2019
Join Our CREW
Close Reading for Effective Writing

Onsite Review: March 4-7, 2019
Quality Enhancement Plan
QEP
Southern Association of Colleges
and Schools Commission on Colleges
SACSCOC

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
700 Park Avenue | Norfolk, VA 23504

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Executive Summary

Norfolk State University has chosen "Close Reading for Effective Writing" (CREW) for the theme of its second Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Here significant stakeholders of the University – faculty, staff, and student leaders – will seek to improve the reading comprehension and writing competency of undergraduate students in general education courses. CREW will seek to build upon key components of the University’s core competencies to develop a signature program to promote close reading as a tool to achieve effective writing across the curriculum. By providing undergraduates with reading and writing intensive experiences both inside the curriculum and through co-curricular programming, CREW is expected to teach at least two-thirds of the undergraduate student population, over 4,000 students, throughout the five years of the plan. In spring 2019, select sections of HIS 101, SOC 101 and ENG 102 used close reading strategies to achieve effective writing from the students involved. By the second year of the Plan, first-year students will be introduced to CREW during the summer before matriculation through the University's Common Reader program. Designated classes of communications, humanities, social science, and natural science will become certified as CREW sections, engaging students of all classifications and disciplines.

Reading and writing are essential components of thinking and learning, and it is with this in mind that the University selected its theme for its second QEP. Indeed, the compelling need for this theme came out of the data from the University’s first QEP on the enhancement of critical thinking skills, which showed that students need help in reading and writing before they can do critical thinking. From this data and a review of relevant scholarly literature, the broad-based, University-wide QEP Committee – consisting of faculty, staff, and student leaders – also discerned the complementary effect of improving reading skills in order to achieve more effective writing skills. Hence, the QEP’s Learning Goal and Student Learning Outcomes are as follows:
Learning Goal

Develop close readers and effective writers, as defined by the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will analyze academic texts and materials by applying “close reading” strategies.

2. Students will demonstrate effective academic writing through “close reading” strategies.

Effective writing has long been an emphasis for the University, but making it a uniform reality has been much more elusive. In the 1980s, for instance, the University embarked upon a writing across the curriculum program that attempted to increase the number of writing assignments in all majors, and, in 2001, the University adopted its own examination of writing competency to gauge the writing skills of its undergraduates. In 2012, the University expanded its Common Reading program to include the reading of a common text by first-year students, and guided discussions during first-year orientation, integration into the first-year seminar course, and author talks. Yet, not until the emergence of CREW was there an intentional, systematic attempt to use close reading as way to inculcate effective writing across disciplines and throughout the University community.

The rationale for the development of CREW was influenced by the University’s vision for the future, as well as its past. The core values of the University’s 2019-2025 Strategic Plan, "Forging Onward Toward a New Horizon," such as academic excellence, student-centeredness, and engagement also expect students in all majors to be able to read texts of all kinds and to be able to write about what those texts mean in a clear and concise manner.

To achieve the student learning outcomes of CREW, University faculty and staff, collaborating with trained student leaders, will use and teach strategies that promote close reading as a shared
intellectual experience, and learn how to use that close reading experience to improve writing. Through professional communities of inquiry, workshops, online resources, and scholarly endeavors, University faculty and staff, along with trained student leaders, will explore and develop innovative pedagogy to help a significant majority of undergraduates to become close readers and effective writers. Faculty development and concurrent student leadership training will be targeted to general education courses that impact nearly all students. Student Affairs staff will also be integral to the success of CREW, helping to foster an immersive culture of reading and writing that bridges divides between students’ lives inside and outside of the classroom. To assess student success in the second Plan, we will use the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ VALUE rubrics for reading comprehension and writing competency, which have been vetted nationwide for their comprehensiveness. By 2023, most students will achieve 2nd level (on a 4-level scale) on these VALUE rubrics in the general education courses. Other formative assessment and process evaluation measures for this QEP will include standardized tests on reading comprehension and writing competency, as well as locally-developed, course-embedded assessments. The timeline and cycle for these assessment measures will begin in the spring of 2019 and will continue through at least 2028.

The Provost will appoint a Director of Quality Enhancement in the summer of 2019 with a 75% course release in order for the Director to have enough time and energy to implement and oversee this QEP. Furthermore, in order to fund the CREW activities fully, the University will budget $768,625 over the first five years of the Plan for programming and staffing, in new, shifted, and in-kind resources.
Close Reading for Effective Writing

Norfolk State University's choice of "Close Reading for Effective Writing" (CREW) for its second Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) centers on the basic notion that reading and writing skills are complementary. The University is not doing two separate QEPs, but it is focusing on the rather traditional idea that reading academic texts and materials for analysis, context, and connection will lead to more effective writing and writers. Close reading proceeds by means of an instructor who very enthusiastically and lovingly models the reading skills and habits he or she is trying to instill. Students often approach a great text with feelings of trepidation, especially if it contains challenging vocabulary or was written in a previous century. Close reading skills and habits offer a way into intimidating texts, a way of entering what seems impenetrable. Students should feel rising levels of confidence as they move into a world (or experience an artifact) that previously seemed blocked to them.

Close reading does not resolve all questions that students might have about the meaning(s) of a text; it does, however, teach students to tolerate and even relish ambiguities and multiple meanings. By making students aware of narrative techniques, they become aware of a writer's purposes and goals (both those met and those unmet). Close readers become aware of the writer's position and perspectives relative to their own position and perspectives. They share in a transfer of both knowledge and opinion – learning when to yield to another mind and when, possibly, to resist. The strategies and practices of close reading strengthen students' ability to articulate what they are feeling using both the author's words – brief direct quotation – and/or their own responsible paraphrasing. Understanding the text brings one into it and then through it. Close reading, then, enables students to emulate the best of what they have read (a good writer's strategies and 'tricks of the trade') when they next sit down to write.
Accordingly, faculty and staff, in conjunction with student leaders, need to know how to teach close reading for effective writing, and that is why professional development and co-curricular programming are key to the success of this project. One cannot assume that everyone knows how to teach close reading, or, even less useful, that only the humanities, especially the discipline of literary criticism, should use close reading.
I. Identification of the Topic

Student writing in college is and has been a problem. Professors have long expressed disappointment with student writing in the freshman year and beyond. Since the nineteenth century, American colleges and universities have been grappling with students’ writing deficiencies. In 1874, Harvard implemented writing entrance examinations amid concerns that a sizeable number of their students, even those coming from the best high schools, were incapable of writing effectively, and by 1897 all Harvard undergraduates were required to take a course in composition (Connors, 1996). State universities followed Harvard’s lead, but those writing deficiencies have only deepened over time. One of those factors has to be the decline in reading anything outside the classroom; another would be the gradual replacement of reading and writing assignments with multiple-choice exams that are easier to grade. At any rate, producing competent writers and critical readers remains a fundamental aim of higher education, yet questions still abound about how best to approach the problem. Norfolk State University’s QEP Selection Committee and its stakeholders have grappled with the following questions: Once in college, does the first-year composition class really prepare students for their later academic careers? Is there transfer from composition classes to disciplinary writing classes? What approaches work best? What is the role of reading, especially academic literacy, in the composition classroom? Does including close reading and academic literacy offer answers to the question of how to improve student writing? Reading and writing are essential components of thinking and learning, and it is with these questions in mind that Norfolk State University selected its Quality Enhancement Plan.

The University’s QEP Selection Committee -- upon consulting other faculty, staff, and student leaders -- believed that the best place to implement any reforms would be to start with the University’s general education core requirements. All Norfolk State University graduates, regardless of major, pass through the general education core requirements that introduce and
emphasize the acquisition of reading comprehension, writing competency, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and civic engagement, the basic competencies that the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) wants assessed. Norfolk State University’s current model is a highly detailed distributive one with three distinct tiers. Its requirements consist of 40 credits in total, and it has remained relatively stable for the last fifty years, ever since the Norfolk Division of Virginia State University became Norfolk State College in 1969. What became Norfolk State University (NSU) had started off as a junior college offshoot of the Virginia Union, a Baptist institution and one of the handful of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that stressed the liberal arts over technical training. To survive financially, what became NSU had to add an array of technical and vocational curricula as options for undergraduates, and the Norfolk Division of Virginia State offered these practical two-year degrees from 1944 onward. However, there remained a strong desire to have a well-rounded general core for the Division's increasing menu of four-year degrees, which included the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Furthermore, in 1970, students demanded that this core include a capstone, junior-level African American or African history and culture requirement in part as reaction to one of their own history professors’ statement that "Africa had no history." This local legacy of the civil rights movement remains in place today. Our core has seen some minor changes over the years, but nearly all courses now have been certified to meet the student learning outcomes of the first QEP with regard to critical thinking. The heart of NSU has moved from the social sciences to the STEM plus nursing disciplines since the turn of the century, but the commitment to the general core with its deliberate inclusion of the humanities and social sciences has remained strong.

Indeed, the NSU QEP (Close Reading for Effective Writing) is part of an educational movement as old as the groves of ancient Athens (where students met with the likes of Socrates to sharpen their interpretive and writing skills) but as new as the latest selection in Oprah’s Book Club or the current show and project entitled The Great American Read on PBS (http://www.pbs.org/the-
great-american-read/vote/#telescope-widget). At the website just mentioned, viewers vote for their favorite among 100 novels, again ranging from 18th century classics such Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* to Chimamanda Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013), one of NSU’s recent Common Reader selections. With our nation’s understandable and necessary emphasis on STEM training—truly vital for our country’s well-being in a myriad of fields—proponents of the humanities have sometimes felt (with good reason) that their beloved field is on the defensive. But there have also been good results of the humanists’ sense of being under attack: specifically, articulate defensive works that support the value of reading for ALL people. A prominent proponent of what she terms “deep” reading is Dr. Maryanne Wolf, John DiBiaggio Professor of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, and also affiliated with Tisch College’s Cognitive Sciences Program. Wolf takes the reading process right down to the molecular level, using STEM language to convince scientists of the wisdom and indeed necessity of joining ranks with the humanists.

Given these national trends, long-term principles and curricular stability, NSU has always deemed the improvement of undergraduate writing a priority. In the 1980s, for instance, the University embarked upon a writing across the curriculum program that attempted to increase the number of writing assignments in all majors, and, in 2001, the University adopted its own examination of writing competency to gauge the writing skills of its undergraduates. The problems with these early initiatives were that they assumed that faculty and staff knew how to teach reading comprehension and writing skills, and that they also assumed that more writing assignments alone would improve student competency. While assessing writing, the University’s first QEP and its emphasis on critical thinking made reading comprehension a priority of its own. In 2012, the University expanded its Common Reader program to include not only the reading of a common text by first-year students but also guided discussions during first-year orientation, integration into the first-year seminar course, and author talks. The problems here were that there was little follow-
up instruction in other general education courses and no systematic assessment of writing competency in the Common Reader program.

The rationale for the development of CREW, therefore, was influenced by this history, as well as by the core values of the University’s newly developed 2019-2025 Strategic Plan: “Forging Onward Toward a New Horizon.” The Strategic Plan’s emphasis on student-centeredness complements the QEP’s focus on student learning outcomes. Its pursuit of academic excellence and engagement presumes that students are competent in reading academic texts and materials closely, as well as in writing about what they have read closely.

Most significantly, however, the adoption of CREW is supported by empirical data collected over the last few years and based upon best practices in student achievement and engagement. The selection of both reading and writing reflects widespread concerns about these essential competencies. CREW was developed through a process of broad-based institutional involvement; it came out of both routine University assessment and planning processes in addition to the conclusions stemming from the University’s first QEP. Indeed, the University’s first QEP Committees began thinking of appropriate themes for the next Plan as early as 2014, and sponsored University-wide competitions in order to come up with a new topic. The winning proposal on student learning communities in the spring of 2015 seemed to be the most coherent at the time; student learning communities had been established by the first QEP to improve critical thinking skills. The new focus, nevertheless, is to improve retention and graduation rates, but the existing Committee concluded that the University should continue the acquisition of student skills and competencies. At this point, during 2016, learning communities as an overall concept became eclipsed by a close examination of the data coming from the first QEP, which kept indicating to the members that reading and writing deficiencies prevented any important gains in critical thinking.
In the spring of 2017, the Director of the University’s first QEP, “REASON: Creating Coherent Pathways to Develop Critical Thinking Skills in Students,” in collaboration with members of the first QEP’s executive and implementation committees, was tasked with developing a new QEP Selection Committee that was broad-based, included faculty members teaching general education courses, and had all of the other relevant stakeholders.

The QEP Committee included faculty members from all five schools/colleges -- Liberal Arts; Science, Engineering and Technology; Education; Business; and Social Work, the Dean of the Honors College; the Dean of Libraries, Student Affairs staff, the Vice-Provost, the Director of Accreditation, the Director of Assessment, and the Assistant Director of Assessment. Additional faculty, staff, and, for the first time, student leaders were added in the fall of 2018. All of these members were recommended by their academic deans, colleagues, and/or the Vice-Presidents. The Director of the first Plan served as the Committee Chair, and at least two of the faculty and one of the staff had previous experience with the creation and establishment of the first QEP – REASON.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, the Provost tasked the Selection Committee with four responsibilities: (1) reviewing relevant SACSCOC principles and guidelines, (2) reviewing the QEPs of other institutions, (3) soliciting suggestions from the University community, and (4) evaluating student learning outcomes assessment data. Small-group discussions, meetings, an electronic survey and electronic voting engaged varied constituents campus-wide and helped to identify the topic of the QEP. Reading and writing were identified as outcomes in need of intervention. For example, in August 2017 during the Opening Session, a majority of faculty members attended a University-wide meeting and workshop after which most present felt that an effective Plan should tackle both reading comprehension and writing competency and that any Plan focused only on
writing would not be any more successful than previous efforts. A majority from across the disciplines also felt that the initial emphasis on learning communities was a distraction from the student learning outcomes which involved the acquisition of an academic skill. In February 2018, a workshop open to faculty, staff, and students was shown the data coming from the first QEP, and the participants agreed that the deficiencies needed to be addressed by having reading as a tool to improve writing. See the Appendix for membership and meeting summaries.

University Needs Assessment

The University has assessed writing using the locally developed Examination of Writing Competency (EWC) since 2001. The Selection Committee reviewed available data from the EWC, the results of the previous QEP on critical thinking, and statewide data on incoming students. The committee also examined data on current University programming, like the Common Reader program, and University-wide survey data (e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement, Graduating Student Exit Survey, and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement).

Examination of Writing Competency

Data from the Examination of Writing Competency (EWC) were used to evaluate student writing. Until fall 2016, all undergraduate students were required to successfully complete the examination before graduation. ENG 101: Communication Skills I and ENG 102: Communication Skills II or comparable transfer courses were prerequisites for the examination. To pass the examination, scores of three or higher on all four EWC rubric criteria – (1) organization, (2) development and analysis, (3) sentence structure, and (4) grammar, diction, and mechanics – were required. The EWC rubric was a five-scaled rubric ranging from one (“incompetence”) to five (“superior competency”). Each examination was scored by at least two trained University raters. At least two
graders were required to agree on the final rating. The Selection Committee reviewed five years of EWC data from 2011-12 to 2015-16. Overall, EWC pass rates ranged from a low of 68 percent to a high of 78 percent. Pass rates are provided in Table 1 by academic year from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Table 1. Examination of Writing Competency Pass Rates by Academic Year

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<tr>
<td>Overall Pass Rates</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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</table>

The University’s established threshold for achievement on the EWC was set as a pass rate of 70 percent or higher. While students met or exceeded the threshold for three of the five years under review, the results revealed that on average 22-32 percent of students did not possess the writing skills needed to successfully pass the examination. Since the EWC was a graduation requirement, a sizable portion of the undergraduate student body failed to meet graduation requirements; thus, writing was having an outsized effect on retention and graduation.

Proficiency Profile

The University’s previous QEP, REASON: Creating Coherent Pathways to Develop Critical Thinking Skills in Students, used the ETS Proficiency Profile to assess student attainment of critical thinking outcomes. The Proficiency Profile also provided the following criterion-referenced scores:

- Writing (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3)
- Reading (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Critical Thinking)
From fall 2009 to fall 2017, the University used Proficiency Profile critical thinking sub-scores to measure its critical thinking learning outcomes. The results revealed that students’ critical thinking proficiency was closely related to their reading proficiency. The results also revealed weaknesses in students’ writing further substantiating the need to improve student writing. The results revealed that fewer than a third of students scored at or above the national average of Carnegie classification peers in reading, critical thinking, and writing. The percentage of students who scored at or above the national average is provided in Table 2 by academic year.

Table 2. Percentage of Scores that Met or Exceeded the National Average by Academic Year

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proficiency classifications provided additional data to support the selection of reading and writing as the QEP topic. Fewer than 45 percent of students were categorized as proficient in level one reading and writing. The percentage of students categorized as proficient is provided by skill dimension and academic year in Table 3.
Table 3. *Proficiency Classifications by Skill Dimension and Academic Year*

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Level 1</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Level 2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, Level 1</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, Level 2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, Level 3</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

*Based on 2014 ETS Proficiency Profile Comparative Scores Guide.

*State and National SAT Data*

The Committee also examined the verbal scores of incoming freshmen in 2017 for both Virginia and the nation disaggregated by family education and racial backgrounds. The Committee then realized how entrenched and worrisome these reading and writing problems are. For example, the verbal scores of those students whose parents had received only a high school diploma were consistently lower than those students whose parents had achieved any type of college education. Most distressing, however, were the verbal scores of African American students, which were nearly seventy points lower than the national mean score and, in turn, were nearly 100 points below the mean score for Virginia. This strongly suggests that the entering freshmen coming to our historically African American university may have writing deficiencies and thus need innovative curricular and pedagogical strategies. The SAT data, combined with the more fragmented Proficiency Profile and EWC evidence, confirmed the University’s decision to choose
Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW) as the focus of our QEP. The QEP Committee examined the relevant Norfolk State University data and concluded that the NSU data mirrored state and national trends.

**Dr. Valerie Harrison's Focus Walks and Pedagogical Workshops**

The QEP Selection Committee realized early that faculty and staff development would be key to the improvement of student performance. Nevertheless, the Committee wanted to know if and/or how Norfolk State faculty members were teaching reading comprehension and/or writing competency across the disciplines. Accordingly, in March and April 2018, the Provost's Office hired a nationally-known educational consultant – Dr. Valerie Harrison – to help the QEP Selection Committee to determine the frequency and quality of current faculty strategies in teaching reading and writing. With permission from interested professors in a wide array of programs (yet still mainly within the general education core), Harrison conducted focus walks or intentional classroom visitations of self-selected faculty members' classrooms in order to assess professorial competence and confidence in teaching reading and writing. Harrison and her team of classroom visitors --mainly taken from the QEP Selection Committee-- observed the most ambitious and dedicated faculty members engaging students in reading and writing activities, but they did not observe many intentional or sustained strategies, such as close reading. The expectations for student competency were present, but the pedagogical support to get the students to the level where the faculty thought they should be was lacking. These observations indicated the acute need for CREW and its sustained pathways. Harrison also led workshops on teaching reading comprehension that revealed a wide range of faculty knowledge about and adoption of pedagogical strategies to inculcate more analytical understandings of academic materials and texts. For example, on March 22, 2018, she offered “The Nature of the Adult Reader” symposium that examined the dialectic connection between adult student reading behaviors and informed pedagogy. As she promised in her handouts,
participants were equipped with research-based strategies, diagnoses, and prescriptions to address nine common adult reading behaviors and a profile of their teaching style." As Dr. Harrison noted later, "the attendees indicated that the information acquired was very revealing and increased their understanding of adult readers." The next symposium that she offered, on April 18, 2018, was "Effective Reading Strategies for Adult Learners," which showcased student-centered instructional pedagogy that included close reading and revealed the need for faculty training in and practice with those CREW strategies. Finally, at the end-of-semester faculty development programming in May 2018, Harrison offered two more symposia that attracted even more faculty and staff members than before. The symposia titles were "Reading Doesn't Have a Content Area: Using Expository Text Structures to Read across the Curriculum" and "Effective Reading Strategies to Improve Comprehension." These symposia exposed participants to an array of analytical tips and devices that close reading could encompass, such as vocabulary development, questioning, reciprocal reading, literature circles, summarizing, and previewing and predicting. The feedback from participants and their enthusiasm in embracing Harrison's research-based suggestions indicated to the Committee that many more such workshops would have a significant impact on faculty and staff effectiveness.

Literature Review

Faculty frequently complain about the quality of freshman writing. Different approaches and studies have tried to focus on how to make improvements in student writing. The Writing across the Curriculum and “writing to learn” were only two of the ways in which the problems of freshman writing performance were addressed. Efforts are still being made to improve student writing in general, as well as writing in the individual disciplines. Brockman, Taylor, Kreth and Crawford (2010) addressed the assessment of college writing in a 2010 article in *English Journal* and followed that article with another that addressed the comments writing instructors made about
college writing. One idea from the focus groups suggested that “college writing asked students to read and write about previously unfamiliar topics as a way to learn course content.”

It is important to note that efforts to improve writing by college students does not begin in the students’ freshman year. High school instructors are aware of the demands on students to read more and to write more than they did in high school. Fanetti, Bushrow, & DeWeese (2010) explore the gap between writing in high school and in college. One primary difference they note is that high school education is “standardized and quantifiable” while college education is intended to be “theoretical.” Since the high school students are usually taught to write to perform well, instruction is often “teaching to the test” or teaching how to write a standard five-paragraph essay. While this approach works for the school, it is not helpful for student performance in college. Patterson and Duer (2006) examined “what is taught” in high school composition/English classes using a 2002-2003 ACT National Curriculum Survey. The survey addressed the most important reading and writing skills, grammar and usage skills, and higher-order reading skills. Their article compared the skills taught to college bound and non-college bound students. VanDeWeghe (2006) also looked at the preparation of high school students for college writing. He asserts that high school writing instruction should focus less on static styles and more on the students’ development as writers.

There is also some focus on the importance of reading skills and strategies for students at the high school and at the college level. Fisher and Frey (2003) examined strategies for helping struggling readers improve their reading and their writing. Alex Poole at Western Kentucky took several looks at student reading strategies. In 2014, Poole discussed reading strategies by first-year composition students. This discussion covered instructor attitudes and students’ ability to read. As part of this examination, Poole suggested additional strategies that could be taught to students to improve. Another study by Poole (2014) examined reading strategies by upper classmen, and used a combination of demographic information and student completion of the
Metacognitive Assessment of Reading Strategies Inventory (Marsi). Poole’s discussion covered the three basis strategies (read-aloud, skimming, and summarizing), but also included additional strategies to improve success. A third article by Poole (2013) looked at the reading strategies college readers use to read fiction. Poole used the MARSI inventory to examine which strategies were used by writers. One point of examination was the comparison of which strategies students reported they used and the strategies their instructors indicated they should use. Hooley, Tysseling & Ray (2013) examined the attitudes of high school seniors and instructors toward required academic reading. Using indicators from the SAT for 2012 and the ACT Survey for 2011, the question examined was the “connection between academic reading attitudes and proficiency for older students.”

Three topics that frequently appear in the literature are reading, critical thinking and writing. If students are to write well, they must be able to read beyond the basic decoding of words. Indeed, they must be able to evaluate the information they encounter and to integrate useful material into their own work. Michelle S. Broussard (2017) in Reading, Research and Writing approaches the issue from a librarian’s viewpoint and addresses ways to provide research assignments that build students’ skills in research to improve their writing of research papers. Broussard notes that in their introduction to How to Read a Book, Adler and Van Doren (1972) indicate that reading instruction in the schools does not extend beyond sixth grade and that the focus of instruction has been on decoding, not on higher reading skills. Horning and Kramer (2013) define reading as “getting meaning from print”, but they also recognize the necessity of additional skills, for they say students should “analyze texts . . . synthesize different readings on the same issue . . . and evaluate the materials they read”. These same skills are addressed by MacMillan and Rosenblatt (2015), who advocate including academic reading strategies as part of information literacy instruction. Their advocacy is informed by their familiarity with disciplines other than their own, as well as with their familiarity with current scholarship on the subject.
The importance of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation is recognized by other scholars who refer to these processes as “academic literacy” (Defazio et. al., 2010) or as “critical literacy” (Flower, 1989). Defazio focuses on the teaching of writing in a “writing across the curriculum” environment. He provides four case studies from various academic units to illustrate techniques used by four instructors at the undergraduate and graduate levels. DeFazio's case studies also illustrate how “writing in the disciplines” can improve student writing. Flower indicates that the critically literate person “questions sources, looks for assumptions and reads for intentions, not just facts.”

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing Program Administrators (WPA)

One strategy to improve student writing was Writing Across the Curriculum, which supported writing assignments in courses outside the usual freshman writing courses. David R. Russell (2002) focused on the resistance in academe to the “reform of teaching and learning what gets taught and learned.” Countering that resistance, Carol Moskovitz (2011) of Duke University has a “reader’s” program built on a partnership between the Thompson Writing Center and the Alumni Association that pairs students with alumni volunteers who work in a professional field related to the student’s major. The student is assigned a written project that represents the type of professional writing the student will be asked to produce in a professional setting. The alumni “reader” acts as a mentor and reflective reader for the student as he/she produces a draft and subsequent revisions in preparation for submission of the final project.

Longitudinal Studies

A number of longitudinal studies have been conducted to follow students’ development as writers or to determine the success of first-year composition (FYC) courses in preparing students for later demands in their academic and professional careers. Elizabeth Wardle (2007) looked at the transfer of skills in her preliminary discussion of the results of a longitudinal study. Her observations indicated that there was little research on “transfer” from FYC to later courses. However, there had been recommendations to abolish FYC because of a lack of evidence that
the skills were transferred. Wardle looked at various conceptions of transfer and made a case for the continuing usefulness of FYC to students. She focused on “generalizations” in the FYC class that could be applied beyond the FYC classroom. Perkins and Salomon (1988) argued that the transfer of skills learned in one context improved if instruction was designed to promote transfer. Two of the techniques they advocate, “hugging” and “bridging,” employed together could provide some structure to increase transfer, they state.

At Harvard University, Nancy Sommers leads The Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing, which followed a cohort of 400 students from their freshman year to graduation. Sommers and Saltz (2004) reported that Harvard University’s Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing followed students over a five-year period to trace their development as writers. In following 400 students through their college careers, she noted that their comments often indicated a greater involvement in the process of learning. Students felt engaged with their academic courses.

The Council of Writing Program Administrators passed WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (3.0) in 2014. In this Statement, the WPA provides outcomes in the following areas: rhetoric, processes, and knowledge of the writing conventions. In addition to the outcomes for students, they also provide expectations for what faculty will provide to students to expand their opportunities to learn and also to expand their learning in a faculty member’s discipline. These requirements for faculty are focused on facilitating student development of reading and writing skills by incorporating both reading and writing strategies into the first-year writing classes. Lisa Bosley (2008) also explored the idea of teaching critical reading in composition classes. Her contention is that “just as college students need to be introduced to college level academic writing, so they need to be introduced to college level, academic reading . . . .” The instructors in her study used different terminology to describe critical reading, but she found that they still provided instruction in reading strategies to assist their students in acquiring the necessary skills to interact effectively with discipline-specific texts.
Ellen Carillo (2016) also discussed Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing In the Discipline (WID), explaining that in such programs the emphasis has been on writing but not on reading. Carillo provides a snapshot of a process to help students move from reading to writing to research. Carillo supports the recommendation of Alice Horning (2007) that students be taught reading “alongside” writing. Carillo further notes the challenge for students in an environment where definitions of literacy expand because of technology. She notes that with technology students can plagiarize using the “cut and paste” method. Instruction, then, in both reading and writing must help prevent student use of this method and equip students in all disciplines to read closely and produce original texts enriched with source material.
II. Broad-based Support

Throughout the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015, University-wide competitions led to the winning proposals from faculty and staff members about sustaining the success of the student learning communities, a legacy of the first QEP. The existing QEP Committees – Executive and Implementation -- from the first QEP then combined these initiatives and priorities to create an executive summary draft. At the end of 2016, the new QEP Committee assumed responsibility. The new committee revised the draft to make it focus on the acquisition of an academic skills rather than on retention or graduation rates. While learning communities had focused on retention and graduation, the draft moved to assessment, particularly to analyzing the assessment data from the first QEP.

From spring 2017 through fall 2018, the University focused on the development and scope of its QEP. A QEP Development Committee was established to oversee this work. The Development Committee included faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as the members of the Selection Committee. All of the five school/colleges were represented; committee members included the Dean of Students, representatives from the Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center, the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library, and the Office of Extended Learning. The size of both the Selection and Development committees increased during 2018 to include more faculty, staff, and, for the first time, student leaders. The two student leaders were nominated by the Dean of Students; the additional faculty and staff members were recommended by their relevant Deans and Vice-Presidents. Currently, the Selection Committee has twenty-eight members with six of those members on the Development or Writing teams as well. The Committees membership list is provided in the Appendices.

Beginning in the spring of 2017, this Committee started drafting executive summaries to refine our focus to emphasize measurable and attainable student learning outcomes, to guarantee that
our Plan explicitly addressed University-wide assessment data, and to make sure that the new Plan was not too ambitious. At the Opening Session of the fall 2017 semester, a two-hour workshop was conducted with the full-time faculty members University-wide on the development of the QEP. Faculty provided feedback on suggested strategies and themes and chose read and writing as priorities, deciding against student learning communities as the vehicle to improve overall student literacy.

In October 2017, the Committee asked visiting members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) whether they valued close readers and effective writers. In February 2018, the QEP Committee hosted a student forum whereby undergraduates gave their views on the relevance and importance of our proposed strategies. That same month, the Committee hosted a model reading of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, and faculty and staff participants offered their views of how the strategies employed could be used in their fields. Such continuous feedback allowed QEP committee members to flesh out the theoretical assumptions underpinning the plan, as well as to customize the measures of its potential success. One point is key: the Committee was careful to avoid conveying to the campus community the notion that “better reading” meant only reading the “classics” or that little reading was occurring on campus. “Better Reading for Better Writing”—an earlier title for the draft—appeared too subjective to some faculty and to Committee members. The QEP Committee did not want to alienate faculty and staff members who would be implementing these improvements; thus, after deliberation by multiple stakeholders, the QEP name was chosen: Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW). The name received overwhelming support from University stakeholders while its memorable acronym captures the collaborative nature of the innovative CREW program.

The Committee also wanted to avoid giving the impression that this QEP initiative would involve only English faculty. Accordingly, the first close reading seminar (held during the Opening
Session of the fall 2018 semester) focused on a seminal piece in ecological history – the stirring introduction to Rachel Carson’s call-to-arms, *Silent Spring* (1962). Participants discussed this text employing close reading techniques and questions and explaining how this text could be used in an undergraduate classroom. Four panelists—a nurse, a biologist, a literary critic, and a historian—led the discussion, and 10 other faculty members from different disciplines participated in the discussion. During the same Opening Session, the Committee also sponsored an Academic Showcase of some of the best reading and writing assignments from current NSU faculty leaders. During the Showcase, a management specialist, a pedagogical expert, an interdisciplinary studies professor, and a sociologist demonstrated how and why the particular activities led to either close reading or effective writing or both. Their presentations sparked animated discussions and debates about best practices, including approaches to improving adult literacy in a sensitive manner. These workshops promoted the series of lunchtime close readings of academic texts and materials from different disciplines held every other Wednesday at 12 noon in the Library for faculty and staff. The academic texts and materials involved included a fiery editorial from abolitionist William Garrison, a secondary article on the origins of the FDIC written by business professors, a chapter from the Dalai Lama’s *The Universe in a Single Atom*, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s State of the Union address from January 1944. The sessions were filmed, and the video recordings will be placed on the QEP website for broad exposure. Inspired by reports of the faculty and staff sessions, student leaders decided to initiate their own close reading series. They have planned a student-led reading of the lyrics from the music video by Childish Gambino designated for Black History Month in February 2019. Furthermore, the QEP Committee has enlisted the support of the University’s Office of Communications and Marketing to develop a comprehensive publicity plan for CREW. Significant features of the plan include promoting the QEP/CREW through the timely release of information regarding the activities of NSU students, faculty, and staff; through collaboration with representatives from various community media; through an NSU QEP/CREW newsletter, the
NSU annual report, the University’s magazine; and through internal and external partnerships that will benefit the student community.

The QEP/CREW program will be hosted on two NSU websites. The QEP/CREW Portal (Website) being developed in conjunction with the Office of Communications and Marketing will be hosted on the www.nsu.edu website to be accessible to the public. Content will include the QEP/CREW Program, including the activities of NSU students, faculty, and staff and other pertinent information. The QEP/CREW SharePoint Website is hosted on the NSU SharePoint website and is accessible to those with authorized usernames and passwords, such as members of the QEP Committee. It houses all QEP/CREW files: documents, working documents, confidential documents, reports, etc.
III. CREW Program Elements

The creation of a more substantive and academically rigorous introduction is a key element of CREW. First-year students are currently introduced to college-level reading and discussion in orientation through the University’s Common Reader program. These discussions are led by University faculty and staff and are designed to improve the first-year experience and introduce the intellectual engagement with diverse ideas that are expected at the University.

Norfolk State University defines “close reading” as the deep analytic reading that directly stresses engagement with a text of sufficient complexity. Going beyond basic literacy, it examines meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately (PARCC, 2011). In other words, close reading is a strategy used to extract meaning from reading that provides students with an in-depth understanding of literature that may not otherwise be obtained. Close reading directs the reader’s attention to the text itself (Frey & Fisher, 2012; NEA 2013; NGAC 2010), and includes three major steps: read the key ideas and details; craft and structure; and integrate the knowledge and ideas (Boyles, 2013). These major steps are not only building blocks to improve reading comprehension but also to improve writing skills (Snow, 2013). As stated previously, if students are to write well, they must be able to read beyond the basic decoding of words, to evaluate the information they need, and to incorporate it into their own work (Broussard, 2017).

Close Reading for the QEP

Close reading is defined as the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as to comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices to be transferred into one’s own writing.
Recommended Steps for Close Reading

In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

1. Review or skim the text for basic features: genre, structure, sections, headings, diagrams, title, purpose, and the like. Discuss what information these features provide to readers and how we should approach the text.

2. Read the text for basic comprehension. Discuss purpose, main and supporting ideas, vocabulary, and be able to recall the fundamental ideas from the text.

3. Read the text critically. Consider and discuss the author’s point of view and potential biases, assumptions made about readers’ knowledge and beliefs, consider what is unsaid or excluded from the text, and consider implications and possible interpretations of the material presented.

4. Focus on a smaller passage and discuss the writer’s style and strengths of language, punctuation, and syntax.

Applying Close Reading to Student Writing

Understanding and articulating views on a text in writing puts into students’ writing practice the elements of strong writing identified through close reading. Direct imitation of good writing’s style and features, as well as indirect practice through high faculty expectations will help these elements of strong writing become habit and manifest in other written work.

Options for Direct Imitation Practice

1. For informational texts, have students imitate the tone, language, and structure of the text read in a piece of writing on a subject they know well. Another option is to have them summarize/paraphrase the text at the same level using the same tone.
2. For argumentative texts, ask students to respond to the argument with their own point of view, either following the patterns and evidence used in the text read or directly rebutting the argumentative text using the author’s own evidence.

3. Have students write a project or paper proposal that implements the requirements and genre conventions of the field as identified through close reading.

Zemelman, Daniels and Arthur (2005) postulate that the best practices to tie in close reading to better writing are to strategize and establish a positive atmosphere for writing, reading and learning; to organize for writing; arrange for meaningful-to-students reasons to write; arrange for students to read, respond to, and use a variety of materials written for a variety of purposes and audiences; and to write regularly across the curriculum and disciplines. These diverse comprehension strategies can be used in varying ways depending on student needs, instructor goals, and the demands of the reading task (Frey & Fisher, 2012, Snow, 2013). Embedding close reading strategies instruction into one’s pedagogy provides students with skills to overcome reading comprehension difficulties and helps them become more skilled readers and more successful in approaching the many types of writing tasks required for college-level work.

Indeed, since CREW is designed to enhance undergraduate reading and writing skills, social constructivism, which suggests that through immersion and shared experiences students will collaboratively construct knowledge (Falk-Ross, 2001), serves as the plan’s theoretical framework. The interventions at the heart of CREW, common readings and intensive writing across the disciplines, lend themselves particularly well to social constructivist views of knowledge as they build academic community through moderated discussion and peer interaction and review. These opportunities model the intellectual engagement that is expected in highly literate environments, like universities (Anderson & Kim, 2011; Falk-Ross, 2001; Ferguson, 2006).
Social constructivists view learning as a social phenomenon, and they emphasize the collaborative nature of learning (Au, 1998). Social constructivist learning environments are designed to help learners reap the rewards inherent in being a member of a knowledge community while also promoting intrinsic motivation (Vygotsky, 1978). CREW is based on the idea that complex academic texts are best understood through academic discourse through group discussion and the development and expression of ideas in writing. This framework has various implications for teaching both in the classroom and beyond. Social constructivist pedagogues view learning as a collaborative process, wherein faculty do more than simply lecture; instead, they create rich learning environments that promote peer interaction, active learning, and group discussion. Since learning also happens outside of the classroom, CREW engages librarians and Student Affairs staff and the larger University community through discussion forums and a range of curricular and co-curricular programming.

Finally, strategy instruction for “effective writing” draws on social constructivist theories of learning (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006) to understand how to help students develop self-regulated strategies. Students actively construct their own understanding of strategies and where and when they are useful through their learning experiences. Instructors support learning by providing explicit explanations, modeling the strategies with “think alouds,” scaffolding students as they apply the strategies, arranging for peer collaboration, and gradually releasing control. Emphasis is placed on the purpose and value of the strategies to enhance motivation and transfer (MacArthur & Lembo, 2009). All of these strategies are dependent upon “close reading” as defined above.
Learning Goal and Student Learning Outcomes

Learning Goal

Develop close readers and effective writers, as defined by the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Students will analyze academic texts and materials by applying “close reading” strategies.
   - Read critically to evaluate a text and recognize its implications.
   - Articulate an understanding of various interpretive reading strategies based on genres and their conventions.
   - Use needed strategies to work through different sorts of texts.
   - Discuss texts in structured ways that contribute to and enhance academic discourse.
   - Connect sources and works with their historical and/or social contexts.
   - Use texts to build knowledge and raise and explore important questions.

2. Students will demonstrate effective academic writing through “close reading” strategies.
   - Demonstrate strategic knowledge of the writing process.
   - Compose texts that clearly convey meaning through tone, style, purpose, and genre.
   - Adapt writing knowledge to new contexts, including rhetoric in digital spaces.
   - Incorporate constructive criticism of drafts in the writing process.
   - Demonstrate consideration of context and purpose when writing.
   - Cite sources in a way that is appropriate for the discipline.
   - Master the conventions of Standard American English.
Program Pathways

In order to build upon the successes of its predecessor, the second QEP will have three complementary and overarching pathways to help bridge the gaps between core and major: curricular and pedagogical innovations, enriching educational experiences that will emphasize collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs, and faculty and staff development and engagement.

Pathway 1: Curricular Innovations

One major role that CREW has is the prompting of faculty members to identify the most compelling and accessible texts in their discipline or teaching subjects. The idea here is that if faculty require close reading and more intentional reading assignments, then student competencies will increase, and their reading and writing will be enhanced. Faculty members teaching CREW courses will join learning communities of their own, exchanging ideas about how to incorporate the teaching of close reading for effective writing into their syllabi. For example, in the College of Liberal Arts, department chairs recommended select sections of ENG 101, ENG 102, HIS 101, and SOC 101 to be the first courses to incorporate the CREW learning strategies and outcomes. This identification happened during the fall of 2018 in order to be implemented by January 2019. The participating faculty members who are teaching these sections first met in December 2018 to discuss the student learning outcomes and possible common reading assignments. In January 2019, those same said faculty members learned how to deploy a common rubric -- the AAC&U rubrics on reading comprehension and/or writing competency in the Blackboard course management system used by the University. The University's assessment specialists provided the participants with a checklist of CREW standards to make the reforms uniform and intentional. The faculty members, their department chairs, and assessment staff have planned a follow-up series of meetings throughout the semester to monitor the progress and to fine-tune the stated outcomes. Between 2019 and 2023, many more sections both within and without the general
education core will become involved, and the program will eventually impact at least two-thirds of the University's undergraduates.

Faculty will be recruited to participate in CREW through presentations at University meetings (e.g., Opening Session, Faculty Senate, General Education Council, University Assessment Advisory, and University Curriculum Committee), faculty orientation sessions, by word of mouth, and through the CREW website. Faculty who participate in CREW will have access to programming funds to support the development or enhancement courses to include CREW outcomes.

Courses must possess CREW Certification, which will designate specific courses as reading and/or writing intensive. This certification will include elements of the certification process used in the first QEP to designate courses as critical thinking intensive. To fully participate in CREW initiatives, faculty who teach General Education core courses will have to complete an application process and be trained to adapt their courses to meet CREW learning outcomes.

**Pathway 2: Enriching Co-Curricular Activities**

Another major role of CREW is for students to be able to recognize the usefulness of close reading outside of the classroom. Norfolk State University has a long-standing tradition of providing high quality co-curricular activities on and off-campus featuring authors, scientists, artists, politicians, activists, humanitarians, and more. In keeping with this tradition, co-curricular activities planned to supplement the close readings within the classroom include the Common Reader, the establishment of CREW mates—peer tutors assigned to CREW sections; student-led CREW reading seminars and discussions; invited authors to give talks and workshops with faculty, staff and students, as well as programs that allow for in-depth discussions on writings that impact our contemporary world.

Specifically, the Office of Student Activities and Residential Housing and Life support curricular activities through programming that reinforces the skills, concepts and issues theorized in the
classroom. For example, in spring 2019, the NSU Theatre in collaboration with the Virginia Stage Company will present Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* — a classic novel that touches on issues of colorism, class and race. An after-performance talk is scheduled to analyze and evaluate Morrison’s writings with the interpretative performance of the show.

Since 2012 the Common Reader program has moved beyond a mere reading of a common text by first-year students to also include guided discussions during first-year orientation, integration into the first-year seminar course and talks by authors and/or scholars. For the second QEP, CREW, the Common Reader program beginning in summer 2019 will include the selection of text that will engage in the close reading process by students, staff and faculty to include incorporation into first-year courses (i.e., ENG 101, HIS 101, BIO 100 and SOC 101), as well as author talks. This will introduce students from their inception into NSU to the close reading process and will help to make a strategic connection between close reading and its usefulness in their courses, as well as to their understanding of common (and even popular) texts. Ideally, the Common Reader selection will include a presentation and talk by the author.

Student leaders, including Honors College students, will be trained as CREW-mates. CREW-mates will be trained on the close reading process and then will self-select texts to read closely with other students in non-classroom settings. In February 2019, the student members of the Selection team have planned a close reading and discussion on the lyrics and graphics of “This is America” by Childish Gambino, including the music video. This CREW-mate designed program includes a comparative discussion of Langston Hughes’ classic poem “I Too Sing America” with this popular song.

CREW-mates will also serve as peer-tutors for first-year students in CREW-designated courses to model and reinforce improved reading skills. Further, CREW-mates will serve to reinforce the process of analysis, review, reflection and application.

Co-curricular activities will highlight the feasibility and practicality of the QEP. The basic yet impactful necessary skills of close reading and effective writing transcend discipline and career.
Through programs that include art, literature, performance and discussion, students will be able to see the relevance of critical readings of texts in their everyday lives, thought processes and ability to articulate their own perspectives. In February and March 2019, the University’s Black History Month is sponsoring a series of brown-bag lunch CREW events where readings and discussions related to the theme, Black Migrations, will occur to include tentative titles: Black Migrations and Religion; Black Migrations and Women, Black Migrations and Genealogy.

Additional co-curricular activities include close readings of interpretive art—fine art, music/lyrics, videos and films. For instance, the Honors College presents a Film Series that often corresponds with literature. After viewing the film, audience members engage in a structured discussion with a scholar, author and/or director regarding the film. Honor students who participate then write on the experience focusing on their strategic knowledge of the writing process including, but not limited to, tone, context, audience, purpose, and more.

All such co-curricular activities will be identified as CREW activities. A survey will be sent to participants to capture their experiences of close reading.

Pathway 3: Faculty and Staff Development and Engagement

The QEP Director, in collaboration with the General Education Council, will design, oversee, and assess a comprehensive QEP faculty and staff development program. The faculty and staff development program will include faculty and staff training sessions during the summer of 2019, an additional one-day training session for lead faculty members in fall 2019, at least four follow-up training and information sessions (a minimum of two per semester) organized by general education core subject area and conducted by lead faculty members, a one-day faculty and staff training session during spring 2020, and one review and feedback session for participating faculty and staff at the end of each academic year conducted by the QEP Director. Finally, each summer from 2020 to 2024, the QEP Director will lead a planning and assessment retreat. The General Education Council and lead faculty from participating general education classes will be
expected to participate in this retreat, where course and other evaluation data will be disseminated and discussed.

Faculty communities of inquiry (COIs) will be organized by general education subject area (e.g., communications, humanities, natural sciences, etc.) to form a learning network focused on embedding pedagogical and co-curricular strategies to develop and assess student attainment of the CREW student learning outcomes. A community of inquiry is a learning network or community in which a process of social learning occurs. Members of the community share a common interest and collaborate to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations. In 2004, Milton D. Cox, the pioneering proponent of this kind of pedagogical reflection, defined faculty learning communities as a cross-disciplinary group (recommended size is 8-12 members) engaging in “an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, interdisciplinary, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and community building.” The primary purpose of the communities of inquiry for the QEP will be to provide continuity, sustainability, and a forum to embed close reading for better writing outcomes in general education courses.

The communities of inquiry are designed to enhance faculty collaborations and will focus on 1) identifying and implementing best practices for embedding CREW outcomes in general education courses and developing close reading for effective writing strategies, 2) using current research findings in developing effective pedagogies and assessment measures, and 3) sharing best pedagogical and assessment practices to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition, communities of inquiries will assist in developing a campus culture of inquiry focused on improving CREW outcomes in students.

Professional development is key to the success of CREW. In the same way that faculty members cannot assume that all students inherently know how to read academic materials before they are assigned, the CREW initiative understands that faculty, staff, and student leaders must be aware of the available strategies for close reading for effective writing before they can apply them in the
Norfolk State University
Close Reading for Effective Writing – CREW

classroom and beyond. Accordingly, the QEP Committee decided that the best approach to this development would be a collaborative and interdisciplinary one in which participants from a wide range of programs could help each other to acquire the relevant teaching techniques. Here the Committee turned to the long-standing templates for faculty learning communities put forth by Milton Cox of Miami University in 2004 and further expanded to become professional learning groups to include staff and/or student leaders. The University's first QEP included what we labeled communities of inquiry (COIs) to have faculty and staff to consider the various aspects of critical thinking skills, and the Committee thought that CREW could draw upon that experience to inculcate close reading for effective writing. Further institutional support for the COIs on campus would come from the newly revived Center for Teaching and Learning, which had helped to launch similar efforts for the University's first QEP on critical thinking.

Beginning in the fall of 2020 through the Plan's fifth year, the Committee intends to sponsor a series of communities of inquiry for topics and techniques revolving around close reading for effective writing. These COIs could focus on such subjects as picking the most appropriate reading assignments, using films and visual media as core texts, vocabulary-building, previewing secondary articles, teaching historical context, annotation, and building a multicultural canon for associated disciplines in the general education core. These COIs would be targeted at those faculty and student leaders in the general education core initially, but their invitation to participate would be open to all relevant stakeholders who would like to commit their time and energy to the discussion sessions that would extend over a semester. Each COI would consist of 8-12 members, and they would be paid stipends for their participation. Yet, for these stipends, they would be expected to show how their syllabi and/or assignments were enhanced by their participation in this development. The process is as important as the product here, but the ultimate goal must be student success. Accordingly, the Committee envisions specific assessment instruments to see how professional development from the communities of inquiry directly helped to improve student performance in reading and writing. These could include classroom visits from
COI colleagues to verify and critique the introduction of new instructional design. The Committee could also compare student performance in classrooms informed by COI development with that performance without such enrichment.

In conjunction with these communities of inquiry, the QEP Committee intends to invite external experts to campus to talk about the latest scholarship on the teaching of reading and writing. Topics might include the practical deployment of nationally-recommended pedagogical approaches which would include the habits of close reading for effective writing. These experts could reach interested stakeholders beyond the COIs who may not have the available time to devote to more sustained development. In the pilot phase, the Committee has sponsored lunch-time close reading seminars on a diverse array of academic materials from Presidential speeches through metaphysical discourses. These seminars could be run at the same time as the COIs in order to reach more personnel and student leaders who did not have the opportunity to engage in a specific community. Finally, along with the direct curricular changes, the Committee hopes to instruct faculty members of CREW sections directly in the techniques of close reading for effective writing. This training with the selected, nationally-vetted rubrics and the close reading habits has already begun with the pilot in spring 2019, and it will become quite robust with the envisioned scaling up of the program. This training may also be tailored for those student leaders who may offer tutorial assistance to their colleagues: the CREW mates. This effort will help to build a core of CREW leaders who can teach others through example.

Sharing experiences and successes with close reading for effective writing will be important in generating and keeping broad-based support. The Committee hopes to highlight the work of COI leaders via the QEP website and other University vehicles and channels. In turn, COI leaders could begin their own blogs or wikis on close reading for effective writing with Committee approval. This kind of publicity and marketing will help to build interest and participation in CREW that will affect a significant proportion of the University’s stakeholders and, particularly, of its undergraduate students.
Program Structure

Each July, the Provost appoints a new QEP Committee, comprising the QEP Director; the Vice Provost; at least one tenured, full-time faculty member nominated by the dean from the five Colleges and Schools; the Director of Accreditation; the Director of Assessment; the Assistant Director of Assessment; and other administrators and staff from the University community. The QEP Committee will advise and support the QEP Director and oversee the implementation of the QEP.

The QEP Director, reporting to the Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness, will provide leadership and oversight for the QEP-CREW program to facilitate the integration of transformative learning for faculty, staff, and students. The Director, collaborating with the Director of Accreditation, will manage documentation, reporting requirements and ensure alignment with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards. Essential duties and responsibilities include working with faculty, administration, staff, and students to guarantee the implementation of CREW; fostering an environment of collaboration; partnering with University staff to maintain and update the QEP Websites; working closely with the Office for Enrollment Management, Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center, Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty to provide input/recommendations for transformative activities and course sections to meet enrollment demand and QEP goal and student learning outcomes; and promoting active participation in the QEP throughout the University. In addition, the QEP Director is a member of the University Assessment Advisory Committee, General Education Council, and QEP Committee. The QEP Director will also ensure that the QEP’s participants meet learning and program goals, and that assessment findings direct decision-making, program planning, student learning outcomes, and continuous improvement. The formal position description for the QEP Director is in the Appendix F.
Office of Academic Effectiveness

September 17, 2018
Program Timeline and Expansion

The program will expand incrementally to include courses outside of the general education curriculum. The program will expand gradually as faculty develop/enhance courses to include CREW outcomes. Table 4 details the expected expansion of CREW courses. The program will officially begin in fall 2019. In subsequent years, more courses will be offered. Some courses may be offered each semester while others may be offered once per academic year depending on faculty and department availability. The program expansion timeline is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Program Expansion Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Courses</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot 2018-19</td>
<td>Offer 4 CREW courses</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One: 2019-20</td>
<td>Offer 6 CREW courses</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two: 2020-21</td>
<td>Offer 9 CREW courses</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three: 2021-22</td>
<td>Offer 12 CREW courses</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four: 2022-23</td>
<td>Offer 15 CREW courses</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five: 2023-24</td>
<td>Offer 18 CREW courses</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pilot process consisted of two phases: pilot project design and pilot project implementation. Pilot project design activities were conducted in spring 2018. In February 2018, the University’s QEP Team hosted a close reading workshop supported by the Black History Month Committee and led by the Dean of the Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College, on the classic Letter from Birmingham Jail by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Faculty from Biology, English, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Business, Social Work, Education and Nursing engaged in the close
reading process, including providing constructive feedback. The ETS HEighten written communication and critical thinking assessments were administered to students in ENG 101 and SEM 101, respectively, to establish a baseline of incoming, students’ abilities.

In May 2018, an external education consultant led a series of workshops over three-days on close reading, teaching, engagement and implementation techniques and strategies for faculty and staff. Approximately 100 participants took advantage of at least one day of this opportunity. In May 2018, a committee of faculty, staff and students selected *The Black Panther* (2016), a graphic novel by Ta-Nehisi Coates as the Common Reader for the Class of 2022.

In summer 2018 and fall 2018, the pilot project implementation phase began. While preparing to incorporate close reading intentionally within specifically identified courses and sections of courses (namely, ENG 101, HIS 100, and SOC 101), faculty met during the summer to train, plan and prepare. The English CREW, History CREW and Sociology CREW faculty identified one to two readings to introduce and instruct students on the close reading process using discipline-specific content. The Student Affairs CREW committed to provide campus-wide programming, (e.g., discussion forums, brown bag lunch programs) and other CREW identified activities including a focus on the Common Reader, *The Black Panther*.

The Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center partnered with the Department of English to ensure that SPARC Summer Bridge Program participants taking English 101 for credit were introduced to CREW elements. This provided an opportunity for course instructors to employ or enhance CREW techniques with a small group of incoming freshmen before partial pilot deployment in fall 2018.

Throughout the summer of 2018, the University’s Office of Communications and Marketing, Office of the Provost and select QEP Committee members crafted a slogan and marketing campaign
featuring CREW. The campaign was designed to raise the salience of the new QEP initiatives and encourage cross-campus participation and input. Further, the marketing campaign will also inspire CREW participation from all areas. The campaign was presented during the fall opening conference in August 2018. Fall 2018 activities included the following:

- Workshops aimed at helping faculty engage in discipline-specific close reading activities
- A University roundtable discussion on CREW
- Creation and regular dissemination of a QEP newsletter and podcast, with QEP director as lead editor and author and feature guest editors, writers and podcast contributors from across campus
- Further consideration of (pre and post) assessment instruments, including the HEighten assessment
- Review of additional Student and Academic Affairs programs to incorporate and support CREW outcomes.

A detailed timeline of CREW development and implementation activities is provided in Table 5.
### Table 5. QEP Development and Implementation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QEP Working Committees Created and Charged</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Approved QEP Theme: Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW)</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders Forum #1—Community at-large and Prospective Employers</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Plan and Budget Presented to ENFL</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Update Presented to Full Faculty at Opening Session (Spring 2018)</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation to Full QEP Review Committee</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders Forum #2 – NSU Campus Community (students, faculty &amp; staff)</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Reading Presentation to Cross-disciplinary Faculty</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREW Showcase of Faculty Best Practices</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREW Seminar on Rachel Carson’s <em>Silent Spring</em></td>
<td>August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREW Faculty and Staff Seminar Series</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREW Faculty and Staff Seminar Series</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREW Faculty and Staff Seminar Series</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Proposal Submitted to SACSCOC</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloted Classes for CREW Strategies</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloted Classes for CREW Strategies</td>
<td>February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloted Classes for CREW Strategies</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Presentation of QEP to SACSOC Visiting Team</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloted Classes for CREW Strategies</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloted Classes for CREW Strategies</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP FULL Implementation Begins</td>
<td>July 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First CREW-Mates Trained and Certified</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP 1st Annual Report</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP 2nd Annual Report</td>
<td>May 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP 3rd Annual Report</td>
<td>May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP 4th Annual Report</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP 5 Year Impact Report</td>
<td>May 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. CREW Resources

Norfolk State University has the commitment and resources to carry out its QEP because it is aligned intentionally with the University’s new Strategic Plan. The University has committed the funding required to develop and sustain CREW during its development and in the coming years. This QEP budget grows incrementally over a six-year period (a planning year, plus five years of incremental implementation), and takes into consideration account expenses needed for personnel, program support, and other administrative costs.

The Center for Teaching and Learning provides on-going training and development for faculty. The Center for Teaching and Learning will absorb the training and development costs associated with CREW into its current operating budget. Costs associated with assessing the program, including training and instruments, will be absorbed by the Office of Academic Effectiveness, which currently leads the University’s general education and program assessment activities.
CREW Budget

The detailed CREW Budget is illustrated in Table 6. Quality Enhancement Program Budget. Faculty stipends will be provided to faculty who develop or enhance new courses in which CREW outcomes can be embedded. Funds for Faculty Professional Development activities in support of CREW objectives are also identified. Costs associated with recruitment and marketing including consultation and web design are incorporated into the CREW budget. Assessment expenses related to tracking the impact of CREW initiatives are also identified in the budget. Funds to be used by the QEP Director in the development of curricular and non-curricular activities for the development or enhancement of CREW programs are also included in the budget. The budget considers a stipend to be paid to the QEP Director in addition to his/her regular faculty compensation, plus a budget line to be paid to the QEP Director’s academic unit to cover the equivalent of 75% release time from teaching load to permit the hiring of an adjunct professor to cover the QEP Director’s released academic load. The budget also considers the hiring of an administrative specialist to provide clerical support to the QEP Director.
Table 6. *Quality Enhancement Program Budget*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2022-23</th>
<th>2023-24</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Stipends ($300 per section)</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>$121,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$121,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Professional Development</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$25,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies/Administrative Expenses</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular/Co-curricular Program Development</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Director stipend</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Director (75% release time)</td>
<td>$10,575</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$21,150</td>
<td>$116,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Specialist</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget</td>
<td>$77,375</td>
<td>$128,150</td>
<td>$132,150</td>
<td>$137,650</td>
<td>$143,650</td>
<td>$149,650</td>
<td>$768,625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Assessment Plan

Assessment of Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW) at Norfolk State University will incorporate some of the assessment processes used for general education learning outcomes. The assessment of CREW learning outcomes will be accomplished through both direct and indirect methods. The direct method will apply to the curricular aspects of the plan, while the indirect method will use survey instruments to estimate the effectiveness of the plan.

CREW assessment will encompass locally designed problems that will be embedded in designated general education courses. The direct approach will use the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics for reading and written communication. Professional development workshops will be designed for faculty teaching the CREW designated courses and rubric norming sessions will be provided in cases where more than one faculty is teaching a designated CREW course. In addition, a standardized instrument (HEIgthen) designed and administered by the Educational Testing Services (ETS) will be used as a means of triangulating its results with internally generated assessment outcomes.

CREW Student Learning Goal and Student learning Outcomes

The goal of CREW is to use diverse readings as springboards to explore meaningful issues through writing. CREW will focus on two student learning outcomes:

1. **Close Reading** – Students will critically analyze core texts in and beyond the discipline.
   - Read critically to evaluate a text and recognize its implications.
   - Articulate an understanding of various interpretive reading strategies based on genres and their conventions.
   - Use needed strategies to work through different sort of texts.
• Discuss texts in structured ways that contribute to and enhance academic discourse
• Connect sources and works with their historical and/or social contexts.
• Use texts to build knowledge and raise and explore important questions.

2. **Effective Writing** – Students will write effectively within and beyond their disciplines and as appropriate to the identified mode of discourse.

• Demonstrate strategic knowledge of the writing process.
• Compose texts that clearly convey meaning through tone, style, purpose, and genre.
• Adapt writing knowledge to new contexts, including rhetoric in digital spaces.
• Incorporate constructive criticism of drafts in the writing process.
• Demonstrate consideration of context and purpose when writing.
• Cite sources in a way that is appropriate for the discipline.
• Master the conventions of Standard American English.
**Direct Assessment**

Direct assessment involves evaluation of student artifacts in CREW designated courses to determine the extent to which the student learning outcomes were met. CREW courses are designated within the three tiers of general education at NSU. Table 7 displays the curricular assessment plan for the CREW quality enhancement plan. The direct approach for assessing student learning will use the AAC&U **Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education** (VALUE) rubrics for reading and written communication.

Table 7. **Curricular Assessment Plan for CREW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Course Levels¹</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Expected Competency Levels²</th>
<th>Expected Performance Rate³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Education</strong></td>
<td>Tier 1 Courses</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tier 2 Courses</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tier 3 Courses</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. NSU's general education courses are grouped into three tiers. Tier 1 courses include 18 credit hours of mostly 100-level required courses which provide students with basic learning tools. Tier 2 courses include 100-300 levels of courses which provide students with opportunities to learn how to effectively appraise information. Tier 3 courses provide students with capstone experiences to develop foundations for intellectual empathy.

2. Student artifacts related to CREW will be assessed by using the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) **Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education** (VALUE) rubrics for reading and written communication.
The respective rubric has four levels of competency: (1) Benchmark; (2-3) Milestones; and (4) Capstone.

3. It is expected that 50 percent or more students completing CREW courses in Tier 1 will reach milestone competency level 2 or better at the end of the courses. At least, 60 percent of Tier 2 completers will reach milestone competency level 2 or above after completing the courses. Similarly, at least 70 percent of Tier 3 course completers are expected to meet milestone competency level 3 or better as indicated in the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for reading and written communication.

Table 8. Assessment Implementation Plan for CREW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Course Levels</th>
<th>Number of CREW Courses</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Year: 2018-19</td>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1: 2019-20</td>
<td>Tiers 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2: 2020-21</td>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3: 2021-22</td>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4: 2022-23</td>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5: 2023-24</td>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 8, five class sections in four courses (ENG 101, 102; HIS 101; and SOC 101) will be piloted and assessed in spring 2019 semester to include the two learning outcomes for CREW.
In Year 1, the scope of this QEP will expand to six CREW-designated courses in Tier 1 and Tier 2 and will be assessed by faculty teaching the courses. Faculty development will be provided on the use of AAC&U VALUE rubrics for reading and written communication. In the first year, approximately 1,000 students will be assessed with the expectation that, at least, 50 percent and 60 percent of Tier 1 and Tier 2 completers, respectively, will attain milestone competency level 2 or better after completing the courses.

Year 2 assessment will cover the three tiers of general education courses that are designated as CREW courses. The scope of this QEP will expand to nine CREW-designated courses in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 and will be assessed by faculty teaching those courses. Faculty development will be provided on the use of AAC&U VALUE rubrics for reading and written communication. In the second year, approximately 1,500 students will be assessed with the expectation that, at least, 60 percent and 70 percent of Tier 2 and Tier 3 completers, respectively, will attain milestone competency level 2 and level 3 after completing the courses.

In Year 3, the number of CREW courses will be expanded to 12 courses with a number of class sections reaching, at least, 2,000 students within the three general education levels. Year 3 assessment strategies will be similar to year 2 strategies.

In Year 4, the scope of this QEP will expand to 15 CREW-designated courses within the general education tiers. At this time, it is anticipated that not less than 2,500 students would benefit from the CREW implementation. The competency level and expected performance rate of students in each category of courses assessed are as shown in Table 8 above.

Year 5, the last year of the QEP implementation, will embrace 18 courses distributed among the general education courses. The assessment approach will be similar to Year 4 strategies.

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**Value-Added Approach**

The impact of the CREW quality enhancement plan will be measured through a value-added approach. Baseline data will be collected in the Pilot Year and Year 1. Through longitudinal
tracking of students at various level of course completions from Year 1 to Year 5, performance growth will be measured insofar as students' reading and written competencies are concerned.

Table 9. *Value-Added Analysis for the CREW Learning Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Levels</th>
<th>Expected Competency Levels</th>
<th>Academic Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiers 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiers 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 9, participating students' knowledge and skills in the two CREW learning outcomes will be incrementally measured. Completers of Tiers 1 and 2 CREW courses will be assessed to determine the percentage of students meeting the VALUE rubrics competency levels 2 and above during academic year 2019-20. The 2019-20 assessment will provide the baseline data for comparisons in the subsequent years. In both academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22, students who have completed the three tiers of CREW general education courses will be assessed to estimate the percentage of students testing at levels 3 and above of the VALUE rubrics in reading and written communication. In academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24, performances of students who have completed the CREW designated courses in general education will be assessed for their competency achievement levels. Comparisons will be made with respect to students who had not completed all levels of the CREW courses. Expected
competency achievement levels (in percentages) are indicated in Table 1, according to the depth of CREW courses completed by students at the time of measuring their skill levels.

Supplementary Direct Assessment

The HEIghten test administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS) will be used to supplement the internal assessment processes as an external validation of the achievement of students’ competencies in reading and writing.

A pilot HEIghten assessment of written communication and critical thinking was conducted in spring 2018 semester to establish baseline performance of NSU freshmen students. The students’ results were compared with the comparison group’s proficiency level on the HEIghten Outcomes Assessment. Table 10 below presents NSU students’ results by proficiency level.
Table 10. *HEIghten Outcomes Assessment Results by Proficiency Level, Spring Semester 2018*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison Group Scaled Score</th>
<th>NSU Students Scaled Score</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Proficiency Level Scale</th>
<th>Percent of NSU Students by Proficiency Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>162.9</td>
<td>158.7</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>150-160</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>161-171</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>172-180</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162.2</td>
<td>156.4</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>150-160</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>161-171</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>172-180</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The HEIghten results showed that about two-thirds of NSU freshmen tested at the developing level of proficiency. In subsequent years, students will be tested at different level of studies to determine the value-added gains resulting from the CREW QEP. The expectation is that, at least, two-thirds of NSU graduating seniors will test at proficient or advanced level in the HEIghten written communication assessment by the end of CREW implementation.

In academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22, the HEIghten test will be administered to a random sample of students who had completed the CREW courses in general education Tiers 1-3. It is expected that 50 percent or more of the students will be testing at proficient or advanced levels.

Again, in academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24, the HEIghten test will be administered to a random sample of students who had completed the CREW courses in general education Tiers 1-3. At this stage, it is expected that three-quarters (75 percent) or more of the students will test at proficient or higher level because a larger number of students must have completed the CREW courses.
Table 11. *Assessment Timeline for CREW*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Academic Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indirect Assessment**

Norfolk State University annually participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In addition to the core questions from NSSE as related to student opinions about the extent that NSU has exposed the students to reading and writing skills, the institution will participate in the NSSE topical module on Experiences with Writing. Comparative data on freshmen and senior students’ opinions about the scope of their experiences with reading and writing at NSU will be tracked annually for the whole term of the CREW QEP.

Key questions related to CREW from the NSSE instrument (2017) include the following:

*During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?*

(a) **Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.**

(b) **Come to class without completing readings or assignments.**

There are four responses to these questions including Never, Sometimes, Often, and Very often. It is expected that 75 percent and 5 percent of senior students will respond “Often” or “Very often” to those questions by the end of this QEP administration.
Table 12. *Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.1 b & c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.1 b &amp; c</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in (% Often /Very often)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come to class without completing readings or assignments (% Often /Very often)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?*

1. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts.
2. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source.

There are four responses to these questions, including Very little, Some, Quite a bit, and Very much. It is expected that the percentage of senior students responding “Quite a bit” or “Very much” to those questions will be, at least, 88 percent by the end of this QEP.

Table 13. *Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.4 c & d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.4 c &amp; d</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following?*

1. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress.
2. Provided prompt or detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments.
There are four responses to these questions, including Very little, Some, Quite a bit, and Very much. It is expected that the percentage of faculty perceived by senior students to be providing prompt feedback “Quite a bit” or “Very much” will increase to 75 percent within this QEP administration.

Table 14. *Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.5 d & e*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.5 d &amp; e</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Senior 2017</th>
<th>Senior 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following lengths have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)*

1. Up to 5 pages.
2. Between 6 and 10 pages.
3. 11 pages or more.

There are seven level of responses to these questions, including None, 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, More than 20 papers. It is expected that the percentage of senior students who indicated writing 6-10 papers or reports of different lengths (in pages) during the school year will be, at least, 75, 50, and 25 percent, respectively, by the end of this QEP administration.
Table 15. Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.7 a, b & c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.7 a, b &amp; c</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5 pages (% saying 6-10 or more papers)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 6 and 10 pages (% saying 6-10 or more papers)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 pages or more (% saying 6-10 or more papers)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?**

1. Identified key information from reading assignments.

There are four responses to the above question, including Never, Sometimes, Often, and Very often. It is expected that the percentage of senior students responding “Often” or “Very often” to this question will be, at least, 90 percent by the end of this QEP administration.

Table 16. Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.9a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.9a</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified key information from reading assignments (% Often /Very often)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?**

1. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)?
There are eight responses to the above question, including: 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, More than 30. It is expected that, at least, 75 percent of senior students will say they prepare for class for 16 hours or more by the end of this QEP administration.

Table 17. *Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.15a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.15a</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities (% 11 or more hours)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the time you spend preparing for class in a typical 7-day week, about how much is on assigned reading?

There are five responses to this question, including Very little, Some, About half, Most, and Almost all. It is expected that at least 75 percent of senior students will respond that they spend “About half” or more of their time on assigned reading by the time this QEP is concluded in 2024.

Table 18. *Baseline Data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.15a*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.16</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About half or more (%)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

1. Writing clearly and effectively.
2. Thinking critically and analytically

There are four responses to these questions, including Very little, Some, Quite a bit, and Very much. By the end of this QEP administration, it is expected that, at least, 90 percent of senior students will affirmatively answer “Quite a bit” or “Very much.”
Table 19. *Baseline data for 2017, NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.17 a & c*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE Instrument 2017, Q.17 a &amp; c</th>
<th>Freshmen 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2017</th>
<th>Seniors 2024 (Expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing clearly and effectively (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking critically and analytically (% Quite a bit /Very much)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these core questions from the NSSE survey, NSU will participate each year in NSSE’s topical module on *Experiences with Writing*, beginning in spring 2019. This indirect assessment will provide longitudinal data over the term of the QEP to evaluate students’ perception of how the QEP has accentuated their performances in close reading and effective writing. Year-to-year results of the survey will be used for making continuous improvement over the life of the QEP.
References


### C.R.E.W. OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction &amp; Emphasize</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emphasize &amp; Reinforce</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reinforce &amp; Advance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education (3 Credit Hours)</td>
<td>Digital Computer &amp; Telecommunications (3 Credit Hours)</td>
<td>Social Sciences (select 1 course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED 101 (1hr)</td>
<td>CSC 100 (3hrs)</td>
<td>HIS 336 (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED 102 (1hr)</td>
<td></td>
<td>HIS 371 (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED 103 (2hrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>HRP 200 (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications (9 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences (7 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cultural Perspectives (6 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101 (3hrs)</td>
<td>BIO 100 (3hrs)</td>
<td>ENG 303 (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 102 (3hrs)</td>
<td>BIO 101 (3hrs)</td>
<td>MUS 224 (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 285 (3hrs)</td>
<td>SCI 101 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCI 101L (1hr)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spartan Seminars (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Humanities (select 1 course)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM 101 (1hr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM 102 (1hr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM 201 (1hr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTH 103 (3hrs)</td>
<td>ENG 207 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIA 201 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 301 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG 100 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCI 101 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCI 101L (1hr)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences (3 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG 303 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 224 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities (6 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences (6 Credit Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG 303 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUS 224 (3hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING
- Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.
- Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices to be transferred into one’s own writing.

**Recommended Steps for Close Reading**

In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

1) Review or skim the text for basic features: genre, structure, sections, headings, diagrams, title, purpose, and the like. Discuss what information these features provide to readers and how we should approach the text.

2) Read the text for basic comprehension. Discuss purpose, main and supporting ideas, vocabulary, and be able to recall the fundamental ideas from the text.

3) Read the text critically. Consider and discuss the author’s point of view and potential biases, assumptions made about readers’ knowledge and beliefs, consider what is unsaid or excluded from the text, and consider implications and possible interpretations of the material presented.

4) Focus on a smaller passage and discuss the writer’s style and strengths of language, punctuation, and syntax.

**Applying Close Reading to Student Writing**

Understanding and articulating views on a text in writing puts into students’ writing practice the elements of strong writing identified through close reading. Direct imitation of good writing’s style and features, as well as indirect practice through high faculty expectations will help these elements of strong writing become habit and manifest in other written work.

**Options for Direct Imitation Practice:**

1) For informational texts, have students imitate the tone, language, and structure of the text read in a piece of writing on a subject they know well. Another option is to have them summarize/paraphrase the text at the same level using the same tone.

2) For argumentative texts, ask students to respond to the argument with their own point of view, either following the patterns and evidence use in the text read or directly rebutting the argumentative text using the author’s own evidence.

3) Have students write a project or paper proposal that implements the requirements and genre conventions of the field as identified through close reading.
Close-Reading Habits of Skillful Readers

When reading, try asking yourself and/or your fellow readers (in the classroom or group) the following questions:

- Why has the author chosen to write in this *particular form* (GENRE) and not another? Is this fiction or nonfiction? Is it an essay, a letter, a case study? Is this poetry or prose?

- Who is speaking? In what “person” is the passage predominantly written? NOTE: Narrative voices/perspectives may change within a text.

- To whom, to which AUDIENCE(s) is the author speaking? What is his or her TONE or STYLE?

- Is the author saying things directly or with some degree of irony?

- In what context (social, historical, literary) does this work belong?

- What should readers do about puzzling vocabulary? Should readers stop to look up words?

- Did this work fulfill your expectations?

- Did this piece of reading make you see something new about a familiar subject? Did it make you understand something about life in a new way?
The CREW Pilot Study courses are HIS 101, SOC 101, ENG 101, and ENG 102. For Common Reading Assignments for Effective Writing, the Committee discussed several authors who could span those courses and stimulate the interest of the students, included the following:

1. Toni Cade Bambara, *Gorilla, My Love*
2. Arna Bontemps, “*A Blackman Talks of Reaping*”
3. Countee Cullen, *The Black Christ and Other Poems*
5. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
6. Langston Hughes, “*Let America be America Again*”
7. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
8. James Weldon Johnson, “*Lift Every Voice and Sing*”
9. Gayle Jones, *Corregidora*
10. Festus Claudius “Claude” McKay, *Home to Harlem*
11. Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
12. Jean Toomer, *Cane*
13. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*
14. W.B. Yeats, “*The Second Coming*”
Four Steps to Close Reading

**Step 1**

**What is Close Reading?**
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one’s own writing.

**Recommended Step for Close Reading**
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

- Review or skim the text for basic features: genre, structure, sections, headings, diagrams, title, purpose, and the like. Discuss what information these features provide to readers and how they should approach the text.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

---

**Step 2**

**What is Close Reading?**
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one’s own writing.

**Recommended Step for Close Reading**
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

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**Step 3**

**What is Close Reading?**
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one’s own writing.

**Recommended Step for Close Reading**
Read the text carefully. Consider and discuss the author’s point of view and potential biases, assumptions made about readers’ knowledge and beliefs, context, what is new or missed from the text, and consider implications and possible interpretations of the material presented.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

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**Step 4**

**What is Close Reading?**
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one’s own writing.

**Recommended Step for Close Reading**
Focus on a smaller passage and discuss the writer's style and strengths of language, punctuation, and syntax.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW
Appendix C – AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric
The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Framing Language

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. The most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is “How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?” In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers’ identity with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer’s growing engagement with writing and disciplinary through the process of writing.

Evaluators using this rubric must have information about the assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers’ work. Also recommended is including reflective work samples of collections of work that address such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as s/he composed the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing — in the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and disciplinary systems used in the writing? This will enable evaluators to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments and take it into consideration as they evaluate.

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments associated with revised drafts. While writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment that has guided our work here can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators’ White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; www.ncte.org/whitepaper) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm)

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer’s intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or assuage; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g., introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first-person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer’s purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers’ ideas in a text.
- Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts such that meaning, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g., lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.
- Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes— to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.
## Written Communication VALUE Rubric

**Definition**

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (roll one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context of and Purpose for Writing Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</td>
<td>Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses on all elements of the work.</td>
<td>Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience’s perceptions and assumptions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Development</td>
<td>Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer’s understanding, and shaping the whole work.</td>
<td>Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</td>
<td>Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources and Evidence</td>
<td>Demonstrates skilful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</td>
<td>Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.</td>
<td>Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, and for guiding the core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

**Definition**

Reading is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow et al., 2002). (From www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB8024/index1.html)

**Fluency Language**

To paraphrase Phaedrus, texts do not explain, nor answer questions about, themselves. They must be located, approached, decoded, comprehended, analyzed, interpreted, and discussed, especially complex academic texts used in college and university classrooms for purposes of argumentation. Historically, college professors have not considered the teaching of reading necessary other than as a "basic skill" in which students may require "introduction." They have assumed that students come with the ability to read and have placed responsibility for its absence on teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

This absence of reading instruction in higher education must, can, and will change, and this rubric makes a direction for this change. Why the change? Even the stronger, more experienced readers making the transition from high school to college have not learned what they need to know and do to make sense of texts in the context of professional and academic scholarship—to say nothing about readers who are either not as strong or as experienced. Also, readers mature and develop their repertoire of reading performances naturally during the undergraduate years and beyond as a consequence of meeting textual challenges. This rubric provides some initial steps toward finding ways to measure undergraduates' progress along the continuum. Our interest in creating this rubric is to support and promote the teaching of undergraduates as readers to take on increasingly higher levels of concerns with texts and to read as one of "those who comprehend." Readers, as they move beyond their undergraduate experiences, should be motivated to approach texts and respond to them with a reflective level of curiosity and the ability to apply aspects of the texts they approach to a variety of aspects in their lives. This rubric provides the framework for evaluating both students' developing relationship to texts and their relative success with the range of texts their coursework introduces them to. It is likely that users of this rubric will detect that the cell boundaries are permeable, and the criteria of the rubric are, to a degree, interrelated.

**Glossary**

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Analysis:** The process of recognizing and using features of a text to build a more advanced understanding of the meaning of a text. ( Might include evaluation of genre, language, tone, stated purpose, explicit or implicit logic (including laws of reasoning), and historical context as they contribute to the meaning of a text.)
- **Comprehension:** The extent to which a reader "gets" the text, both literally and figuratively. Accomplished and sophisticated readers will have moved from being able to "get" the meaning of the text, the questions it raises, and the counterarguments one might suggest to respond to it. A helpful and accessible discussion of "comprehension" is found in Chapter 2 of the RAND report Reading for Understanding: www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR14655/MR14655_ch2.pdf.
- **Epistemological lens:** The knowledge framework a reader develops in a specific discipline as he moves through an academic major (e.g., essays, textbook chapters, literary works, journal articles, lab reports, grant proposals, lectures, blogs, webpages, or literature reviews, for example). The depth and breadth of this knowledge provides the foundation for independent and self-regulated responses to the range of texts in any discipline or field that students will encounter.
- **Genre:** A particular kind of "text" defined by a set of disciplinary conventions or agreements learned through participation in academic discourse. Genre governs what texts can be about, how they are structured, what to expect from them, what can be done with them, how to use them.
- **Interpretation:** Determining or construing the meaning of a text or part of a text in a particular way based on textual and contextual information.
- **Interpretive Strategies:** Purposeful approaches from different perspectives, which include, for example, asking clarifying questions, building knowledge of the context in which the text was written, visualizing and considering counterfactuals (asking questions that challenge the assumptions or claims of the text, for example, What might our country be like if the Civil War had not happened? How would Hamlet be different if Hamlet had simply killed the King?).
- **Multiple Perspectives:** Consideration of how text-based meanings might differ depending on point of view.
- **Parts:** Titles, headings, meaning of vocabulary from context, structure of the text, important ideas and relationships among those ideas.
- **Relationship to text:** The set of expectations and intentions a reader brings to a particular text or set of texts.
- **Searches intentionally for relationships:** An active and highly-aware quality of thinking closely related to inquiry and research.
- **Takes texts apart:** Discern the level of importance or abstraction of textual elements and see big and small pieces as parts of the whole meaning (compare to Analysis above).
- **Metacognition:** This is not a word that appears explicitly anywhere in the rubric, but it is implicit in a number of the descriptors, and it is certainly a term that we find frequently in discussions of successful and rich learning. Metacognition, (a term typically attributed to the cognitive psychologist J.H. Flavell) applied to reading refers to the awareness, deliberateness, and reflectivity defining the activities and strategies that readers must control in order to work their ways effectively through different sorts of texts, from lab reports to sonnets, from math texts to historical narratives, or from grant applications to graphic novels, for example. Metacognition refers here as well to an accomplished reader's ability to consider the ethos reflected in any such text, to know that one is in present and should be considered in any use of, or response to a text.
# Reading VALUE Rubric

For more information, please contact info@value.org

**Definition**

Reading is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow et al., 2002). (From www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RR8024/index1.html)

Educators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (all are) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone 4</th>
<th>Milestones 3</th>
<th>Milestones 2</th>
<th>Benchmark 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Recognizes possible implications of the text for contexts, perspectives, or issues beyond the assigned task within the classroom or beyond the author's explicit message (e.g., might recognize broader issues at play, or might pose challenges to the author's message and presentation).</td>
<td>Uses the text, general background knowledge, and/or specific knowledge of the author's content to draw more complex inferences about the author's message and attitude.</td>
<td>Evaluates how textual features (e.g., sentence and paragraph structure or tone) contribute to the author's message; draws basic inferences about context and purpose of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genres</strong></td>
<td>Uses ability to identify texts within and across genres, monitoring and adjusting reading strategies and expectations based on generic nuances of particular texts.</td>
<td>Articulates distinctions among genres and their characteristic conventions.</td>
<td>Reflects on reading experiences across a variety of genres, reading both with and against the grain experimentally and intentionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship to Text</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Making meanings with texts in their contexts</strong></td>
<td>Evaluates texts for scholarly significance and relevance within and across the various disciplines, evaluating them according to their contributions and consequences.</td>
<td>Uses texts in the context of scholarship to develop a foundation of disciplinary knowledge and to raise and explore important questions.</td>
<td>Engages texts with the intention and expectation of building topical and world knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Interacting with texts in parts and as wholes</strong></td>
<td>Evaluates strategies for relating ideas, text structure, or other textual features in order to build knowledge or insight within and across texts and disciplines.</td>
<td>Identifies relations among ideas, text structure, or other textual features, to evaluate how they support an advanced understanding of the text as a whole.</td>
<td>Recognizes relations among parts or aspects of a text, such as effective or ineffective arguments or literary features, in considering how these contribute to a basic understanding of the text as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpretation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Making sense with texts as blueprints for meaning</strong></td>
<td>Provides evidence not only that s/he can read by using an appropriate epistemological lens but that s/he can also engage in reading as part of a continuing dialogue within and beyond a discipline or a community of readers.</td>
<td>Articulates an understanding of the multiple ways of reading and the range of interpretive strategies particular to one's discipline(s) or in a given community of readers.</td>
<td>Demonstrates that s/he can read purposefully, choosing among interpretive strategies depending on the purpose of the reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reader's Voice</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Participating in academic discourse about texts</strong></td>
<td>Discusses texts with an independent intellectual and ethical disposition so as to further or maintain disciplinary conversations.</td>
<td>Elaborates on the texts (through interpretation or questioning) so as to deepen or enhance an ongoing discussion.</td>
<td>Discusses texts in structured conversations (such as in a classroom) in ways that contribute to a basic, shared understanding of the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Norfolk State University

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee
Close Reading for Effective Writing – CREW
2018 – 2019

Dr. Charles Ford, QEP Director, History
Dr. Désiré Baloubi, English
Ms. Alexandra Boone, Student
Dr. Arthur W. Bowman, Biology
Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Accreditation
Dr. Beatrice Darden-Woody, Exercise Science
Dr. V. Reddy Dondeti, Accounting
Dr. Lydia Figueroa, Nursing
Dr. Mildred K. Fuller, Nursing & Allied Health
Dr. Leroy Hamilton, Provost
Ms. Lynne Harrison, Dean of Libraries
Dr. Jocelyn Heath, English
Dr. Ebenezer Kolajo, Director, Assessment
Dr. Nicole Kyser, Community Counseling
Dr. Tiffany Lane, Social Work
Dr. Denise S. Langley, Director, Academic Advising
Dr. Page Laws, Dean, Honors College
Ms. Michelle Marable, Dean of Students
Dr. Aylin Marz, Biology
Dr. Felicia Mebane, Executive Director, Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center
Dr. Khadijah O. Miller, Professor and Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies
Dr. Andrea P. Neal, Associate Vice Provost
Mr. Oyeyiola O. Oladayo, Assistant Director, Assessment
Dr. Robert K. Perkins, Associate Professor and Chair, Sociology
Dr. Marty Sharpe, Associate Vice Provost
Dr. Viola Vaughan-Eden, Social Work
Ms. Courtney M. Waters, Student
Dr. Enrique G. Zapatero, Vice Provost
NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

SUBCOMMITTEES

Executive Summary, Overview of Norfolk State University
Dr. Charles H. Ford and Dr. Andrew T. Carrington

Selection and Development of Topic, QEP Goals and Student Outcomes, and Literature Reviews
Dr. Page R. Laws, Dr. Ebenezer F. Kolajo, Mr. Oladayo Oyeyiola, Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Dr. Lydia Figueroa, Dr. Leon Rouson and Ms. Lynne Harrison

Implementing NSU's QEP
Dr. Khadijah O. Miller, Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Dr. Viola Vaughn-Eden and Dr. Jocelyn Heath

Assessment of the QEP
Dr. Ebenezer F. Kolajo, Dr. Oladayo Oyeyiola, Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Dr. Jason Demeter and Dr. Charles H. Ford

Institutional Capability and Budget
Dr. Reddy Dondeti, Dr. Enrique Zapatero and Dr. Andrew Carrington

Community Involvement, QEP Director Position Description and Appendices
Dr. Charles H. Ford, Dr. Robert K. Perkins and Dr. Andrew T. Carrington

Conveners
Appendix F – Director Job Description
QEP Director Position Description

Under the governance of the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Director leads and provides oversight of the Plan among faculty, staff, and students to facilitate the integration of transformative learning at Norfolk State University (NSU). The Director also manages documentation and reporting requirements and ensures alignment with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensure QEP alignment with SACSCOC standards.
- Work with faculty, administration, staff, and students to guarantee the successful submission and implementation of the Norfolk State University QEP.
- Foster a collaborative environment for the QEP Development Team to design new policies, procedures, curricula, facilities, job descriptions, and professional development opportunities necessary to achieve the QEP goals.
- Work with the appropriate University staff members to maintain and update the QEP website.
- Work closely with the Office for Enrollment Management, the Patricia Stith Success Center, deans, department chairs, and faculty to provide input/recommendations for transformative activities and course sections to meet enrollment demand and QEP goals.
- Promote participation in the QEP throughout the University and to the community.
- Work with the Project Director to coordinate and lead the activities of the QEP Development and Implementation Committees.
- Work closely with the Director of Assessment to develop and manage the QEP assessment.
- Continually evaluate and approve proposed High Impact Practices (HIPs) to determine if they meet the criteria to be incorporated into the QEP.
- Coordinate the training for faculty and staff to develop high quality HIPs as a part of the QEP.
- Perform outreach and marketing to students to encourage participation to meet the QEP goals.
- Assist faculty in creating and coordinating the evaluation rubrics for reflections submitted by students as a part of the QEP.
- Partner with the Director of Assessment to collect and analyze the results of the QEP program and implement improvements as necessary to increase effectiveness.
• Manage the QEP budget in compliance with all NSU policies, procedures, and procedures.

• Provide oversight and updates to the campus community regarding the QEP progress.

• Teach at least one course, preferably in the general education core, each academic semester.

Required Qualifications

• An earned doctorate or terminal degree (or its foreign equivalent) from an accredited university in a discipline taught at NSU.

• Demonstrated knowledge, interest, and competence in student development theory, student engagement, and student success—all of which may be manifested through academic credentials, research activities, scholarly engagement, or artistic work.

• Broad knowledge of trends in higher education across the United States and abroad.

• Excellent verbal, listening, writing, and interpersonal communication skills.

• Demonstrated ability to collaborate and partner in an environment that honors shared governance.

• Ability to collaborate with deans, department chairs and faculty.

The QEP Director will report directly to the Vice Provost. Each July, the Provost will appoint a QEP Implementation Committee, consisting of the QEP Director, the Vice Provost, and, at least, one tenured, full-time faculty member nominated by each dean of the five Colleges and Schools, together with administrators and staff from relevant areas across campus, including Institutional Research and Assessment. Student leaders will also be on that Committee. The Implementation Committee will advise and support the QEP Director and oversee the implementation of the QEP.
NSU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee Meeting | MINUTES
CREW - Close Reading for Effective Writing

Date 1/03/2019 | Time 12:30 PM | Location Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College, 236 Brown Hall

Attendees
Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Mr. Oyeiyola O. Oladayo, Dr. Charles Ford, Dr. V. Reddy Donadei, Ms. Lynne Harrison, Dr. Désiré Baloubi, Dr. Aylin Marz, Dr. Denise S. Langley, Dr. Beatrice Darden M. Woody, Dr. Enrique G. Zapatero, Ms. Nicole Kyser, Dr. Lydia Figueroa, Dr. Tiffany Lane, Dr. Marty Sharpe (Skype)

QEP Director Dr. Charles Ford
Facilitator Dr. Enrique G. Zapatero
Minutes Dr. Andrew T. Carrington

AGENDA ACTION
Call to Order Dr. Charles Ford, QEP Director
Approval of QEP Meeting Minutes, December 13, 2018
After a review of the Minutes, Dr. Zapatero moved to approve, Dr. Langley, seconded. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

QEP/CREW Draft
The Committee discussed the draft in progress (QEP Draft 2019-01-02), final writing assignments, timeline charts for past & future, visual graphics and representations, and finalizing narrative. Dr. Carrington stated, based on SACSCOC guidelines, the QEP document may not exceed 100 pages of size 11 Arial font, including a narrative of no more than 75 pages and appendices of no more than 25 pages. Each QEP Committee member is to continue reading the draft and select sections/areas to build upon/review/write. Revisions, rewrites and comments are to be emailed to Dr. Ford and Dr. Carrington. Dr. Carrington will compile the QEP/CREW document and Dr. Annie Perkins will edit. Dr. Sharpe stated the final document must be ready for printing by January 15, 2019.

Dr. Zapatero and Dr. Ford reminded the Committee about the following sections assigned to Committee Members:

Sections Committee Members
Executive Summary Dr. Ford
Core Text/Close Reading/Common Reader Dr. Laws, Ms. Atkinson, Dr. Mebane
Assessment/Prior Program Dr. Kolajo, Mr. Oyeiyola
Pathway 2: Enriching Co-curricular Activities Dr. Miller, Dr. Haywood
Pathway 3: Faculty and Staff Development and Engagement
References/Library Guide Ms. Harrison
Program Structure Dr. Zapatero
Program Timeline and Expansion Dr. Zapatero

Dr. Ford and Dr. Zapatero opened the EKU QEP Website and presented a summary of The EKU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Read with Purpose, that is similar to the NSU QEP/CREW program. The EKU QEP seeks to develop critical readers who are guided by purposeful inquiry; as such, it reinforces the university’s current emphasis on promoting metacognitive strategies to foster deep learning.

Dr. Zapatero recommended that the Committee visit the EKU QEP Website for more information: https://ecp.easternkentucky.edu/
Dr. Carrington encouraged the Committee to review the Harvard University - Harvard College Writing Center curriculum posted on the QEP/CREW SharePoint Website that is similar to the NSU QEP/CREW program. The Harvard Center offers advice to students and faculty on numerous reading and writing resources, including the following:

- How to read an assignment
- Fundamental elements of academic writing
- Moving from assignment to topic
- How to do a clear reading
- Guides to using sources
- Writing guides
- Writing guides for the disciplines

https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/resources

Dr. Ford and Dr. Zapatero opened the QEP/CREW SharePoint Website and discussed the findings of the Return of Investment for Norfolk State University (Report) prepared by Dr. Valerie Harrison, Educationally Yours, LLC, who worked with staff in the Provost’s Office and the Quality Enhancement Plan Committee to enhance the institutional and instructional effectiveness at Norfolk State University (NSU) in order to improve student learning and student success, as well as show compliance with the related standards for NSU’s 2019 SACS OC reaffirmation

Dr. Zapatero encouraged the Committee to revisit the entire report:
https://www.npsu.edu/rap/qep/

The Committee discussed the following QEP/CREW activities and programs for the Spring 2019 Semester, and the Spring 2019 Semester, which starts January 17:

1. Training of CREW faculty Pilot begins January 4, and then every 1st Thursday of the months of the semester at 12:30 pm in NGE 200. (12:00 – 13:30 am, Friday, January 4, 2019, 1040 Lyman Beecher Brooks Library.) Dr. Bialous stated that Dr. Jason Demeter was added to the pilot faculty and he will teach ENG 102-22, TTH, 9:00 – 11:00 am.


3. Student CREW Seminar Series for CREW-Mates or CREW-Fellows: Every 4th Tuesday of the month, 12:30 pm. The training targets NSU leaders from the faculty, staff and students who promote the student learning goal and outcomes of NSU’s语文翻译
AGENDA

Library, and assessment procedures, evaluation of student progress, AAC&U Reading Value Rubric and AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric. Participants scheduled include the following: Dr. Enrique Zapata, Dr. Ebenezer F. Kolajo, Mr. Oladayo O. Oyeyiola, Dr. Andrew T Carrington, Dr. Khadijah O Miller, Dr. Robert K Perkins, Ms. Cynthia Lynne Harrison, Dr. Charles H. Ford, Ms. Ebonne N. Atkinson, Dr. James A Curiel, Ms. Ellen E. Jones, Dr. Page Laws, Dr. Felicia E. Mobane, Dr. Chinedu G. Okala, Dr. Désiré Balobi, Dr. Jason Demeter, Dr. Mamie Johnson, Ms. Christina P. Streets and Ms. Shelley T. Scott-Johnson (Trainer).

Deadlines – January 25 to SACSCOC, March 4-7, QEP Onsite Visit

The QEP/CREW Report, along with the NSU SACSCOC Focus Report, will be submitted via overnight mail to SACSCOC, January 25, 2019. The SACSCOC/QEP Onsite Committee Visit will be March 4-7, 2019. All QEP Committee Members are expected to participate. Dr. Carrington specified that the Onsite QEP Evaluation Committee will identify the composition of the groups to be interviewed on campus during the visit. Well in advance of the visit, the QEP Lead Evaluator will work with NSU to ensure that the groups developed for the QEP interviews meet the Onsite Committee’s expectations. For example, the Onsite Committee typically wants to dialogue with small groups of representative constituencies involved in creating and implementing the QEP, such as the QEP Committee, faculty responsible for the QEP’s implementation, administrators responsible for providing support, students, institutional research and assessment personnel, and staff in related student services.

QEP/CREW Marketing Campaign

Dr. Ford, Dr. Zapata and Dr. Carrington opened the QEP/CREW SharePoint Website and discussed the draft Marketing Plan submitted by Ms. Stevalynn Adams, Office of Communications and Marketing. The Communications and Marketing team will promote the QEP/CREW through the release of timely information regarding the activities of NSU students, faculty, and staff. The QEP/CREW Marketing Campaign will work with the news media, publishing a NSU newsletter, annual report, university magazine and creating internal and external partnerships that will help tell the NSU QEP/CREW story. After reviewing the draft posters, the Committee was most impressed with Poster 1 – CREW Teams and recommended eliminating Poster 3 – Large Oars. Furthermore, for Poster 1, emphasize spotlight the CREW Teams by presenting a diverse mix of oarspersons (females and males, black, brown, white, etc.) in NSU Spartan green and gold uniforms.

QEP/CREW Website

Dr. Ford, Dr. Zapata and Dr. Carrington opened the QEP/CREW SharePoint Website and discussed the QEP Website proposal submitted by Ms. Debbie Jones, Office of Communications and Marketing. The new QEP/CREW Website (portal) will be hosted on the regular nsu.edu website, no password is required and it will be accessible by anyone with Internet service.

ACTION

QEP/CREW SharePoint Website
Dr. Ford, Dr. Zapata and Dr. Carrington confirmed, however, that the QEP/CREW SharePoint Website is hosted on the NSU SharePoint website and is only accessible with an authorized username and password, e.g., the QEP Committee.
https://intranet.nsuo.edu/irap/ceep/

Next Meetings
12:30 pm, Thursdays, Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College, 236 Brown Hall
- January 10, 2019
- January 15, 2019 – Final QEP/CREW Document to Printers
- January 17, 2019
- January 24, 2019
- January 25, 2019 – Mail QEP/CREW Document to SACSCOC
- January 31, 2019
- February 7, 2019
- February 14, 2019
- February 21, 2019
- February 28, 2019
- March 4-7, 2019 – SACSCOC/QEP Onsite Committee Visit

Closing
Dr. Charles Ford, QEP Director, closed the meeting at 1:45 pm

Attachments
- Posted to QEP/CREW Website, authorized username and password required:
https://intranet.nsuo.edu/irap/ceep/
NSU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee Meeting [MINUTES]

CREW - Close Reading for Effective Writing

Date 12/13/2018 | Time 12:30 PM | Location Robert C. Nesham Honors College, 236 Brown Hall

Attendees

Dr. Page Laws, Dr. Andrew T. Carrington, Dr. Eunseok Kolgojo, Dr. Aylin Marz, Dr. Charles Ford, Dr. Enrique G. Zapatero, Dr. Tiffany Lane, Dr. Desire Beloubi, Dr. Viola Vaughan-Egoff (Skype)

QEP Director Dr. Charles Ford
Facilitator Dr. Enrique G. Zapatero
Minutes Dr. Andrew T. Carrington

AGENDA ACTION

Call to Order Dr. Charles Ford, QEP Director

QEP Onsite Lead Evaluator Dr. Ford, Dr. Zapatero and Dr. Laws stated that the QEP Lead Evaluator will be Dr. William J. McKinney, Executive Vice President, University Academic Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. The SACSOC CCR Committee & QEP/CREW Committee Onsite Visits will be March 4-7, 2019

Revised Student Learning Outcomes The Committee considered comprehensively the following Learning Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop close readers and effective writers, as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities' VALUE rubrics.</td>
<td>1. Students will analyze academic texts and materials by applying “close reading” strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>2. Students will demonstrate effective academic writing through “close reading” strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, after major, well-thought-out deliberations, the Committee approved the following Learning Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop close readers and effective writers, as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities' VALUE rubrics.</td>
<td>Dr. Ford presented a synopsis of a SACSOC 2018 Annual Meeting QEP session, December 9-11, 2018, New Orleans, L.A., presented by Eastern Kentucky University, which is similar to NSU's QEP focus on reading and writing competences. The EKU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Read with Purpose, seeks to develop critical readers who are guided by purposeful inquiry; as such, it reinforces the university’s current emphasis on promoting metacognitive strategies to foster deep learning. To achieve these outcomes, EKU faculty, staff and student leaders use and teach metacognitive strategies that promote critical reading. Through online resources, in-person workshops, professional learning communities and scholarly projects, EKU instructors explore and develop innovative pedagogies to help students analyze, synthesize and evaluate texts across disciplines. Direct instruction and support of metacognitive practices help students read with purpose and develop the critical reading skills needed for deep learning. Ultimately, the work of the QEP contributes to EKU’s mission, which seeks to prepare “students to contribute to the success and vitality of their communities, the Commonwealth, and the world.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schedule of CREW Activities for Spring 2019

Dr. Ford specified that he is working with Dr. Dorothy L.R. Jones to present the QEP CREW during the 2019 Opening Session for faculty and staff. He also presented the following initial list of CREW/CREW activities and programs for the Spring 2019 Semester, including the Spring 2019 Opening Session:

1. Traings of CREW faculty for the classroom beginning with January 4, and then every 1st Thursday of the month of the semester at 12:30 pm in NGE 200, (10:00 – 11:30 am, Friday, January 4, 2019, 1040 Lyman Beecher Brooks Library.)
2. CREW Seminar series every other Wednesday beginning on January 17 at noon in the Archives Orientation Room, Brooks Library, 2nd Floor until April 25

AGENDA

ACTION

4. Training for Reading CREW-Mates – every 4th Tuesday of the months of the semester, 12:30 pm. (EKU sample)

5. "This Is America" by Childish Gambino – African American History Month


Trainings for CREW-mates and/or CREW Fellows

Dr. Ford noted that the training will be for target NSU leaders from the faculty, staff, and students who promote the goals of NSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan CREW.

Dr. Ford said the training will be for a target group of staff and/or students who will assist with reading goals for NSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan CREW.

Reading Apprentices or Course-Embedded Reading Consultants

Dr. Ford discussed training targeted for faculty development:

1. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are faculty/educators who collectively meet to improve student learning and achievement. PLCs engage in a continuous cycle of collaborative inquiry questioning based on classroom practices. In an effort to build a shared knowledge as professionals, these meetings occur at regularly scheduled times throughout the school year.

2. An educational community of inquiry (CoI) is a group of faculty/educators who collaboratively engage in purposeful critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meanings and confirm mutual understanding by creating deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learning experience through the development of three interdependent elements—social, cognitive, and teaching presence.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) or Communities of Inquiry (CoI)

Common Reading Assignment for Effective Writing

Dr. Ford listed the CREW targeted courses for pilot study as HIS 101, SOC 101, ENG 101, and ENG 102. He also asked the Committee to suggest readings that would span those courses of the pilot. After a detailed discussion, several Committee Members believed The Second Coming, a poem written by Irish poet W. B. Yeats in 1919, would be an exceptional common reading assignment. The poem uses Christian imagery regarding the Apocalypse and Second Coming allegorically to describe the atmosphere of post-war Europe. It is considered a major work of modernist poetry.

QEP/CREW Pilot Program and Implementation Training

Dr. Ford and Dr. Kolajo discussed the QEP/CREW Implementation Training: 10:00 – 11:30 am, Friday, January 4, 2019, 1040 Lyman Beecher Brooks Library.

QEP/CREW Draft

Dr. Ford delivered a brief overview of the QEP/CREW, the significant impact it will have upon student reading and writing achievement, effect upon the overall success of NSU students, and influence upon NSU graduates as citizens and adult workers. He reminded each QEP Committee member to continue reading the draft and select sections/areas to build upon/revise/rewrite. Revisions, rewritings, and improvements are expected. Comments are to be emailed to Dr. Ford and Dr. Carrington before leaving for the NSU Winter Break. Dr. Carrington will compile and edit the official QEP document. Dr. Ford also reminded the Committee about the following sections assigned to Committee Members during the December 6, 2018, QEP meeting:

- Executive Summary
- Core Text/Close Reading/Common Reader
- Assessment/Pilot Program
- Pathway 2: Enriching Co-curricular Activities
- Pathway 3: Faculty and Staff Development and Engagement
- References/Library Guide
- Program Structure
- Program Timeline and Expansion Budget
- Writing Lab
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Reading & Writing

Committee Members

Dr. Ford
Dr. Laws, Ms. Atkinson, Dr. Mebane
Dr. Kolajo, Ms. Gueyiola
Dr. Miller, Dr. Haywood
Dr. Arroyo
Ms. Harrison
Dr. Zapatero
Dr. Zapatero
Ms. Atkinson, Dr. Mebane
Dr. Laws, Dr. Babuse

Return of Investment for Norfolk State University (Report) Prepared by Dr. Valerie Harrison, Educationally Yours, LLC

Dr. Ford, Dr. Zapatero & Dr. Laws discussed the goal and objectives of the Return of Investment for Norfolk State University (Report) prepared by Dr. Valerie Harrison, Educationally Yours, LLC.

Goal: To work with staff in the Provost’s Office and the Quality Enhancement Planning Committee to enhance the institutional and instructional effectiveness at Norfolk State University (NSU) in order to improve student learning and student success as well as show compliance with the related standards for NSU’s 2019 SACS/COC reaffirmation.

The focus of this consultation will be on instructional effectiveness of academic programs.

Objectives

- Design the data collection process for the Quality in Student Learning Project Plan and develop a calendar of implementation
- Create, review, and provide feedback on the Quality in Student Learning Project Planning process (Focus Walk Protocol)
- Create all documents associated with the student learning improvement efforts
- Develop, train, and support Quality in Student Learning Team (QSLT) to address the concerns as stated in NSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan

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|        | • Facilitate and support the improvement efforts of the Quality in Student Learning Team (QSLT)  
|        | • Consult with and mentor appropriate staff members  
|        | • Review and analyze all data collected during the student learning improvement efforts |
|        | QEP/CREW Marketing Campaign |
|        | Dr. Ford indicated that the Office of Communications and Marketing is developing the QEP/CREW Marketing Campaign. The Communications and Marketing team plans to promote the QEP/CREW through the release of timely information regarding the activities of NSU students, faculty, and staff. The QEP/CREW Marketing Campaign will work with the news media, publishing a NSU newsletter, annual report, university magazine and creating internal and external partnerships that will help tell the NSU QEP/CREW story. |
|        | QEP/CREW Onsite Visit |
|        | Dr. Ford stated the SACSCOC/QEP Onsite Committee Visit will be March 4-7, 2019. All QEP Committee Members are expected to participate. Dr. Cerrington specified that the Onsite QEP Evaluation Committee will identify the composition of the groups to be interviewed on campus during the visit. Well in advance of the visit, the QEP Lead Evaluator will work with NSU to ensure that the groups developed for the QEP interviews meet the Onsite Committee’s expectations. Onsite Committees typically want to talk with small groups of representative constituencies involved in creating and implementing the plan, such as the QEP Committee, faculty responsible for the QEP’s implementation, administrators responsible for providing support, students, institutional research and assessment personnel, and staff in related student services. |
|        | Next Meetings |
|        | 12:30 pm, Thursdays, Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College, 236 Brown Hall  
|        | • January 10, 2019 – First Meeting of Spring 2019 Semester  
|        | • January 17, 2019  
|        | • January 24, 2019  
|        | • January 31, 2019 – Mail QEP/CREW Document to SACSCOC  
|        | • February 7, 2019  
|        | • February 14, 2019  
|        | • February 21, 2019  
|        | • February 28, 2019  
|        | • March 4-7, 2019 – SACSCOC/QEP Onsite Committee Visit |
|        | Closing |
|        | Dr. Charles Ford, QEP Director, closed the meeting at 1:55 pm. |
|        | Attachments - None |
Appendix H – Communications and Marketing
1. **Training of CREW faculty Pilot** begins January 4, and then every 1st Thursday of the months of the semester at 12:30 pm in NGE 200. (10:00 – 11:30 am, Friday, January 4, 2019, 1040 Lyman Beecher Brooks Library.) Dr. Baloubi stated that Dr. Jason Demeter was added to the Pilot faculty and he will teach ENG-102-22, TTH, 9:00 – 11:00 am.


3. **Student CREW Seminar Series for CREW-Mates or CREW-Fellows**: Every 4th Tuesday of the month, 12:30 pm. The training targets NSU leaders from the faculty, staff and students who promote the student learning goal and outcomes of NSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan CREW: First Seminar: *This is America!* by Childish Gambino – African American History Month, February.

4. **Reading Apprentices or Course-Embedded Reading Consultants**: The training targets staff and students who will assist with the student learning goal and outcomes for NSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan CREW.

5. **CSET Workshops**, February 16, 2019: Teaching Students How to Learn, Dr. Saundra McGuire, Presenter, LSU Center for Academic Success. Dr. Marz stated the goal is to get students to focus on learning instead of grades: metacognition is the key!

6. **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** are faculty/educators who collectively meet to improve student learning and achievement. PLCs engage in a continuous cycle of collaborative inquiry questioning based on classroom practices in an effort to build a shared knowledge as professionals. These meetings occur at regularly scheduled times throughout the school year.

7. **Educational Communities of Inquiry (CoI)** are faculty/educators who collaboratively engage in purposeful critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meaning and confirm mutual understanding by creating a deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learning experience through the development of three interdependent elements – social, cognitive and teaching presence.

8. **Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College CREW Reading**
   Faculty & Fellows 2019 Development Luncheon
   Topics of discussion will include:
   - Honors Assessment and RCNHC Archives
• Upcoming Conferences for both Faculty and Students
• Honors Events for Spring
• QEP Participation and Much More!

When: Tuesday January 15, 2019
Time: 12:00-2:00 p.m.
Place: Town Point Club, Downtown Norfolk
RSVP: 823-8208 or mrsmitih@nsu.edu by January 11, 2019

9. Black History Month – “This Is America” CREW Close Reading – February 20th, CREW close reading sponsored by the NSU Black History Month Committee. Childish Gambino’s ground-breaking song and music video, “This Is AMERICA,” lyrics and graphics will be analyzed by a panel of students and faculty using the CREW close reading strategies. The event will consist of Opening poem and video (Message from Childish Gambino TBD), Breakdown of lyrics, Panel Discussion on song context (Panelists will be a mix of Faculty and students), Questions and dialogue with audience. This is a CREW sponsored event.

10. QEP/CREW Pilot Program and Implementation Training, January 4, 2019
QEP/CREW Implementation Training conducted by Ms. Shelley T. Scott-Johnson, 10:00 – 11:30 am, Friday, January 4, 2019, 1040 Lyman Beecher Brooks Library; and assessment procedures, evaluation of student progress, AAC&U Reading Value Rubric and AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric.
Join Our CREW
Close Reading for Effective Writing

1. Read core texts in and beyond the discipline and then explicate them orally and in writing
2. Identify literary and rhetorical devices in order to explain them to any audience
3. Master the conventions of American English
4. Connect sources and works with their historical and/or social contexts
5. Incorporate constructive criticisms of drafts in their writing process
6. Cite sources in a way that is appropriate for any discipline

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
We see the future in you. nsu.edu
Four Steps to Close Reading

Step 1: What is Close Reading?
Close reading is the practice of paying careful attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one's own writing.

Recommended Step for Close Reading
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

Review or skim the text for basic features: genre, structure, sections, headings, diagrams, title, purpose, and the like.

Discuss what information those features provide to readers and how they should approach the text.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

Norfolk State University
You are the Future to come

Step 2: What is Close Reading?
Close reading is the practice of paying close attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one's own writing.

Recommended Step for Close Reading
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

Norfolk State University
You are the Future to come

Step 3: What is Close Reading?
Close reading is the practice of paying close attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one's own writing.

Recommended Step for Close Reading
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

Norfolk State University
You are the Future to come

Step 4: What is Close Reading?
Close reading is the practice of paying close attention to all elements of a text (content, organization, tone, style, format, sentence structure, grammar, and such) in order to analyze, as well as comprehend the text and to become familiar with effective writing practices, which allows for transferring into one's own writing.

Recommended Step for Close Reading
In an ideal reading process, the student will make multiple passes through the text and read for different elements on each pass.

For more information visit www.nsu.edu/CREW

Norfolk State University
You are the Future to come
Close Reading for Effective Writing

CREW

Quality Enhancement Plan
QEP

Southern Association of Colleges
and Schools Commission on Colleges
SACSCOC

Norfolk State University
700 Park Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504

January 25, 2019
Faculty Unite for Input and Info on the Proposed QEP!

Join your QEP Committee for an enjoyable practice close reading of Dr. MLK, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Working titles of the QEP so far: Better Reading for Better Writing or Active Close Reading for Improved Writing (ACRIW)

ALL DISCIPLINES ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME. WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Wednesday February 28, 2018
12 noon in Student Center 138
12-1:30 pm

There are 25 slots available. Lunch will be provided.

RSVP by February 23 to: 823-8208 or mrsmith@nsu.edu

The future of NSU depends on a great QEP!
Norfolk State University has chosen *Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW)* for the theme of its second Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Here, significant stakeholders of the University—faculty, staff, student leaders—will seek to improve the reading comprehension and writing competency of undergraduate students in both general education and major capstone courses.

- Data from the University’s first QEP showed that students need help in reading and writing before they can do critical thinking. To assess student success in the second QEP plan, we will use the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ VALUE rubrics, which have been vetted nationwide for their comprehensiveness, to access reading comprehension and writing competency.

- In spring 2019, select sections of HIS 101, SOC 101, ENG 101, and ENG 102 will use close reading strategies to generate more effective reading and writing among the students involved. By 2023, the plan is to scale this curricular impact upwards to reach at least two-thirds of the undergraduate student population.

- The CREW Faculty Development Seminar series will continue this spring, with the first one scheduled for Wednesday, January 17 at 12 noon in the Archives Orientation Room, Lyman Beecher Brooks Library. Faculty and staff participants will discuss Senator Henry Cabot Lodge’s prophetic speech on immigration from 1896.

- The SACSCOC visiting team will be on campus on March 4-7, 2019, to discuss CREW, and we look forward to presenting our overall progress and preliminary vision.

If you have any questions or would like to join the QEP Committee, please contact Dr. Charles H. Ford, director of the QEP, at chford@nsu.edu.