The "Vital Few" for 2008-2011

During every three-year cycle, the Assessment Team will conduct assessment from which a "Vital Few" 2-3 areas of focus will be identified and targeted for improvement during the cycle.

For the 2008-2011 cycle, the Assessment Team identified **THREE** key areas of focus for targeted improvement for cycle term:
1. *Writing Across the Curriculum,*
2. *Reading Across the Curriculum, and*
3. *Mapping Computer Use Across the Curriculum*

The Action Plan for the "Vital Few" are outlined below.

Focus Area #1
The A-Team wants WWCC to strengthen Writing Across the Curriculum.

During the last three-year assessment period 2005-2008, the Assessment Team Committee highlighted this as a Vital Few. Although the Assessment Team was excited to see that research writing truly is conducted *across* the curriculum, with some writing elements being quite strong—such as solid purpose statements, logical organization, unified and coherent paragraph structuring, and having evidence to support claims—the students are still not performing at the level we would like to see. We have made great strides with students having the experience of writing, but we want to continue this focus to ensure that this type of activity becomes a part of "what we do."

The A-Team wants WWCC to strengthen Writing Across the Curriculum over the next three years:

Specifically, the A-Team recommended the following plan of action:
Using Smarthinking &/or Turnitin, surveys, and student assessment results to get feedback over 3 years.
    a. Emphasize Writing Across the Curriculum during in-service including adjunct faculty;
    b. During in-service, promote Smarthinking and conduct survey to identify how many faculty are assigning papers and how many are using Smarthinking.
    c. Provide faculty with scoring rubrics or guides. Include information on FR website.
    d. Promote the concept through newsletters. Highlight examples that faculty actually use in class.
    e. Conduct workshops with external specialists promoting this activity. May also include department based seminars.

Focus Area #2

The A-Team has been watching with great concern the student learning assessment results in Reading. After several years of concern, the A-Team has chosen Reading as an area for targeted improvement. At this point, the data suggests that the lowered student performance in reading is beginning to have a "ripple" effect into other areas—most notable the area of Critical Thinking.

The A-Team did acknowledge that this is a national issue that we have to address on our local level. As the data suggests, our students today are a different audience than they were just a few years ago. In order to reach a different audience, Reading activities in class must adapt to the way the students learn in today's culture. The concern for the A-Team is that our audience has changed, yet our teaching techniques have not. Students are just not improving this skill while here at WWCC. A-Team anticipates that this will be at least a 3-year project.

Specifically, the A-Team recommended the following plan of action:
Using surveys, faculty interviews and student assessment results to get feedback over 3 years.
   a. Emphasize Reading Across the Curriculum during in-service including adjunct faculty;
   b. During in-service, conduct breakout sessions with faculty and professional staff who work with students to identify Best Practices and Implementation Strategies for the classroom.
   c. Provide faculty with feedback and examples of HOW other faculty are integrating ACTIVE Reading in the classroom. Include information on FR website.
   d. Promote the concept through newsletters. Highlight examples that faculty actually use in class.
   e. Survey faculty to find out what and how reading is happening.
   f. Student focus groups and/or student interviews for gathering student perception and feedback.

Focus Area #3

As the A-Team has continued to discuss and look for ways to best assess computer proficiency of graduates, grappling with WHAT students should know as an educated person with an AA, AS, AAS, AFA, or ADN from WWCC.

We discussed at some length HOW the proficiency should change and what is actually happening across the curriculum. A-Team determined that we can't really target a proficiency assessment if we don't really know what is happening with students in programs.

Specifically, the A-Team recommended the following plan of action:
Use surveys, faculty interviews, and PR information to get feedback and guidance over the next 1-2 years to target appropriate content.

a. Identify discipline specific computer programs;
b. Identify computer programs across disciplines;
c. Identify what are common computer skills within disciplines;
d. Share faculty feedback on use and expect from students within various disciplines.
e. Begin targeting WHAT should be assessed and target how best to proceed with assessing student learning in this area.