WRCS Program QEP Impact Report—Fall 2012

What outcomes has your unit attempted to measure?
Because our program outcomes are closely tied to the QEP outcomes, WRCS accesses all five outcomes each year.

What methods or capture points did you create, access, or implement?
Our Metacognitive Synthesis assignment is required of all ENGL 101 and 202 students as an evaluative assignment that asks students to reflect on all WRCS Learning Outcomes by integrating specific examples from their assignments as evidence of their learning. We also conduct an assignment assessment to determine which QEP areas our instruction is addressing.

How effective were the methods or capture points you used?
Our student assessment submissions undergo a two-reader process. Generally, average assessment scores are within 1-4/100ths of each other. The faculty assignment assessment process is similar to the student assessment.

What main, summary results did you find?
Our most recent assessment follows the trend of previous years, and indicates that we are doing well with our first three outcomes. These are linked to the QEP outcomes Communicate Effectively and Responsibly, Solve Complex Problems and Integrate Information from a Variety of Contexts. Our 101 Students consistently perform at the developing level, whereas our 202 students are moving towards the achieving level. This is especially the case in two learning outcome areas:

Communicate Effectively: Our students illustrate an ability to recognize the various stages of their writing process and improve their compositions through revision. As a part of this process, we require them to work together with other students on revisions and projects, and many instructors assign presentations to assist students in understanding the differences between written and verbal communication. Using available technologies, students in both 101 and 202 consider document design as an element of effective communication. This outcome, along with the one aligned with Solve Complex Problems, is the one in which students perform the best in both ENGL 101 and 202, based on our student portfolio scores.

Integrate Information from a variety of contexts: Though this outcome is typically our lowest score at the end of ENGL 101, our students improve significantly by the end of ENGL 202 in their ability to integrate sources into their work. Since the implementation of the QEP, the second composition course has been moved to the sophomore year and now focuses on addressing disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. With the assistance of the Hunter Library staff, we have shifted our focus from “academic” to “authentic” research, encouraging students to consider perspectives beyond their individual majors. Our role at the forefront of the eBriefcase implementation process is another indication of the WRCS program’s commitment to this particular outcome.

Learning outcomes aligned with Clarify Purpose and Values and Practice Civic Engagement are the areas in which we have scored lower in our assessments. In response, we have prioritized them in our faculty development workshops. Though many faculty members have been able to integrate Service Learning into their composition courses in the past, increased class size has made this practice difficult to maintain. In conjunction with the Center for Service Learning, we hope to explore opportunities for establishing manageable projects to reintegrate this practice into some of our classes.

What changes to your program or curriculum will you do as a result of your findings?
At this time while no major adjustments to the program have been recommended, the director of the program strongly recommends piloting the eBriefcase as a possible program assessment tool and is currently defining procedures for the Academic Success Program to be used as a precursor for WRCS.