A QEP on Speaking and Writing: One Institution’s Experience

Dr. Julie Howdeshell, Director of Quality Enhancement
Ms. Kathryn Lowery, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Session Preview

› QEP Experiences and Impact
› Elements of a QEP Impact Report
› Reflections/Lessons Learned
› Q & A

A copy of this presentation will be available on the USM QEP site: [www.usm.edu/qep](http://www.usm.edu/qep) in mid-December.
A QEP on Speaking and Writing: One Institution’s Experience

Recognizing the importance of speaking and writing skills, many institutions have selected communication-related topics for their SACS-designated Quality Enhancement Plans. Given the human and financial commitments made in these initiatives, stakeholders want to know (and need to know) what worked and what didn’t. This session outlines the experience and impact of the CIEP, Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies, at The University of Southern Mississippi.

The University of Southern Mississippi QEP Impact Report

The University of Southern Mississippi submitted the CIEP Impact Report for Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies in March 2012 and received positive feedback in July 2012 with no follow-ups. A copy of The University of Southern Mississippi QEP Impact Report is included in the following pages of this document. The report followed the SACS guidelines in place in March 2012.

Presentation Materials

In addition to this document, additional materials will be posted on The University of Southern Mississippi CEP website in mid-December 2012. If you have additional questions, please contact Dr. Julie HowesBethel.

Helpful Links and Resources

- Quality Enhancement Plans: Lists and Summaries Since 2008
- The Five-Year: Interim Report: Information, Forms, and Timelines
- Process for the Review of the QEP Impact Report

Recognizing the importance of writing and speaking skills, many institutions have selected communication-related QEP topics.

See “Quality Enhancement Plans: Lists and Summaries Since 2004” - (http://www.sacscoc.org/inst_forms_and_info1.asp)
Speaking and Writing QEPs – A Sample from Track A

1. Communities of Practice: Writing Across the Curriculum
2. The Write Attitude: Enhancing Student Learning by Fostering Positive Attitudes toward Writing
3. Journeying Through College Writing: From Thought to Expression
4. Rhetorica: The Art of Writing and Speaking at Young Harris College
5. Enhancing Writing Skills through the General Education Curriculum
6. Speak Well, Write Well, Work Well! Enhancing Communication College Wide
7. Enhancing Student Learning Through Revising the Curriculum Component of Written and Spoken
8. Communication as a Model for an Evolving Process of Curricular Revision
9. Students First: Improving Oral Communication through Technology

Speaking and Writing QEPs – A Sample from Track B

2. Write to the Top: Enhancing Student Writing through a Writing Intensive Program (2010)
3. WRITE: Write, Reflect, Integrate, Transfer, Excel (2011)
5. Communicating to Succeed (2009)
6. Developing a Culture of Writing to Enhance Students’ Academic and Professional Success (2008)
9. Fulfilling the LSU Flagship Agenda: Enhancing Students’ Academic Experiences through Scholarly and Creative Activity (See CXC) (2004)

Common Threads within Speaking/Writing QEPs

- Faculty Development
- Student Support - Tutoring
- Technology
- New Curricular Requirements or Opportunities – Expanded Composition, Writing across the Curriculum, Writing-Intensive Courses
- Showcasing Opportunities
Is this really going to work?
The Experience at One Institution – Southern Miss

- 2006 Reaffirmation – Track B
- Dual Campus:
  - Hattiesburg, MS (1.5 hours from New Orleans, Mobile, and Jackson) and Gulf Coast
- Public, comprehensive, doctoral research institution
- 16K Students
- Diverse range of student abilities
- Large transfer student population

In sharing the experience and impact, the presentation follows the guidelines for the QEP Impact Report which was submitted in March 2012 and received positive feedback from SACS in July 2012 with no follow-ups. A copy of the report is included in this document. Current guidelines for the Impact Report are available on the SACS site here and included as a part of this document.
Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies

Based on
1. ACT scores
2. National, standardized test scores (CAAP)
3. Exit survey data
4. New requirements in general education curriculum

Three Enhancements
1. Faculty development
2. Creation of Speaking Center and expansion of existing Writing Center, including a new Writing Lab
3. Improved assessment of oral and written learning

Tip: Make sure you have enough baseline data that can be improved.
Succinct List of Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes

Goals

1. Faculty pedagogies that strengthen students’ communication skills
2. Learning environment that offers enhanced support for speaking and writing (including one-on-one instruction and technologies)
3. More effective assessment of oral and written learning
Succinct List of Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes

- **Written**
  1. Content
  2. Organization
  3. Language
  4. Audience
  5. Assignment Requirements
  6. Use of Research
  7. Overall

- **Oral**
  8. Content
  9. Organization
  10. Language
  11. Audience
  12. Vocal Delivery
  13. Nonverbal Delivery
  14. Communication Apprehension
  15. Audio-Visual Aids
  16. PowerPoint
  17. Overall

*Tip: Ask faculty to describe what they mean by good writing or speaking.
Resource: U. of Houston study.*

*Tip: Make connections between writing and speaking.*
Changes and Rationale

- Number of faculty seminar sections
- Emphasis on foundational writing
- Writing Lab
- Faculty Seminar Facilitators
- Assessment
- Gulf Coast Speaking and Writing Centers

Tip: Act upon obstacles and opportunities to improve your QEP. Document your changes and the rationale. Utilize a QEP Advisory Board throughout the process and maintain minutes of meetings.
Direct Impact...

- Achievement of Goals and Outcomes
- The Environment that Enhances Student Learning
- Student Learning
Goal 1: Faculty Pedagogies

- Seminar was first piloted in 2005
  - Voluntary
  - Stipends
- 151 participants representing 40 departments
- New syllabi and assignments
Goal 1: Faculty Pedagogies

- **Impact**
  - QEP faculty development participants were more likely to specify traits associated with best practices in assignment design, such as clarifying purpose and audience and incorporating a process for revision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Mean Number of Assignment Traits Included (Scale: 0-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of Traits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 1: Faculty Pedagogies

- **Impact**
  - There was also a significant positive correlation between faculty pedagogies and student performance in QEP-led courses for each rubric category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Written Communication</th>
<th>Oral Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Non-QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 2: Learning Environment – Enhanced Support for Speaking

- 2006
  - Established first and only Speaking Center at a 4-yr institution in Mississippi

- 2007
  - Hired Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre as Director of the Speaking Center via national search
  - Established Speaking Center at Gulf Coast campus

- 2009
  - Constructed organized suite of consultation and rehearsal rooms

Tip: Incorporate needed human and physical resources at planning stage.
Goal 2: Learning Environment – Enhanced Support for Speaking

Speaking Center: Student Tutoring Sessions

- Hattiesburg
- Gulf Coast
Goal 2: Learning Environment – Enhanced Support for Writing

- **2005**
  - Created Gulf Coast Writing Center

- **2007**
  - Established full-time faculty director position for the Writing Center (previously one person served as Composition Director and WC Director) and coordinator position.

- **2008**
  - Moved to new space in main library designed to be a place that students wanted to be – not a place they had to go to.

*Tip*: Make the center inviting. Tap into available resources on campus that can contribute to the process.
Goal 2: Learning Environment – Enhanced Support for Writing

Writing Center: Student Tutoring Sessions

- 2005-06
- 2006-07
- 2007-08
- 2008-09
- 2009-10
- 2010-11

Hattiesburg
Gulf Coast
Goal 2: Learning Environment –

- In addition to sharing student tutoring sessions, include other measures to triangulate and support:
  - Student and/or faculty feedback regarding quality and usefulness
  - National linkages such as Certified Tutor Program designations and other national awards (See the National Association of Communication Centers for more information.)
Goal 3: More Effective Assessment

- Finding a Voice QEP Advisory Board
- QEP and General Education Connection
- Capstone Level
  - Collected ~400 student papers & presentations
    - Also collected syllabi and assignment instructions
  - Trained raters analyzed the artifacts using the QEP rubrics
  - Each artifact was rated by 2 raters
  - Three years – writing; Two years - speaking
Impact on Student Learning
The percentage reaching proficiency (3+) was greater in courses led by instructors who had participated in QEP faculty development opportunities than in courses led by instructors who had not participated for:

- All SLOs for Written Communication
- All SLOs for Oral Communication except Support for Reasoning and Language
### Written Communication – SLOs and Faculty Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>3.0 – 4.0</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>2.5 – 4.0</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>QEP</td>
<td>QEP-Non</td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose &amp; Content</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence/Reasoning</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=153 (Non); 254 (QEP) for all except documentation: N=99 (Non); 163 (QEP)
## Oral Communication – SLOs and Faculty Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>3.0 – 4.0</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>2.5 – 4.0</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>QEP</td>
<td>QEP-Non</td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose &amp; Content</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Reasoning</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal Delivery</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Delivery</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-Visual Aids</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=136 (Non); 254 (QEP); Nonverbal: 135 (Non); 250 (QEP); AV Aids: 46 (Non); 71 (QEP)
### ENG 102: Course Assessment

Percentage Scoring ≥3 on 1-5 Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus and Development</td>
<td>73% (n=72)</td>
<td>95% (n=50)</td>
<td>95% (n=79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Usage</td>
<td>87% (n=72)</td>
<td>95% (n=50)</td>
<td>91% (n=79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Claims</td>
<td>57% (n=72)</td>
<td>70% (n=50)</td>
<td>81% (n=79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding, Utilizing, and Citing Sources</td>
<td>32% (n=66)</td>
<td>55% (n=38)</td>
<td>73% (n=79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Comparisons of Standardized Test Scores in Writing

- Cited in rationale when topic was selected
- Below national average in 2005 and 2006 (CAAP)
- Above national average in 2007 (CAAP)
- At or above national average in 2009, 2010, 2011 (ETS Proficiency Profile)

See Impact Report, p. 9, Table 7 for data.
### Graduating Seniors Exit Survey

Rank the degree of personal improvement achieved at Southern Miss on a 5 point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LITTLE + VERY LITTLE</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Effectively</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=311)</td>
<td>(n=1189)</td>
<td>(n=986)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Effectively</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=305)</td>
<td>(n=1190)</td>
<td>(n=983)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Professional Presentation Effectively</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=310)</td>
<td>(n=1188)</td>
<td>(n=984)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Think big, but be focused on what you want to accomplish and what is sustainable.

2. Identify models that have worked then adapt them to your campus and your goals.
Reflections: Assessment

3. Gather as much baseline data as possible before implementation begins.

4. Be systematic where you can.

5. Include a variety of measures – genuine artifacts from within and external measures for added credibility and comparison.
Reflections: Resources

6. Enlist the existing resources you have in terms of faculty development, learning centers, public relations, faculty, staff, and students.

7. Have adequate resources built in – human and financial. It’s even harder to get funding after the QEP has been submitted to SACS.
8. Identify who is going to ensure that the QEP happens and identify an advisory board to provide support and accountability.

9. Prepare an annual impact report throughout implementation to stay on track and to document changes.

10. Stay positive and confident. It’s contagious.
A QEP on Speaking and Writing: One Institution’s Experience

Recognizing the importance of speaking and writing skills, many institutions have selected communication-related topics for their SACS-designated Quality Enhancement Plans. Given the human and financial commitments made in these initiatives, stakeholders want to know (and need to know) what worked and what didn’t. This session outlines the experience and impact of the QEP, Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies at The University of Southern Mississippi.

The University of Southern Mississippi QEP Impact Report

The University of Southern Mississippi submitted the QEP Impact Report for Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies in March 2012 and received positive feedback in July 2012 with no follow-ups. A copy of The University of Southern Mississippi QEP Impact Report is included in the following pages of this document. The report followed the SACS guidelines in place in March 2012.

Presentation Materials

In addition to this document, additional materials will be posted on The University of Southern Mississippi QEP website in mid-December 2012. If you have additional questions, please contact Dr. Julie Howkeshel.

Helpful Links and Resources

Quality Enhancement Plans: Lists and Summaries Since 2008

The Five-Year Interim Report: Information, Forms, and Timelines

Process for the Review of the QEP Impact Report


