

# What Happens After the Critical Thinking Workshop?

Lessons Learned in Making Critical Thinking “stick” at your University



CLEMSON FACULTY INSTITUTE, JUNE 2013

**PATRICIA PAYETTE, PH.D.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IDEAS TO ACTION  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, DELPHI CENTER FOR TEACHING &  
LEARNING

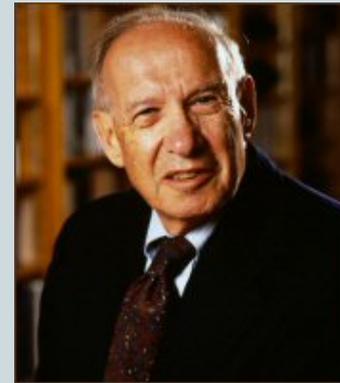
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

**PATTY.PAYETTE@LOUISVILLE.EDU**

# My Operating Assumptions

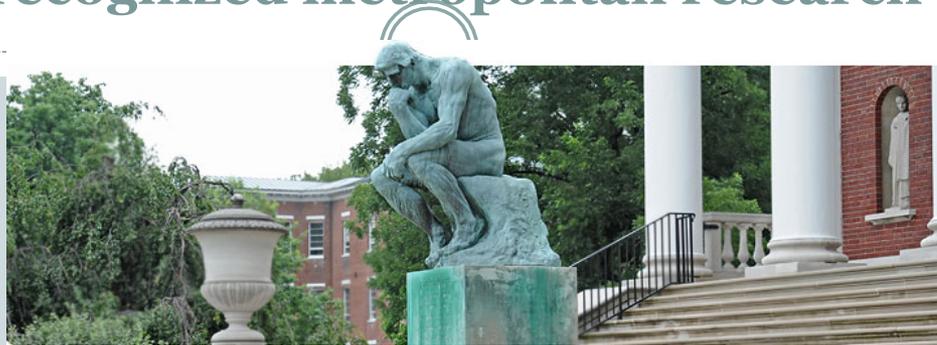


- You are a critical thinker
- You are willing to learn to think in new ways about something very familiar to you
- Critical thinking transformation is a process (e.g. one workshop and one assignment won't be enough)
- “Culture eats change for breakfast”
- –*Peter Drucker*



# University of Louisville

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



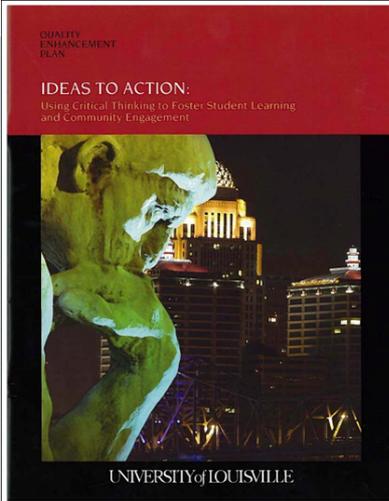
- **Established: 1798 in Louisville, KY**
- **Total Student Headcount: 22,293 (Fall 2012)**
- **Faculty and Staff: 6,901**
- **Operating Budget (2012-13): \$1.2 billion**
- **Academic Programs (Degrees offered):**
  - – Undergraduate degrees, 78 programs (includes certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and post-baccalaureate certificates)
  - – Graduate degrees, 106 programs (includes master's degree, post-master's certificates, doctoral degrees)
  - – Professional degrees, 3 programs

**Source: University of Louisville's "Just the Facts," 2012-2013** <http://louisville.edu/institutionalresearch/institutional-research-planning/just-the-facts.html>



# Our QEP: Ideas to Action

4



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

“Our extensive consultation with all university constituencies yielded a surprisingly strong and clear call for education focused on the skills and knowledge needed to deal with real-world issues and problems.” (i2a SACS proposal, p.22)

# Our QEP goals across undergraduate curricula

5

Sharpen our existing focus on building critical thinking skills in the **general education** program...

.....continuing through **undergraduate major courses** with an emphasis on applying and refining those skills...

...resulting in a **culminating undergraduate experience (CUE)**, such as a senior thesis, research, service learning project, internship, or capstone project that reflects authentic engagement

# Principles of organizational transformation



- 1) Call for critical thinking change is visionary *and* practical
- 2) Scope of the transformation is supported by appropriate resources
- 3) Transformation is a collaborative process to be tended, not a system to be mechanized
- 4) Accept the difficult realities and embrace unexpected wins

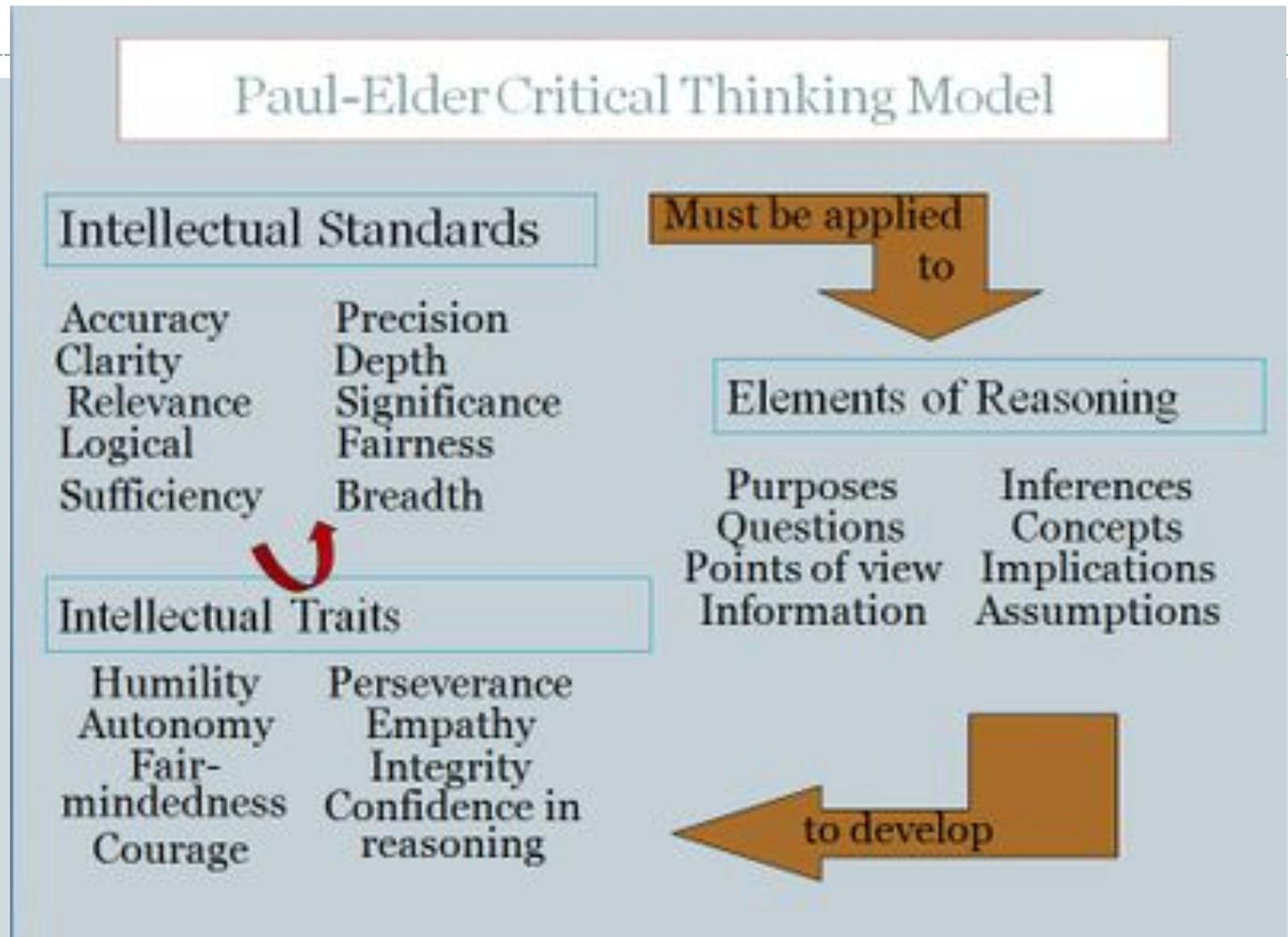
# Call for critical thinking change is visionary *and* practical: how to lay the groundwork



- Allow for runway time—move from development to implementation
- Take scholarly approach
- Develop central messages & elevator speech
- Address disciplinary norms & career stage
- Brand your initiative: make it visible & tie to u. mission
- Develop your credibility: hone your own expertise and commit to ongoing work with critical thinking concepts



# Our critical thinking framework



<http://www.criticalthinking.org>

# Help faculty (and staff) map their everyday work to the QEP



## What is critical thinking?

At the top of a sheet of paper fill in the blank by completing this sentence :

“I see or hear critical thinking when my students  
are \_\_\_\_\_”

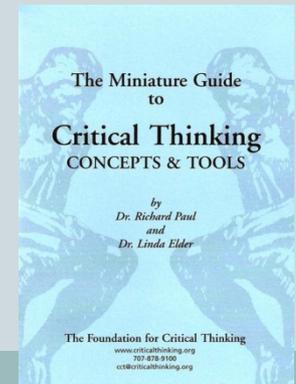


# A Well-Cultivated Critical Thinker

10

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

*Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools, page 2*



# Critical thinking and college faculty

11

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

# Scope of the transformation is supported by appropriate resources



- People
- Infrastructure
- Money

# Resources: People



- Institutions don't make changes, but people at the institution do
- Who is on the bus is more important than how many are on the bus (Collins)



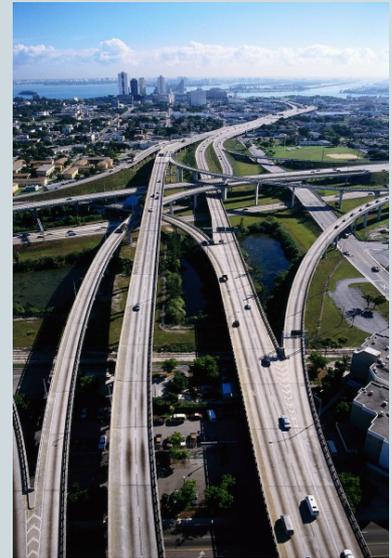
- Leadership team becomes a centralized hub for critical thinking activities, & anxieties
- Early adopters of critical thinking can become your peer leaders and most important advocates

# Building partnerships



- Find the relevant “on ramp” to build partnerships
- Invite established players (assessment experts, opinion leaders) who are successful
- Go for commitment, not compliance
- Provide tools that help them right away

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



# Learning Communities on Critical Thinking at UofL



- ✓ Included 12-13 fac or staff from across disciplines
- ✓ Met regularly over semester or year
- ✓ Background reading, homework, and sharing of new work
- ✓ Individual consultation required
- ✓ Library of critical thinking assignments/artifacts submitted
- ✓ Employed best practices in course design, assessment and critical thinking
- ✓ Tri-level reflection: learning community, critical thinking, their own teaching growth
- ✓ Participants expected to serve as advocates upon completion



# Faculty Perspective

16

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

*Senior faculty member, Department of English*



# How faculty “make it work”



- Use the words “critical thinking” explicitly
- Point to the mental moves that make up “critical thinking” in the course—“*it’s not my opinion anymore*”
- Write your course description in terms of thinking skills student will practice, NOT coverage
- Model the disciplinary thinking you want student to emulate
- Scaffold the critical thinking process and let them practice, practice, practice with **novel situations**
- Have them transfer the thinking skills to authentic contexts
- Attitude: “Will this *thinking* be on the test?”

# Staff perspective

18

“Using the Paul-Elder framework when talking about my work enhanced my credibility when collaborating with faculty colleagues. It also gave us a common way to talk about our learning goals across disciplines.”



**Karen S. Newton, MPH, RD**  
*Director, Health Promotion Education*

with **Paula Kommor, MEd, CPA Faculty,**  
Health and Sport Sciences



# Student Perspective



“This class really has helped me understand and use critical thinking every day. I never realized how much I was missing by not using it. I particularly try to pay attention to the assumptions, point of view, and inferences sections of critical thinking. These sections have helped me with dealing with difficult situations and delicate situations. I have to think about how to approach someone and what assumptions are they going to have as I approach the situation. I also have to think what they are going to infer from what I say. Point of view always helps me in not being so one-sided about things and always thinking about how someone else can approach the situation. “ –Spencer Scruggs, junior

# Resources: Infrastructure



- **Infrastructure**
  - Programs and events scaffolded over time
  - Keep 5 Year Report frame in mind
  - Leverage existing structures at your organization to build *sustainability*.....  
...from IR to Admissions to marketing  
to student government to libraries.....



# i2a professional development programs

2007-2013

Learning Communities



Workshops by CT Scholars

Annual 3-day Institute



CT conferences, readings, scholarship



Information Sessions



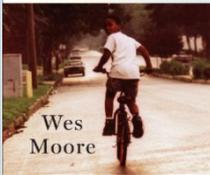
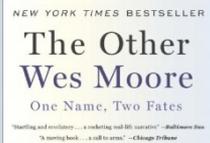
Small grants



Individual consultations



Collaborations with student affairs and student services



Department presentations with early adopters



Showcase events, celebrations



Website exemplars, testimony, "before and after"

# Keep 5 Year Report Frame in Mind

22

The QEP Impact Report asks institutions to address the following as it relates to the QEP developed during its previous reaffirmation:

- ❑ Initial goals and intended outcomes
- ❑ Discussion of changes and reasons for changes
- ❑ QEP's direct impact on student learning, including goals and outcomes and unanticipated outcomes of QEP
- ❑ Reflection on what institution learned as a result of the QEP experience



# Keep 5 Year Report Frame in Mind

23

- ❑ Document everything & expect changes!
- ❑ Unexpected outcomes can be positive or negative
- ❑ Share the good, the bad and the ugly...
- ❑ ...but don't overshare on the trauma and drama
- ❑ Gather testimonials, qualitative and quantitative data (and photos) along the way
- ❑ Allow for 18 months for 5 Year Report
- ❑ Look at exemplary reports



# Resources: Money



- Institution must put its money where its mouth is
- Anticipate needs of units (unit funding)
- SUN Grants; small funding sources

**Supporting Undergraduate iNnovation:**  
Ideas to Action (I2A) Implementation Grants

*Application Deadline: November 3, 2008*

“The Ideas to Action (I2A) team is pleased to announce new funds designated for faculty or faculty/staff projects to support the permanent integration of I2A critical thinking and community engagement priorities into undergraduate courses.”

- Dr. Patty Payette, Executive Director, I2A

The graphic features a stylized yellow sun with rays on the left side. The text is arranged in a clean, professional layout with a mix of bold and italicized fonts.

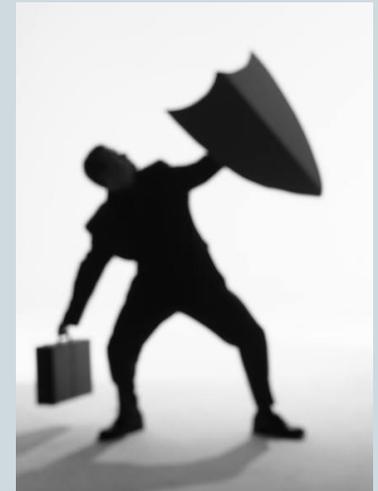
---

**BOTTOM LINE:** all critical thinking funds are for projects that are **sustainable, connected to our outcomes, and have assessment data**

# Transformation of the curriculum is a collaborative process to be tended, not a system to be mechanized

- Get comfortable with an evolutionary change agenda
- One size does NOT fit all when it comes to critical thinking readiness
- Make accountability for teaching and learning outcomes clear, but allow for some autonomy

“Those who plan the battle rarely battle the plan.”  
- Blanchard and Britt, *Who Killed Change?*”



# Accept the Difficult Realities and Embrace the Unexpected Wins

## Difficult Realities of Lasting Change

- Don't wait for all conditions to be perfect in order to act...but be deliberate, intentional
- Make your sometimes clunky, “messy” process transparent to stakeholders
- Be prepared to experience others' criticism, hostility and indifference
- Students may not realize critical thinking is a lifelong skill that requires intentional practice

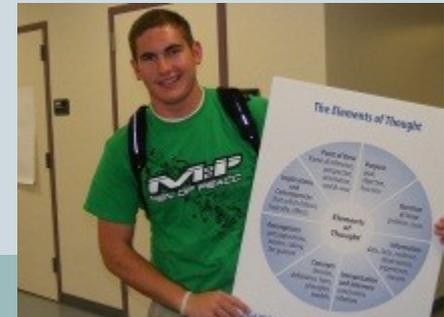


# Accept the Difficult Realities and Embrace the Unexpected Wins



## Embrace the Unexpected Wins

- Community is created; people's lives are changed
- New collaborations, conversations, and scholarship
- Being more conscious of critical thinking can change your life and the life of your colleagues and family





# Our QEP Evolutionary Timeline



## **QEP Timeline and Strategic Priorities**

<b>2005-2007</b>	<b>Creating the Conceptual Framework for our QEP</b>
<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>Laying Groundwork, Defining Terms and Outcomes, Piloting Pedagogical Approaches</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>Building Infrastructure, Launching Programs</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>Creating Capacity for Growth and Scholarship</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>Piloting the Institution-wide Assessment Protocol</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>Engaging Units in Reporting Annual Activities/Outcomes</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>Reporting data, Summarizing Progress</b>