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IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH SUPPORT SERVICES:

READING AND CRITICAL THINKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

I. ABOUT LEE COLLEGE

A. Lee College Main Campus

Founded in 1934, Lee College, in Baytown, Texas, has been an active part of the Southeast Texas educational community for several decades. It often represents area residents' best opportunity to pursue a college degree, a technical trade, or self-improvement and enrichment. Like many community colleges, Lee College enrolls a large number of first-generation college students and non-traditional students who may face significant challenges—including personal barriers, financial barriers, language barriers, and time barriers—while pursuing their educational goals. The college is committed to helping students overcome their individual barriers and remain motivated and engaged throughout the completion of their educational programs.

Developing a plan to improve student learning necessitates creating positive communication and collaboration among all campus groups. Lee College's QEP is based on the concept of campus-wide support of students' needs.

B. Huntsville Center Campus, Lee College

Lee College was the first college in Texas to make higher education available to individuals incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The college began offering coursework to inmate-students in 1966, utilizing main campus faculty who traveled to Huntsville once a week to hold classes in one of four prison units. In 1984, the Huntsville Center of Lee College (HCLC), the division of Lee College that exclusively serves inmate-students incarcerated on eight different units of the Texas

Department of Criminal Justice, was born. HCLC has a separate full-time faculty, both academic and technical, and is located approximately 100 miles north of the main campus in Baytown. Because of the nature of its student population, HCLC faces unique challenges in providing access to common services that support student learning. Nonetheless, HCLC is committed to providing a high-quality education that enables these inmate-students to achieve success in their post-incarceration careers.

II. DEVELOPING THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (QEP) TOPIC

A. Selecting a QEP Topic

Lee College began the QEP topic selection process in June 2003 during one of its regular administrative retreats. Every two years, administrators, division chairs, faculty representatives, staff representatives and student representatives come together for a day to discuss leadership and college issues.

Following a presentation by SACS Liaison Roberta Wright and Dean Johnette Hodgins on the new reaffirmation process, the group had a brainstorming session on ways to improve student learning at Lee College. A list of possible topics was generated without analysis.

In August 2003, President Ellis presented a brief overview of the new reaffirmation process to the entire college community at a Professional Development Day meeting that included both the main campus and HCLC. Later, during the Fall 2003 semester, the Institutional Report Card, providing data showing how well the College is meeting its goals, was reviewed by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and President's Council. Areas falling below a predetermined level were deemed in need of

improvement. This information, along with the information collected at the administrative retreat, was used to generate more focused potential topics for the QEP.

Next, the more focused topics were presented to the main campus community at the Professional Development Day activities for Spring 2004. After a presentation describing the reaffirmation process and an in-depth discussion of the requirements for a QEP, the college was divided into small groups of no more than twenty people. Each group had a facilitator who had gone through a training session on QEP requirements and on the process of choosing a topic. The goal for each group was to suggest two or three topics they thought would most improve student learning at Lee College. The two most popular topics brought back from the various group meetings were **services to support student learning** (including tutoring, advising, early warning systems, online services, developmental programs, and student engagement) and **new program development** (including delivery modalities, global perspectives, service learning). This topic selection process was repeated at HCLC's Spring 2004 Professional Development Day meeting a few days later, and the HCLC faculty and staff concurred with **services to support student learning** with an emphasis on **developmental education**.

Based on the collective discussion of the college community as described above, the QEP topic was narrowed to **improving student learning through support services**. This QEP topic supports the College's mission and vision statements. The QEP topic also builds on areas of strength in which the college has documented success and pursues opportunities for improvement that the college community has identified in the above process and through the Institutional Report Card.

The college community then identified the following specific focus areas for implementing the QEP topic:

- Creating environments for student success
- Tutoring labs and library
- Improving student motivation and commitment to the learning environment
- Orientation for students
- Integrating resources to use technology to improve learning
- Improving course effectiveness through measurements, evaluation and assessment in the classroom
- Developmental education

Further analysis of the above focus areas led to three subtopics: developing **policies and procedures** that reflect the priority placed on student learning, increasing **student motivation** and students' awareness of **realistic expectations and commitment to college work**, and strengthening **developmental education** courses that prepare students for college-level work. The above topic and subtopics were approved by the President's Council on June 14, 2004.

During Fall 2004, the entire college community worked within each department and division to develop objectives and strategies that would contribute to the college's efforts to improve student learning. This process further reinforced the legitimacy of the topic by demonstrating that success in student learning results from active and on-going cooperation and mutual support from all college groups, both students and college employees.

The next challenge was defining *student learning* as a campus-wide, measurable objective. For the purpose of brainstorming activities, the term had been defined as inclusive of both *affective* and *cognitive growth*. *Affective growth* is defined as ***engagement in the learning environment, motivation and increased awareness of the learning process that prepares students for the classroom experience***. *Cognitive skills*

include *the basic recall and comprehension of information* plus *analyzing, applying and evaluating* it. The goal was to produce long-term, independent learners. It was necessary to link this definition to a specific skill that could be measured by validated assessment instruments. The issue was brought before the SACS Steering Committee in December 2004.

As the SACS Steering Committee and the SACS Leadership Team examined the preliminary work of the college community, it became clear that the focus must be narrowed. Based on the faculty's input throughout the process, two narrower issues central to student learning had emerged: the need for **more effective reading skills** and students' need to **think critically**. The concept of broad-based involvement through the use of support services was not modified.

During Professional Development Day activities for Spring 2005, the college community once again was presented with the final QEP topic: **Improving Student Learning Through Support Services: Reading and Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum**. Committee work was explained and broad participation was emphasized as crucial to an effective, well-defined plan. Break-out sessions were organized by departments and divisions to discuss the topic in detail, to allow for additional input about the topic, and to seek committee membership. Six committees were formed to work on the QEP at the main campus, and four were formed at the Huntsville Center. A list of these committees and their tasks is included in the Appendices. All committees are composed of faculty, staff, and administrators.

The Research committee immediately undertook the task of finding the best practices for teaching reading skills and critical thinking in the content areas. *Active*

learning steadily rose to the top as the most effective teaching and learning modalities in classrooms where awareness of one's own thinking and learning process prepares the students for assimilation of course content. Further discussion of best practices by members of Reading and Critical Thinking focus committees as well as the SACS Steering committee led to narrowing the QEP focus to the concepts of *core skills in critical thinking, active learning strategies* and *student and faculty learning communities*. Core critical thinking skills include interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. In addition, through working with the Foundation for Critical Thinking, the focus committee developed a more substantive understanding of critical thinking and how to best teach it. Reading skills improvement thus became not a part of the overall QEP focus, but instead a support objective that would lead to improvement in students' critical thinking skills and active learning abilities. Detailed descriptions, theoretical background and research references for these concepts are presented later in this document.

B. Justification of the QEP Topic

During formal and informal discussions, faculty has expressed concern and frustration about the low academic skills of students entering college. Lack of realistic expectations and awareness of the rigors of college work were also identified as common denominators for student failure. Documenting relevant student data that can help to identify specific learning barriers, however, has only recently been implemented at Lee College.

As research confirms, it is very difficult to assess institutional effectiveness, student success, and learning outcomes at community colleges due to the nature of the

students they serve. According to Jeffrey Seybert (1990), in contrast to four-year colleges, community colleges have a broader mission. “In addition to traditional coursework, community colleges provide career training, occupational retraining, remedial and developmental coursework, community and continuing education programs, courses for special populations, and a variety of other educational offerings” (p.24). Furthermore, “Community college students often are much more diverse in terms of age, background, employment status, preparation, and educational objectives than their four-year college or university counterparts” (p. 24).

However, in spite of these inherent difficulties in documenting student progress, Lee College has already taken several steps towards appropriate assessment of students’ needs, skills, and abilities. In 1993, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) developed and implemented student surveys measuring student satisfaction. Data from these surveys are analyzed and reported on the annual Institutional Report Card. In 2002, Lee College also began evaluating the institution’s core curriculum. Course syllabi are made available to students to inform them of the knowledge, skills, and abilities taught in each course. Students should demonstrate awareness of the objectives in the core courses they take and acknowledge meeting such goals. Therefore, students ready to graduate respond to surveys about the college’s efforts to address core course competencies, perspectives, and exemplary objectives as mandated by the State of Texas.

Other assessment initiatives have also been incorporated into evaluation of student engagement and learning. In 2002, for example, Lee College’s Curriculum Committee approved faculty’s resolution to re-evaluate and revise as necessary the reading levels required to enroll in many academic courses. The Allied Health Division

has already incorporated critical thinking skills into the instruction and testing of nursing students, and tracking students' scores on nursing exams as part of the professional licensure program has provided measurement of student learning within that particular group. Finally, during Spring 2005, Lee College main campus administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).*(These results will be here at the end of July - earliest)*

As mentioned previously, the Office of Institutional Research maintains databases containing student performance information. This information was analyzed by the QEP Data Committees for each campus. The purpose of these committees was to discover trends and correlations that might illuminate which challenges seem to most impede student learning and what strategies might be used to help students overcome those challenges.

Data included in the committees' analysis included enrollment, successful completion, and migration rates. According to the Office of Institutional Research, Lee College's combined enrollment in credit classes for fall and spring semesters has varied between 6,000 and 6,700 during the last four years. Summer I enrollment has been between 3,800 and 4,900, and Summer II enrollment has vacillated between 700 and 850 students. Lee College graduates approximately 1,250 students per year with an AA, AS or AAS degree. Lee College's technical certificate program is one of the largest in the nation: nearly 800 technical certificates per year. The migration or transfer rate, however, has never exceeded 8.2%.

More relevant to QEP initiatives are the student course completion rates, grades, and passing/advancing rates. Because reading at college level was identified by faculty as

crucial to student learning in regular credit courses, it was insightful to track the progress of students enrolled in courses that require intense reading.

The Data committees identified ten courses referred to as “gate keeper” courses and the Office of Institutional Research compiled data from Fall 2001 to Spring 2003 (Appendix). Data analysis show an *overall completion* rate (course grade F or higher) of 71% and a *successful completion* rate (course grade C or higher) of 56%. Almost half of the students would have to retake the course to show at least average mastery. There are several reasons why students do not complete a course, including personal situations the College can not control. However, lack of basic skills is very likely to explain the lower grades received by some of the students who do manage to finish reading-intensive courses. This assumption is strengthened by anecdotal observations from faculty members, who consistently state that students who are able to read and comprehend textbook material independently gain the most knowledge from a course. Students with below-level reading skills have difficulty going beyond basic fact acquisition into the higher-level thinking skills that allow them to analyze and evaluate information. The College has not documented sufficient relevant data to draw a factual statement about the importance of good reading skills in the content areas. Hence, QEP initiatives seek to improve assessment and documentation of student performance in order to establish correlations between reading and critical thinking skills and their impact on student learning.

During Spring and Summer 2005, a cross section of Lee College students (610 total) from both the main campus and HCLC responded to a survey designed by SACS Steering Committee (Appendix). From a list provided in the survey, students were asked

to select the three most important skills for success in college. Reading and critical thinking skills were among the top three choices of approximately 60% of the students and 75% rated critical thinking as ‘very important’ to college education. When asked to rate their own critical thinking skills, 3% responded ‘weak’, 42% responded ‘average’, 43% responded ‘strong’, and 9.8% responded ‘very strong’ (Appendix). It will be enlightening to compare these responses to the scores on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) benchmark. Measuring and improving students’ awareness of their own cognitive abilities is a major part of the QEP focus.

C. Potential Impact of the Topic

The QEP initiatives will have greatest impact on faculty and students. Faculty will have opportunities to interact and review scholarly research, discuss teaching and learning theories, and share effective classroom activities and assignments specific to content areas. Training will focus on instructional strategies that promote a substantive concept of critical thinking and on active learning. Through faculty’s utilization of these instructional strategies, students will increase their ability to learn, evaluate, and apply knowledge independently as well as increase awareness of their own learning process.

Creating a College Culture to Promote Critical Thinking: The Impetus for Transformation

In focus-sessions early in the QEP process, Lee College faculty identified critical thinking as essential to the improvement of student engagement and student learning. Four faculty members attended the 25th International Critical Thinking Conference, sponsored by The Foundation for Critical Thinking, in Berkeley to learn to create a college culture that promotes critical thinking. These four faculty members represent Lee’s leadership team for the advancement of critical thinking. The Foundation for

Critical Thinking has designed critical thinking professional development programs for 60,000 college faculty. The initial process of developing such a program, according to Elder, “will involve somewhere between five and seven years of workshops and consultations with experts in fostering critical thinking across the curriculum” (2005, p. 3). In planning for change, the leadership team considered Elder’s (2005) suggestions for developing an effective professional development program based on critical thinking, including: “1) comparing the ideal college with the reality (on one’s own campus); 2) establishing administrative support and commitment; 3) including all areas of the campus in the development process; 4) taking a long-term approach to change, 5) creating internal processes that encourage incremental faculty and staff development; 6) providing long-term workshops in critical thinking for faculty and staff; 7) tying critical thinking to assessment, accreditation and the college mission; 8) keeping the focus on a rich, substantive concept of critical thinking” (pp. 1-2).

Once the development of a substantive critical thinking program became the college’s choice for its QEP, Lee formed committees of staff, faculty, and administrators from all areas of the campus to develop a plan to create a college culture “that places critical thinking at the focal point of the college’s philosophy, mission, and goals” (Elder, 2005, p. 2). The critical thinking committee determined that 1) administrators, faculty, and staff—all are responsible for student learning, that 2) improving student learning requires a transformation of the college culture, and that 3) transforming the college cultures requires a willingness to change administrative and pedagogical practices.

As Lee devised its plan for change, the college considered the following questions: 1) How is critical thinking best defined? 2) What are the foundations of critical

thinking? 3) What are the pedagogical practices of our faculty? 4) Which practices promote critical thinking and which do not? 5) How can we transform our practices to foster critical thinking? 6) What knowledge, needed to develop such practices, must faculty acquire? 7) How can we create a college culture to promote critical thinking? 8) Which policies and procedures promote student learning and which do not?

Focusing on a Substantive Concept of Critical Thinking: Transforming Learning

To search for answers to pedagogical questions, the college formed a research committee to review relevant scholarship related to practices that promote critical thinking. Working with The Foundation for Critical Thinking, the leadership team identified the following ideas as integral to a substantive concept of critical thinking: 1) the foundations of critical thinking (including the elements of thought, the intellectual virtues, and the intellectual standards), 2) close reading and substantive writing, 3) course content as a mode of thinking, 4) reasoning across the disciplines, and 5) student self-assessment of reasoning. In addition to developing a substantive concept of critical thinking, the leadership team considered specific student learning outcomes, including the following: students will 1) self-assess their reasoning; 2) “master content more proficiently in diverse disciplines and settings”; 3) “exercise more skilled and proficient reasoning and problem solving in a diversity of fields”; 4) “become more proficient in using and assessing goals and purposes, questions and problems, information and data, conclusions and interpretations, concepts and theoretical constructs, assumptions and presuppositions, implications and consequences, and points of view and frames of reference (in the posing and solving of problems, as well as in the asking and answering of questions and the resolving of issues)”; 5) “achieve higher levels in the mastery of

language and communication”; 6) “think more clearly, more accurately, more precisely, more relevantly, more deeply, more broadly, and more logically”; 7) “become better readers, writers, speakers, and listeners” (adapted from Foundation for Critical Thinking, 1999, p. viii).

Focusing on Pedagogies that Foster Critical Thinking: Transforming Teaching

Once Lee adopted learning outcomes, the college was then able to focus on establishing a curriculum initiative, as well as pedagogical strategies, that would promote student learning. After a review of the literature, Lee recognized the following pedagogies as supporting the development of students’ critical thinking skills: 1) providing students with a critical thinking vocabulary, so they may evaluate their own reasoning, 2) modeling skilled thinking for students, 3) engaging students in active and collaborative learning, 4) using inquiry-based learning methods, 5) requiring an intellectual journal when relevant, and 6) incorporating portfolio assessment into course requirements.

Scholarly support for Substantive Reading that Fosters Critical Thinking in Students

Scholarly research on student learning continues to corroborate the importance of effective reading skills across the curriculum. Although offering developmental courses at institutions of higher education has been a controversial issue, all community colleges in the nation continue to provide courses to assist academically deficient students who want to pursue a career (Brothen and Wambach, 2004, p.17). Students who have been enrolled in a remediation course not only make better grades, but also are more likely to complete the class and enroll again (p. 17). Studies also suggest that “allowing underprepared, unremediated students to enroll in college-level courses will cause teachers to reduce their expectations for student performance, watering down the

curriculum for everyone (2004, p.17). Hence, Brothen and Wamback propose the integration of underprepared students into mainstream curriculum by providing teachers in the college-level courses the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of the skills teachers (2004, p. 20). Lee College will be providing such opportunities through faculty learning communities, workshops, and professional development for faculty-at-large. In the FLCs, a reading instructor will serve as the peer consultant for improving reading skills in the content areas as well as offer professional development workshops for all faculty. Outside experts on specific reading topics will also present during Faculty In-Service.

The most effective reading programs are those that teach reading skills as a tool to learning and provide students with additional guided practice plus active, independent learning outside the classroom (Maitland, 2000, p. 26). In the FLCs, the reading consultant will focus on the act of reading and its relation to the thinking process that leads to learning: effective readers are actively and conscientiously thinking about their purpose for reading (Maitland, p.27). Maitland also proposes that teachers become aware of their own metacognitive process in order to provide quality feedback to students. “Before asking students to be active, independent learners who apply metacognitive and self-regulative strategies, we reflect on our own thinking and practice as reading teachers (2000, p. 27).

As research suggests, it is important that students practice independent learning and self-regulation (Maitland, 2000, p.28). As part of QEP initiatives, the College will offer computerized practice, tutoring sessions, and/or supplemental instruction for students who need assistance in credit courses. Teachers of credit courses will be able to

refer students who have acknowledged difficulty understanding basic information from reading assignments. Students will have an active role in their learning by identifying what is keeping them from comprehending written material; “the student must assume ownership and feel responsible (p. 28). Lab tutors will be trained to ‘guide’ students through effective reading strategies.

Scholarly support for Pedagogies that Foster Critical Thinking in Students

As Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz (2004) note, countless research studies suggest that students with good critical thinking skills perform better in college (Gadzella, 1996; Gadzella, Ginther, and Bryant, 1997; Holmgren and Covin, 1984; Kooker, 1971; McCammon, Golden and Wuensch, 1988; McCutcheon, Apperson, Hanson, and Wynn, 1992; Scott and Markert, 1994; Spaulding and Kleiner, 1992; Steward and Al-Abdulla, 1989). Effectively teaching these critical thinking skills, as Ruggiero (1998) suggests, “does not depend on what is taught, but rather in how it is taught” (Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz, 2004, p. 3). Developing students’ critical thinking skills through active learning has, as Rubin and Hebert (1998) point out, “a long and distinguished history” (p. 1), dating back to Socrates. According to Bloom (1953), “student-centered methods, such as discussion, are considered more effective in developing higher-order skills, such as synthesis and problem-solving” (Rubin and Hebert, p. 1). Nevertheless, as Coleman, Rogers, and King (2002) assert, most students are socialized into passive learning behaviors, as opposed to active learning behaviors (Gordon, 1994). Moreover, “{t}he transition from passive to active and autonomous learning will probably not occur without a struggle” (Coleman, Rogers, and King (2002). To encourage students to take responsibility for the learning process, faculty will utilize strategies to engage students in

active learning. Research suggests that inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and journaling—all promote active learning and students’ critical thinking skills.

As Researchers such as Keeley, Ali, and Gebing, (1998); King, (1995); and Reitner, (1994) have demonstrated, inquiry-based learning is an active learning method that is essential to developing students’ critical thinking skills (Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz 2004). Richard and Elder (1998) assert, “The goal of critical thinking is to establish a disciplined ‘executive’ level of thinking, a powerful inner voice of reason, to monitor, assess, and reconstitute—in a more rational direction—our thinking, feeling, and action. Socratic discussion cultivates that inner voice by providing a public model for it” (p. 2). Elder and Paul (1998) argue that “thinking is driven not by answers but by questions” and that teachers often “emphasize coverage of the material over engaged thinking” because “they do not fully appreciate the role of questions in teaching content” (p. 1).

Research suggests that collaborative learning is an active learning strategy that promotes critical thinking. Rubin and Herbert (1999) maintain that active and collaborative learning—“characterized by interaction and cooperation” (p. 2)—is an effective model to promote student learning. Gerlach (1994) suggests, “collaborative learning environments have many advantages for students’ intellectual and social development . . .” (Rubin and Hebert, 1998, p. 2). Smith (1997) asserts that peer collaboration promotes critical thinking (Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz, 2004). Rubin and Herbert (1998) further maintain that several theoretical perspectives support collaborative learning, including cognitive theory, motivational theory, and social context theory (2). Researchers in the various fields, including Svinicki (1991), Forsyth and Mcmillan

(1991) and Billson and Tiberius (1991)—all assert that collaborative learning is beneficial.

Journaling promotes critical thinking by developing students' metacognitive abilities. Experts in critical thinking, such as Maslow (1979), Connor-Greene, (2000), Mayo, (2003a; 2003b), Seshachari, (1994), Hettich (1990), de Acosta, (1995) and Tsui (2002)—all argue that reflective journaling promotes metacognitive development (Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz, 2004). Metacognitive development in students is essential to the development of their critical thinking skills. . According to Ilene Rutan (2002), “As problem solvers students need to employ their reasoning skills and become aware of how they solve problems rather than just arrive at the correct answer. They need to keep track of the steps they take to solve problems, and they need to be able to explain these steps in writing” (p. 9). In short, they need to be able to reflect upon their own cognitive process.

Not only do portfolios foster students' critical thinking skills, but portfolios also demonstrate whether students are in fact meeting learning outcomes. According to Coleman, Rogers and King (2002), “Portfolios are compendiums of purposively selected student work assigned to enhance learning and show how outcomes are being met.” (p. 585). Moreover, “{b}ecause portfolios demonstrate both progress and a product, they are linked with critical thinking in such a way that the portfolio is the product and critical thinking is the vehicle through which the product is constructed” (Coleman, Rogers and King, 2002, p. 585). According to Kish and Sheehan (1997), portfolios promote active learning because a portfolio requires students to justify the contents, “which “contributes to an intellectual self-consciousness that results in the scholarly ownership” (p. 2) of

learning and because “{t}he portfolio requires, actually creates, situations in which students must think about their own thinking, allowing them to monitor their progress.” (p. 3) In short, the portfolio provides students with a sense of ownership in their own learning. Brown, McCrink and Maybee (2003) conducted a study to determine whether the portfolio increased critical thinking, and findings indicated that students did indeed gain increased competencies in critical thinking. According to Brown, McCrink, and Maybee (2003), “Clearly, critical thinking is a composite of several tasks—organization, communication, and self-reflection—that coalesce and are embedded in the portfolio development process (p. 20).

The critical thinking portfolio will consist of a series of assignments requiring that students master the core critical thinking skills of analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation, explanation, and regulation (“The Delphi Report,” 1990). Thus students will concentrate not simply on mastering course content but also on mastering critical thinking skills. Students will not only execute the assignments, but they will also keep a metacognitive journal in which they must be able to identify which core CT skills were required in order to complete the assignment. According to Elder and Paul (2002), “To be skilled in critical thinking is to be able to take one’s thinking apart systematically, to analyze each part, assess it for quality and then improve it” (p.34). The portfolio will provide the opportunity for both students and faculty to evaluate the development of students’ critical thinking skills throughout the semester.

Focusing on Professional Development: Transforming the College Culture to Promote Excellence in Teaching

To transform the college culture, the college will provide professional activities and opportunities throughout the year that foster critical thinking, including a) a monthly

newsletter inviting all faculty and staff to share insights about critical thinking and about how to teach it, 2) brown-bag discussions that the college professional community can attend, 3) critical thinking seminars for new faculty, facilitated by the leadership team, 4) faculty learning communities for faculty who wish to engage in more intensive training and to take a leadership role, and 5) a five-year professional development program for faculty-at-large.

Faculty Learning Communities

Over the course of three semesters, twelve faculty participants, representing diverse disciplines, will meet once a week as a faculty learning community. Four faculty members who attended the International Conference on Critical Thinking in Berkeley will serve as FLC coordinators. Members of the FLC will receive intensive training in critical thinking. By the third semester, faculty will fully implement new curriculum they developed as part of the FLC. At the end of the third semesters, faculty will assess students' critical thinking and reading skills with the California Critical Thinking Skills Test and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Appendices H and I). The college intends to sponsor three FLCs in a five-year period.

Scholarly Support for Faculty Learning Communities

Faculty learning communities, as a means of improving student learning, began to appear in the mid-90s (Cox, 1999). According to Cox (2004), an FLC is “a cross-disciplinary faculty and staff group of six to fifteen members . . . who engage in an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, the scholarship of teaching, and community building” (p. 8). Richlin and Cox (2004) point

out that “{t}he scholarship of teaching and learning has been a primary motivator and focus of faculty learning communities” (p. 127). Moreover research suggests that peer consultation over an extended period of time (a year or more) is a better strategy for achieving faculty professional development in the area of student learning than one or two workshops with an expert consultant (Cox, 2004). As Richard Paul (2004, p.1) has pointed out, “Critical thinking is not something to be devoured in a single sitting nor yet in a couple of workshops.” In a FLC, faculty participants are engaged in the assessment process—“setting objectives for FLCs, identifying appropriate assessment strategies and criteria to evaluate process and outcome issues, and participating in assessment experiences that require faculty members to think critically and engage in self-directed learning (individually and collaboratively)” (Hubball, Clarke, and Beach, 2004, p. 91). Thus the faculty is more invested in the outcome of the FLC experience. Not only do FLCs serve to provide faculty development for the participants, but FLCs— through their emphasis on community building—also cultivate faculty consultants “willing to share their expertise with colleagues across the institution” (Cox, 1999, p. 40). Because the FLC represents various disciplines, faculty will have achieved an additional benefit; they will have broadened their understanding of critical thinking across the curriculum. Finally, the FLC will mentor the faculty at large through professional development presentations and peer consultations. As Lee seeks to transform the college culture, the FLCs emphasis on community building should prove advantageous.

Summary of Lee’s Long-term Professional Development Program

According to Elder (2005, p.1), “Critical Thinking is foundational to the effective teaching of any subject. When critical thinking is deeply understood, it provides a rich

set of concepts that enable us to think our way through any subject or discipline, through any problem or issue. Critical thinking, then, must be at the heart of any professional development program.” Thus Lee has developed a long-term professional development program, based on the recommendations and scholarship of The Critical Thinking Foundation. Workshops on the following topics will be presented over a five-year period: 1) Teaching the foundations of critical thinking, 2) Teaching content as a mode of thinking, 3) Integrating inquiry-based learning into teaching, 4) Teaching students to assess their own thinking, 5) Using intellectual standards; 6) Utilizing active and collaborative learning methods; 7) Teaching students the art of substantive reading and writing; 8) Organizing courses so that critical thinking is emphasized, 9) Teaching Analytic Thinking, 10) Teaching Scientific Thinking, and 11) Identifying Critical Thinking Competency Standards. Lee’s leadership team for the advancement of critical thinking and members of the faculty learning community will present basic workshops. Members of the FLC will offer brown-bag discussions about the impact of their intensive training in critical thinking on their pedagogical practice and classroom experience. Experts will present advanced workshops. Lee’s leadership team for the advancement of critical thinking will present basic workshops to new faculty.

Focusing on Student Development: Transforming the College Culture to Promote Excellence in Learning

In order to transform the college culture, the college must reach out to students outside, as well as inside, the classrooms walls. Much learning takes place in informal settings: field trips, retreats, lyceums, corridor discussions among students and professors, etc. To take advantage of such opportunities, the college plans to 1) conduct monthly workshops for students on the foundations of critical thinking, facilitated by

members of the Faculty Learning Community, 2) initiate a series of Socratic discussions between students and chosen professors from the Faculty Learning Community, entitled, *Brown-bag with a Brainiac* (Students will chose the topics), 3) develop posters featuring the basic concepts of critical thinking, 4) institute a Critical Thinking Club with the QEP director serving as faculty sponsor, and 5) provide student support services, including reading tutors and critical thinking software. Because Lee College is a commuter college, students yearn for opportunities for community. To truly engage students in critical thinking, the college must provide opportunities throughout the year for students to practice critical thinking in an informal setting. Students must be able to apply their developing skills to topics in which they are particularly interested. A Critical Thinking Club would provide interested students with funding from the SGA that would enable them to pursue lectures, speakers, etc. To transform the college culture for students, the college must market critical thinking outside, as well as inside, the classroom.

In addition, the college must provide students with the necessary support services to enable them to be successful in the classroom. The college will equip the writing lab with reading tutors and with critical thinking software.

Conclusion

The college's goal is to improve student learning. To develop students' reading and critical thinking skills, teachers must provide them with a vocabulary that enables them to develop an *intellectual voice*, to articulate and to evaluate their reasoning. Teachers must model critical thinking inside and outside the classroom walls. The college must transform its policies and its pedagogies. In short, the QEP will impact the

entire college: staff, faculty, students, and administrators. The QEP provides Lee the opportunity to transform student learning by transforming itself.

D. Design of Faculty Learning Communities

Four faculty members, including the two FLC Coordinators, the QEP Director, and the QEP Coordinator from HCLC, attended the International Conference on Critical Thinking at The University of California at Berkeley in July 2005. These instructors and subsequent attendees, referred to as the leadership team for the advancement of critical thinking, will serve as peer consultants to the FLCs throughout the implementation of the QEP. Main campus will have a total of three FLCs over the five-year plan, working in three-semester cycles. While HCLC faculty will not organize formal FLCs, they will have the opportunity to attend meetings at main campus or participate via teleconferences.

Each FLC will be comprised of twelve faculty participants representing diverse disciplines who will meet at regulated intervals as often as once a week to review and discuss scholarship related to critical thinking. In each FLC cycle, a reading peer consultant will provide an ongoing resource for improving reading skills that promote critical thinking in the content areas.

In addition, beginning in Spring 2006, outside experts in both reading skills and critical thinking will present information at Professional Development Day meetings throughout the five years of QEP implementation. The FLC cycles will require three semesters for full implementation. The California Critical Thinking Skills Test, which assesses student mastery of these core CT skills, and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test will

be administered to students at the beginning and at the end of the third semester of each FLC cycle. Appendices H and I contain validation information for the CCTST and N-D.

III. QEP FOCUS STATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A. Definitions of Key Terms

As the QEP topic evolved, the college recognized a need for precise definitions of key terms in the QEP Focus Statement. Definitions for *student learning*, *support services* and *critical thinking* were narrowed down to make discussion more precise and productive. In terms of skills and classroom experience, ***student learning*** is defined as *the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to be successful in future studies and work*. ***Support services*** are defined as *every resource available to initiate and maintain students' engagement in the learning process*.

Support Services at Lee College that will be instrumental in the success of the QEP include professional development for faculty and staff as well as appropriate academic guidance and support for students. The College's developmental program is in itself a major support service to students who need to improve basic academic skills before enrolling in a college-level program.

There are also several campus groups whose primary goal is to engage students in the learning process and assist them along the way to successful completion. Such groups include the Lee Way Project and Educational Opportunity Center.

Critical thinking was defined as the *ability to go beyond learning or memorizing facts into such higher-level skills as problem solving, reasoning, logic, analyzing information and drawing conclusions*. Once definitions were established, it was easier to aim at specific objectives and tasks and to finalize the Focus Statement.

B. The Focus Statement

Students at Lee College will develop the critical thinking skills required for success in their academic and professional careers.

C. QEP Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Integrate reading skills development into content courses to enhance the students' critical thinking skills.

Assessment: Pre-and post-test results will show one grade level improvement in reading comprehension scores above the baseline as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test.

The Lee College Main Campus strategies are:

Provide formal professional development specific to increasing students' basic and advanced reading skills to faculty participating in learning communities;

Hire and train reading tutors available to all students on a referral basis;

Provide instructional labs equipped with appropriate hardware, software and human resources to deliver computerized student learning support for reading in the content areas;

Administer the Nelson-Denny Reading Test to students enrolled in courses taught by a FLC participant before and after implementation of QEP initiatives to measure improvement on student learning and instructional effectiveness.

The Huntsville Center's strategies are:

Provide professional development activities to assist all faculty—especially those in technical certification curricula whose students do not have access to developmental reading courses—to incorporate reading skills instruction into their content areas;

Maintain supplemental tutorial software to improve reading skills in a computer lab available to HCLC students on a walk-in basis;

Train all peer tutors, regardless of their tutoring subject area, to identify and assist students with textbook reading and study skills deficiencies;

Train Supplemental Instruction leaders to assist students in knowing how to efficiently use textbooks in study reading;

Administer the Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students at Ferguson and Wynne Units before and after implementation of QEP initiatives to measure improvement on student learning and instructional effectiveness.

Objective 2: Students will increase critical thinking skills.

Assessment: Results will show a 10 % improvement above the baseline as measured by California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST).

The Lee College Main Campus strategies are:

Institute a five-year professional development program for faculty-at-large;

Review *critical thinking* from a pedagogical perspective and create consensus when developing curricula that will improve student learning through critical thinking activities;

Provide faculty in learning communities with intensive training in teaching strategies that will increase students' active learning and critical thinking skills;

Develop student workshops on the foundations of critical thinking;

Create an instructional resources library with a lead team of faculty members that provides opportunities for organized workshops and informal sharing of classroom activities and practices that have been effective in improvement of student learning;

Launch the QEP initiatives in the classroom with the participation of instructors in faculty learning communities as defined in the timeline for implementation;

Incorporate a Critical Thinking portfolio/project as a course requirement that documents the process of learning and its continuous progress;

Include software to enhance students' critical thinking skills on the computers in the Writing Center;

Administer the California Critical Thinking test to students enrolled in courses taught by a FLC member before and after implementation of QEP initiatives to measure improvement on student learning and instructional effectiveness.

The Huntsville Center’s strategies are:

Institute a five-year professional development program for faculty-at-large;

Define critical thinking components as they pertain to each course’s content and assist faculty in revising or maintaining their individual course designs to incorporate critical thinking skills as part of course instruction and course activities;

Increase faculty resource materials for increasing student learning available at the HCLC Instructional Resources Center;

Include software to enhance students’ critical thinking skills on the computers in the computer lab;

Train peer tutors to include active learning techniques in their tutorial sessions with students;

Train Supplemental Instruction leaders to encourage and facilitate active and collaborative learning techniques that help build students’ core critical thinking skills in their supplemental instructional sessions;

Incorporate a Critical Thinking portfolio/project as a course requirement that documents the process of learning and its continuous progress;

Administer the California Critical Thinking Skills Test to all students at the Ferguson and Wynne Units before and after implementation of QEP initiatives to measure improvement on student learning and instructional effectiveness.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QEP

The following table shows the specific timeline and QEP activities planned for both campus. A brief discussion of the timeline follows the table.

TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR QEP

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
YEAR 1						
Fall 05	First workshop from the <i>long-term professional development program</i> . Four faculty members will make a presentation at professional development day for full and part-time faculty at both campus.	All faculty, Staff, and Administrators. HCLC will use the <i>long-term professional development program</i> as the main source for faculty training.	Four faculty members attended the International Conference on Critical Thinking at Berkley in July of 2005 for professional development. They will focus on the foundations of critical thinking.	Faculty-at-large will gain knowledge about the foundations of critical thinking: elements of reasoning, intellectual standards, intellectual virtues, and the barriers to the development of thinking.	Workshop assessment survey	4 members @ \$1500 each
Fall 05	Establishment of Instructional Resource Center. Strengthen Instructional Support Center in HCLC.	QEP Director, Learning Communities Coordinators, Reading Consultant and Instructional Resource Librarian.	Instructional Resource Librarian will be responsible for housing research, as well as for researching, on faculty request, information about active learning methods.	A permanent collection of research will serve as a resource for full and part-time faculty.	Faculty Self-evaluations	Operating budget plus \$7,000 to library budget for materials
Fall 05	Develop a handbook for faculty learning communities.	Learning Community Coordinators	Based on research related to learning communities, coordinators will develop a handbook for faculty participants. Handbook will address various topics, including peer consultation, teaching and learning across disciplines, community building, and the benefits of faculty learning communities. In	The handbook will provide faculty with a basic overview of scholarly research regarding faculty-learning communities. In addition, the handbook will help faculty participants to establish procedures.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time 4@\$6,444

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
			addition, the handbook will provide numerous models for monitoring, assessing, and evaluating the progress of learning communities.			
Fall 05	Survey instructors to determine the reading skills needed for their coursework.	All Faculty	Comprise a survey that identifies reading skills needed for coursework across the disciplines.	Knowledge of what reading skills are needed in different disciplines.		Faculty release time
Fall 05	Research computer assisted instructional programs for reading and critical thinking skills development.	Reading faculty, HCLC Coordinator, Writing Center Director, and computer technicians	Research what is available for adult reading labs Validation studies Survey of colleges with reading labs	Provide an effective and affordable software package to make available to all students on a referral basis.	Student evaluations. Computer labs assessment surveys.	Faculty release time. \$5,000 for software.
Fall 05	Develop worksheets and computer assignments for guided practice in the content areas.	Reading faculty, HCLC Coordinator	Prepare guided practice assignments and assessment for reading in the content areas.	Assignments that all referred students can use to practice effective reading strategies in content area courses.	Student evaluations. Computer labs assessment surveys.	Faculty release time
Fall 05	HCLC-Ferguson Unit begins training peer tutors and supplemental instruction leaders.	HCLC Coordinator/ tutor trainer.	Training includes one-on-one instructional and SI leadership methodologies; incorporating reading, critical thinking, and studying skills instruction into tutoring sessions.	Provide well-trained peer tutors to students referred by instructors.	Student surveys and collaborative learning assessment tools.	QEP budget.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 05	Develop a system to store QEP data for future analysis.	QEP Director and Office of Institutional Research	Participants meet to discuss the most productive way to integrate QEP data to the College's student records software, PeopleSoft.	A system in which results of QEP initiatives are documented with all other student records to facilitate effective data analysis.	QEP annual report.	Operating budget. No additional cost.
Fall 05	Learning Communities Coordinators will recruit faculty for first faculty-learning community.	Learning Communities Coordinators for Main Campus	Coordinators will make a presentation about learning communities at fall Professional Development Day and at the mid-semester professional development brunch. They will schedule interest meetings throughout the semester. Each faculty learning community must represent four disciplines. The first faculty learning community will serve as a pilot program.	Coordinators will recruit twelve faculty members for first faculty learning community. Faculty will become aware of the advantages of faculty learning communities. *HCLC will not have formal organization of FLCc; however, they will have the option to become a member of a FLC at main campus.	Assessment survey of learning communities.	Faculty Release Time
Fall 05	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
			be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.			
Sp. 06	Leadership team for the advancement of CT will present workshops on CT topics during Professional Development Day.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	Leadership team for the advancement of CT will facilitate a discussion on how to apply the foundations of CT within subjects and disciplines, and across the curriculum.	Faculty will gain awareness about how to apply the foundations of CT within their subjects and disciplines, and across the curriculum.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time.
Sp. 06	Assess students' critical thinking skills to be used as a baseline measurement.	Faculty and students.	Faculty at main campus administers the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the California Critical Thinking Skills Test to a representative sample of 600 students. *HCLC faculty at Ferguson unit administers both tests to <u>all</u> students in order to obtain reliable data.	Assess students' reading and critical thinking skills and set a benchmark for future comparison.	Nelson-Denny Reading Test and CCTST	\$19,798.00 Includes all test booklets needed for five-year plan.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Sp. 06	Faculty learning community 1 will convene weekly at main campus. *HCLC will begin intensive training as prescribed in the <i>long-term professional development program</i> .	Learning Communities Coordinators, Reading Consultant, twelve faculty members, and one counselor. *HCLC faculty may also become members of a FLC at main campus.	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators, serving as facilitators. Reading Consultant will provide advice on improving reading skills in the content areas in order to improve CT. They will focus on how to apply the foundations of CT within subjects and disciplines, and across the curriculum.	Learning communities will enable faculty to apply the foundations of CT and investigate active learning methods across disciplines and to establish a peer assessment and evaluation of the implementation of new teaching methods that encourage active learning.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time
Sp. 06	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Sp. 06	HCLC begins Peer Tutoring and SI with students at Ferguson Unit.	Ferguson Unit peer tutors/SI leaders and tutor coordinator	At assigned times, peer tutors/SI leaders will work with referred students during 'study hall'.	Learning assistance sessions that incorporate reading, critical thinking, and study skills for all academic coursework.	Student surveys and collaborative learning assessment tools.	

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Summer 06	Set up computer lab at HCLC-Ferguson Unit.	Computer-based technical faculty and full-time HCLC computer technician.	Software will be installed on the computers in the existing technical computer lab and security safeguards as needed will be provided.	Computerized practice on reading and critical thinking skills.	Student Surveys, reading tests, CT tests.	QEP budget.
Summer 06	Write annual report of QEP initiatives.	QEP Director, SACS Liaison and QEP Advisory Committee	QEP Director prepares reports of QEP tasks completed during the year. Meeting reports, assessment surveys and input from all QEP participants will be reviewed for evaluation of QEP initiatives. Any modifications to the plan will be approved by QEP Advisory Committee before implementation of the plan for the following year.	Evaluation of QEP and approval of tasks and strategies for the following year.	SACS	Faculty release time.
YEAR 2						
FALL 06	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	Workshops topics will include: <i>Understanding Content as a Mode of Thinking</i> and <i>Socratic Questioning</i> .	Faculty will gain awareness about using content material to teach CT and the Socratic Method to activate thinking.	Workshop assessment survey and FLC assessment tools	Prof. Dev. Budget. \$3,000

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
FALL 06	Faculty learning communities 1 will continue to meet once a week.	Learning Communities Coordinators, Reading Consultant, twelve faculty members, and one counselor	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators. They will continue to discuss <i>Content as a Mode of Thinking</i> and <i>Socratic Questioning</i> .	Learning communities will enable faculty use content as a mode of thinking and to investigate active learning methods across disciplines and to establish a peer assessment and evaluation of the implementation of new teaching methods that encourage active learning.	Workshop assessment survey and FLC assessment tools.	Faculty release time
Fall 06	Hire and train reading tutors. HCLC will continue training of peer tutors/SI leaders.	Reading faculty, Writing Center Director, and HCLC Coordinator.	At main campus, student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. *HCLC will train peer tutors who will hold sessions at assigned meeting times. Supplemental instruction will also be provided by trained tutors.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.
Fall 06	Computer labs will open at main campus and HCLC Ferguson Unit.	Reading Faculty, HCLC Coordinator, Writing Center Director, and HCLC computer technicians.	Main campus will have instructional software in the Writing Center available to referred students. Student assistants will oversee the use of software. HCLC will provide a part-time computer technician to oversee the use of computer lab and to assist students using the software.	Computerized practice in reading and critical thinking skills.	Student surveys and collaborative learning assessment tools.	QEP Budget.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 06	HCLC provides orientation for new students (to be repeated every semester for academic students, twice yearly for technical students).	Ferguson counselor and/or faculty representatives.	Students will be advised about QEP initiatives, student support services, and testing for QEP objectives.	Inform students of QEP initiatives.	Student surveys.	No additional cost.
Fall 06	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Sp 07	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	Workshops will focus on <i>Learning to Assess Thinking Within Any Discipline</i> .	Faculty will learn about CT pedagogies, learning, and assessment tools.	Workshop assessment survey	No additional cost

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Sp 07	<i>Pre-test:</i> Assess Critical Thinking Skills and Reading Skills of students of faculty participating in FLC1 and all students at Ferguson Unit.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in learning communities	On day 1 and 2 of classes, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students of faculty in learning communities HCLC will assess all students at Ferguson Unit.	To assess level of students' critical thinking skills and reading skills	CCTST Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and \$800 for Nelson-Denny
Sp 07	<i>Post-test:</i> Assess Critical Thinking Skills and Reading Skills of students of faculty participating in FLC1 and all students at Ferguson Unit.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in FLC1 and all students at Ferguson Unit.	On last day of semester, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students of faculty in learning communities HCLC will test all students at Ferguson Unit.	To determine whether students' critical thinking skills and reading skills have improved.	CCTST, Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Students' Critical Thinking Portfolio/Project	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and \$800 for Nelson-Denny
Sp 07	Evaluate outcome of pilot program.	External Consultant	An external consultant will evaluate the pilot program.	Evaluator will make specific recommendations, prior to the expansion of the program.	Consultant's report.	
Sp 07	Hire and train reading tutors at main campus. HCLC continues peer tutoring and SI.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator and tutors/IS leaders.	At main campus, student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC will continue 'study hall' sessions.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas and critical thinking.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Sp. 07	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Summer 07	Write annual report of QEP initiatives.	QEP Director, SACS Liaison and QEP Advisory Committee	QEP Director presents reports of QEP tasks completed during the year. Meeting reports, assessment surveys and input from all QEP participants will be reviewed for evaluation of QEP initiatives. Any modifications to the plan will be approved by QEP Advisory Committee.	Evaluation of QEP and approval of tasks and strategies for the following year.	SACS	QEP Director release time
YEAR 3						
Fall 07	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	Workshops will focus on <i>Fostering the Traits of the Disciplined Mind</i> .	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom to foster critical thinking.	Workshop assessment survey	Prof. Dev. Budget.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 07	Faculty learning community 2 will convene once a week.	Learning Communities Coordinators, Reading Consultant, twelve faculty members, and one counselor.	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators, serving as facilitators. Reading Consultant will provide advice on improving reading skills in the content areas in order to improve CT. They will focus on <i>Fostering the Traits of the Disciplined Mind</i> .	Learning communities will enable faculty to investigate active learning methods across disciplines and to establish a peer assessment and evaluation of the implementation of new teaching methods that encourage active learning.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time
Fall 07	Hire and train reading tutors. HCLC continues peer tutoring and SI at Ferguson Unit.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator and tutors.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC continues 'study hall' program.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas and critical thinking.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.
Fall 07	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 07	HCLC begins baseline testing at Wynne Unit.	All students at Wynne Unit.	All students at Wynne Unit will take the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the CCTST.	Benchmark scores for Wynne Unit.		
Sp 08	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, Administrators.	Faculty workshops will focus on <i>Ethical and Scientific Reasoning</i> .	Faculty will gain advanced knowledge of CT theories and pedagogies.	Workshop assessment surveys.	
Sp 08	Faculty learning community 2 will continue to meet once a week.	Learning Communities Coordinators, Reading Consultant, twelve faculty members, and one counselor	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators. They will continue to discuss research articles, to practice active learning methods and to discuss experiences with active learning in the classroom. Reading Consultant will continue to provide ideas on how to improve reading comprehension in the content areas.	In depth knowledge of CT theories and pedagogies.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time
Sp 08	Hire and train reading tutors. HCLC continues peer tutoring and SI at Ferguson Unit.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator and tutors.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC will continue 'study hall'.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Sp. 08	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Sp. 08	HCLC begins orientation sessions for new students at Wynne Unit.	Wynne counselor and/or faculty representative(s).	Orientation will be repeated at start of each term for both academic and technical students to advise of QEP initiatives and administer baseline testing if needed.	Prepare Wynne Unit for future launching of QEP initiatives there.	Student surveys.	No additional cost.
Summer 08	Set up of computer lab at Wynne Unit.	Computer-based technical faculty and full-time HCLC computer technician.	Software will be installed on the Lee College laptop computers stored on the unit and security safeguards as needed will be provided.	Computer lab available for computerized practice of reading and critical thinking skills.		
Summer 08	Tutor training for peer tutors/SI leaders on Wynne Unit.	HCLC coordinator and tutors.	The existing class of peer tutors will be trained in SI leadership and the use of reading and critical thinking skills pedagogies.	Trained tutors available at Wynne Unit.	Student surveys and collaborative learning assessment tools.	
Summer 08	Write annual report of QEP initiatives.	QEP Director, SACS Liaison and QEP Advisory Committee	QEP Director presents reports of QEP tasks completed during the year. Meeting reports, assessment surveys and input from all QEP participants will be reviewed for evaluation of QEP initiatives. Any modifications to the plan will be approved by QEP Advisory Committee.	Evaluation of QEP and approval of tasks and strategies for the following year.	SACS	QEP Director release time

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
YEAR 4						
Fall 08	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	Faculty workshops will focus on <i>Reasoning Within the Social Sciences</i> and <i>Historical Reasoning</i> .	Advanced knowledge of CT theories and pedagogies as applied to content areas.	Workshop assessment survey	No additional cost.
Fall 08	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities.	Learning Communities Coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom and the application of CT pedagogies.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Fall 08	<i>Pre-test:</i> Assess Critical Thinking Skills and Reading Skills.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in FLC2 and all students at Ferguson Unit.	On day 1 and 2 of classes, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students in FLC2 and students at Ferguson Unit.	To assess level of students' critical thinking skills and reading skills	CCTST Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and \$800 for Nelson-Denny
Fall 08	<i>Post-test :</i> Assess Critical Thinking and Reading Skills.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in learning community 2 and students at Ferguson Unit.	On last day of semester, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students in FLC2 and all students at Ferguson Unit.	To determine whether students' critical thinking skills and reading skills have improved.	CCTST, Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Students' Critical Thinking Portfolio/Project	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and \$800 for Nelson-Denny
Fall 08	Hire and train reading tutors at main campus. HCLC continues peer tutoring and SI at Ferguson Unit and adds Wynne Unit to QEP initiatives.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator, and tutors.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC will have 'study hall' at Ferguson and Wynne Units.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 08	HCLC opens computer lab at Wynne Unit.	HCLC coordinator and computer technician.	A part-time computer technician will be hired to oversee use of computer lab and to assist in software usage.	Computer lab available for computerized practice on reading and critical thinking skills.	Student surveys and independent practice assessment tools.	
Sp 09	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators.	Faculty workshops will focus on <i>Mathematical Reasoning</i> and <i>Professional Reasoning</i> (in a variety of fields).			
Sp 09	Faculty learning community 3 will convene once a week.	Learning Community Coordinators, Reading Consultant, twelve faculty members, and one counselor	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators, serving as facilitators. Reading Consultant will provide ideas on best practices for improving reading skills in the content areas. Again, each community will consist of twelve faculty members representing at least four disciplines. They will discuss research articles, will review active learning methods, will discuss experiences with active learning in the classroom, and incorporate the topics of <i>Mathematical and Professional Reasoning</i> .	Learning communities will enable faculty to investigate active learning methods across disciplines and to establish a peer assessment and evaluation of the implementation of new teaching methods that encourage active learning.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time
Sp 09	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities	Learning communities coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Sp 09	Hire and train reading tutors at main campus. HCLC continues peer tutoring, SI, and computerized practice at Ferguson and Wynne Units.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator and tutors/SI leaders.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC will continue 'study hall'.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.
Summer 09	Write annual report of QEP initiatives.	QEP Director, SACS Liaison and QEP Advisory Committee	QEP Director presents reports of QEP tasks completed during the year. Meeting reports, assessment surveys and input from all QEP participants will be reviewed for evaluation of QEP initiatives. Any modifications to the plan will be approved by QEP Advisory Committee.	Evaluation of QEP and approval of tasks and strategies for the following year.	SACS	QEP Director release time
YEAR 5						
Fall 09	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, Administrators.	Faculty workshops will focus on <i>Close Reading and Substantive Writing</i> .			
Fall 09	Faculty learning community 3 will continue to meet once a week.	Learning Communities Coordinators, twelve faculty members, and one counselor	Faculty learning communities will meet once a week with Coordinators and Reading Consultant. They will continue to discuss research articles, to practice active learning methods and to discuss experiences with active learning in the classroom.	Learning communities will enable faculty to investigate collaborative learning methods across disciplines and to establish a peer assessment and evaluation of the implementation of new teaching methods that encourage active learning.	Workshop assessment survey	Faculty release time

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
Fall 09	Hire and train reading tutors at main campus. HCLC continues peer tutoring/SI at Ferguson and Wynne.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC Coordinator and tutors.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC continues 'study hall'.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.
Fall 09	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities	Learning communities coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center
Sp 2010	Professional Development Day activities.	Faculty, Staff, and Administrators.	Faculty workshops will focus on <i>Teaching Students to Assess Their Own Thinking</i> .	Specific tools to assess one's own metacognitive process.	Workshop assessment survey	No additional cost
Sp 2010	<i>Pre-test:</i> Critical Thinking and Reading Skills.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in FLC3 and all	On day 1 and 2 of classes, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to	To assess level of students' critical thinking skills and reading skills	CCTST Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
		students at Ferguson and Wynne Units.	all students of faculty in FLC3 and all students at Ferguson and Wynne Units.			\$800 for Nelson-Denny
Sp 2010	<i>Post-test:</i> Assess Critical Thinking and Reading Skills.	Students in all classes of faculty participating in FLC3 and all students at Ferguson and Wynne Units.	On last day of semester, administer California Critical Thinking Skills Tests and Nelson-Denny Reading Test to all students of faculty in FLC3 and all students at Ferguson and Wynne Units.	To determine whether students' critical thinking skills and reading skills have improved.	CCTST, Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Students' Critical Thinking Portfolio/Project	Total budget for 5-year plan: \$19,798.00 for CCTST and \$800 for Nelson-Denny
Sp 2010	Hire and train reading tutors at main campus. HCLC continues peer tutoring/SI at Ferguson and Wynne.	Reading faculty and Writing Center Director. HCLC coordinator and tutors.	Student assistant tutors are hired on a semester basis. Continuous modeling of tutoring strategies will be provided by reading faculty. Tutoring sessions will be available for all students who are referred by an instructor. HCLC continues 'study hall'.	Effective tutoring sessions that will improve reading comprehension in content areas.	Evaluation of tutoring program by students, tutors, and faculty.	Faculty release time. Tutors: 30 hrs/wk at 6.63/hr.
Sp. 2010	Organize mid-semester professional development day activities	Learning communities coordinators	All faculty will be invited to an informal brown bag lunch where instructors will have the opportunity to share their classroom experiences. Ideas on specific teaching strategies can be exchanged among faculty of different disciplines. Instructors will also be encouraged to provide feedback on QEP initiatives.	Faculty will gain awareness about using active learning methods in the classroom.	Workshop assessment survey.	Supply budget for Instructional Resource Center

Time	Tasks(s)	Participants/ College Groups Involved	Method/Strategy	Outcomes	Assessment	Budget
S 2010	Write final report of QEP initiatives.	QEP Director, SACS Liaison and QEP Advisory Committee	QEP Director presents reports of QEP tasks completed during the year. Meeting reports, assessment surveys and input from all QEP participants will be reviewed for evaluation of QEP initiatives. Any modifications to the plan will be approved by QEP Advisory Committee and President Council.	Evaluation of QEP and approval of tasks and strategies for continuation of QEP initiatives.	SACS	QEP Director release time

FALL 2005

The first semester will be spent preparing to launch the QEP. An overview of the plan will be presented to the college community, and activities for Professional Development Day will include topics on critical thinking, active learning and faculty learning communities. Faculty members who attended the 2005 International Conference on Critical Thinking will lead the discussions. This will be the introduction to the sequential seminars for professional development on critical thinking skills as suggested by the Critical Thinking Foundation.

Faculty will be invited to participate in one of the learning communities that will implement QEP teaching and learning strategies in the classroom during the 5-year plan. HCLC faculty will be encouraged to become a member of FLCs at main campus and participate via teleconference or attendance in person. Adjunct Faculty Orientation activities will also include the QEP overview, the presentation on faculty learning communities and a formal invitation to become involved and participate on QEP initiatives.

The QEP Office will be established and QEP Director will oversee all specific tasks and strategies of the plan. A hiring committee will be selected to fill the secretarial position for the QEP office. The Office of Institutional Research will prepare for QEP assessment, including methods for recording benchmark and pre- and post-test data into student records for effective future analysis. FLC Coordinators, the Peer Reading Consultant and the QEP librarian will prepare resource materials for FLC meetings. The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) will also be established at main campus. The HCLC Instructional Support Center will be expanded and become an extension of the IRC. The Peer Reading Consultant, along with reading faculty, the Writing Center Director and

HCLC representatives, will select reading and critical thinking skills software for both campus' computer labs.

In addition to professional development seminars and/or expert presenters, FLC coordinators will organize mid-semester brown bag lunches at which all faculty are invited to share classroom experiences and ideas about teaching strategies as well as provide feedback on QEP efforts.

As part of the pre-launching phase, the QEP Advisory committee will be formed. During execution of all QEP initiatives, it is important to have a group of individuals oversee the process, evaluate the progress, and make recommendations for any modifications necessary. The committee will be comprised of the SACS Liaison, QEP Director, Coordinators, Reading Consultant, Instructional Deans, Counseling Center representative, and one faculty representative from each division.

The three FLCs at main campus will be organized into staggered three-semester cycles to develop critical thinking curricula in their content areas, plan appropriate course lessons and assignments, implement active learning strategies in the classroom, and assess student learning.

The HCLC Coordinator will organize continuous professional development seminars on reading and critical thinking skills for faculty-at-large. The HCLC will also follow the same testing cycles and procedures as main campus.

SUMMERS 2007-2010

During all summer terms, the QEP Director will evaluate all assessment data gathered during the preceding semesters and prepare evaluation reports as required by SACS. Any modifications to the plan will be approved before the following year's implementation.

SPRING 2006 – SPRING 2007

During Spring 2006, a stratified random sample of the entire student population will be given the Nelson- Denny Reading Test and the CCTST to provide base-line scores for comparison to future QEP assessments.

Also in Spring 2006, FLC 1 coordinators and the peer consultant will initiate weekly meetings with FLC 1 members. **During the first semester of each FLC cycle, the focus will be on three core critical thinking skills: inference, interpretation, and self-regulation; and two active learning strategies: punctuated lecture and inquiry-based learning.** Participating faculty may integrate QEP classroom strategies any time during the course of the semester.

The second semester, Fall 2006, **FLC meetings will concentrate on development of the last three core critical thinking skills: analysis, explanation, and evaluation; and another two active learning strategies: journaling and collaboration.** Again, participating faculty may integrate new strategies at any point during the semester.

Also during Fall 2006, the tutoring and computerized instructional services will be made available to main campus students on a referral basis. The peer consultant will work with reading faculty and Writing Center Director in hiring and training reading tutors as needed every semester.

HCLC will also start providing independent practice and tutoring to all students.

HCLC Coordinator and faculty will select and train participants for the peer tutoring and supplemental instruction program. Their training will include the same critical thinking and active learning methodologies as provided for all HCLC faculty and members of the FLCs at main campus. Tutoring sessions will be offered during assigned times for Study Hall. Software on reading and critical thinking skills development will be installed on computers in the existing technical computer labs. Students will have the opportunity to practice independently during open-lab hours. A computer technician will be available

for assistance. These instructional support services will become available year 2 and 3 of the plan at the Ferguson Unit and year 4 and 5 at the Wynne Unit. HCLC is the first college program in the nation to incorporate peer-tutoring, supplemental instruction, and computer-assisted tutorials as learning support for incarcerated students.

An orientation session will be implemented for all first-time-enrolled-in-HCLC students to base-line test them for both reading and critical thinking skills level as well as to familiarize them with the services available to them through the tutorial/SI program and the computer lab. This orientation session will be repeated for first-time HCLC students every semester.

The third semester, Spring 2007, will be the last one for FLC 1's three-semester cycle. Full implementation of active learning methods will be in place and CT portfolio/project will be integrated to the course assignments. Increases in student learning will be assessed by three means during this final semester of implementation. First, students enrolled in FLC members' classes will complete a critical thinking portfolio or project. Also, these students will be pre-tested in critical thinking and reading comprehension skills during the first week of the semester and post-tested on the same skills at the end of the semester to measure improvement for that semester. Finally, CT scores will be compared to the CT benchmark scores from Spring 2006. All data will be submitted to the QEP Director and OIR for comparison, analysis, and evaluation of the success of the QEP initiatives for that FLC (FLC 1 will be the Pilot group). The QEP Advisory committee will review annual evaluation reports and recommend modifications if needed.

FALL 2007 – SPRING 2010

Except for benchmarking activities, FLC 2 (Fall 2007-Fall 2008) and FLC 3 (Spring 2009-Spring 2010) will repeat the same three-semester cycle of planning, implementing, and

assessment as FLC 1, including any approved modifications to QEP activities that were suggested by the overall evaluation of the preceding FLC.

At the end of each spring semester, all FLC data gathered during that academic year will be submitted to the QEP Director and OIR for analysis. Analyses may include comparison of pre- and post-test scores for that FLC as well as comparisons to benchmark scores and scores from already completed FLC cycles. The QEP Director will compile these data into an annual report and present it to the QEP Advisory committee. Because continuous evaluation is essential to the refinement of the plan, these annual reports will examine the effectiveness of every task and strategy related to QEP efforts.

Spring 2010 is also the end of the QEP five-year plan. At that time, the college will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the QEP to determine how much student learning has increased as a result of the QEP initiatives.

The College's QEP strategies and progress will also be well known and established by the end of the five years. A total of 36 faculty members will have actively participated in a FLC at main campus plus full implementation by HCLC's faculty-at-large (20). In addition to FLC participants, all other instructors, including adjunct, plus administrators and staff will have been exposed to QEP efforts through Professional Development Day activities, seminars, workshops, mid-semester informal lunches, Division meetings, Faculty Assembly meetings, Adjunct Faculty Orientation presentations, student evaluations, faculty self-evaluations, student orientation, student satisfaction surveys, etc. Once there is a strong foundation to QEP implementation, an organized plan for continuation of the QEP will be set in motion.

V. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Because faculty involvement, support, and commitment in the project is crucial to the success of QEP initiatives, it was important to address issues that might have

positive and/or negative impact on assessment of student learning. Like all QEP committees, the College's Assessment committees had strong faculty involvement and were chaired by faculty members. Lee College's assessment plan is based on four factors identified by Jeffrey Seybert (1994) as basic to proper examination of student success. "First, everyone involved must understand that assessment cannot be connected in any way to an individual faculty member's performance evaluation. Second, in general, institution or programmatic assessment should not supplant or compete with assessment of the individual member's classroom, or be imposed without strong faculty involvement. Third, assessment is not, if appropriately designed and conducted, an infringement on academic freedom. Finally, the nontraditional attendance and matriculation patterns of many community college students also exacerbate the problems inherent in outcomes assessment"(Seybert 1994, p.24).

Lee College already uses qualitative assessments of student satisfaction with their courses and instructors: what Winfred Arthur (2003) calls reaction evaluation, which "is concerned with trainees' perceptions, impressions, and feelings about the training (or instructor/course) and are operationalised using self-report measures including student evaluations" (p.276). All instructors are evaluated annually by their students, and student satisfaction surveys on the quality of student services are administered annually by the different support programs on campus.

Similarly, Seybert (1994) reports that community colleges have been successful in assessing student success rates in their programs of study, student transfer rates to four-year colleges, and post-completion success rates in students' chosen occupations (p.25). The Office of Institutional Research at Lee College is charged with gathering, analyzing,

and reporting student data in an annual institutional effectiveness report. These data will be included in QEP assessment as needed.

Quantitatively assessing actual student learning, on the other hand, involves different criteria. Winfred Arthur (2003) defines criteria for learning assessment as “measures of learning that are typically indexed by objective, quantifiable learning outcome measures such as traditional tests of declarative and procedural knowledge, usually in the form of formal examinations (p. 276). Seybert (1994) categorizes learning assessment as quantifiable measures that test cognitive outcomes and answer the question, “What and how much did students learn during their community college career?” (p. 25). Other than course grades and GPAs, Lee College does not currently record the kinds of hard data that document actual student learning. Therefore, one of the primary benefits of this QEP initiative is that the college will begin gathering the kinds of data that will provide a much clearer picture of students’ learning.

Learning assessment instruments commonly used in community colleges, although not as prevalent as student satisfaction surveys, include national standardized tests, locally produced exams, portfolios of student work, capstone courses and experiences, internships in business and industry, and final major projects (Seybert, 1994). At Lee College, the allied health, office technology, industrial training, cosmetology, air conditioning and refrigeration, and truck driving technical programs already assess student learning at the department level and/or require external licensing exams. Seybert reports that these types of cognitive evaluations are common in certain disciplines. “In the allied health such as nursing, dental hygiene, and respiratory therapy, for example, standardized licensing exams have long been required. Similarly, most commercial art programs have routinely require that their students present portfolios of

their work before graduation, and in some cases as an integral part of their job interviewing strategy”(Seybert, 1994, p.28).

Although Lee College’s current assessment procedures are typical of community colleges when compared to national norms, QEP initiatives will offer the opportunity to improve assessment of student learning. The College will gather four new kinds of data: 1) quantitative assessment of students’ reading and critical thinking skills using the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, 2) evaluation of pedagogical practices within the faculty learning communities, 3) faculty and student evaluation of active learning methodologies, and 4) evaluation of QEP initiatives by all campus groups.

1. Quantitative Assessment of Reading and Critical Thinking

The first step towards effective measurement of student learning is establishing a benchmark for comparison to later testing results. During the first three weeks of the spring 2006 semester, a stratified random sample of students at main campus will take the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (Form 2000) and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test in one of their courses. The testing sample will be selected by the Office of Institutional Research based on factors such as full-time versus part-time status, academic versus technical studies, previous college experience, age, gender, and ethnic background. In order to assure at least 500 examinees that accurately represent the College’s student body, a total of 800 will be pre-selected to account for absenteeism, duplication, and/or late registration. Due to lower enrollment, the HCLC will test all students in order to maintain reliability and validity of results.

During the five-year plan, students participating in QEP initiatives will be pre- and post-tested during the final semester for each FLC cycle. Examination will include

the CCTST and the Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test. The first cycle of implementation will be evaluated as the pilot group, and modifications will be made to the plan if needed.

Evaluation of student learning will serve the following primary purposes:

- Measure improvement in critical thinking and reading skills within the target group of students (those enrolled in courses with faculty participating in FLCs, and students at HCLC participating units).
- Compare students' pre and post-test scores to benchmark data.
- Compare students' improvement based on amount of previous college experience.
- Compare improvement between technical and academic students.
- Compare improvement based on variables such as individual course, discipline, and/or major to determine whether there are significant differences in student learning based on these variables. For example, this comparison might reveal that greater improvement in critical thinking takes place in freshman-level science courses than in freshman-level social science classes.

Secondary purposes of student learning assessment include:

- Correlation of critical thinking scores to reading skills scores.
- Correlation of critical thinking and reading scores to Grade Point Average.
- Correlation of critical thinking and/or reading scores to retention.

2. Assessment of Teaching Strategies and Learning Outcomes

Assessment tools specific to teaching strategies and learning outcomes in critical thinking skills will also be part of professional development seminars and discussion during FLC meetings. Faculty will review various methods of assessment recommended in published literature and select those that best meet the needs of a particular course, instructor and students' learning styles. (Appendix L). Students enrolled in courses taught by an instructor participating in a FLC and students at HCLC participating units will also respond to these assessment tools.

3. Qualitative Assessment of Learning Communities and Active Learning

Qualitative assessments for learning communities and active learning strategies will be administered to faculty and students in FLCs, and at all workshops, seminars and professional development activities. All current evaluation instruments, such as student satisfaction surveys, workshop assessment, faculty self-evaluation, and student evaluations will be updated to include items addressing QEP initiatives. The critical thinking portfolio will also provide significant qualitative evidence of student learning.

4. Full Campus Assessment of QEP Initiatives

As recommended by SACS, evaluation of the strategies used to carry out QEP objectives will be a continuous task during the five-year plan. The QEP director will prepare and submit annual reports, and any suggestions for modification to the Plan will be reviewed by the QEP Advisory Committee.

HCLC's assessment procedure will utilize the same evaluation instruments and procedures, serve the same purposes and achieve the same correlative results as the Main Campus' assessments. Student satisfaction surveys and student evaluations of faculty will be adjusted to reflect the educational context of the HCLC campus.

VI. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The Commitment Committees, chaired by faculty members and consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators, estimated financial commitments to the QEP and submitted a projected budget for each of the five years of the QEP. Appendix M provides a detailed description of needs and costs. The anticipated costs include faculty release time, instructional resources, administrative assistance, assessment needs, professional development, and outside content experts. The following table provides a summary of the 5-year projected budget.

	2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Year 0		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Total Budget	New Money	Total Budget	New Money	Total Budget	New Money	Total Budget	New Money	Total Budget	New Money	Total Budget	New Money
Administrative												
QEP Chair	21,164	21,164										
QEP Director	-	-	40,000	40,000	42,000	42,000	43,000	43,000	44,000	44,000	45,000	45,000
SACS Chair	900	900	2,700	2,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HCLC Chair	19,035	19,035										
HCLC Coordinator			15,228	4,950	15,600	4,950	16,000	4,950	16,500	4,950	17,000	4,950
QEP Admin. Assistant	-	-	16,666	16,666	17,000	17,000	17,500	17,500	18,000	18,000	18,500	18,500
HCLC Computer Tech.	-	-	-	-	5,670	5,670	5,670	5,670	11,340	11,340	11,340	11,340
QEP Office Expenses	-	-	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Total Admin.	41,099	41,099	82,594	72,316	88,270	77,620	90,170	79,120	97,840	86,290	99,840	87,790
Reading Focus												
Faculty Release	-	-	13,946	3,300	14,504	3,300	15,084	3,300	15,688	3,300	16,315	3,300
Assessment Tests	-	-	800	800	-	-			-	-	-	-
Software	-	-	5,000	5,000	-	-	500	500	-	-	500	500
Tutors	-	-	-	-	8,752	8,752	8,752	8,752	8,752	8,752	8,752	8,752
Professional Develop.	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	500	-	-	-	-
Total Reading	-	-	19,746	9,100	23,256	12,052	24,836	13,052	24,439	12,052	25,567	12,552
Critical Thinking Focus												
CT Coordinator	6,444	6,444	25,255	6,601	26,265	6,601	27,316	6,601	28,408	6,601	29,545	6,601
Travel	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Assessment Tests	-	-	19,798	19,798	3,996	3,996	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200
Professional Develop.	-	-	3,000	3,000	500	500	-	-	500	500	500	500
Resource Librarian	-	-	28,048	-	28,610	-	29,182	-	29,766	-	30,361	-

Total Critical Thinking	12,444	12,444		82,101	35,399		65,371	17,097		69,698	19,801		71,874	20,301		73,606	20,301
Total QEP Project	53,543	53,543		184,441	116,815		176,897	106,769		184,704	111,973		194,154	118,643		199,013	120,643

The committees established two requirements when considering approval of proposed financial needs: direct connection to student learning, and integration of current budget. Emphasis was placed on long-term commitment and financial feasibility.

Lee College's current operating budget reflects significant commitment to support services for student learning (Appendix N). Professional development, developmental labs, and tutoring services comprise the basic infrastructure for student support services. In addition, a retention specialist works closely with faculty and counselors to keep students engaged in their studies. Other groups, such as Student Government, the Black Educational Access Committee, and the Hispanic Educational Access Committee, receive full support from the College's Student Activities coordinator. Such groups organize college information workshops and other extracurricular programs on campus and in the community. Such events are many times open to the public. QEP initiatives intend to take advantage of current support services available for students, and expand on them to improve student learning.

As shown in the QEP Organizational Chart (Appendix J), four faculty members will serve as guides and facilitators for QEP initiatives. The QEP Director (*Kathleen Sydnor*) will keep track of all QEP strategies carried out, document results, and prepare the reports that will be submitted to SACS. The coordinators (*Kathleen Sydnor, Judy Etzel and Sharon Dent*) and peer reading consultant (*Joyce Jacobs*) will plan, organize, and facilitate FLC meetings. Coordinators will also report QEP activities and outcomes to the QEP Director. The QEP Director will receive a two-course release, and the

coordinators and peer reading consultant will receive a one-course release to work on QEP initiatives.

The Government Documents and Serials Librarian will be designated to assist with QEP efforts in the two Instructional Resource Centers, one located the main campus and one at HCLC. Administrative assistance will be provided by a part-time secretary who will receive employee benefits. Also, lab technicians and tutors will be hired to assist in computer labs and tutoring sessions. Job descriptions and compensations for all QEP positions have been written and approved by SACS Steering Committee (Appendix K).

Additional costs include maintenance and supplies of QEP office, maintenance of software and hardware for computer labs, assessment materials, and expert presenters for professional development, and annual attendance to the International Critical Thinking Conference. All of these costs are included in the projected budget table.

In order to fully implement the QEP, the College will add an estimated \$114,969 in new costs per year. New costs resulting from the QEP represent less than 1% of the overall annual Lee College budget. Therefore, the plan is feasible and will be easily absorbed into the current policies, procedures, and operating budget.

VII. CONTINUATION OF QEP EFFORTS

Lee College is committed to continuous evaluation of student learning as a means of meeting the college's goal of providing the best possible educational experience for all students. After five years of implementation of the QEP, the College will have the experience needed to move towards full institution of the QEP initiatives.

As mentioned earlier, instructors involved in FLCs at main campus plus all instructors at HCLC's participating units represent 33% of the entire Lee College faculty. They will contribute substantial knowledge, support and guidance to other faculty members who wish to join QEP efforts.

In order to ensure effective infusion of the QEP on campus, the College will institute the QEP Director's position, QEP office, QEP secretary, QEP librarian, and Instructional Resource Centers. Faculty will continue to lead QEP efforts by continuing the organization of FLCs and professional development seminars.

Appendix A: LEADERSHIP TEAM AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SACS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Martha Ellis **President**
Donnetta Suchon **Dean of Academic Studies**
Dennis Topper **Dean of Administrative Services**
Johnette Hodgins **Dean of Applied Sciences**
Donna Zuniga **Associate Dean HCLC**
Steve Evans **Dean of Financial Services**
Tom Sanders **Dean of Student Development and Institutional Planning**
Rosemary Coffman **Counselor**
Roberta Wright **Executive Director for Institutional Advancement**

SACS STEERING COMMITTEE

Rosemary Coffman, Chair **Counselor**
Judy Etzel **Faculty**
Becki Griffith **Registrar**
Keith Scheffler **Senior Accountant**
Linda Vingless **Secretary to Workforce Development**
Jimmy Lockett **Faculty**
Donna Stoughton **Faculty HCLC**
Jan Borel **PC Repair Technician**
Judy Lehmborg **Faculty**

Appendix B: QEP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Appendix C: QEP COMMITTEE TASKS

Data: Gather and analyze campus based facts in regards to student success. Establish trends and correlations; look into successful versus unsuccessful completion, progress of reading students from one level to another and after exiting program, former developmental students versus always college level, day versus night students, full-time faculty versus part-time faculty, etc.

Research: Work with library staff to look into educational research publications and compile a list of better practices (college community involvement, teaching strategies for reading and critical thinking, and assessment of student learning). Members will write summaries/abstracts of articles to discuss in meetings and categorize them as applicable to each objective. A Works Cited page will also be kept.

Focus: Will take recommendations from Research committee and select those to be implemented, the specific tasks to be completed, and a timeframe. This committee will also develop a list of resources needed and always keep Commitment committee informed so they can work on budget.

Assessment: Will review current trends in student learning assessment and examine the CCSSE and California CT to make certain the College's objectives and strategies match what these tests are measuring. Other tests to consider will be the THEA, Nelson-Denny, AccuPlacer, LASSI, and any others recommended by committees.

Commitment: Will develop a plan to budget the QEP. Costs to consider include test administration, speakers, faculty release time, labs (maintenance, software, personnel, etc.), instructional resources library/teaching and learning center, administration of the process, and hiring of new personnel if needed.

Appendix D: REPORTS ON STUDENT SUCCESS RATES

Appendix E: CRITICAL THINKING SURVEY

Critical thinking is defined as the mental process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion.

In terms of critical thinking, please answer the following questions:

1. How would you rank the importance of critical thinking as part of your college education?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Somewhat Important
 - c. Neither Important nor Unimportant
 - d. Somewhat Unimportant
 - e. Very Unimportant

2. How would you rate your own skills in critical thinking?
 - a. Very Strong
 - b. Strong
 - c. Average
 - d. Weak
 - e. Very Weak

3. Below is a list of skills that some believe are important for college success. From this list, what is your opinion of the top three skills necessary for college success?
 - a. Math skills
 - b. Writing skills
 - c. General study skills
 - d. Knowledge of resources on campus (library, tutoring, labs, etc.)
 - e. Critical thinking skills
 - f. Reading skills
 - g. Oral communication skills

Your top three choices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Please use the back of this form to comment on how your teachers have encouraged critical thinking or to suggest what they might have done to increase the amount of critical thinking for that class.

5. Information about you:
 - a. Your gender: ____ male ____ female

 - b. Credits completed: ____ 0-15; ____ 16-30; ____ 31-45; ____ 46 or more

 - c. Your major: _____

Appendix F: QEP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Appendix G: JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR QEP PERSONNEL

QEP Director will work with SACS Liaison to properly document and report QEP data as required by SACS; Supervise administrative assistance for the QEP; oversee the implementation of QEP timelines; critical thinking coordinators and peer consultant on reading skills to organize discussion groups for learning communities; oversee purchasing, storage and dissemination of critical thinking exams; gather, process, and store data as needed for reporting; generate reports for SACS in coordination with SACS Liaison; oversee budget; and organize meetings with QEP steering committee to keep them informed.

QEP Secretary will assist in the coordination of the first major critical thinking assessment which occurs the first week of the spring 2006 semester. This position will provide administrative assistance to the Director of the QEP which includes the administering and scoring of tests; maintaining files for QEP office that includes minutes, reports, data, etc.; and processing budget requests with PeopleSoft. The position requires strong communications skills and will work directly with faculty and others such as the office of institutional research.

The Critical Thinking Coordinator's primary responsibility is to guide the implementation of pedagogical strategies for critical thinking skills as stated in the QEP objectives. Specifically, they will organize seminars for professional development days; establish critical thinking learning communities; organize and facilitate weekly workshops/meetings for learning communities; compile teaching strategies for faculty; coordinate development of linked courses; and assist QEP director with administration of critical thinking assessments.

The **Peer Consultant** for reading skills development will work with the critical thinking coordinators to add the reading component information for the learning communities; integrate strategies for teaching specific reading skills in content areas; oversee tutoring and labs for all students; and evaluate QEP initiatives in the reading program.

The **Huntsville Center Coordinator** will organize all QEP activities at the Huntsville Center and coordinate with the Baytown Campus on reporting to SACS. This includes a summer release due to the nature of the semesters (the trimester system).

Lab Technicians for HCLC will oversee the use of the computer lab and assist students in using the software. In year 2, one part-time technicians will be hired. Another part-time technician will be added in year 4. This will be a 15/hr per week position for 42 weeks each year (a total of 15 hours per week in years 2 and 3, an 30 hours per week in years 4 and 5).

The **Instructional Resources Librarian** will maintain files of QEP instructional resources, process acquisition of materials related to the QEP, assist QEP coordinators with workshops/discussion groups' materials, and maintain files with lesson plans and instructional activities.

Appendix H: PROJECTED BUDGET

QEP Budget				
5 Year Projection				
(Summer 2005)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
SACS Chair	To direct SACS activities	\$300/mo for Summer	\$900.00	900.00
QEP Chair	To direct all QEP activities and to write report	Full Summer Release: \$14,731; Fringe Benefits-\$3683; 1 class replacement - \$2750	\$21,164.00	21,164.00
Huntsville Chair	To direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	Full Summer Release: \$15228; Fringe Benefits-\$3807	\$19,035.00	19,035.00
CT Coordinator	Guide the CT process	Half Summer II Release: Salary - \$3,835; Fringe Benefits-\$959; 1 class replacement-\$1650	\$6,444.00	\$6,444.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Total Summer Cost			\$53,543.00	\$53,543.00
Year 1 (Fall 2005 - Summer 2006)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
QEP Director	To direct the QEP	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$40,000.00	40,000.00
QEP Admin. Assistant	To assist in all QEP activities	1/2 time + fringe benefits - Based on Administrative Secretary-Step 1	\$16,666.00	16,666.00
QEP Office	For furniture, computers, supplies, travel, and telephone	Furniture & computers - \$3,000; Supplies and other - \$5,000	\$8,000.00	8,000.00
Huntville QEP Coordinator	To help direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	1 class release each semester and 1 summer	\$15,228.00	4,950.00
SACS Chair	To direct SACS activities	\$300/mo through May	\$2,700.00	2,700.00
Reading Focus				

Reading Faculty Release	Evaluate, assess,survey, and develop, Reading peer consultant	1 class each long semester	\$13,946.25	3,300.48
Reading Assessment Tests	For pre and post testing of students	100 copies of 2 forms = 200 at \$4@	\$800.00	\$800.00
Software Needs	Student use in Lab	Probably Plato, estimate for a site license and annual maintenance	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Critical Thinking Focus				
Faculty Release	Learning community Coordinators, guide the CT prof. develop.	1 class each long semester for Academic and Applied Science Coordinator	\$25,255.00	\$6,600.96
Critical Thinking Assessment Tests	Pre-test for all Students	Fall ~4,000; Spring and Summer ~2,000 - Option 1	\$19,798.00	\$19,798.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Professional Development	Spring In-Service at Huntsville and Baytown campuses	1 day + expenses	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Critical Thinking Resource Librarian	Handling collection of CT resources	1/2 time	\$28,048.00	\$0.00
Total Annual Cost			\$184,441.25	\$116,815.44
Year 2 (Fall 2006 - Summer 2007)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
QEP Director	To direct the QEP	1/2 time position	\$42,000.00	\$42,000.00
QEP Admin. Assistant	To assist in all QEP activities	1/2 time plus fringe benefits	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00
QEP Office	Supplies, Travel and Telephone	Supplies - \$5000; Telephone and Travel - \$3,000	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Huntsville QEP Coordinator	To help direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	1 class release each semester and 1 summer	\$15,600.00	\$4,950.00
HCLC Computer Technician	To handle computer needs at Ferguson Unit	15 hrs/week at \$9.00/hr for 42 wks	\$5,670.00	\$5,670.00

Reading Focus				
Reading Faculty Release	Evaluate, assess, survey, and develop, Peer Consultant	1 class each long semester	\$14,504.10	\$3,300.48
Reading Tutors	For tutoring reading students from learning communities	Paraprofessional - 30 hrs/wk long and summer semesters at \$6.63/hr.	\$8,751.60	\$8,751.60
Critical Thinking Focus				
Faculty Release	Learning communities Coordinators, Guide the CT process	1 class each long semester for Academic and Applied Science Coordinator	\$26,265.20	\$6,600.96
Critical Thinking Assessment Tests	Pre and Post-testing of some students	Fall and Spring ~1,200 at \$333 per 100	\$3,996.00	\$3,996.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Professional Development	Professional Development Activities	During Fall and Spring on Baytown and Huntsville campuses	\$500.00	\$500.00
Critical Thinking Resource Librarian	Handling collection of CT resources	1/2 time	\$28,610.00	\$0.00
Total Annual Cost			\$176,896.90	\$106,769.04
Year 3 (Fall 2007 - Summer 2008)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
QEP Director	To direct the QEP	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$43,000.00	43,000.00
QEP Admin. Assistant	To assist in all QEP activities	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$17,500.00	17,500.00
QEP Office	Supplies, Travel and Telephone	Supplies - \$5000; Telephone and Travel - \$3,000	\$8,000.00	8,000.00
Huntsville QEP Coordinator	To help direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	1 class release each semester and 1 summer	\$16,000.00	4,950.00
HCLC Computer Technician (1)	To handle computer needs at Ferguson Unit and Wynne Unit	15 hrs/week at \$9.00/hr for 42 wks	\$5,670.00	\$5,670.00
Reading Focus				

Reading Faculty Release	Evaluate, assess,survey, and develop, Peer Consultant	1 class each long semester	\$15,084.26	\$3,300.48
Reading Tutors	For tutoring reading students from learning communities	Paraprofessional - 30 hrs/wk long and summer semesters at \$6.63/hr.	\$8,751.60	\$8,751.60
Software Needs	Student use in Lab	Annual maintenance of Plato system	\$500.00	\$500.00
Professional Development	Professional Development Activities	During Fall and Spring on Baytown and Huntsville campuses	\$500.00	\$500.00
Critical Thinking Focus				
Faculty Release	Learning Communities Coordinators, guide the CT process	1 class each long semester for Academic and Applied Science Coordinator	\$27,315.81	\$6,600.96
Critical Thinking Assessment Tests	Pre and Post-testing of some students	Fall and Spring ~1,200 (online) at \$6@	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
Critical Thinking Resource Librarian	Handling collection of CT resources	1/2 time	\$29,182.00	\$0.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Total Annual Cost			\$184,703.67	\$111,973.04
Year 4 (Fall 2008 - Summer 2009)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
QEP Director	To direct the QEP	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$44,000.00	44,000.00
QEP Admin. Assistant	To assist in all QEP activities	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$18,000.00	18,000.00
QEP Office	Supplies, Travel and Telephone	Supplies - \$5000; Telephone and Travel - \$3,000	\$8,000.00	8,000.00
Huntsville QEP Coordinator	To help direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	1 class release each semester and 1 summer	\$16,500.00	4,950.00

HCLC Computer Technician (3)	To handle computer needs at Ferguson, Wynne, and Hightower Units	15 hrs/week at \$9.00/hr for 42 wks	\$11,340.00	\$11,340.00
Reading Focus				
Reading Faculty Release	Evaluate, assess, survey, and develop, Peer Consultant	1 class each long semester	\$15,687.63	\$3,300.48
Reading Tutors	For tutoring reading students from learning communities	Paraprofessional - 30 hrs/wk long and summer semesters at \$6.63/hr.	\$8,751.60	\$8,751.60
Critical Thinking Focus				
Faculty Release	Learning Communities Coordinator, guide the CT process	1 class each long semester for Academic and Applied Science Coordinator	\$28,408.44	\$6,600.96
Critical Thinking Assessment Tests	Pre and Post-testing of some students	Fall and Spring ~1,200 (online) at \$6@	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Professional Development	Professional Development Activities	During Fall and Spring on Baytown and Huntsville campuses	\$500.00	\$500.00
Critical Thinking Resource Librarian	Handling collection of CT resources	1/2 time	\$29,766.00	\$0.00
Total Annual Cost			\$194,153.67	\$118,643.04
Year 5 (Fall 2009 - Summer 2010)				
Need	Job	Desired Amount	Total Budget	New Money
QEP Director	To direct the QEP	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$45,000.00	\$45,000
QEP Admin. Assistant	To assist in all QEP activities	1/2 time position + fringe benefits	\$18,500.00	\$18,500
QEP Office	Supplies, Travel and Telephone	Supplies - \$5000; Telephone and Travel - \$3,000	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Huntsville QEP Coordinator	To help direct all QEP activities at Huntsville Center	1 class release each semester and 1 summer	\$17,000.00	\$4,950

HCLC Computer Technician (4)	To handle computer needs at Ferguson, Wynne, Hightower, and Estelle Units	15 hrs/week at \$9.00/hr for 42 wks	\$11,340.00	\$11,340.00
Reading Focus				
Reading Faculty Release	Evaluate, assess, survey, and develop, Peer Consultant	1 class each long semester	\$16,315.44	\$3,300.48
Reading Tutors	For tutoring reading students from learning communities	Paraprofessional - 30 hrs/wk long and summer semesters at \$6.63/hr.	\$8,751.60	\$8,751.60
Software Needs	Student use in Lab	Annual maintenance of Plato system	\$500.00	\$500.00
Critical Thinking Focus				
Faculty Release	Learning Communities Coordinator, guide the CT process	1 class each long semester for Academic and Applied Science Coordinator	\$29,544.78	\$6,600.96
Critical Thinking Assessment Tests	Pre and Post-testing of some students	Fall and Spring ~1,200 (online) at \$6@	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
Travel	To attend CT Conference in Berkeley, CA	4 members @\$1500	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Professional Development	Professional Development Activities	During Fall and Spring on Baytown and Huntsville campuses	\$500.00	\$500.00
Critical Thinking Resource Librarian	Handling collection of CT resources	1/2 Time	\$30,361.00	\$0.00
Total Annual Cost			\$199,012.82	\$120,643.04
	Five-year costs		\$992,751.31	\$628,386.60

Professional Development

\$	5,000	Budgeted annually for Professional Development Day.
		Each full time faculty member is allocated \$200 a year for Professional Development travel. Currently, Lee college has 156 full time faculty members. (156 X \$200 = \$31,200)
\$	31,200	
		Budgeted annually for professional development opportunities. The professional Development Committee of the Faculty Assembly is responsible for awarding these funds.
\$	20,000	
\$	56,200	Total Professional Development

Student Support Services Services

\$	74,380	Faculty Salaries
\$	1,649	Supplies
\$	700	Telephone
\$	76,729	Total Reading Budget
\$	47,124	Retention Specialist
\$	40,000	Perkins Tutors (Technical Students)
\$	5,800	EOC Tutors
\$	14,000	Writing Center Tutors
\$	4,640	Houston endowment Tutors
\$	64,440	Total Tutors
\$	48,000	Reading Lab 24 Computers
\$	1,500	Supplies
\$	100	Telephone
\$	500	Travel-Student
\$	49,167	Other
\$	51,267	Total Student Government
\$	49,549	Salaries - Admin
\$	9,390	Student Assist.
\$	800	Supplies
\$	150	Printing/Copier
\$	200	Telephone
\$	200	Repairs/Maintenance
\$	60,289	Total Student Activities
\$	2,500	BEAC
\$	2,500	HEAC

\$ 352,849	Total Student Support Services
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In order to fully implement the QEP, the college will add an estimated \$114,969 in new costs per year. New costs resulting from the QEP plan represents less than 1% of the overall annual LC budget.

37,385,697	LC annual Budget 2005
<u>114,969</u>	QEP average new cost per year
<u>0.31%</u>	% of annual budget per year

Appendix I: ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR QEP INITIATIVES

Nelson-Denny Justification (QEP)

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test was created over 75 years ago, in 1929. In the intervening years, it has become one of the most recognized and trusted reading evaluation tools available to educators. It includes three parts: vocabulary, comprehension and reading rate. For the purposes of Lee College's QEP, only the comprehension scores will be used as an assessment tool to track improvement in students' reading skills. An increase in the rate at which a student reads does not necessarily indicate improvement in his or her college performance, engagement or retention since the speed at which a student reads is heavily dependent on the kind of reading he or she is engaging in—study, pleasure, or skimming and scanning—and on the context of the reading—classroom, home or group study. Similarly, vocabulary building is essential to efficient reading skills and will be included in reading diagnostics and instruction, but improvements in vocabulary are reflected in overall comprehension post-test scores and need not be recorded as an individual assessment item for evaluation of the QEP.

Desirable Features of The Nelson-Denny Reading Test

There are several reasons that the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (N-D) was selected as an assessment tool for this QEP. It offers all the features that are both essential and desirable for evaluative purposes.

- The N-D provides two different but equivalent forms of the test that yield accurate student progress information in a pre- and post-testing assessment design.
- The test provides median scores for grades 3.6 through 16.9 (bachelor's degree equivalent), which allows accurate assessment for all students tested. It is unlikely that more than a small percentage of students will score below junior high grade level or above grade fourteen (college

sophomore), but inevitably some testing scores will fall into both the extreme upper and lower levels. With the wide range of skill levels that can be assessed by the Nelson-Denny, every student's learning can be tracked accurately.

- N-D offers four kinds of derived scores: *percentile ranks* reference individual student performance to a norm based on a national reference group of students in the same high school grade, two-year college class, or four-year college/university class; *stanine scores* are nine-interval normalized standard score scales ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 9 that provide similar reference points as percentile rankings but are easier to manipulate for some statistical calculations; *developmental standard scores* provide users with information to measure growth or to perform certain kinds of statistical calculations; and *grade-level equivalencies* offer an easily recognized and understood reference point for student skills. This variety of scoring mechanisms makes the test adaptable to any analysis of student progress that the college deems necessary or desirable.
- N-D also provides charts that correlate self-reported GPA's and self-reported ACT and SAT scores with students' scores on N-D as well as a correlation chart for N-D and AccuPlacer. AccuPlacer reading scores are used for state-mandated assessment and placement at the Lee College Main Campus. These correlations provide an opportunity to use N-D as a predictive tool for student success.
- Comprehension questions on Nelson-Denny are divided into two skills: only fact recall only or interpretation of information from the reading selection. Because interpretation of information is a core skill for critical thinking, this assessment will yield data showing students' interpretative skills.

Reliability and Validity of The Nelson-Denny Reading Test

Information demonstrating the reliability and validity of N-D also establish it as an excellent assessment tool.

- Norms for each derived score were determined through testing of a stratified random sample for each of three primary academic groupings: high school (grades 9-12), 2-year college students (grades 13 and 14) and 4-year college/university students (grades 13-16). Stratification includes students from all geographical regions of the United States as well as all socioeconomic, ethnic, gender demographics. Schools represented by the testing samples ranged from small to large and public to private. These data were used to identify 20 different reference groups for normative tables.
- Two circumstances can affect the reliability of reading assessment scores: 1) the students' prior knowledge of the subject matter covered in the reading passages, and 2) the degree to which a correct answer can be derived by logic alone. In either of these cases, a student could answer most or all questions about a text passage correctly without having read the passage. It is important that the questions that appear with a test item are *context dependent*, making it highly unlikely that the student can use prior knowledge or logic alone to identify a correct answer without having read the context in which the answer is presented. Validity statistics for test items in N-D show a high degree of context dependence.
- Statistical comparisons verify that both forms of the test yielded essentially equivalent results so that scores from the pre-and post-tests can be accurately compared to assess student learning over a period of time. Additionally, this ensures that the forms are interchangeable as pre- and post-tests without affecting the accuracy of the assessment.

