Inquiry ARC Report for AY 2012-13

[See http://inquiryarc.unca.edu for details of participating staff, faculty, and meeting minutes]

AY 2012-13 Accomplishments

Programmatic:

1. Primary accomplishment entailed the successful implementation of Inquiry ARC program in pilot year. We exceeded our goal for 10 pilot educator participants with 19 faculty and staff educators and had a similarly robust response with our call for 2013-14 participants with 13 new participants lined up for fall 2013 (program goal 20 new participants for AY 2013-14).
2. Designed and established application cycle and selection process for fall and spring Inquiry ARC courses and co-curricular projects (see below)
4. Met with Communication & Marketing in summer 2013 regarding advertising Inquiry ARC. Mary Lynn Manns will lead a marketing effort for the program in AY 2013-14
5. Met with library staff (summer 2013) to develop holdings and resources on critical thinking

Professional Development:

1. Initiated series of Inquiry ARC workshops & reading circles & check-ins as part of faculty and staff professional development. Inquiry ARC instructors engaged in one and a half day workshops, one mid-summer check-in and a final pre-semester assessment meeting. In fall 2012 4 one hour reading circles served as a substitute for ½ day of workshop participation. During the semester of instruction, participants met for two check-ins to explore progress and/or concerns with their Inquiry ARC courses.
2. Developed program and application cycle for co-curricular Inquiry ARC experiences. We seek to accommodate those modes of instruction that could benefit from Inquiry ARC, but which lie outside the norm of the for-credit classroom experience. Examples include Ramsey Library Information Literacy instruction, Counseling Center classes, SAIL student leader training, Housing Resident Assistant training and an Arts and Ideas SP 2014 Arts Festival. Participants undergo training but are not held to the same
standards for assessment (see below).

3. Identified events for professional development opportunities and sponsored the following:
   - Laurie Miles to AACU Conference, on E-Portfolios. (Atlanta, GA in October 2012).
   - Mary Lynn Manns to Critical Thinking Symposium, (Berkeley, CA in March 2013).
   - A group of 5 faculty and staff (Cathy Whitlock, Brandy Bourne, Anita White Carter, Lorena Russell, Marietta Cameron) attended the three day i2a (Ideas to Action) Symposium on Critical Thinking at U Louisville (Louisville, KY in May 2013).
   - Anne Slatton (COMM) for her participation in a conference where she presented a paper on her experience teaching Inquiry ARC (Los Angeles, CA in July 2013).

**Auxiliary programs, workshops and presentations:**

1. Laurie Miles (ITS) gave a presentation to our 2013-14 educators May 10 on uses of e-portfolio in Inquiry ARC classes
2. Mary Lynn Manns (MGT) led a July 2013 workshop on critical thinking exercises
4. Series of 4 workshops in spring 2013 for LANG 120 faculty on Inquiry ARC and Teaching Writing. Sessions led by Lorena Russell, Dee James, Deaver Traywick and Eileen Crowe.

**Assessment:**

1. Approximately 400 first year students were measured in August using the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory test (CCTDI). This information will help form our baseline for future measurements. Summary of findings:
   - The CCTDI offers indicators of student disposition towards using critical thinking and measures the following dispositions: truthseeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, critical thinking self-confidence, inquisitiveness and maturity of judgment. According to documentation provided by the CCTDI organization, high scores on the overall number indicate “the valuation of critical thinking as an approach to analyzing and resolving complex, novel, high stakes problems is a dominant habit of mind” while low scores “indicate that the test taker probably has none of the attitudes and attributes associated with the strong critical thinker.” They go on to note that scores under 210 are rare, and overall scores above 350 are also relatively rare. If all seven scores are 40 or above, then “the test taker has demonstrated significant and generalized strength in critical thinking disposition.”
   - Our August first-year student scores are well within the norm (with an average total of 302). In general, they scored high in terms of their self-confidence,
but were less impressive in terms of truth-seeking or systematicity.

2. The assessment team has developed and updated materials and distributed packets to pilot educators. The team simplified the rubric and added a checklist format along with some open-ended questions for input.

3. We’ve had discussions about the feasibility of imbedded assessment as an incentive for broader participation and will continue to pursue potential iterations of this option.

4. Review of course materials revealed some shortcomings in our process, and a revised “Materials Checksheet” was drafted in response.

5. The team modified and narrowed various rubric models. The latest iteration, developed from feedback from our pilot educators, links Inquiry ARC with critical thinking values and provides a simplified model that we hope will be adaptable by all participating instructors.

6. Preliminary data from Student Rating of Instruction (SRI’s) shows a promising increase in selected categories in Inquiry ARC courses when compared to non-Inquiry ARC averages.

Goals for AY 2013-14

Programmatic

1. Continue to recruit participants for Inquiry ARC from staff and faculty with a focus on those areas and departments with lower representation in the program

2. Explore further avenues for faculty, staff and student incentives and awards for participation in Inquiry ARC

3. Refine committee structure to maximize effectiveness

4. Develop student internship & student participation

5. Raise visibility of program on campus.

6. Explore avenues for capturing stories of faculty and student experiences with Inquiry ARC

7. Meet with Admissions to explore Inquiry ARC’s potential contributions in recruitment

Professional Development

1. Support departmental and program level professional development in critical thinking

2. Organize and support university-wide events on critical thinking and Inquiry ARC

3. Organize workshop with Paideia Institute on teaching critical thinking

4. Offer reading circles on aspects of Inquiry ARC and critical thinking (focus: diversity)

5. Identify and invite critical thinking specialist for summer 2014 two day workshop for faculty and staff

6. Develop on-going development opportunities for faculty and staff that have completed basic workshops

7. Continue to identify conference and symposia and support continuing professional development faculty and staff
8. Develop pathways for participants to share research and findings related to Inquiry ARC
9. Develop cohort of peer educators on campus. Meet with career center to develop programming and/or support for using CT education to advance careers for UNC Asheville graduates
10. Develop participant mentoring program.

Assessment:

1. The assessment team revised the plan for testing seniors for baseline data with the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (CCTDI), and will test in fall and spring in 2013-14 instead of spring alone as originally planned. Seniors from HUM 414 and LS 479 will participate in the survey.
2. Will compile further information from the spring 2013 Student Rating of Instruction (SRI)
3. Will compile further information from spring 2013 artifacts

Recommendations & Concerns

Programmatic:

1. I will present a full report early in the fall to Senate about our progress. Fundamentally, I'm pleased with the campus response to the program, and think that Inquiry ARC and our critical thinking focus not only a good fit for our campus, but it is also working well in the classroom. Overall faculty and staff response to workshops and classroom experiences have been very positive. That said, participation is key for the QEP's success, so I can't help but to have concerns that we will be able to sustain the kind of support we've enjoyed thus far. Maintaining the momentum and enthusiasm remains a key concern of the Inquiry ARC, and sustainability is a frequent concern.
2. This is a program involving staff as well as faculty, and we've worked to develop equitable accommodation for staff participation. This is challenging given restrictions on SPA payment, but this is an issue I will continue to work through and take up with others on campus.
3. I spoke with the FWDC committee in the fall of 2012 regarding my concerns about the make-up of the Inquiry ARC committee structure. Currently, there is a standing Advisory Committee composed of a broad university constituency. There are also two subcommittees: one focused on Assessment and the other on Professional Development. My primary concern is that the sub-committees of the program, the Professional Development and Assessment Committees, do substantial work, and will be part of the university structure for at least the next 5 years. I'd like to see these committees recognized as formal/standing committees by the Senate so that the members' contributions are fully counted. I also recommended adding the previous director of the Inquiry ARC as a standing member on the Advisory Committee so that as we proceed through Inquiry ARC (and future QEP's) the program maintains continuity of leadership.
4. Currently we provide stipends for instructors to employ Inquiry ARC two times in their
classes, and the third time we don’t expect them to participate in assessment. Is this model sustainable?

**Professional Development**
1. Our professional development needs to be assessed and adjusted as needed
2. How to best manage workshops and reading circles, especially given challenges of limited time for preparing spring participants?
3. Thus far the focus has been on offering introductory workshops. How can we develop the content of our professional development to meet the needs of experienced Inquiry ARC instructors?

**Assessment**
1. Continue to clarify connection between Inquiry ARC pedagogies and CT capacities and dispositions
2. How to develop assessment for co-curricular learning experiences that might not produce grades or traditional student artifacts?
3. As numbers build, shift assessment towards a sampling model
4. Include focused assessment on selected classes, such as those employing pre- and post-testing
5. Program implementation has functioned in large part on developing faculty and staff interest and participation, but will need to expand to engage students directly
6. Clarify assessment expectations upfront for participants, making details clear on application materials and CFPs.
7. Develop faculty and staff surveys in SP 2014 and student surveys FA 2014