	\$84,000
International Conference on Critical Thinking (\$1,600 x 4 attendees)	\$6,400
Training (Fall 2007) The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
Training (Spring 2008) The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
CCTDI Expense	\$1,500
Training – January - Assessment	\$750
Subtotal Salary	\$84,000
Subtotal Other Costs	\$64,578
Total 2007-2008	\$148,578

Table 5: Proposed QEP Budget for July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

2008-2009	
ACA Co-Directors Salaries and Benefits	\$85,800
International Conference on Critical Thinking (\$1,600 x 4 attendees)	\$6,400
Information Posters (200 Foundation posters @ \$3.00/each; 200 in-house produced posters @ \$2.00/each for classes and offices)	\$1,000
Training (Fall 2007)	
The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
Training (Spring 2008)	
The Foundation for Critical Thinking	\$8,564
Facilitator Expenses	\$1,200
Materials	\$500
Refreshments	\$2,200
Adjunct Compensation (\$100/each x 150)	\$15,000
CCTDI Expense	\$600
Training – January – Course Design	\$1,000
Subtotal Salary	\$85,800
Subtotal Other Costs	\$63,928
Total 2008-2009	\$149,728

CHAPTER 3: ASSESSMENT OF THE QEP

Means for Assessing Success of the QEP

The transition from a teaching-centered institution to a learning-centered institution is successful only to the extent that students “improve and expand learning” (*A Learning College for the 21st Century*, as cited in Wilson, 2002, p. 1), thus underscoring the importance of assessment of student learning. Demonstrating that learning occurs is, however, among the most challenging objectives facing institutions (Wilson).

Recognizing the challenges posed in identifying appropriate assessment, the WCC QEP Team has established an Assessment Subcommittee, one of four key subcommittees, to carry out this important aspect of the plan. The Assessment Subcommittee will be chaired by the Institutional Effectiveness Officer and will be made up of a representative group of faculty and staff. The QEP Co-Directors will work closely with the Institutional Effectiveness Officer and the Assessment Subcommittee in the development and adoption of assessment tools and in collection and analysis of data. While Bellack (2005) notes that “most faculty will agree that this process [critical thinking] is essential for graduates of their classes and college, little has been done to assess critical thinking other than traditional grades and teacher evaluation” (personal communication, June 15, 2005). Similar to Dr. Bellack’s institution, Trident Technical College, WCC will develop rubrics for assessing the work of students. Although Trident is still in the early stages, Dr. Bellack conveys confidence that this method will allow for assessment of student outcomes as well as improvement of teaching and learning. Bellack notes that this constitutes a paradigm shift in assessment, and that the process is evolving.

Similarly, Wilkes recognizes that assessment is a complicated process which will require much consideration in the development of sound practice. A *Student Performance Rubric* is currently under development. The intent is to use the rubric to view student work from the perspective of the WCC model of critical thinking which incorporates a more streamlined focus on truth seeking. WCC also recognizes the need

for a national measure and has adopted the CCTDI to assess disposition with Pilot Project students and also with random samples of students upon full implementation.

Internal Measures

Facione and Facione (1996) indicate that a wide variety of materials may potentially serve as evidence of students' critical thinking ability (p. 7). Paul and Elder (2005) indicate that classroom observations, assignments, syllabi, and student evaluations can constitute evidence of fostering critical thinking. To that end, evaluation of the QEP entails multiple measures and multiple types of measures, for both formative and summative purposes, e.g., gathering of artifacts (e.g., syllabi, assignments, and student papers); qualitative and quantitative data; and pre- and post-measures. Table 6 presents data sources for students, faculty, and staff in the assessment of progress for WCC's QEP goal, objectives, and strategies.

Table 6: Data Sources for Assessment

Student	Faculty	Staff
CCTDI in ACA 115 Pilot Programs (Pre, Post, and upon graduation)	Instructional Strategies and Modeling (Assessed by <i>Observation Rubric</i>)	Written Communication Observation Records completed by peers and supervisors
CCTDI (Random sampling)	Syllabi	Performance Enhancement Plans
Article Analysis in ACA 115	Assignments, Evaluations, and Projects (Assessed by the <i>Assignment/Evaluation Rubric</i>)	Minutes of Work Area Meetings
ACA 115 Portfolios		Student Opinion Instrument
Course Work Samples such as projects, papers, tests, and documentation of oral presentations (Assessed by the <i>Student Performance Rubric</i>)	Performance Enhancement Plan Goals Minutes of Divisional Meetings Planning and Monitoring Form	
Capstone Course Project	Student Evaluations	
Student Opinion Instrument	Student Opinion Instruments	
Work Experience Evaluations		
Employer Evaluations		
Alumni Surveys		

The WCC model of critical thinking originated from the analysis of data collected through both a nationally recognized inventory, the CCTDI, and WCC campus surveys.

As students progress through their courses, they will encounter not only the skills but instructors and staff who model the skills for them, thus encouraging students to make it a habit to practice truth seeking. The Student Learning Outcomes relate heavily to truth seeking and disposition.

Table 6 demonstrates that assessment efforts are directed at using multiple instruments to determine if students are increasing in critical thinking skills with a focus on truth seeking as well as the disposition to use those skills. Bers, McGowan and Rubin cite Jones and agree that “there also appears to be a general agreement that critical thinking comprises two main components, a cognitive component and a disposition to think critically” (p. 197). Student learning is the emphasis and WCC realizes that professional development and employee involvement are major avenues to ensure that student learning is enhanced. Therefore, a number of process measures have been included in the QEP to demonstrate WCC’s belief that faculty and staff involvement is critical to student learning. The *Strategic Implementation Document* (Appendix A) provides a detailed and organized view of the QEP in a Goal /Objective/Strategy/ Assessment Measure/Assessment Criteria format as adopted from Dr. Larry Kelley’s workshop at Winthrop University on assessment attended by six members of the QEP Team. Assessment is woven throughout the QEP; and as a result, WCC will know how the implementation process is proceeding and if changes need to be made within the timeline or strategies.

Pre-Implementation Data Collection Wilkes Community College has been proactive in anticipating the collection of data that can be used for post-implementation assessment. For example, a questionnaire, based upon an interview protocol used in a study entitled *California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations* (1997), was adapted to be administered to faculty. The *International Critical Thinking Test* assessment was adapted for staff use with permission from Linda Elder of The Foundation for Critical Thinking. The online administration allowed faculty and staff to respond anonymously to questions assessing knowledge of critical thinking. Data from this administration will be compared to data gathered after three years of professional development. The inventories will be assessed after a core group of faculty and staff is well versed in critical thinking fundamentals.

Similarly, baseline data have been collected for subsequent comparison to determine student familiarity with the language of The Foundation for Critical Thinking Model. These data were collected through faculty evaluations during the Fall of 2004. Data collected subsequent to full implementation of the QEP will be compared to the baseline data. Other baseline data collected Fall 2004 are artifacts gathered via random sampling and include course syllabi, assignments, and student papers. These artifacts will be compared to materials collected after implementation of the QEP. These artifacts will be assessed after a core group of faculty and staff is well versed in critical thinking and a rubric for evaluation has been developed.

Finally, *The Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory* (CCTDI) was administered to a stratified random sample of 270 students in Fall 2005 and it was determined that truth seeking was the lowest score (35.194) and thus the area of most need. According to Bers, McGowan and Rubin, “a score of 30 and below on any of the scales indicates consistent opposition or weakness in relation to the given attribute or characteristic, a score of 40 indicates minimal endorsement on average, and scores above 50 indicate consistent endorsement or strength of the given characteristic” (p. 199). The WCC critical thinking model incorporates truth seeking skills as well as the disposition or habit of using those skills. The CCTDI will be administered at intervals throughout the Pilot Projects and upon full implementation to compare student disposition to think critically as WCC transitions to a critical thinking institution.

External Measures

Consideration of external measures may include peer review from similar institutions, e.g., Surry Community College, with whom WCC has collaborated on critical thinking, or other institutions engaged in critical thinking initiatives. This may entail review of student artifacts, observation of a Learning Circle, and critical evaluations of policies to determine effective and accurate utilization of critical thinking. Additional external sources of evaluation may include the identification of benchmarks and/or normative data from critical thinking instruments selected for assessment, employer evaluations, and/or an external review committee. As part of the QEP, the

college will develop an advisory committee for evaluation, consisting of members from the current program advisory committees. These members, from business, industry, and public organizations external to the college, may serve as an external evaluation committee. The committee could also include representatives from the public schools and members of the Knowledge Coalition, a body working with the three-county service area on economic development issues. The WCC QEP Implementation Team and its Assessment Subcommittee will develop membership criteria and provide support and assistance to the committee.

Internal System for Evaluating and Monitoring the QEP

The *Strategic Implementation Document* (Appendix A) provides a detailed yet comprehensive view of strategy-specific intended outcomes, assessment measures and assessment criteria. Both student learning and process measures are included and will be used to inform the continuing and recursive implementation process. The timing of the assessment events is also incorporated in *The Implementation Timeline* in Chapter 2, page 44. Both the *Strategic Implementation Document* and *The Implementation Timeline* designate responsible individuals or groups for the internal evaluating and monitoring of the QEP.

Using Results to Improve Student Learning

“By and large, colleges are unable to say with any certainty whether students have learned what the professors are teaching. This is particularly true of abilities like critical thinking that develop across the confines of individual courses. Without knowing how well students have learned, the faculty finds it difficult to improve education in any purposeful way” (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2002, p. 18).

The implementation and assessment processes described thus far incorporate ongoing evaluation and analysis of multiple measures. The following is one example:

- CCTDI scores. If students do not improve as expected, we will revisit the teaching strategies, assignments, and evaluations of students. More emphasis will be placed on the part or parts which have the lowest scores. There may be a need to increase the number of items required within an assignment or evaluation which demonstrates a student’s use of critical thinking. ACA 115 may need to be revisited for examination of course structure and weight in the different areas of truth seeking. We may need

to evaluate the emphasis on critical thinking within service areas to encourage student responsibility. Another option will be to determine if lower scores exist within specific instructional areas and to examine the need for additional professional development in those areas. It may be necessary to review our professional development format and scheduling for adjustment.

- Course/Instructor Evaluations. These may be used to identify particular departments or groups of faculty who may not be incorporating critical thinking as expected. Evaluations will provide information about where more professional development is needed. Also, they will assist in identifying instructors who would serve well as mentors and/or experts. We will also learn about courses which are transitioning smoothly into the QEP focus.
- Capstone Projects. These provide information on student strengths and weaknesses as well as areas which need to be strengthened in the classrooms or in certain programs. For example, one curriculum may show strength in engaging in inquiry but weakness in examining assumptions. Capstone projects may also indicate particularly strong instruction which would inform the recruitment of mentors and/or experts.
- Employer Surveys. These provide information from an employer's perspective on student strengths and weaknesses. Additional needs related to critical thinking in specific disciplines and programs may be provided. This information provides crucial feedback from a community-based source.
- Student Opinion Surveys. These instruments gather information directly from students and may deal with both instruction and services. They provide valuable information from students' cognitive and affective domains. For example, students may respond to a question about whether or not they use critical thinking strategies in the classroom. They may also be asked whether or not they encounter a visual emphasis on critical thinking throughout campus. Information from the student opinion surveys can be used to review professional development, instruction, physical learning environment, and services. This may provide information about both strengths and weaknesses in specific instructional or service areas.

Having a strong, multi-faceted plan for QEP assessment, as previously outlined, positions WCC for continual evaluation of the learning process and provides a means for improvement. The full report on the comprehensive assessment measures and criteria related to the goal, strategies and intended outcomes is located in *The Strategic*

Implementation Document in Appendix A. Assessment is woven throughout the QEP and includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Both WCC's institutional change process and student learning are assessed in the cognitive and affective domains. The assessment process allows WCC to gather, analyze, and review all data to inform continued implementation.

CHAPTER 4: BROAD-BASED INVOLVEMENT

Development of the QEP

The process of developing the Wilkes Community College QEP began in January 2004, with the college's QEP Leadership Team attending the orientation meeting sponsored by the Commission on Colleges for institutions scheduled for reaffirmation in 2006. The Leadership Team, consisting of the President; the Dean of Instruction; the Dean of Student Services and SACS Liaison; and a lead instructor designated as QEP Coordinator, attended the meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 30, 2004.

Following the orientation meeting, the Leadership Team progressed through these steps:

- Conducted presentations to campus groups, including Administrative Council, Academic Council, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and all divisions, informing personnel of the QEP concept;
- Formed a broad-based QEP Team, with subcommittees for implementation and assessment;
- Developed and administered a campus-wide survey derived from the *WCC Purpose and Vision 2010 Statements*, that afforded an opportunity for all students and all full- and part-time faculty and staff to identify the area of greatest need for enhancing student learning;
- Analyzed the survey data and identified Educational and Intellectual Growth and the Learning Environment as the areas of greatest significance;
- Affirmed the QEP Team's selection "**Wilkes Community College will embrace critical thinking throughout the college community in order to enhance student learning**" as the QEP topic.

The broad-based QEP Team consists of representatives from the Wilkes campus and Allegheny and Ashe Centers including: the college's four academic divisions, college alumni, Basic Skills, Continuing Education, Faculty Senate, Institutional Effectiveness Office, WCC Library, students, Staff Council, Student Services, and Student Support Services (Table 7). Team members serve as liaisons with respective areas of the college which ensures that all employees are informed of progress on the QEP and provides input from colleagues into the process.

Table 7: QEP Team Membership

Belinda Smithey	QEP Coordinator and Lead Sociology Instructor
Nolan Belk	Chair, e-Learning and Professional Development/English Instructor
Chad Bledsoe	I E Officer/BPST Division Chairperson
Eddie Carter	Industrial Maintenance Instructor–Ashe Center
Cynthia Colbert	Student
Christy Earp	Librarian
Kim Faw	Director of Student Support Services
Marty Franklin	Lead Business Administration Instructor
David Greenwood	Coordinator of Computer Writing Center and Developmental English Instructor
Blair Hancock	Chair, Arts and Sciences
Jan Huggins	Lead Human Services Technology Instructor
Tom Ingledue	Lead Biology Instructor
Scott Johnson	Student Activities Coordinator/Counselor
Cindy Killian	Lead Accounting Instructor
Tim Lackey	Lead Architectural Technology Instructor
Kristen Macemore	Computer Information Systems Instructor
Cinnamon Martin	Psychology Instructor
Joyce Minton	Lead Medical Assisting Instructor
Julie Mullis	Lead English/Humanities Instructor/Faculty Senate Representative
Karen Perry	Alumnus
Wesley Poplin	Director of Community Services/Staff Council Representative
James Redmon	Student
Beth Reynolds	Coordinator of Developmental Education
Sherry Shaw	Business Instructor/Alleghany Center
Dean Sprinkle	Dean of Student Services/SACS Liaison
Debbie Woodard	Director of Basic Skills

Following the initial information meetings and formation of the broad-based QEP Team, a survey was developed by the team to gather input from students, faculty, and staff. Deriving the survey from the *WCC Purpose Statement* (Appendix B) and the *WCC Vision 2010 Statement* (Appendix C) complement the institution’s ongoing planning and evaluation process. Analysis of the survey data identified "Educational and Intellectual Growth" and the "Learning Environment" as the areas of greatest significance. QEP

Team members researched these topics to identify relevant best practices, professional development activities, potential consultants, and assessment methods. A review of research findings led to the identification of a topic to address the areas of greatest significance. Reflecting the college and community values to prepare the citizens of the three-county area for productive and successful lives, the QEP Team selected the topic of embracing critical thinking. Subcommittees were formed to develop goals, objectives, and implementation and assessment strategies, resulting in the detailed *Strategic Implementation Timeline* in Appendix A. Additional subcommittees addressed development of the revised ACA course and professional development for adjunct faculty. To illustrate the ongoing evolution of the QEP, further broad-based development took place between October 2005 and March 2006. Upon review by the Assessment Subcommittee, the Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Instructional Services Division Chair, and the Dean of Instruction and Student Services, the disposition and truth seeking elements were added to the QEP. Due to the recursive nature of this process, further revision is anticipated. This revision will take place through the broad-based systems in place.

Development of the QEP: Faculty, Staff, Student, Board, and Administrator Involvement

Beginning with information sessions initially held with faculty and staff by division or functional area, the QEP process has been inclusive. Consistent with Brookfield's (1997) conviction that total involvement of personnel in learning and utilizing critical thinking strengthens the impact upon student engagement in critical thinking, the QEP Team defined the issue as one for the entire college, not just for faculty. Membership of the QEP Team was structured to ensure representation from all academic divisions and all functional areas of the college, including representation of two off-campus centers, as well as students and an alumnus. Data collection for selection of a QEP topic was obtained through surveys. Surveys were administered such that all students, faculty, and staff were afforded an opportunity to respond. Surveys were obtained from 1,253 students, 89 faculty, and 34 staff, which provided input from a cross-section of the college community.

During the formative phase of the QEP, the majority of administrators, faculty and staff, including adjuncts, have been introduced to the basics of the selected critical thinking model. Senior administrators, division chairpersons, and directors participated in an introductory session on critical thinking in November 2004. This was followed by a professional development session for all full-time faculty and staff in January 2005 with 242 persons in attendance. Adjunct training followed in March and April 2005 with 73 being trained. By September 2006, 122 of 167 adjuncts participated in Introduction to Basics of the QEP and Critical Thinking Sessions.

The QEP has involved a large number of individuals in a variety of teams and subcommittees including these: Learning Circles; Definition of Student Learning; ACA Redesign, Adjunct Training, Leadership Team, Assessment, Implementation, Best Practices, Professional Development, Comparable Institutions, Identification of Consultants, and three Goal Teams.

Faculty, staff, and students are kept apprised of progress in the development of the QEP via ongoing publication of articles in the *Open Line* (WCC employee newsletter), CampusCruiserTM (WCC web portal for students, faculty, and staff), WCC student newspapers, and the WCC website. QEP Team members serve as liaisons with respective areas of the college, ensuring that others are informed of progress on the QEP and providing input from colleagues into the process. Throughout the development phase, individuals were invited and encouraged to give input. CT Scans, weekly and sometimes daily contests, were run six weeks prior to the on-site visit to engage personnel in an information blitz. The WCC Board of Trustees has been apprised of the QEP process through presentations made to the Board on July 8 and September 23, 2004, and January 13, April 14, and July 28, 2005. The WCC Board of Trustees and the local public school boards were also represented at the January 2005 faculty and staff critical thinking training session.

Continued Involvement

Barr and Tagg (1995) state that the learner is the primary agent in a learning college. As WCC integrates critical thinking into the institutional culture, it will in turn be moving towards an institution with a learning, rather than a teaching, paradigm. The learners will not only be students, but faculty and staff as well. Not only will students become active in constructing their knowledge, but all facets of the college community will be engaged. “What if,” as stated by Kopp (2005), “we were to view critical thinking as a cipher, an operating system, for navigating the labyrinth of learning and educating students for the future, how would that perspective change/influence our thinking about our institution” (Presentation at the 2005 International Critical Thinking Conference)? As the QEP topic evolves, the college perceives a range of possible implications from this transition, including development and/or revision of policies, implementation of new techniques for instruction, more active roles for students as learners and constructors of knowledge, alternative ideas for facilities, and improvement in communication on all levels.

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APPENDIX A – STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENT

Goal: Increase students' disposition to use critical thinking in their academic, professional, and personal lives.

OBJECTIVE 1: Create a common understanding of critical thinking foundations throughout WCC.

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>1. Provide ongoing professional development for faculty, staff, and adjuncts to learn a common language, a disposition to use, and assessment of critical thinking.</p> <p>A. Provide semi-annual training and intermittent WCC led sessions for faculty, staff, and adjuncts conducted by experts and with a focus on both critical thinking concepts and critical thinking disposition</p> <p>B. Provide faculty training to assist in the design and implementation of various assessment tools for measuring student learning as related to critical thinking.</p>	<p>WCC personnel will learn about critical thinking, disposition, and assessment as it relates to the QEP</p> <p>A. Faculty and staff will learn the elements and standards of critical thinking within a common language and will understand and model the disposition to use critical thinking</p> <p>B. Faculty will accurately assess student learning related to critical thinking.</p>	<p>Multiples measures involving oral and written communication as well as attendance records</p> <p>1. Group activities and practice during the training.</p> <p>2. Evaluations of training sessions based on self-assessment of understanding the elements and standards.</p> <p>3. The <i>International Critical Thinking Test</i> will be administered to staff in 2009 to assess understanding.</p> <p>4. <i>Interview Protocol of the 1997 California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking</i> will be administered to faculty in 2009 to assess understanding.</p> <p>5. Performance Enhancement Plans will reflect employee use of critical thinking and its disposition.</p> <p>B. Instructor measurement tools, self assessments during training, and observation</p>	<p>Continuous assessment of professional development activities will indicate increased use and knowledge of critical thinking, disposition, and assessment.</p> <p>1. Observations by experts will validate understanding</p> <p>2. Review of evaluations by QEP Assessment Committee will assess mastery of concepts</p> <p>3. Analysis of results from the 2004 and the 2009 administered <i>International Critical Thinking Tests</i> should reflect improvement in critical thinking skills.</p> <p>4. Analysis of results from the 2004 and the 2009 administered <i>Interview Protocols of the 1997 California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking</i> should reflect improvement in critical thinking skills.</p> <p>5. Employees and their supervisors document on annual Performance Enhancement Plans specific illustrations of modeling critical thinking, habits of mind, and behaviors which reflect the disposition to use critical thinking.</p> <p>B. Submitted rubrics and measurement tools will meet the standards as determined by the QEP Assessment Committee.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>C. Utilize Learning circles which are delivered both face-to-face and online to further the understanding of critical thinking as well as encourage community among WCC employees</p> <p>D. Provide professional development through WCC's written communication channels including <i>The Open Line</i>, <i>Outlook</i>, and <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM.</p> <p>E. Provide professional development through access to journal articles, minutes, and other written resources on the QEP website.</p>	<p>Faculty, staff, and adjuncts will learn the elements and standards of critical thinking within a common language.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Circle attendance increases. 2. Facilitators for Learning Circles are trained. 3. Learning Circles applicable equally for faculty, staff, and adjuncts continue. 4. Online Learning Circles are developed and utilized. <p>Employees are kept informed of the current training sessions, occurrences, and updated information.</p> <p>E. Employees will be informed of recent developments and relevant information about critical thinking, its foundations, and QEP related topics.</p>	<p>Evaluation forms at the conclusion of each Learning Circle.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance records. 2. Number of facilitators trained. 3. Evaluation forms and number of sessions conducted. 4. Participation rates on line. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP updates appear in <i>Open Line</i> bi-monthly. 2. Adjuncts receive the same information through <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM that fulltime faculty and staff receive. 3. Learning Circles are published in the <i>Open Line</i>, <i>Outlook</i>, and <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM. 4. All professional development training sessions are publicized through all three channels. <p>E1. Number of "hits" to the QEP website. E2. QEP information available on website.</p>	<p>Learning Circles maintain and/or increase in their ratings of usefulness, relevance, and flow of information.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Circle attendance will increase 25% from Jan. 2006 to Jan 2007 and increases and/or maintains in subsequent years. 2. Facilitators representing each division and department are trained by Fall 2008. 3. Number of sessions held increases due to increased demand. 4. Participation rates online increase. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications will be timely. 2. Communications will be current. 3. Communications will be accurate <p>E1. Resource use will increase 20% each year after the initiation of the website in Fall 2006. E2. Information is current and accurate.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>F. Provide professional development through the establishment and management of a QEP Resource Room in the WCC Library.</p> <p>G. Provide professional development to new employees and adjuncts Fall and Spring semesters of each year beginning Spring 2006.</p>	<p>F. Employees will have access and the ability to contribute and exchange materials to assist in the implementation of the QEP.</p> <p>G. New employees and adjuncts will be informed of WCC's QEP and receive training in the common language, disposition, and assessment of critical thinking.</p>	<p>F1. Documentation of visits to and the use of materials in the QEP Room.</p> <p>F2. Collection of QEP related materials and resources.</p> <p>G1. Documentation of training sessions.</p> <p>G2. Group activities and practice during the training.</p> <p>G3. Evaluations of training sessions based on self assessment of understanding the elements, standards, disposition, and assessment of critical thinking.</p>	<p>F1. Use of the Resource Room will increase 20% each year after the initial implementation year beginning Fall 2006.</p> <p>F2. Collection of materials reflecting CT skills, disposition, and assessment will grow according to library records.</p> <p>G1. Training sessions are held Fall and Spring semesters.</p> <p>G2. Observation by experts</p> <p>G3. Continuous assessment of professional development activities will indicate increased use and knowledge of critical thinking, disposition, and assessment skills.</p>
<p>2. Establish a panel of critical thinking experts within WCC.</p>	<p>WCC will have experts and mentors in all areas and departments throughout the college.</p>	<p>Number of experts.</p>	<p>2. All areas and departments will have a minimum of one expert by Fall 2008.</p>
<p>A. Provide additional training conducted by external experts for Pilot Project Instructors, ACA Instructors, QEP Team, Division Chairs, and other interested and designated persons.</p>	<p>A. WCC experts will have participated in training and knowledge beyond that offered for all WCC employees</p>	<p>A. Records of training attended</p>	<p>A. Experts shall participate all training with the Foundation of Critical Thinking and 90% of other offered training</p>
<p>3. Provide students with introductory and ongoing visual exposure to critical thinking.</p>	<p>Students will indicate a strong awareness of critical thinking.</p>	<p>Student Survey</p>	<p>50% of students will indicate a strong awareness of critical thinking on Student Survey beginning 2007 with a 10% increase in subsequent years.</p>
<p>A. Introduce the QEP focus on critical thinking in "new student" orientation video.</p>	<p>A. Video will communicate critical thinking focus</p>	<p>A. Orientation video.</p>	<p>A. 10% of the student orientation video is designated to critical thinking as of 2009.</p>
<p>B. Publish informational articles through the student newspapers and in the Student Handbook..</p>	<p>B. Student newspaper will communicate critical thinking focus</p>	<p>B. Student newspaper articles.</p>	<p>B. Newspaper articles will accurately and regularly contain articles about critical thinking</p>
<p>C. Display posters in classrooms and other areas.</p>	<p>C. Posters will communicate critical thinking focus</p>	<p>C. Posters.</p>	<p>C. Posters are displayed in all classrooms, work areas, and buildings beginning 2006.</p>
<p>D. Post critical thinking information on <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM and WCC website.</p>	<p>D. Electronic media will communicate critical thinking focus</p>	<p>D. Postings on <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM and WCC website.</p>	<p>D. Constant presence of critical thinking emphasis on <i>CampusCruiser</i>TM and WCC website beginning Fall 2007.</p>

OBJECTIVE 2: Implement practices to increase students’ disposition to use critical thinking.

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>1. Identify greatest student need, in regard to critical thinking.</p> <p>A. Develop an institutional <i>Student Performance Rubric</i> based on Student Learning Outcomes to measure critical thinking behavior and skills with an emphasis on truth seeking for use in Fall 2006.</p> <p>2. Implement critical thinking with a focus on truth-seeking in phases beginning with Pilot Projects in order to receive data for improvement toward full implementation.</p> <p>A. Implement Pilot Project I 2006 – 2008 with three academic programs to begin the introduction of students to critical thinking foundations with a focus on truth seeking skills and behaviors.</p>	<p>WCC will have reliable measures in order to develop a critical thinking focus.</p> <p>A. The Student Performance Rubric will accurately measure critical thinking based on the learning outcomes</p> <p>The phased implementation of the critical thinking focus will provide data based on student learning outcomes for informed analysis and any corrective measures in order to refine and improve full implementation.</p> <p>A. Pilot Project I will provide information for continuous assessment in order to confirm the direction of implementation and/or to adjust the direction, focus, and timeline of future implementation</p>	<p>1. <i>California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory</i>.</p> <p>A. Institutionally designed rubric to measure student performance.</p> <p>Observation, review of assignments, evaluation instruments and other course documents</p> <p>Process Measures for Pilots I and II</p> <p>A1. Course Syllabi</p> <p>A2. Assignments</p> <p>A3. Course Evaluation Measures</p>	<p>1. Representative random sampling of the student body in Fall 2005, demonstrated students’ greatest need to be truth-seeking skills and behaviors. (*TRUTH SEEKING is defined as: <i>A courageous desire for the best knowledge, even if such knowledge fails to support or undermines one’s preconceptions, beliefs or self interests.</i> California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory, California Academic Press).</p> <p>A. Rubric will be validated and revised through the Pilot Projects in order to accurately measure student learning outcomes.</p> <p>The QEP Assessment Committees and Co-Directors, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Division Chairs, and Dean of Instruction will provide Pilot instructors with support and opportunities for continuous review. These groups and the Pilot Project instructors will participate in the quantitative analysis of process and outcomes.</p> <p>Process Criteria for Pilots I and II</p> <p>A1. Syllabi will reflect language of critical thinking with emphasis on truth seeking behaviors and skills beginning with Pilot Project I in Spring 2007 and Pilot Project II in Spring 2008.</p> <p>A2. Each course assignment will require a minimum of one truth seeking element beginning with Pilot Project I in Spring 2007 and Pilot Project II in Spring 2008.</p> <p>A3. Each course evaluation measure will contain a minimum of one truth seeking element beginning with Pilot Project I in</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>B. Review and assess Pilot Project I for data to inform Pilot Project II and professional development decisions.</p> <p>C: Implement three additional academic programs as Pilot Project II 2007 – 2009 based on best practices and data gained from Pilot Project I. At the conclusion of Pilot Project II, every instructional division and site will have participated through a pilot project in instruction using the critical thinking focus and will have a mentor and/or expert.</p> <p>D: Review and assess Pilot Project II for data to inform full implementation and professional development decisions.</p>	<p>B. Pilot Project II and future implementation will be based on Pilot Project I data</p> <p>C. Pilot Project II will provide information for analysis and review in order to inform full implementation</p> <p>D. Pilot Project II data indicate improved student and process performance over Pilot Project I.</p>	<p>A4. Instructional modeling of truth seeking behavior</p> <p>A5. Establishment of the <i>Observation and Assignment/Evaluation Rubrics</i></p> <p>A6. Capstone Course and interdisciplinary project.</p> <p>B. Multiple Measures including but not limited to.....</p> <p>C. Measures similar to Pilot Project I (See Objective 2, Strategy 2A above)</p> <p>D. Multiple Measures</p>	<p>Spring 2007 and Pilot Project II in Spring 2008.</p> <p>A4. Each Pilot Project instructor will be observed for modeling critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors based on the <i>Observation Rubric</i>. The results of the observation will be shared with the instructor and the data will be used to review the rubric.</p> <p>A5. The Pilot Projects will assist in the establishing the validity of the <i>Assignment/Evaluation Rubric</i>. Continuous data from Pilot Project I through Pilot Project II will be used to critique the rubric and revise if necessary.</p> <p>A6. Capstone Course Interdisciplinary projects will reflect general competencies and QEP Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>B. The QEP Team and Committees, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Division Chairs, Dean of Instruction, and Pilot Instructors will maintain regular communication for the purpose of using the data gathered in both Pilot I and then Pilot II to make decisions about future implementation.</p> <p>C. Criteria similar to Pilot Project I (See Objective 2, Strategy 2A above)</p> <p>D. Pilot Project II students will score at or above Pilot I Project students on measurements on <i>Assignment/Evaluation and Observation Rubrics</i> are at or above those in Pilot I.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>E. Focus on the adopted Student Learning Outcomes throughout the implementation process.</p>	<p>Student Learning* Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue best information 2. Examine underlying assumptions 3. Engage in inquiry 4. Analyze different points of view <p>*WCC defines Student Learning as: the acquisition of the appropriate habits, skills, and information to construct and purposefully apply knowledge in the academic, professional, and personal areas of life.</p>	<p>Student Learning will be assessed through multiple instruments based on these Student Learning Outcomes which are applicable to the Pilot Projects, full implementation, and ACA.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The <i>California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory</i> Measure: administered at the beginning of ACA 115, at one year, and again upon graduation. 2. Course assignments. 3. Course evaluation measures 4. Interdisciplinary projects in capstone courses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The amount of exposure to critical thinking skills and disposition correlates with scores on the CCTDI. 2. Graduating students in 2011 will demonstrate a significant difference of 3 points on the truth seeking scale of the CCTDI compared to graduates in 2006. 3. Pilot Cohorts and subsequent students who have successfully completed at least four courses with a critical thinking emphasis will have higher scores on the Student Performance Rubric as compared to students in non-pilot courses and students whose assignments/evaluations were collected in 2004. 4. Pilot Cohorts will score satisfactory or above on <i>Student Performance Rubrics</i> on interdisciplinary projects in the capstone courses.

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>3. Introduce WCC students to the concept of critical thinking and truth seeking in ACA 115</p> <p>A. Redesign ACA 115 to reflect critical thinking and truth seeking.</p> <p>B. Conduct specialized training for ACA instructors on critical thinking skills, disposition, and modeling conducted by ACA lead instructor and others.</p> <p>C. Enroll Pilot Project students in ACA 115 within their first 13 hours of instruction at WCC and continue the practice with identified students through full implementation.</p> <p>1. Pilot newly designed ACA 115 in Pilot Project I beginning Fall 2006.</p> <p>2. Pilot newly designed ACA 115 with a group of general students for data comparison to the current ACA 111 Fall 2006 and Spring 2007.</p> <p>3. Pilot improved ACA 115 in Pilot Project II beginning Fall 2007.</p> <p>4. Increase offering ACA 115 to 50% of ACA course offerings Fall 2008.</p> <p>5. Replace all current ACA 111 courses with ACA 115 Fall 2009.</p>	<p>Students will know and be able to apply critical thinking skills</p> <p>A. ACA will primarily focus on critical thinking plus meet institutional requirements</p> <p>B. ACA instructors will demonstrate consistency and quality throughout all ACA classes.</p> <p>C. Student critical thinking disposition and skills plus student retention and completion rates will improve in both ACA and other courses.</p>	<p>Multiple measures of process and student learning with an emphasis on truth seeking.</p> <p>Process Measures:</p> <p>A. State and institution requirements.</p> <p>B. Instructors and instructional methods will continually be assessed for data towards improvement with the <i>Observation Rubric</i>.</p> <p>C. Student Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Critical thinking and Truth seeking behavior and skills. Course content knowledge. <i>California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory</i>. Course assignments Course evaluations Retention rates in ACA 115. Article analysis exercise. International Critical Thinking Test 	<p>D. The process and student learning as a result of redesigned ACA 115 will be assessed with criteria below.</p> <p>Process Criteria:</p> <p>A. The Curriculum Committee, QEP ACA Committee, and The Academic Council will approve the ACA 115 course design and refinements.</p> <p>B. ACA instructors will score satisfactory or above on <i>Observation Rubric</i> that assesses the modeling of critical thinking and truth seeking behavior.</p> <p>C. Student Criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students who complete ACA 115 with a C or above will score an overall higher score than students who complete ACA 111 with a C or above on an article analysis exercise at the end of the course that is scored with the <i>Student Performance Rubric</i>. Students who complete ACA 115 with a C or above will score an overall higher score than students who complete ACA 111 with a C or above on evaluations of course content. Students who complete ACA 115 with a C or above will score higher on the truth seeking scale of the CCTDI than students who completed ACA 111 when inventoried at the beginning of the semester following ACA. Graduating students who completed ACA 115 with a C or above will demonstrate a significant difference of 3 points on the truth seeking scale of the CCTDI from entry to graduation. Student growth in accomplishing the ACA objectives will be demonstrated in the ACA 115 portfolio as determined by the ACA instructor and random sampling of

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>4: Implement critical thinking and truth seeking in phases throughout WCC instructional divisions.</p> <p>A. Require faculty to develop and submit one course syllabus by mid-semester Fall 2007 designed to increase student's disposition to use critical thinking with a focus on truth seeking.</p> <p>B. Require faculty to develop and submit one assignment and one evaluation by mid-semester Spring 2008 designed to increase student's disposition to use critical thinking with a focus on truth seeking.</p> <p>C. Require faculty to teach one course with syllabi, assignments, and evaluations focused on engaging students in critical thinking and truth seeking Fall 2008.</p>	<p>Student knowledge and use of critical thinking skills and behavior as well as the disposition to use critical thinking will increase as a result of instruction.</p> <p>A. Syllabi will reflect language of critical thinking.</p> <p>B. Assignments and evaluations will require students to use critical thinking skills</p> <p>C. Instructors will model critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors and expect students to increase critical thinking behaviors.</p>	<p>Multiple Assessment Measures including but not limited to.....</p> <p>4. Process Assessment</p> <p>A. Course syllabi</p> <p>B. Course assignments and course evaluation measures</p> <p>C. Observations</p>	<p>student portfolio artifacts by the QEP Assessment Committee.</p> <p>6. Student retention rates in ACA 115 will increase over ACA 111 rates.</p> <p>Multiple measures will be analyzed by the QEP Co-Directors, Assessment Committee, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Chair of Instructional Support, Division Chairs, and Dean of Instruction for critical thinking emphasis both qualitative and quantitative.</p> <p>4. Process Assessment Criteria</p> <p>A1. 100% of submitted syllabi will reflect the language and importance of truth seeking behaviors and skills according to the established rubric</p> <p>A2. Submitted Fall 2004, Fall 2007 and Fall 2009 syllabi will be compared for a progression in critical thinking emphasis.</p> <p>B1. A minimum of one course assignment during the semester will require truth seeking according to the <i>Assignment/Evaluation Rubric</i>.</p> <p>B2. Submitted Fall 2004, Spring 2008 and Spring 2010 assignments will be compared for a critical thinking emphasis.</p> <p>B3. Each course evaluation measure during the semester will contain a minimum of one item that provides evidence of critical thinking and truth seeking according to the <i>Assignment/Evaluation Rubric</i>.</p> <p>C. Classroom / online observation by qualified peers documents the use of critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors according to <i>Observation Rubric</i>.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>D. Assess progress of QEP through December 2008 truth seeking others</p> <p>E. Require all syllabi to reflect truth seeking behavior and skills Fall 2009.</p> <p>F. Identify WCC capstone courses in each instructional program and develop relevant assessment measures 2008 – 2009.</p> <p>G. Require all courses to include a minimum of one assignment and one evaluation reflecting critical thinking and truth seeking Spring 2010.</p> <p>H. Begin capstone courses campus wide Spring 2011.</p> <p>I. Review data on student performance continually for critical thinking growth</p>	<p>D. Gathered data will provide bases for determining early implementation measures to inform the continuing progress.</p> <p>E. Students will encounter the language of critical thinking in all course syllabi</p> <p>F. Identification of capstones will assist students entering two-year degree programs in Fall 2009 with schedule planning</p> <p>G. Students will encounter the critical thinking focus in all course assignments and evaluations</p> <p>H. Students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills in a final project or capstone experience</p> <p>I. Students will demonstrate increases in critical thinking skills and disposition as a result of instruction</p>	<p>D. Multiple measures gathered throughout project including but not limited to.....</p> <p>E. Random sample of syllabi</p> <p>F. Capstones identified, assets determined</p> <p>G. Random sample of assignments and evaluations</p> <p>H. Random sample of capstone projects</p> <p>4. Student Assessment</p> <p>1. The <i>California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory</i> administered at the beginning of ACA 115, at the conclusion of the student's first year, and again upon graduation.</p> <p>2. Course assignments.</p> <p>3. Course evaluation measures.</p> <p>4. Interdisciplinary projects in capstone courses.</p>	<p>D. QEP Co-Directors and Team, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Division Chairs, Chair of Instructional Support, and QEP Assessment Committee will review data for progress and decisions regarding continued implementation Spring 2009.</p> <p>E. 100% of samples collected will reflect critical thinking language</p> <p>F. QEP Co-Directors, Division Chairs, and Dean of Instruction will review identification of capstone in all WCC programs</p> <p>G. QEP Co-Directors, Assessment Committee, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, Dean of Instruction and Division Chairs will analyze sample for 100% compliance.</p> <p>H. Interdisciplinary projects in capstone courses will be assessed using components of the <i>Assignment/Evaluation Rubric</i>.</p> <p>4. Student Assessment Criteria</p> <p>1. The amount of exposure to critical thinking skills and disposition correlates with scores on the CCTDI.</p> <p>2. Graduating students in 2011 will demonstrate a significant difference of 3 points on the truth seeking scale of the CCTDI compared to graduates in 2006.</p> <p>3. Students who have completed at least four courses with a critical thinking emphasis will have higher scores on the <i>Student Performance Rubric</i> as compared to students in non-pilot courses. These assignments and evaluations will also be compared to student performance artifacts collected in 2004.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>5. Model truth-seeking behaviors and skills to reflect critical thinking in services and responsibilities throughout the college.</p> <p>A. Hold annual planning sessions in each work area to identify which functions therein could best apply critical thinking and truth seeking strategies.</p> <p>B. Practice critical thinking behavior in carrying out daily tasks.</p> <p>C. Recognize employee modeling of critical thinking behaviors.</p> <p>D. Revise policies as needed to reflect WCC critical thinking emphasis.</p> <p>E. Communicate in writing using the language and process of critical thinking.</p> <p>F. Interact with students demonstrating critical thinking skills and disposition for the purpose of guiding students towards increased personal responsibility.</p>	<p>Student's total college experience will be positively affected by the college's disposition to use critical thinking skills and truth seeking behaviors.</p> <p>A. All college efforts will consider student learning as it relates to critical thinking.</p> <p>B. Work areas will model critical thinking and work to encourage students to do the same.</p> <p>C. WCC will emphasize focus on critical thinking among employees</p> <p>D. WCC policies will reflect the language of critical thinking and exercise of critical thinking</p> <p>E. WCC's written communication will demonstrate the emphasis on critical thinking</p> <p>F Students will demonstrate increased responsibility in completing tasks associated with role of student</p>	<p>Multiple means of measurement including but not limited to...</p> <p>A. Documentation of work area plans.</p> <p>B. Observations</p> <p>C. Submissions of accounts of critical thinking behavior.</p> <p>D. Policy revisions.</p> <p>E. Letters, CampusCruiser™, catalogue, websites, and other publications.</p> <p>F. Documentation associated with financial aid, business office, advising, registration, that relates to student responsibility as well as observation and CCSSE or other general student opinion survey. Records of attendance, late registration, payment of fees, parental inquiries, graduation and retention.</p>	<p>4. Students who have completed four or more courses with a critical thinking emphasis will indicate on surveys such as the CCSSE that they have used a greater degree of critical thinking QEP-related skills in courses as compared to students who have completed less than four such courses</p> <p>QEP Co- Directors, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, and Administration will review services and responsibilities efforts in incorporating critical thinking emphasis.</p> <p>A. Work areas that have student contact will be expected to include information as to how their effort can advance student learning in the area of critical thinking</p> <p>B. Supervisors will observe and document outstanding uses of critical thinking efforts by employees</p> <p>C. Observation records of employees using critical thinking skills and behaviors will be submitted to the QEP Team by peers and supervisors for recognition and for use in determining future professional development needs.</p> <p>D. Revised policies promoting student disposition to use critical thinking will be reviewed by the Administrative Council.</p> <p>E. Written communication reflecting the language and process of critical thinking will be assessed by supervisors within the respective areas.</p> <p>F. The QEP Co-Directors, administration, and supervisors will review documentation that indicates timely and thorough completion of tasks associated with college status</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>G. Modify individual work strategies to reflect critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors.</p> <p>6. Establish external means of assessment.</p> <p>A. Utilize current advisory groups of community employers, leaders, and citizens in Fall 2008 to communicate plans, progress and needs related to critical thinking.</p> <p>B. Conduct student focus groups beginning Fall 2009.</p> <p>7. Prepare students for successful employment by giving them the transferable skill of critical thinking through truth seeking.</p> <p>A. Revise educational work/experience evaluation forms.</p> <p>B. Revise employer survey to reflect critical thinking and truth seeking for work experiences and post-graduate employment.</p>	<p>G. WCC employees will set an annual goal related to critical thinking as to improve work performance and service to students.</p> <p>WCC will obtain feedback to assess the process and progress of QEP Implementation.</p> <p>A. Communicate critical thinking emphasis among advisory groups</p> <p>B. Informal student feedback will be obtained to assess critical thinking effort and to inform future effort</p> <p>7. WCC students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in the workplace</p> <p>A. WCC students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in work experience settings.</p> <p>B.. WCC graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills in the workplace</p>	<p>G. Performance Enhancement Plan</p> <p>Documentation obtained from external sources</p> <p>A. Minutes of meetings and observation</p> <p>B. Attendance records and minutes</p> <p>7. Institutionally designed surveys beginning 2006 for baseline data and continuing thereafter as to student critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors.</p> <p>A. Work experience evaluation forms.</p> <p>B. Institutionally designed questionnaire beginning 2006 for baseline data and continuing thereafter.</p>	<p>G. Supervisors will rate employee on critical thinking effort on an annual basis. Individual Performance Evaluation Plans will be reviewed by the supervisor and randomly selected for assessment by the Administrative Council for accurate evidence of critical thinking and truth seeking behavior. Employee goals will be set in spring 2007 to be evaluated in Spring 2008 and continuing annually.</p> <p>QEP Co-Directors, Assessment Committee, Institutional Effectiveness Officer, and Administration will review external communication for assessment of critical thinking emphasis in the community</p> <p>A. WCC will review minutes and document observation to inform and revisit advisory effort</p> <p>B. QEP Co-Directors and QEP Team will review information gathered from informal groups to direct future groups and to inform implementation</p> <p>7. Employer evaluations of students in education related work experience will reflect a yearly increase in positive responses regarding students' use of critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors beginning with Pilot Project cohorts in 2008.</p> <p>A. Employer perceptions of student employee's critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors and skills will reflect continual improvement as measured against baseline data collected in 2006.</p> <p>B. Employer perceptions of graduates' critical thinking and truth seeking behaviors and skills will reflect an increase in positive responses beginning with Pilot Project cohorts in 2009.</p>

Strategy	Intended Outcome	Assessment Measure	Assessment Criteria
<p>C. Revise alumni survey to include questions involving critical thinking and truth seeking behavior.</p> <p>8. Communicate student progress, opinions, and concerns internally and externally.</p> <p>A. Publish regular reports of student progress as related to the QEP goals.</p> <p>B. Provide the Board of Trustees with regular reports of student progress as related to the QEP goals.</p> <p>C. Provide the WCC communities with information about student progress as related to the QEP.</p>	<p>C. Alumni will communicate use of critical thinking skills in survey responses</p> <p>WCC will involve the entire community in the QEP process.</p>	<p>C. Institutionally designed questionnaire beginning 2007 and continuing thereafter.</p> <p>Internal and external communication</p>	<p>C. Alumni perceptions will indicate a positive reflection of their knowledge and use of critical thinking as a result of their experience at WCC beginning with Pilot Project cohorts in 2007</p> <p>Progress will be reported accurately and timely.</p>

APPENDIX B

As a public, two-year, “open door” institution, Wilkes Community College is committed to providing comprehensive education and educational support services for people in Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany counties and beyond. As a member of the North Carolina Community College System, the College seeks to enhance intellectual, economic, cultural, and social development, through a variety of means, by providing:

- *quality education, training and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills education, occupational, technical, and pre-baccalaureate programs;*
- *support for economic development through services to business and industry, both public and private; and*
- *a variety of services, cultural activities, and recreational opportunities that improve the quality of life.*

(Note: The WCC Purpose Statement was revised at the July 2005 WCC Board of Trustees meeting).

APPENDIX C

WCC VISION 2010 STATEMENT

APPENDIX D
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX E

FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX F

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE