

2010-2011 i2a SUN Grant Funded Project Descriptions

University of Louisville i2a SUN Grant Co-Curricular Applicant Recipients

“Leading the discussions: Building a background for instructional strategies”, Latricia Bronger & Nicole Fenty, College of Education and Human Development. The objective of this project is to improve the critical thinking of the courses, EDTP 345, Special Populations, EDTP 545 Exceptional Children in the Regular Classroom, and EDTP 337, Collaboration, Inclusion, and Transition in order to rethink candidate engagement that will benefit P-12 students in initial teacher education programs. Students will be grouped into pairs and trios that will provide the use of listening, speaking, reading and writing about the relevant topics. These candidate groups will participate in a Journal Led Discussion to challenge the students’ knowledge, interpretation and implementation of evidence-based strategies for instruction. In addition they will, peer review each other’s work, complete collaborative activities, and provide feedback to each other on collaboration, critical thinking and reflection. All the assessment and critical thinking collaborative intervention plan instruction will take place in typical college classrooms. Since pre-service teacher candidates will engage with field experience simultaneously as part of the coursework, the impact of this project is expected to reach actual school age children as well.

“Formalizing Undergraduate Research as a Capstone Course in Physics & Astronomy”, David Brown, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Physics. A “Culminating Undergraduate Experience” is a key element in the i2a plan for strengthening critical thinking among students. Yet the Department of Physics & Astronomy currently has no formal culminating experience for all of its majors. Many – but not all – students in the department complete research, but the individual experiences vary broadly. There is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that students have understood the role or processes of critical thinking as it relates to scientific research and other modes of thinking. We propose to develop a course that will incorporate research with materials designed to facilitate student understanding of critical thinking. We will also develop a rubric for assessing student understanding of critical thinking. After development of the course, departmental faculty will be asked to approve adoption of the course as a requirement for all majors.

“Human Trafficking: Critical Thinking about Modern Day Slavery”, Theresa Hayden, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Justice Administration. The purpose of this project is to improve on the student learning outcomes introduced in a pilot course (JA 496-01) on human trafficking in the fall semester of 2009. Theresa C. Hayden as instructor for JA 496-01 will provide oversight of the course and a final project for successful completion. Students will demonstrate they are gaining knowledge as to the depth and breadth of human trafficking in today’s society. Students will form teams with peers, develop an educational presentation appropriate for youth about human trafficking, and implement the presentation. Student members of Cards 4 Freedom organization will mentor the student teams and assist the instructor with completion of the final project. Two documentaries will be purchased to use for the presentations at the youth organizations. The project will be evaluated with multiple methods.

“Community Mapping Project: Exploring Resources for At-Risk Youth in Partnership with the Community”, Suzanne Hopf, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Sociology. The goal of this project is to integrate critical thinking skills while exploring community resources for at-risk youth. The class project will utilize a community mapping approach to investigate community resources. Students will investigate local programs that serve at-risk youth and develop a report utilizing critical thinking skills regarding the program that are the subject of their class project. The project is designed to promote synthesis of theoretical knowledge used during the course. Assessment of the student’s application of critical thinking skills will be done via a written report and an oral report.

2010-2011 i2a SUN Grant Funded Project Descriptions

“ACTIONS: Assessing Critical Thinking in Outcomes of Nursing Students”, Ermalynn Kiehl and Judith Schreiber, School of Nursing. In 2009 i2a funded an Implementation Grant with which the School of Nursing identified and documented critical thinking activities for all Upper Division nursing courses (Phase I) and incorporated Paul-Elder critical thinking concepts into course assignments and syllabi (Phase II). This SUN grant funding would be used to implement Phase III, which would include guidance by consultants to development of a mechanism (ACTIONS-ER) for undergraduate faculty who are trained in use of the ACTIONS-ER to objectively measure student learning outcomes resulting from the changes in the curriculum occurring as a result of the 2009 funding. The specific goal of this project is to develop, evaluate, test, and implement a modified version of the University of Louisville critical thinking grading rubric.

“Online Journal: Miracle Monocle”, Glynis Ridley, College of Arts and Sciences Department of English. To give a group of 8 English majors or Creative Writing minors an authentic experience, appropriate for their discipline, of working as readers, editors, producers, and marketers of an online creative writing journal to be housed in the English Department: *Miracle Monocle*. This publication is in its infancy but may be accessed at www.miraclemonocle.com. The journal’s creator and current editor has offered it and its domain name, registered for the next three years, to a part-time instructor in the English Department – Matt Crady - with whom he has previously worked. In order to bring *Miracle Monocle* to UofL, the English Department must be able to put in place a team who can demonstrate a range of critical thinking skills, not least the ability to question whether a submission is publication worthy. In making real editorial decisions, reviewing others’ work for clarity of expression, originality, and significance in the field of creative writing, students will learn and refine skills that are fundamental to the publishing world. Their end product will be a quarterly publication. Communicating its existence to the widest possible audience will demand the student team think about the relevance of their creative choices and the significance of the journal for a range of target populations (e.g. professional writers and new writers; those in the higher education community and those beyond it). For 8 students, this will be a Culminating Undergraduate Experience that will allow them to demonstrate to future employers their proficiency in making decisions of the kind made in media industries on a daily basis.

“Assessing Critical Thinking in Psychology”, Alison Sommers and Pavel Zahorik, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. The primary purpose of this project is to generate a direct, performance-based measure of student learning outcomes in critical thinking, which will: 1) provide a baseline measure of student learning outcomes in CT which will enable us to assess CT learning within the major, 2) provide graduating students a culminating experience in which they can incorporate and transform their psychology-specific knowledge and concepts to apply them to community and world problems, 3) provide a performance standard and data set that would encourage instructors to review their course syllabi in light of CT goals, outcomes and applications, 4) supplement the current measure in use by the Psychology Department which primarily evaluates content information.

“Laboratory Innovations For Enhanced Learning (LIFE Learning)”, Joseph Steffen and Tommy Parker, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Biology. In addition to the lecture hall, the laboratory is an important place for learning in the life sciences. The intent of this proposal to develop a training program specifically for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Undergraduate Learning Assistants in Biology that will affect undergraduate students completing laboratory courses within this major to assist in moving forward with i2a goals. Specifically these teaching/learning assistants will be able to help our undergraduate students: 1) apply the elements of thought in selected Biology laboratory courses

2010-2011 i2a SUN Grant Funded Project Descriptions

assignments, 2) use the Intellectual Standards as criteria for assessing quality of reasoning, and 3) demonstrate critical thinking skills using applications to real world problems. The outcomes of this training will be evaluated and disseminated within other science, and potentially non-science, departments.

“Incorporating Critical Thinking into English 101 and 102”, Joanna Wolfe, College of Arts and Sciences Department of English. The Composition program request an i2a grant to assist 20 part-time and term faculty in incorporating the Paul-Elder critical thinking terminology into their English 101 and 102 classes. Faculty will meet in cohorts of 5 along with an Assistant Director or Director of Composition to (a) Incorporate the Paul-Elder terminology—particularly the intellectual standards—into syllabi, assignment prompts, grading rubrics, and other course materials; (b) Reach a general understanding of what levels of critical thinking students should be able to demonstrate (on the general education critical thinking rubric or an equivalent) by the end of English 101 and 102; (c) Discuss how to incorporate the Paul-Elder language into the written feedback they provide on student essays.