

Rise Up! Dig Deep! Nurturing a Culture of Inquiry at LRU
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Rise Up! Dig Deep! Nurturing a Culture of Inquiry at LRU seeks to improve student learning by increasing academic challenge. Lenoir-Rhyne University (LRU) identifies academic challenge in terms of the higher order thinking skills as conceived in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, i.e., analysis, evaluation, and creativity. The University selected Inquiry-Guided Learning (IGL) as a strategy to promote higher-order thinking. This approach challenges students to actively and creatively engage in guided and increasingly independent investigations of complex questions and problems under appropriately supportive conditions created by faculty and peers.

LRU has a longstanding commitment to education within the context of the liberal arts. Institutional values of excellence, care, integrity, and curiosity form the foundation from which emerged the two-year development process that has informed the Quality Enhancement Plan *Rise Up! Dig Deep! Nurturing a Culture of Inquiry at LRU*.

The QEP focuses on student learning outcomes that demonstrate progressive improvement in the students' abilities to do the following:

1. critically analyze data, information, and/or concepts related specifically to course content;
2. effectively evaluate course-related ideas, information, or materials; and
3. create new meaning or structure from diverse elements related to course content.

LRU anticipates that completion of IGL-designated courses with appropriate support will produce students who can demonstrate analysis, evaluation, and creation. Additional gains are anticipated for students who successfully complete IGL-designated First Year Experience courses and IGL-designated Core Capstone courses. Overall, students who successfully complete IGL-designated Core courses will be able to engage more independently and report more confidence in the research process.

These improvements in student learning demand a shift in the way students are taught. Faculty development in IGL pedagogies ensures the institutional capacity for delivering appropriate levels of challenge and support for students using IGL in the classroom. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and a Faculty Fellow program dedicated to exploring IGL strategies, course design, and assessment create the foundational network for this pedagogical shift.

The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) will conduct both formative and summative assessment of the QEP outcomes and processes using multiple measures. This ambitious but manageable assessment plan focuses on the general education program; however, the plan does not limit participation to faculty teaching core courses. The expectation is that LRU students will *Rise Up!* and *Dig Deep!* into academic challenge integrating a deep level of analysis, evaluation and creation into all aspects of their education.