



Developing and sustaining a critical thinking initiative across your institution

Part I

30th International Conference on Critical Thinking

July 19-22, 2010

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University of Louisville

- **Part I and Part II:**
 - **Overview of QEP at Univ. of Louisville**
 - **Review 6 Guiding Principles support the development and growth of a critical thinking initiative**
 - **Discuss lessons learned while promoting organizational and curricular change**
 - **Apply these principles & lessons to your own work with “micro reflections.”**
- **Provide you with resources and tools to help you on your own journey**





Mission: Kentucky's premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university

- **Established: 1798 in Louisville, KY**
- **Total Student Headcount: 21,761 (Fall 2008)**
- **Faculty and Staff: 6,174**
- **Operating Budget: \$934.6 million**
- **• Academic Programs (Degrees offered):**
 - Undergraduate degrees, 78 programs
 - Graduate degrees, 106 programs (includes master's degree, post-master's certificates, doctoral degrees)
 - Professional degrees, 3 programs
- ***Source: University of Louisville's***
"Just the Facts," 2008-2009 (<http://www.louisville.edu>)

Ideas to Action: The basics

- Ideas to Action (i2a): Using Critical Thinking to Foster Student Learning and Community Engagement

is our **Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)**.



- Twin focus on **critical thinking and culminating undergraduate experiences (CUE)** in the undergraduate curriculum
- SACS reaccreditation visit: April 2007
- Summer, 2007: i2a staff hired
- Housed in the Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning in Ekstrom Library as part of our “Learning Commons”

Call to action at UofL

“Our extensive consultation with all University constituencies yielded a surprisingly strong and clear call for education focused on the **skills and knowledge** needed to deal with **real-world issues and problems**, an education in which **students can see the importance of the parts (the courses) to the whole (their education as citizens and workers).**” [QEP Report, 2007]



6 Guiding Principles

- 1. Do your homework, lay your groundwork**
- 2. Build your partnerships and help them find the “on ramp”**
- 3. Learn to “grow” your innovations:
Pilot test, assess, refine**
- 4. Demonstrate that you are info-savvy**
- 5. Remember, attitude is everything:
be flexible, learn to stretch, create excitement**
- 6. Pay Attention to Readiness**

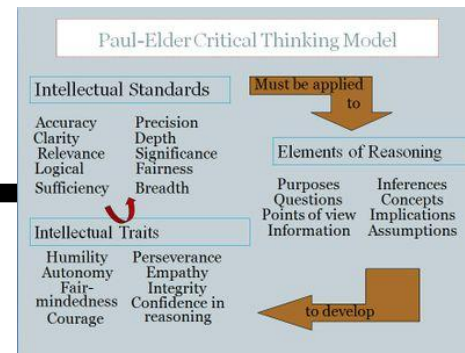
Do your homework and lay your groundwork



- Literature review “best practices” & define your terms
- Make assessment less scary: explicit outcomes and structures to measure learning and change
- “Invest right the first time.” (Morse) (monetary, personnel)
- Brand your initiative: make it visible...
- ..but tie it clearly to your organization’s mission and describe your long term vision in terms of org. culture
- Develop your credibility: hone your own expertise and commit to ongoing work with critical thinking concepts

Lesson 1: Examples of laying groundwork/homework

- Researched critical thinking models & had clear rationale for our choices
- Hired established faculty and staff and provided a physical space on campus for work
- Pour resources into a launch (“blue books,” giveaways)
- Conduct brief info. sessions at faculty mtgs, orientations, etc. that are tailored to the audience and interactive (example: see *Miniature Guide* p. 17)
- Help colleague improve their conceptual *and* ‘how to’ knowledge of critical thinking





Richard Paul-Linda Elder Framework

The Critical Thinking Community

- ✓ Agreed upon by all reviewers (virtually perfect inter-rater reliability)
- ✓ Most comprehensive (many 'models' merely narratives)
- ✓ Discipline- neutral terminology
- ✓ Provides a common language/terminology for discussing, modeling and measuring critical thinking that can be readily applied to all disciplines
- ✓ Has a wealth of discipline specific resource materials
<http://www.criticalthinking.org>

Example: Critical Thinking Exercise

1. Working in groups of 2, you will need a flip chart and a marker to:\

At the top of a sheet of paper fill in the blank by completing this sentence : “I see or hear critical thinking when my students are _____”

At the bottom of the same sheet of paper fill in the blank by completing this sentence :

“When my students are not thinking critically, I notice _____”

2. Share your results with the group at large and discuss themes you see.

3. Review the 5 skills that make up the “well-cultivated critical thinker” on page 2 of your *Miniature Guide*. What do you see in common with your definitions? What do you see that is different?

A Well-Cultivated Critical Thinker

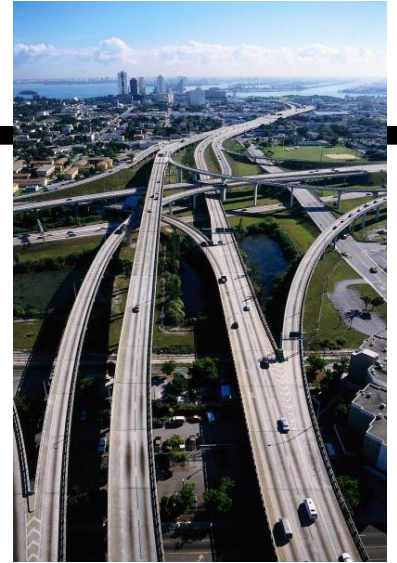
- Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely
- Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively
- Comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards
- Thinks open mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as needs be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems

Your micro-reflection on Principle 1

Reflect and write:

- What questions do you still need to research? (Question at hand)
 - What groundwork still needs to be put into place for you and others? (Information)
 - Whose perspectives should you consider as you lay out your vision for critical thinking? (Point of view)
-

Principle 2



Build your partnerships and help them find the “on ramp”

- Find the relevant “on ramp” to invite partnerships and collaborations around critical thinking
- Establish your working group with those *across* stakeholder groups
- Invite established players (assessment experts, opinion leaders.) who are successful
- Set the tone of the critical thinking journey and help them anticipate barriers (slooooowing down their thinking)
- Provide tools that help them right away (“going around the wheel”)

Remember to meet them where they are and go at their speed.

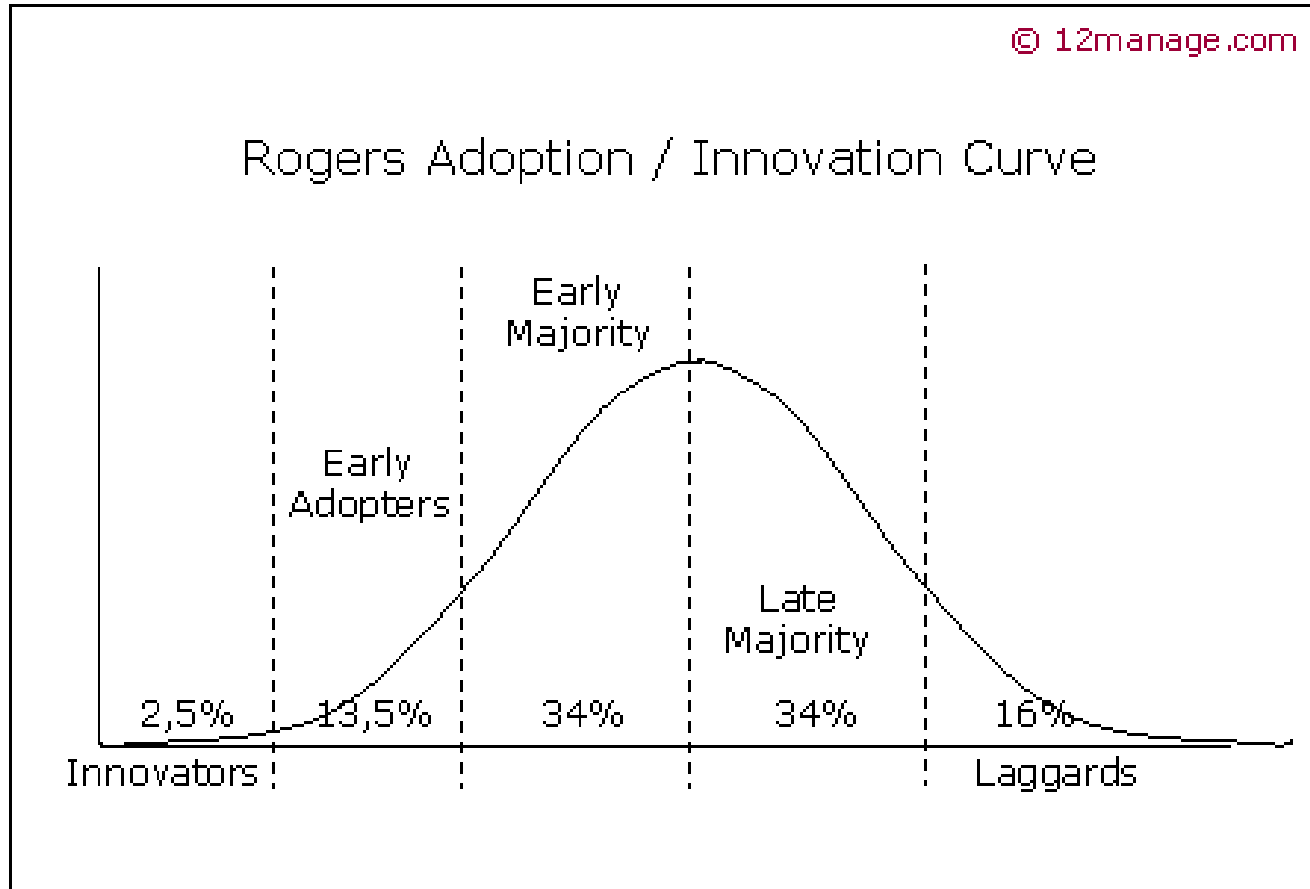
Example: Create partnerships where missions and goals overlap

- Office of Community Engagement
- Individual faculty and academic departments
- Individual faculty (Faculty Learning Communities)
- Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Student Services
- Other programs at other schools with similar themes



Seek out opportunities to build on existing events, structures, programs, etc.

What you need to know about adopter categories



Critical mass begins to happens when 30% of individuals adopt an innovation!

Adopter Categories

- Innovators
- Early Adopters
- Early Majority
- Late Majority
- Laggards

Your micro-reflection on Principle 2

- Who are those faculty, staff or other colleagues whose purpose and/or mission aligns with your interest in critical thinking? (Purpose, Point of view)
- What are the explicit and implicit values and agendas of these possible partners and how can you bring these people to the table? (Assumptions, Interpretation)
- Are there other collaborators (regional schools, community members, personal mentors) you might cultivate for your critical thinking project? (Point of view, Information)

Principle 3



Pilot test, assess, refine

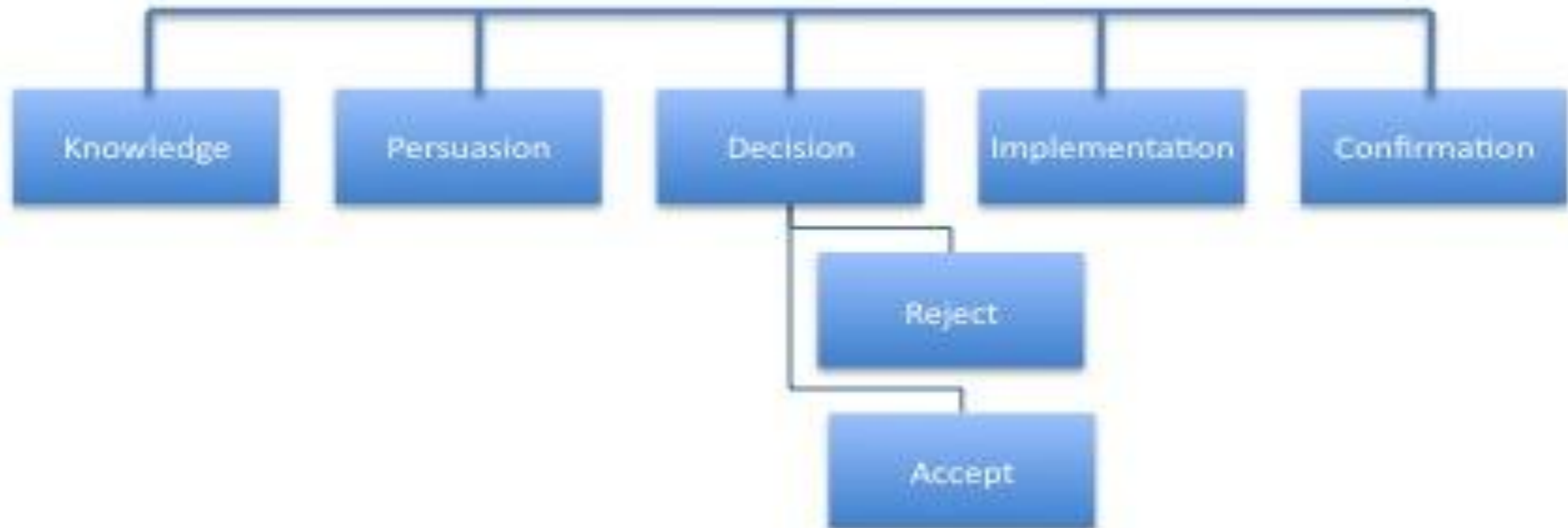
- “Start small, do it well, then expand.”
- Be realistic and help others take baby steps
- Lower risks, anxiety and create “safe space” for trial and error
- Demonstrate scholarly approach of inquiry and research
- Start with those who are ready
- Be sure to assess your process to find out what works

Fundamental and powerful concept: be deliberate and explicit in your “pilot” programs



Remind yourself and others to start small, do it well, then expand!

Five Stages in the Decision Innovation Process



Learning communities: structure and support for critical thinking infusion

- “Before and after” examples of faculty & staff working with critical thinking
 - i2a Faculty Learning Community
 - i2a Collaborative Learning Community (staff)
- Faculty and staff choose one assignment or aspect of their program to inject critical thinking explicitly
- Participants meet regularly to try out new ideas, receive mentorship, share strategies and success
- “Graduates” of the learning communities become advocates for our critical thinking programs and efforts



Info on Faculty/Professional Learning Communities:

http://intranet.howardcc.edu/Faculty_Resources/FPLC/Index.html

Reflect and write:

- What is the curricular or organizational change or innovation that you wish to ‘test drive’? (Concepts) Who can help you make visible “what it looks like” when the change is complete? What will success look like in one year, three years, 10 years? (Consequences)
- What information will you need to gather while you are piloting your critical thinking innovation? (Information) As you are thinking about how to operationalize your innovation, what are you wondering about? Worried about? (Questions)
- How will you “close the feedback loop” with stakeholders and interpret the info (good, bad, ugly) that you gather? How will this information inform your next steps and help you expand your reach? (Interpretation, Consequences, Point of view)



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Part II

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- Paul, 1996
- 140 interviews of college faculty
- 89% indicate critical thinking is a primary objective of their instruction
 - 19% could give a clear explanation of critical thinking
 - 77% had difficulty describing how to balance content coverage with fostering critical thinking
 - 8-9% could articulate how to assess critical thinking

6 Guiding Principles

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- 5. Remember, attitude is everything:**
be flexible, learn to stretch, create excitement
- 6. Pay Attention to Readiness**

Principle 4

Demonstrate you are information-savvy

- Keep central messages about critical thinking out in front but modify by audience
- Your website can be hub of your activity
- Be transparent about what you do know, what you don't
- Offer info sessions, give regular updates, keep project 'visible'
- Get your initiative's purpose and plans out there: feature stories, photos, video testimonial, co-sponsor events,



Key concepts...

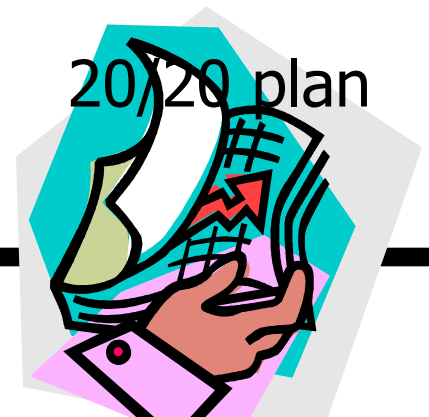
Create your vision for change that describes the big picture, is tied to institutional mission, consistent, credible and come from the top regularly. (Kotter)



Give updates and talking points to your provost or head honcho

Examples of information-savvy work

- Put your central messages about critical thinking and student learning in all presentations and materials
- Connect these messages to your organization's mission and strategic plan
- Focus on: enhancing the student experience and students' lives
- “Administratively supported, faculty-driven” change
- Reminder: fluid approach to change over many years
- Show your work is informed by research
- Issue annual reports and newsletters
- Have peers speak to peers about the impact



Peer testimonials

- “The Faculty Learning Community (FLC) opened my eyes to a new approach of teaching that engages the student in the learning process and helps them to think critically. As a result, students get more involved in classroom activities and start asking higher level questions during class.”
- Jackie Singleton, Associate Professor,
Dental Hygiene, School of Dentistry



Faculty Perspective

“I think that for decades I have given my students many opportunities to engage in critical thinking, and I have modeled critical thinking in class discussions. But I don’t think I can claim ever to have *taught* critical thinking in a systematic way. The framework gives me a way to share a critical thinking vocabulary with students and to chart their progress. I know and can tell my students exactly what I am looking for.”

Senior faculty member, Department of English



Other use of your
'early adopters' and "innovators":

- Video testimonials
- Exemplars on website
- Campus & conference presentations
- Mentoring/advocacy
- Learning communities & informal sharing

Micro-reflection on Principle 4

Write and reflect:

- Even if a key colleague forgets every detail about your CT program: what are 2-3 fundamental and powerful ideas or concepts you want them to never forget about critical thinking and/or your program? (Concepts, Purpose)
- How do you make explicit these concepts/ideas in your literature and other information you share with colleagues and stakeholders? (Information, Point of view)
- What are the free and inexpensive ways that information gets communicated in your organization or across your work culture (think: email, meetings, flyers, posters, keynote events)? Where are your sources for information and ideas about critical thinking? How do you tap into these and help others do the same? (Information, Point of view, Concepts)

Principle 5

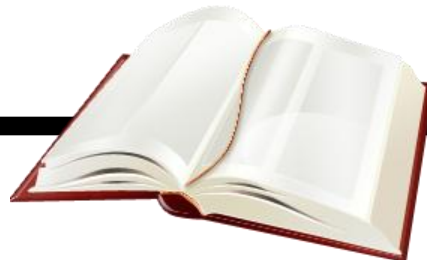
Remember, attitude is everything: be flexible, learn to stretch, create excitement

- Ask your partners: “how can I help you do this work?”
- Celebrate success and “short term wins” & grow from challenges
- Keep your own eyes on the prize: **STUDENTS**
- Create a community of “early adopters”
- Remember the importance of symbolic gestures (mugs, letters, exemplars)



Symbols embody and express the organization's culture—the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices and artifacts that define for members who they are and how they are to do things.

(Bolman and Deal)



Cast the net widely

- i2a informational sessions and workshops
- Departmental and individual consultations
- Ongoing Learning Communities
- Collaborative Learning Community
- i2a Institute: Developing Critical Thinkers
- i2a Showcase events for faculty and student critical thinking products and projects
- Culminating Undergraduate Experience pilot programs
- Ongoing campus collaborations (Office of Community Engagement, Division of Student Affairs)



Salem College



Ideas to Action (i2a) at Univ of Louisville



i2a is designed to help you...



SAILS Students Achieving Improved Learning Strategies

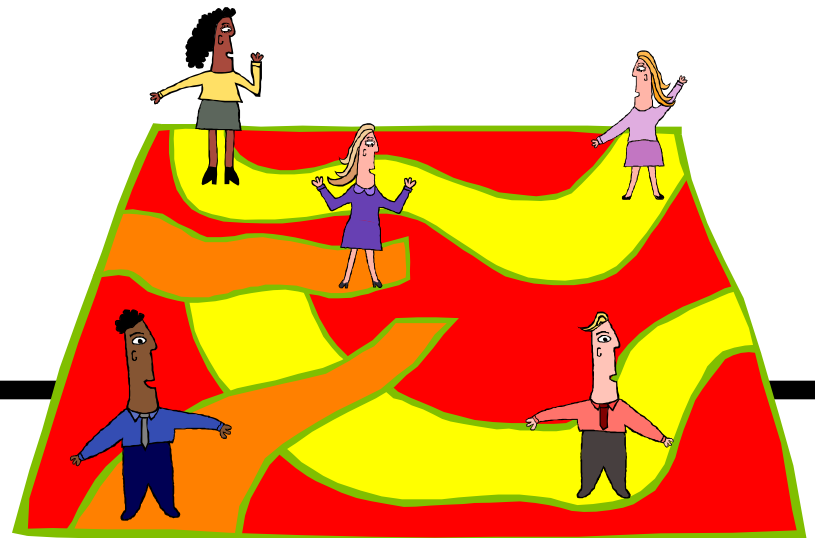


Roane State Community College

Look at other learning initiatives at **institutions** similar to yours!

Model confident flexibility: Ride the Waves of Change

“The path of change... [is] never linear; unexpected events and unintended consequences of predictable occurrences shaped the course of change in every institution. The [change] process took twists and turns, sped up and slowed down, and the substance of the change agendas took on new dimensions over time.”



(Eckel, Green and Hill)

Micro-reflection on Principle 5

- Describe your vision of critical thinking in your organization in one sentence (Concept, Purpose):
- What are the catalysts that push change forward in your organization(leaders, money, student voices, etc.)? How will you harness these for your efforts? (Assumptions, Implications)
- How can you use existing and new public and private avenues for rewarding and celebrating your chief allies and early adopters? Be creative! (Information, Point of view)

Principle 6

Pay Attention to Readiness!



Readiness for:

-you

-your organization

Micro-reflections for Principle 6

1. Handout about your readiness

Are you ready to ride the
waves of change?

**Self-assessment: “Are
you an effective
change agent at your
institution?”**

2. Handout to assess your org’s readiness

Is your institution ready to
ride the waves of change?

**Assess your institution:
“Assessing an
organization’s
readiness for change”**

- **Learning Communities**

<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/aboutlc>

- **i2a SUN Grants**

<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/grants>

- **i2a Institute (large-scale training)**

<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/i2a-institute>

- ***Faculty Speak! Video***

<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/resources/media>

- **Faculty Exemplars**

<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/resources/faculty-exemplars>

Enjoy the Journey!

QUESTIONS?

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"Ideas to Action"

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