

## Norfolk State University

### Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW), Quality Enhancement Plan

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Norfolk State University selected **Close Reading for Effective Writing (CREW)** as the QEP theme to emphasize how significant University stakeholders – especially, faculty, staff and students – are working together to improve the reading comprehension and writing competency of undergraduate students in general education courses. Reading and writing are essential components of thinking and learning; consequently, based upon NSU's first QEP on the enhancement of critical thinking skills, the data indicated that students needed assistance in reading and writing before they can do critical thinking. From this data and a review of relevant scholarly literature on reading and writing for college and university students, the broad-based, University-wide QEP Committee – consisting of faculty, staff, and student leaders – understands the complementary effect of improving reading skills in order to achieve more effective writing skills.

The foundation and validation for the development of CREW was influenced by the University's vision for the future, while building upon its noteworthy heritage. The core values of the University's 2019-2025 Strategic Plan, "Forging Onward Toward a New Horizon," such as academic excellence, student-centered, and engagement also require all students 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. Therefore, CREW is designed to build upon key components of the University's core competencies to develop close reading as a means to achieve effective writing across the curriculum. 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.

University faculty and staff, collaborating with trained student leaders, are teaching reading and writing strategies that promote close reading as a shared intellectual experience, and learning how to use the close reading experiences to improve writing to achieve the student learning outcomes of CREW. Through professional communities of inquiry, workshops, online resources, and scholarly endeavors, University faculty and staff, along with trained student leaders, are exploring and developing innovative pedagogy to help a significant majority of undergraduates to become close readers and effective writers. Faculty development and concurrent student leadership training is targeted to general education courses that impact nearly all students. In addition, Student Affairs staff are also actively engaged in to the success of CREW by helping to foster an immersive culture of reading and writing that bridges divides between students' lives inside and outside of the classroom.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities' VALUE rubrics for reading comprehension and writing competency, which have been vetted nationwide for comprehensiveness, are being utilized to assess student success. By 2023, most students will achieve 2nd level (on a 4-level scale) on the VALUE rubrics in the general education courses. Other formative assessment and process evaluation measures for this QEP 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 began spring 2019 and will continue through 2028.