

March 10, 2009

Bill Mooney

Table Notes

February 27

#1

1. Increase awareness college-wide of critical thinking as an educational goal. Increase “buy-in” among faculty.
2. Develop: networking; sharing lessons learned, break down barriers to sharing.
3. Measurement: SATs; Watson-Glaser; work to include critical thinking skills as something faculty look for in peer observation; establish base-line numbers so that we can gage progress.

#2

1. Spend more time on scientific method in all science courses.
2. Create a library of examples/ template online for faculty use.
3. Research: dig deeper to understand what learning critical thinking is based on and how best to improve student performance. Talking about critical thinking may not be the best way to get students to do it (math “problem solving” versus math facts story).
4. Use standardized final exams to provide data across courses and department offerings.

#3

1. Include Watson-Glaser test in courses – have students (and faculty) take it.
2. Emphasize critical thinking in all foundation courses, so as to build on it in upper level work.
3. Make critical thinking part of all assessment.
4. Allow time in class for reflection, instead of always rushing forward to give more information.
5. Use Angel more widely to increase reflection.
6. Work more on visual presentations, insisting on the culling, sequencing, etc. which require critical thinking.
7. Hold seminars across the college.
8. Work for wider buy-in from faculty colleagues.
9. Include more “critique” in A&D classes.
10. Provide more training in incorporating critical thinking in pedagogy.

#4

1. Ceding control of lesson delivery and content in classes (for example, using more group discussion, debate).
2. Sequence assignments carefully, so that simpler assignments build to more complex ones leading to a higher level of critical thinking. (For example move from summarizing exercises to critiquing summaries.)
3. Scaffold assignments to make sure lessons taught early are used later.

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4. Direct students to notice and explore connections among disciplines, similarities and differences. Research methods vary between sociology and history of art, for example. Writing styles vary among disciplines....
5. Foster dialogue to reveal (evaluate) achievements after one semester.

#5

1. Internship Center: incorporate critical thinking in counseling and in classes taught by the IC.
2. Emphasize reading and writing skills.

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#1

1. "Mandatory" CET sessions/seminars on "What is critical thinking?"
2. Two seminars per semester for students -- at the beginning and middle of the semester -- on critical thinking.
3. Make critical thinking part of course outlines and learning objectives.
4. Departmental workshops on critical thinking and as part of orientation of new faculty, added to handbooks.
5. Efforts to bring creativity and critical thinking into dialogue, A&D with B&T, etc. : Use slogan, Where Creativity gets down to Business.
6. Panel discussions, to include faculty from various departments and advanced students or alumnae, for larger audience, topics to include creativity and critical thinking, critical thinking and employment, etc.
7. Invite external speakers on the subject.

#2

1. Ensure that students do not put off taking developmental classes. Perhaps line English developmental class to major? Block it in, for example in one cohort for Photography? This would provide an incentive to take the classes earlier in their program.
2. Consider Presidential Scholars program a model for interdisciplinary connectivity, formation of learning communities.
3. Create department Learning Object Resources using Angel where critical thinking assignments can be posted.
4. Create programs to make faculty more aware of need and substance of critical thinking.
5. Invite a Convocation speaker on the topic of critical thinking.

#3

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Focus on faculty development and the need for faculty to be on board with critical thinking across the campus. Instructors need to know how to facilitate, learn the techniques, and develop the tools to guide and engage students to think critically through speech, writing, presentation, and assessment.

1. Faculty need to develop the critical thinking skills – to be taught how to critique and the criteria as to how to measure and assess if the thinking is taking place. Standardization of these criteria.
2. Should this be based on Disciplines?
3. New verbal, non-verbal techniques to provide coaching on critical thinking
4. To consider the role of adjunct faculty.
5. Should new teachers be paired with faculty to learn the new techniques?
6. Recommendations: faculty workshops on critical thinking.
 - Class for students on critical thinking
 - Interdisciplinary faculty integration is a positive – use it to encourage critical thinking
 - Use Socratic method to draw students' critical thinking skills out

#4

1. Train faculty to build critical thinking into syllabus development.
 - a. Exercise discipline in the articulation of learning outcomes, which should include ability to apply course content.
 - b. Build critical thinking outcomes into all courses from the start.
 - c. Stress the importance of learning to learn and lifelong learning.
2. Require critical thinking in exams and assignments.
 - a. Require problem-solving applications, versus recitation of content.
3. Stress the importance of recognizing context (i.e. recognizing the forest where the trees reside).
 - a. Establish a program of career planning and academic progress tracking and mentoring that begins at one's start at FIT, to help establish a personal goals-based context for learning.
 - b. Develop a revised Advisement model to help students do a better job of thinking through course selection themselves (with advisor support).
 - c. Require more of a liberal arts orientation, with a broad range of curricular requisites, that helps drive interdisciplinary connectivity.
4. Train faculty in teaching methods that better engage students, for example simulations that build on their propensity for computer games.
5. Incorporate more group/team learning exercises into courses, helping students to learn more from peers versus the tendency toward isolated work and communications online and through other digital means.
6. Establish a series of seminars where students can see faculty practice critical thinking like we did during the mini-retreat exercise evaluating the skirt designs.
7. Institute programs that provide students with more frequent and helpful feedback (e.g. mandatory midterm progress reports).
8. Conduct regular annual surveys of FIT graduates 2-3 years beyond graduation to measure and track progress in improving their preparedness for the work world.

#5

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1. Problem: everyone has courses to teach w/ critical thinking skills. Solution: Have courses readjust content to all for critical thinking. More must be done. Must be campus-wide.
2. Emphasize library more, across the college, in the classroom, getting people to incorporate more current events/sources into the courses. More outreach, possible link to course content using Angel.
3. Interest in test-taking skills: have student get some practice, but avoid teaching to a test. Emphasize writing.
4. Possibly do a random-sample audit of assignments across the college to determine how extensively we are targeting critical thinking and to learn what others are doing. A faculty senate initiative?
5. In spreading work about critical thinking, be sensitive to current practices, habits and feelings of faculty.