

2011-2012 i2a SUN Grant Funded Project Descriptions

University of Louisville
i2a SUN Grant Academic, Co-Curricular and Student Support Applicant Recipients

“Adventures in Critical Thinking,” Brian Barnes, College of Arts and Science, Department of Philosophy

A committee of undergraduates will be assembled to write 10 issues of a 20-page comic book depicting a beginning critical thinker, Paul Elder, as he makes his way through everyday undergraduate life on Belknap campus. Writers and artists will be trained in the Paul-Elder framework and oversee the creation of Elder as a critical thinking model for undergraduates. Each issue will emphasize Elements, Standards, and Traits, and characters will solve at least one major problem using the Framework. Writers will create models that self-reflectively review intellectual process and combat poor thinking in the university community. The characters will informally train one another in critical thinking. The comic can be distributed on the internet, and it will feature the people and places of U of L.

“Video Exemplars in Developing Critical Thinking in Music,” Dean Doane, School of Music

The school of Music is creating a series of videos that will highlight different facets of music instruction in the undergraduate degree programs to highlight exemplary teaching that incorporates the development of critical thinking in music learning and performance. Videos will be used as training models for faculty members in the school and other instructional settings.

“Creating a Collaborative Learning Community in MUH 212,” John Hausman, School of Music

MUH 212, the History of Rock, is unique among U of L’s offerings, with students bringing content knowledge and prior experiences incomparable to those they bring to other courses. This project will incorporate collaborative learning techniques by developing an extensive online discussion community and by grouping students in “learning pods.” By fostering a communal method of listening, the online group will bridge the gap between classroom and experience by closely resembling the way students experience the course’s content in their daily lives. In a “learning pod,” each student will be responsible for a content area with which they are most familiar, giving them the opportunity to serve as reference, guide, and teacher for their peers throughout the semester. In such a learning community, each student will make a unique contribution to the group’s learning, with the instructor serving as facilitator, ensuring students incorporate their peer’s knowledge into a broader framework.

“The Resilient Families Project at Wayside Christian Mission’s Hotel Louisville: A Culminating Experience,” Lora Haynes and Barbara Burns, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

The goal of this project is to provide a CUE that integrates critical thinking skills while supporting at-risk families in Louisville. The Resilient Families Project provides educational experiences and a sense of community/caring for families living at Wayside Christian Mission’s Hotel Louisville and Homeless Shelter. This project involves a three-part weekly program serving approximately 100 family members. First is a one-hour parent-child learning session that provides a structured learning forum for families to strengthen reading, and engage in shared learning activities. Second is a two-hour child/adolescent learning/enrichment session involving art, reading, homework/tutoring, and music/dance, all aimed at promoting school-readiness and social/emotional development. Third is a two-hour parenting session, an evidence-based program developed for high-risk families, which involves an educational component to strengthen parenting, improve stress/anger management, promote healthy discipline strategies, and support goal-setting and self-esteem. A final component of the project involves work at WCM’s Homeless Shelter Childcare Center.

“Using High Dosage of Critical Thinking Language and Modeling by the Health Education Instructor to Impact Unit Plan Development,” Cheryl Kolander and Betty Straub, College of Education and Human Development, Department of Health and Sports Sciences

Health education majors are expected to teach critical thinking skills to P-12 students. Their unit plan design is based on the National Health Education Standards and the Kentucky Program of Study which include a focus on critical thinking skills. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the intentional use of high dosage instruction in critical thinking language (elements and intellectual standards) and the incorporation of critical thinking activities into classroom instruction will improve the unit plan design of health education majors.

“Online Student Staff Training Module” & “Dare to Play Fair Intramural Sportsmanship Module,” Julie Onnembo, David Shaw, John Smith, Pam Curtis, Becky Clark, and Katie Partin, Student Activities, Division of Student Affairs

This joint project between the departments of Student Activities and Intramural Sports will provide for the development of online training for student staff of both departments. In addition, Intramural Sports will use the online training to promote critical thinking to program participants through online sportsmanship training. Both departments plan to make the online component required entities for their specific groups. Student staff will be required to complete the module before beginning work for Student Activities and Intramural Chairs would be required to complete the module prior to being able to register their organizations into intramural programs. Both modules will be structured to emphasize critical thinking traits and standards. The Intramural project will be focused on traits of fair-mindedness, intellectual humility, courage, empathy, autonomy and integrity. Student staff training will focus on standards of clarity, accuracy and precision as well as traits of intellectual autonomy, integrity and confidence in reason.

“Thinking Critically About Communities,” Armon Perry and Karla Washington, Kent School of Social Work

Social work is defined as the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, and communities enhance and restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to that goal. Therefore, social work students must be prepared to identify strengths at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels in order to develop interventions designed to respond to human needs. To this end, the project aims to better prepare students to think critically about macro-level problems and to use logic and technology to more accurately and precisely assess the consequences of those problems for residents and communities in Louisville. To aid in this process, funding is also provided for the purchase of resources to more explicitly and intentionally connect critical thinking to undergraduate social work education in macro contexts including reference books, macro practice DVDs, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software.

“Advancing Critical Thinking about Relevant Issues in Public Schools,” Melissa Shirley, Shelley Thomas, and Ingrid Weiland, College of Education and Human Development, Department of Middle/Secondary Education

Recent federal legislation requires the College of Education and Human Development to certify that the teacher preparation programs provide training to candidates regarding the needs of students from low-income families and students from urban and rural settings. Accordingly, we will modify lessons and assessments in the EDTP 506: Public Schools in America course in order to fulfill this mandate and infuse critical thinking. We will employ a Faculty Learning Community model, in which we read and discuss *relevant* books as well as design instruction that prepares students to consider the *concepts* and

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implications of teaching Title II students. As a result of this project, course instructors will gain *information* from a *breadth* of perspectives. In turn, we will implement instruction and assessments that require students to consider their *assumptions* and *points of view* about educating Title II populations. This project provides lasting impact through course improvement and faculty education.

“Incorporating Critical Thinking in the African American Male Initiative (AAMI),” Lyston Skerritt, Joseph Godman, Michael Anthony, Office of Diversity, Cultural Center

In the Fall of 2010 an inter-divisional task force was formed at the University of Louisville to design and implement a retention and graduation program for African American Male undergraduate students. The taskforce plans to use this i2a grant to assess Paul-Elder’s critical thinking framework within the different elements of the program with correlation to their academic success in the first semester, Fall 2011. A graduate intern will be hired to assess the effectiveness of the African American Male Initiative’s (AAMI) first iteration and review its major elements; Early Arrival Program (EAP), Graduate Preparation Seminar (GPS) and Family Mentoring (FM). Focus groups will be held with student based on their academic success quadrant in their first semester; 4.0-3.0/2.9-2.5/2.4-2.0/2.0-0.0. Furthermore, recommendations will be made for design of sophomore and junior Programs.

“i2a Implementation in the BSPH Program,” Kira Taylor and Pete Walton, School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Departments of Epidemiology and Population Health, and Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences (respectively)

Developing a curriculum for the new Bachelor of Science in Public Health program (in progress) that is i2a-rich, incorporating critical thinking skills and community engagement. The five components of this include: (1) two workshops with experts from the Delphi Center and the i2a Institute to provide formal education in the Paul-Elder critical thinking framework and aid in the development of course syllabi, for core faculty members; (2) individual consultation with experts from the Delphi Center and/or i2a Institute to assist with developing syllabi and lessons plans for the core BSPH courses; (3) a small library of pedagogical and i2a-related resources, for each of the core faculty members; (4) work release for those small working groups of faculty developing the BSPH core course syllabi; and (5) a half-day workshop with critical thinking expert Gerald Nosich.

“Developing a Case-Based Critical Thinking Final Exam for the Dental Materials Course (DHED 315),” Randall Vaught and Linda Lewis, School of Dentistry, Departments of Perio, Endo, and Dental Hygiene, and General Dentistry and Oral Medicines (respectively)

The goal is to develop a case-based critical thinking final examination for the senior dental hygiene Dental Materials course. The critical thinking final exam will be constructed by using the Paul-Elder framework and exam questions will be written, developed and assessed by applying the Elements of Thought and by using the Intellectual Standards. The exam will be formatted using PowerPoint slides with clinical cases and scenarios. Students will review clinical cases and be asked a series of questions directly related to the case. All cases and scenarios will be developed from the Paul-Elder framework of critical thinking. This type of exam will measure the students’ ability to apply problem solving and critical thinking skills for successful selection and manipulation of dental materials that will be used in clinical practice.