

Northeast Texas Community College

PO Box 1307 ♦ 2886 FM 1735 ♦ Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456-1307 ♦ 903-434-8100



Improving Students' Writing and Vocabulary Skills

Dr. Brad Johnson, President

Ms. Toni LaBeff, SACSCOC Liaison

Quality Enhancement Plan

Submitted to the Southern Association

of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

in Partial Fulfillment of the Reaffirmation of Accreditation

On-Site Visit: October 8, 2012

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary 3

II. Broad-Based Process Used to Develop the QEP 4

III. Topic Identification 8

 CCSSE Data 8

 Texas Higher Education Accountability Report..... 9

 Internal Data: Writing Placement Scores of FTIC Students..... 10

 Student Writing and Vocabulary Assessment..... 11

 Faculty Perceptions of Students’ Skills Survey 13

IV. Student Learning Outcomes..... 22

V. Review of the Literature and Best Practices..... 23

 Students Unprepared for College 23

 Perceptions of Writing Abilities 24

 Students’ Writing Abilities 25

 Writing Intensive Courses 26

 Writing Across the Curriculum 27

 Writing in the Disciplines..... 28

 Writing Instruction 29

 Vocabulary and Successful Writing 32

 Importance and Value of Writing..... 34

 Professional Development 35

 Writing Center 36

 Writing Assessment 37

 Conclusion 39

VI. Write Smart Implementation Actions 41

VII. Implementation Timeline 46

VIII. Organizational Structure..... 50

IX. Resources 53

X. Write Smart Assessment Plan..... 55

 Figure 10..... 56

 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes..... 57

 Additional Strategies aimed at achieving Write Smart student learning outcomes..... 59

Appendix I: CCSSE Data Summary..... 65

Appendix II: Preliminary Writing and Vocabulary Assignment and Assessment Rubric. 66

Appendix III: NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey..... 68

Appendix IV: Employee Writing Skills Survey..... 72

Appendix V: Write Smart Writing and Vocabulary Pre- and Post-Test 75

Appendix VI: Write Smart Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric 76

Appendix VII: Write Smart Student Assessment Survey Example 77

List of Tables

Table 1: 2006 Comparative Data	9
Table 2: Writing Placement Scores of FTIC Students	10
Table 3: QEP Implementation Timeline	46
Table 4: <i>Write Smart</i> Five-Year Budget Proposal	53

List of Figures

Figure 1: Student Essay Scores	12
Figure 2: Number of Writing Intensive Courses Taught During Semester	14
Figure 3: Number of Writing Assignments per Semester	15
Figure 4: Percentage of Students' Grades Based on Writing Assignments	16
Figure 5: Faculty Perceptions of Students' Preparedness for College Level Writing	17
Figure 6: Vocabulary Usage	18
Figure 7: Employee Perceptions of Students' Preparedness for College Level Writing	19
Figure 8: Employee Perceptions of Percentage of Students with Writing and Vocabulary Weaknesses	20
Figure 9: <i>Write Smart</i> Organizational Chart	52
Figure 10: Illustration of Assessment Plan	56

I. Executive Summary

Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that focuses on improving the writing and vocabulary skills of NTCC students. Writing and vocabulary improvement were chosen as the QEP topic after surveying students, faculty, employees, community members, alumni, and board of trustees members. The NTCC QEP topic supports the NTCC Strategic Plan and enhances the mission of the college “to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities.” Specifically, the goal of the NTCC QEP is to improve NTCC students’ writing skills and vocabulary usage.

The goal of the NTCC QEP requires measurable student learning outcomes and various methods of assessment. The NTCC QEP student learning outcomes reflect the knowledge, skills and behaviors students are required to acquire in order to:

1. Illustrate effective college writing using standard writing processes and mechanics.
2. Compose original college writing that utilizes critical thinking to analyze and reflect on readings, contemporary ideas, personal experiences, and multiple viewpoints.
3. Integrate college level and discipline specific vocabulary into writing assignments such as compositions, lab reports, research papers, and essays.

The student learning outcomes will be measured by utilizing course embedded assessments, writing and vocabulary rubrics, pre- and post-test evaluations, faculty evaluations and surveys, student surveys, and program evaluations. The overall assessment of the QEP goal will be measured with QEP program evaluations, student writing and vocabulary skills evaluations, student surveys, and faculty/staff surveys.

The NTCC Administration has communicated their full support for the implementation of the NTCC QEP. In addition, the administration is committed to providing adequate resources to implement and sustain a quality writing initiative for NTCC students.

II. Broad-Based Process Used to Develop the QEP

In September of 2009, the Executive Vice-President for Instruction, Dr. Ron Clinton, selected a QEP Director to begin the process of assessing key issues important to student learning and to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the SACSCOC reaffirmation process at Northeast Texas Community College. The following January, the QEP Committee was formed with membership representing broad-based disciplines and skill sets. The committee members are:

Dr. Kim Wommack, Chair - QEP Director; Division Director Creative & Performing Arts; Professor of Art

Dr. Jena Hamra - Dean of Allied Health

Dr. Mary Hearron - Accreditation Director; Division Director Natural Sciences; Professor of Biology and Chemistry

Melody Henry - Associate Dean of Outreach Services

Toni LaBeff - Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

David Rangel - Instructor of Mathematics

Jim Swann - Division Director of Languages; Professor of Spanish

Jodi Weber - Director of Public Relations

Heidi Wooten - Division Director of Business & Technology; Associate Professor of Economics

Delbra Anthony - Humanities Secretary - QEP recorder

Additional committee members were added in 2010. The members selected were the authors of the QEP proposals chosen as the best topic proposals. The additional members are:

Anna Ingram - Dual Credit Director; Instructor of English

Julie Ratliff – Associate Professor of English

Mandy Smith - Instructor of English

Dr. Andrew Yox - Honors Director; Professor of History

Another committee member from the NTCC English department, listed below, was added in 2011 to enhance the writing and rhetoric component of the NTCC QEP.

Melinda Bobbitt – Instructor of English

NTCC President, Dr. Brad Johnson, charged the QEP committee with the following tasks:

- Develop and implement a broad-based topic selection process
- Define student learning outcomes for topic proposals
- Engage in appropriate research related to support of topic proposals
- Narrow topics down to three proposals to submit to President's Cabinet for review
- Identify actions to be implemented for final selected topic
- Develop a plan for organization, administration, and funding for the final topic
- Prepare the formal QEP plan for submission to SACSCOC

In addition, President Johnson stressed the importance of a faculty-driven QEP, supporting the QEP topic with relevant data, and focusing on student learning. The committee was encouraged to review the NTCC Mission Statement, NTCC Strategic Plan, CCSSE Data, internal data, and the SACSCOC QEP Guidelines.

To start the awareness process, the QEP Director gave a QEP presentation during the Spring 2010 in-service that included: the definition of QEP, SACS timelines, the president's viewpoint, and a list of the committee members. The purpose of the presentation was to inform and introduce the concept and processes of the QEP to the faculty and support staff. Other initiatives used during the semester to educate employees, faculty, and staff about the QEP included: weekly informational emails, presentations at faculty meetings, faculty QEP knowledge questionnaires, faculty senate

discussions, and a topic selection survey administered to the college community. Additionally, during the NTCC 25th Anniversary Celebration, the QEP Committee hosted a QEP booth providing brochures, QEP awareness information, and conducted a community-wide survey to increase awareness and obtain QEP topic ideas from employees, students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. Additionally, a NTCC QEP website was created and added to the NTCC website. The spring 2010 semester was primarily used to increase awareness and start the initial discussions related to topic selection.

The QEP Director attended the SACSCOC 2010 Summer Institute on Quality Enhancement in July to learn more about the QEP processes and development strategies. The Director attended numerous sessions related to topic selection, student learning outcomes, implementation, and assessment.

In September 2010, an online survey was administered to students, employees, faculty, adjuncts, community members, alumni, local employers, and the NTCC Board of Trustees. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent via email to all students, employees, faculty, adjuncts, and board members. Approximately 400 employers and community members were invited based on the availability of their email addresses obtained from chamber of commerce websites and NTCC Advisory Board mailing lists. Three hundred and sixty-five people responded to the survey. This included: 220 students, 50 administrative employees, 38 full-time faculty, 33 adjuncts, three alumni, two board of trustees members, and 18 community members. From the responses, a list of seventeen topic areas emerged.

The survey results revealed that only a small percentage of faculty who participated in the survey had submitted a specific topic idea. To increase faculty participation, two faculty forums were conducted to engage faculty in the topic selection process. Faculty members were asked to narrow the list of seventeen topic ideas and provide clarification

of key issues focused on student learning. From this activity, five topic areas emerged including: college preparedness, communication, educational services, reading comprehension, and student engagement.

In November 2010, the QEP Committee issued a call for proposals via email to all college faculty, adjuncts, and employees. Writers were asked to submit proposals based on student learning within the five topic areas chosen in the broad-based topic selection process. Seven authors submitted short proposals and were invited to write a longer proposal that included all components of the SACSCOC requirements for a QEP document. The college community was continually updated on the progress of the QEP topic selection process during faculty meetings and by email. Five of the seven authors submitted a long proposal to the QEP Committee. The committee reviewed the proposals and narrowed the list to three top-ranking proposals for submission to the President's Cabinet for review and selection. The cabinet ranked the three proposals and recommended that the top two be merged into one. The proposal authors of the top two proposals were invited to join the QEP Committee. The topic selected for the NTCC QEP is based on student learning in the areas of enhanced writing and improved vocabulary usage. The topic emerged from concerns regarding college preparedness, one of the top five focus areas.

To learn more about SACSCOC reaffirmation and the QEP process, several QEP Committee members attended the December 2010 SACSCOC annual meeting in Louisville, KY. Various sessions were attended related to all aspects of the QEP topic selection and writing process.

III. Topic Identification

The QEP Committee, realizing the importance of data-driven decisions, formed a data sub-committee during the summer of 2011. The sub-committee consisted of the following members:

- Toni LaBeff – Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research
- David Rangel – Instructor of Mathematics
- Dr. Kim Wommack – QEP Director

The sub-committee, assisted by the office of Institutional Effectiveness, compiled and reviewed the following data: Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), The Texas Higher Education Accountability Report, and a five year compilation of data from entering students enrolled in developmental courses. The committee reviewed the data to validate the selected topic and to determine if the existing data supported the idea that NTCC students lack writing and vocabulary skills.

CCSSE Data

Northeast Texas Community College participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement during the fall of 2011 (Appendix I). The QEP data sub-committee examined the CCSSE data to determine if students' responses revealed weaknesses in writing and vocabulary skills. Questions pertaining to college preparedness, reading, and writing from the NTCC CCSSE data were compared with five small community colleges in Texas similar to NTCC. According to the CCSSE data summary NTCC students' survey results indicated that NTCC students wrote fewer papers than students at all of the other comparable colleges. In addition, NTCC students were most likely to read books on their own for personal enjoyment but still only read one to four books in an entire semester. Of the five colleges compared in the analysis, NTCC students ranked highest (tied for first) on time spent preparing for class but still

spent six hours or less per week in preparation. They also ranked highest (tied for first) when asked if they prepared two or more drafts when writing a paper. NTCC students ranked last when asked about satisfaction with and how often they used skill labs (writing, math, etc.). The data results collected from this question reflect the lack of a writing skills lab and academic tutors being available for students at the time of the survey.

Texas Higher Education Accountability Report

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Accountability Reports are available online and provide an overview of enrollment data, demographics, developmental education, graduation rates, persistence rates, and other statistical data. The 2011 report referenced below provides data about the 2006 first-time-in-college (FTIC) developmental writing cohort. The following table shows comparative data for NTCC, the Texas Small Colleges Group, as well as Texas Statewide data.

**Table 1
2006 Comparative Data**

Fall 2006 FTIC Cohort	% Below State Standard in Writing	% Attempting Developmental Education in Writing	% Attempting College Level Writing Course	% Completing College Level Writing Course
Northeast Texas Community College	20.6%	61.1%	52.6%	85.0%
Texas Small Colleges Group	16.1%	48.5%	48.8%	71.1%
Statewide	19.5%	57.2%	55.2%	74.5%

Source: 2011 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability Data

The data show that NTCC has more students below the state standard in writing than both of the comparison groups. However, perhaps because of mandatory developmental education policy requirements, NTCC shows a higher percentage of students taking a developmental writing course. The data also indicate that NTCC has a percentage similar with the comparison groups in those taking a college level writing course, and the highest rate of students who complete a college level writing course with an A, B, or C grade. These relatively positive results in college level writing courses were very surprising when compared to the outcome of the Student Writing Assessment outlined below which showed poor performance on actual writing samples. Although the NTCC QEP isn't specifically focused on developmental education, the review of the THECB Accountability Report Data raised a variety of questions about whether current writing placement tests accurately measure student skill level, whether writing placement test cut-off scores are set correctly, and whether English Composition I course content focuses heavily enough on writing mechanics.

Internal Data: Writing Placement Scores of FTIC Students

The NTCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research compared the initial writing placements of entering first-time-in-college students over a five year period and discovered that the percentage of students who require remediation has increased over the past four years by approximately eight percentage points as the chart below shows

**Table 2
Writing Placement Scores of FTIC Students**

FT-FTIC Cohort	College Ready Number	% College Ready Percent	Highest Level of Remediation Number	Highest Level of Remediation Percent	Level 2 Remediation Number	Level 2 Remediation Percent
	ENGL 1301		ENGL 0302		ENGL 0301	
Fall 2006	229	91%	10	4%	14	6%
Fall 2007	294	95%	9	3%	8	3%
Fall 2008	348	93%	12	3%	16	4%
Fall 2009	330	90%	20	5%	15	4%
Fall 2010	440	87%	39	8%	25	5%

Source: NTCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

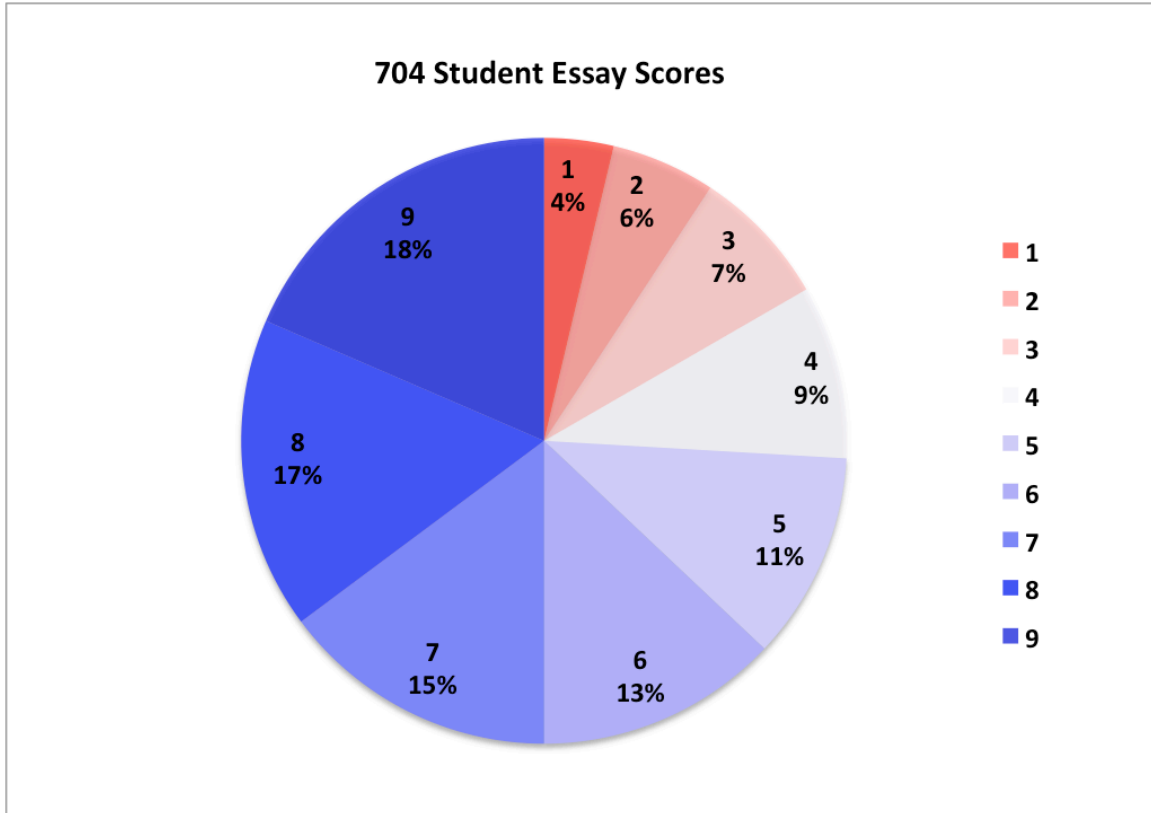
Again, although the QEP is not focused on developmental education, the decline in entering writing level over time shows a trend that bears consideration especially when viewed in concert with the poor performance on the comprehensive writing sample reported below.

The entire college community recognized the need to improve writing and vocabulary skills to ensure student success and individual educational goals. Internal and external data sources including CCSSE data, the Texas Higher Education Accountability Report, and internal data were reviewed by the QEP Data Sub-Committee to validate the QEP topic. However, the existing and internal data reviewed by the sub-committee did not provide clear and direct measures of writing and vocabulary skills so the committee was left primarily with anecdotal evidence regarding the skills of NTCC students. As a result, the NTCC QEP Committee decided to survey NTCC faculty and staff to determine their perceptions of students' writing and vocabulary skills. In addition, writing and vocabulary rubrics were designed to assess the writing and vocabulary skills of current NTCC students. The committee decided to administer the writing and vocabulary assessments during the first Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. classes of the Fall 2011 semester. NTCC faculty and staff were recruited to help with this step in the process.

Student Writing and Vocabulary Assessment

The faculty administered and the QEP Committee assessed 730 students' writing samples and 652 vocabulary exams. The results of the students' assessments indicated that 52% of NTCC students scored a D or an F on the writing sample and 44% scored a D or an F on the vocabulary exam. The grading was based on a rubric (Appendix II) designed by the QEP Committee and each sample was read by at least two members of the committee for consistency. The following chart provides details of the essay scores, passing vs. failing grades, and grade distribution:

Figure 1



Passing vs. Failing Essays	Essay Scores	Grade Distribution
368 students scored between 1 – 2.5 (D and F papers)	1. 51 Essays scored 1 = 4%	2% scored A
336 students scored between 3 – 5 (A, B, and C papers)	2. 59 Essays scored 1.5 = 6%	15% scored B
	3. 138 Essays scored 2 = 7%	31% scored C
	4. 120 Essays scored 2.5 = 9%	37% scored D
	5. 140 Essays scored 3 = 11%	15% scored F
	6. 76 Essays scored 3.5 = 13%	
	7. 67 Essays scored 4 = 15%	
	8. 37 Essays scored 4.5 = 17%	
	9. 16 Essays scored 5 = 18%	

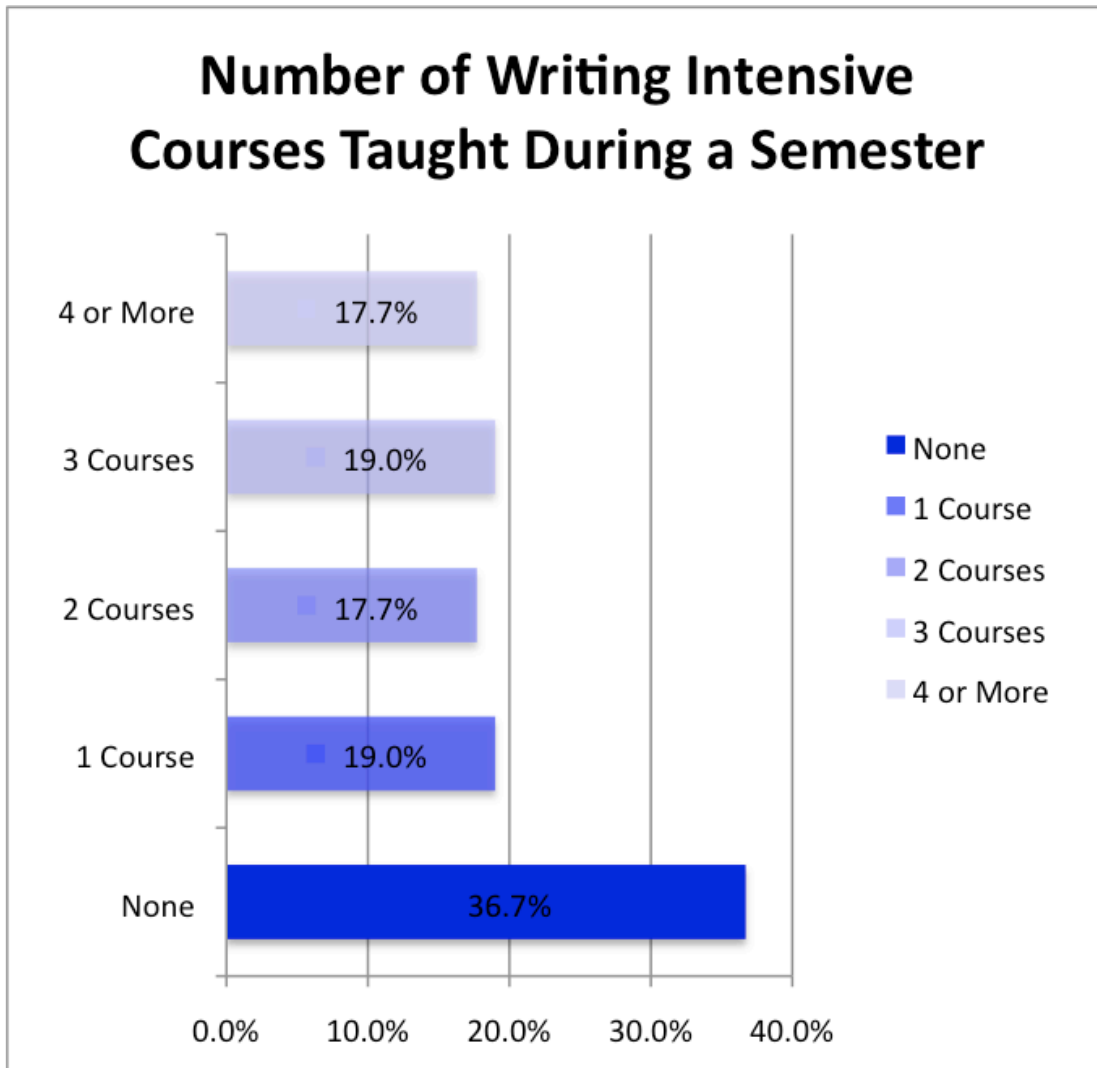
Faculty Perceptions of Students' Skills Survey

An NTCC Writing and Vocabulary Skills Faculty Perceptions Survey (Appendix III) was conducted in the Fall of 2011 to determine if NTCC students are prepared for college level writing, the quantity of writing taught by NTCC faculty, the quality of students' writing, writing mechanics needing improvement, and suggestions from NTCC faculty to improve their students' writing skills and vocabulary usage. Seventy-nine faculty members (approximately 42% of full-time and part-time faculty) responded to the survey.

NTCC faculty survey results revealed how many writing intensive courses faculty teach in a semester. Nearly 37% of NTCC faculty do not teach any classes that are writing intensive. Nineteen percent teach one course that is writing intensive and 17.7% teach two courses that are writing intensive. Additionally, 8.9% teach three courses during a semester that are writing intensive. Finally, 17.7% of NTCC faculty indicated that four or more of their classes are writing intensive, as the following chart indicates:

Chart for Survey Question #1: How many courses do you teach in a semester that are writing intensive (3 or more writing assignments)?

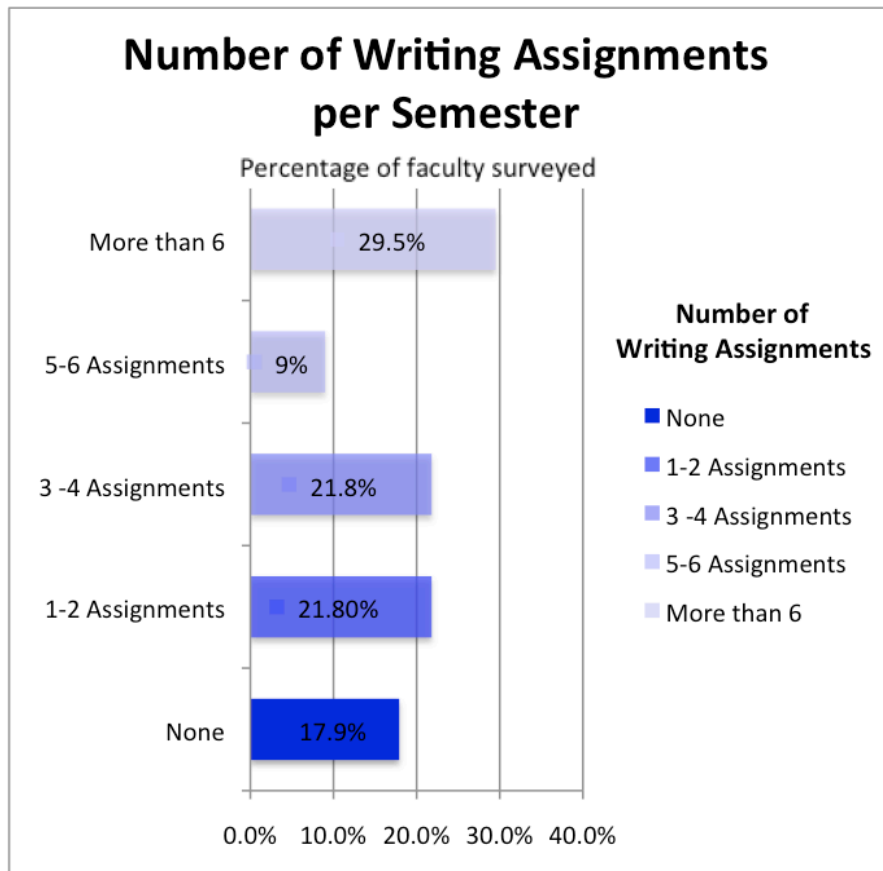
Figure 2



As indicated in the next chart, nearly 40% of NTCC faculty answering the survey revealed they required fewer than three writing assignments per semester. Additionally, 21.8% of faculty assigned 3-4 writing assignments and 9% of faculty assigned 5-6 assignments per semester. However, 29.5% of NTCC faculty who answered the survey assigned more than six writing assignments per semester. Further research might determine if this group is primarily from the English Department. The data from this survey question aligns with the CCSSE data gathered from NTCC students indicating fewer papers were written at NTCC than the number written by students at comparable small colleges.

Chart for Survey Question #3: In an academic semester, how many writing assignments do you require?

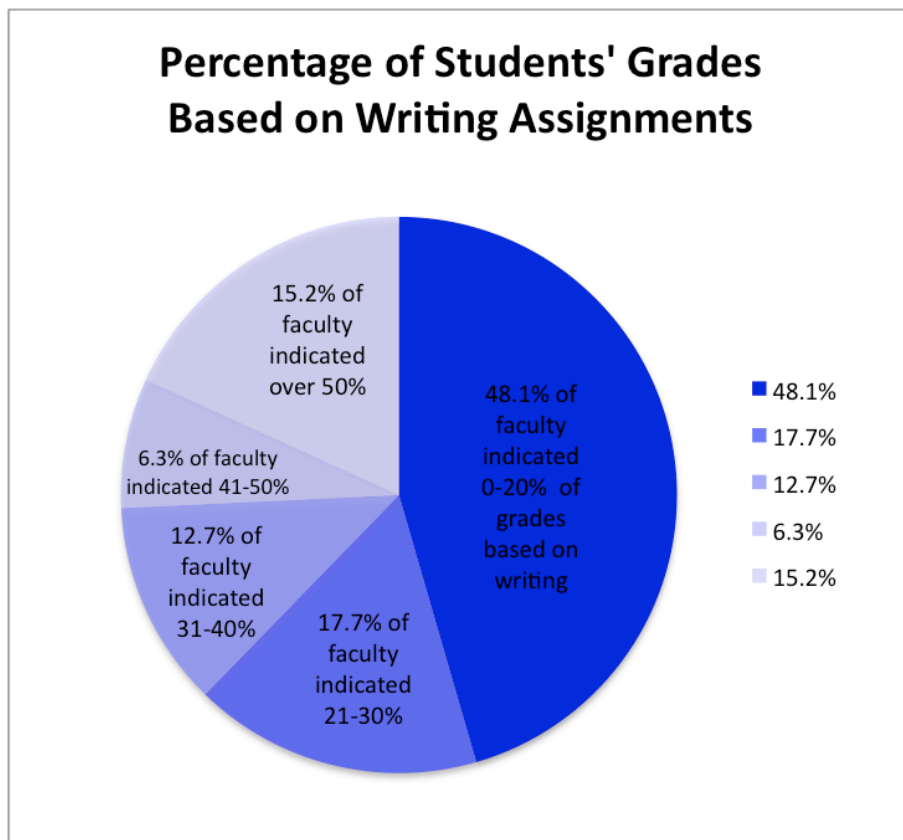
Figure 3



Another fact, illustrated in the following chart, emerged from the survey. Forty-eight percent of NTCC faculty reported that less than 20% of their students' grades were based on writing assignments. Eighteen percent of faculty surveyed used writing assignments to account for 21-30% of students' grades. Another 6% utilized writing assignments to determine 41-50% of students' grades. Fifteen percent used writing assignments to calculate 50% or more of the total grade.

Chart for Survey Question #5: What percentage of your students' grades is based on writing assignments?

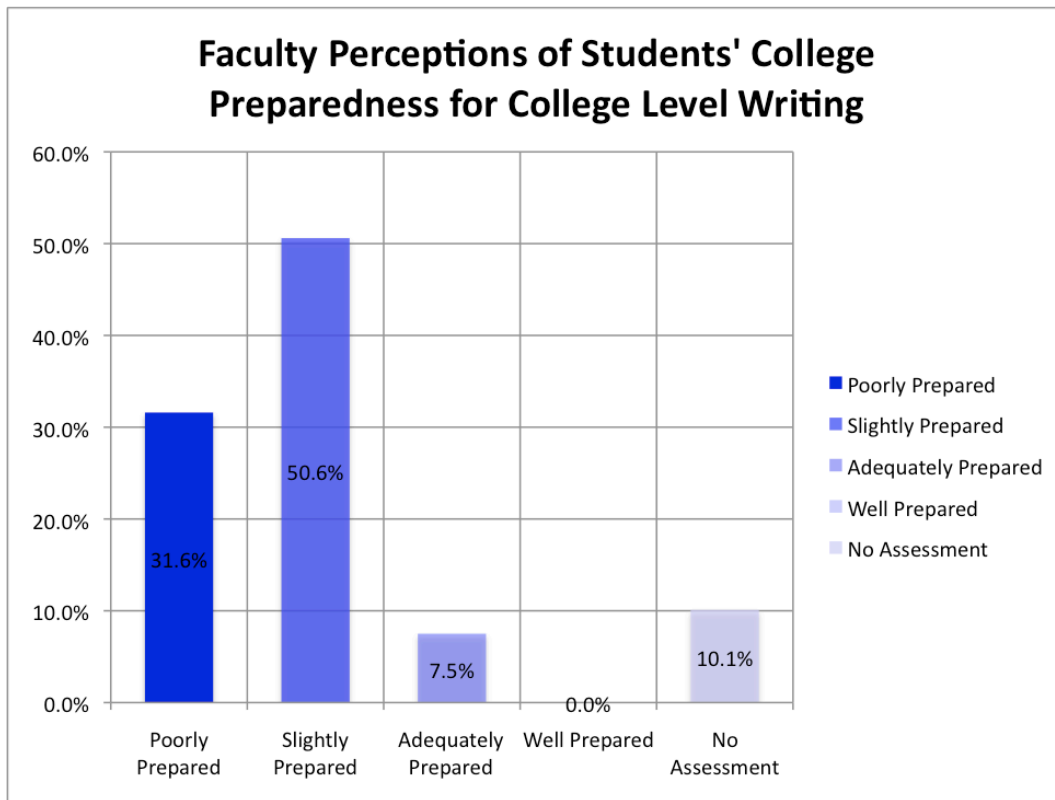
Figure 4



The following chart shows that 82% of NTCC faculty indicated their students are either poorly prepared or only slightly prepared for college level writing. Additionally, 7.5% of the faculty thought that their students were adequately prepared for college level writing. Zero percent of faculty reported that their students were well prepared for college level writing. An additional 10.1% of faculty had no perception or had not assessed their students in college level writing abilities.

Chart for Survey Question #6: How well prepared are your students for college level writing?

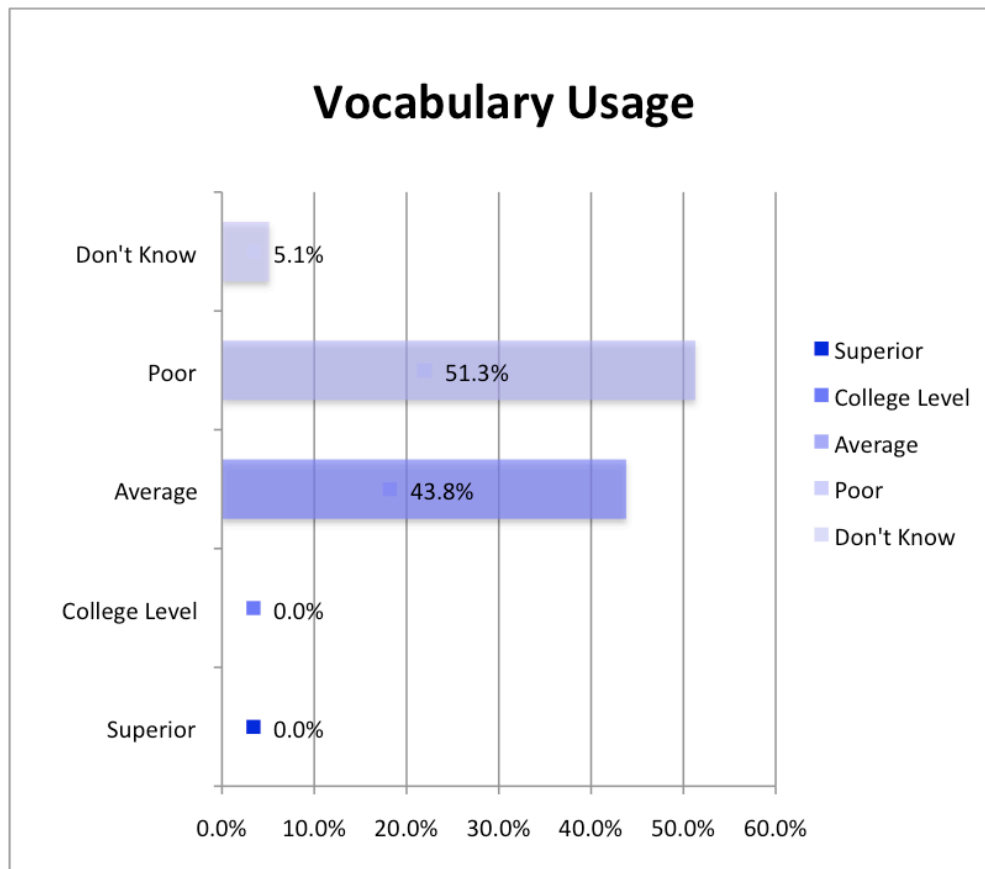
Figure 5



In addition to the findings about faculty perceptions of NTCC students' writing abilities, faculty also perceived that 0% of their students used vocabulary and communication skills at college or superior levels. Nearly 44% of faculty rated their students as average in vocabulary usage. Another 51.3% of faculty rated their students' vocabulary usage as poor.

Chart for Survey Question #11: How would you rate your students' vocabulary usage in writing and communication?

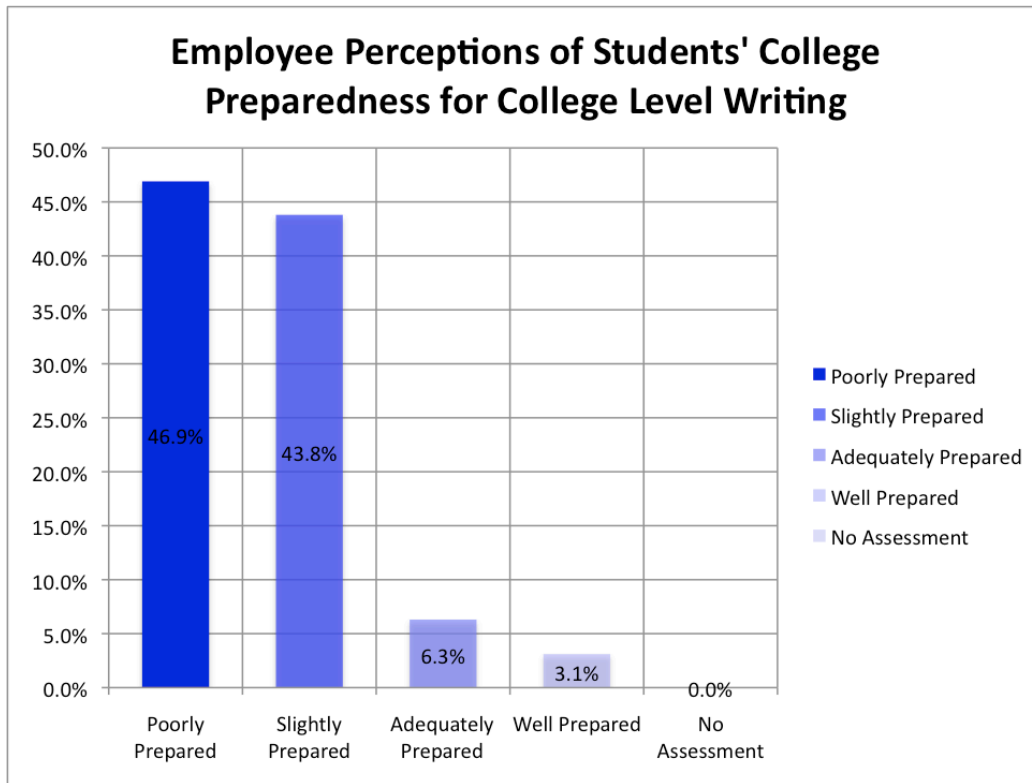
Figure 6



An NTCC Employee Writing Skills Survey (Appendix IV) was administered to NTCC administrative employees and staff to ensure broad based participation in the QEP writing and vocabulary data results. Thirty-two employees participated in the survey. Based on their interactions with students, nearly 47% of NTCC employees noticed that students are poorly prepared for college level writing. An additional 43.8% realized that students are only slightly prepared. Also, 3.1% of NTCC employees felt the students they encountered in their daily jobs were ready for college level writing as indicated in the next chart:

Chart for Employee Survey Question #6: Based on your interactions with students, how well prepare are NTCC students for college level writing?

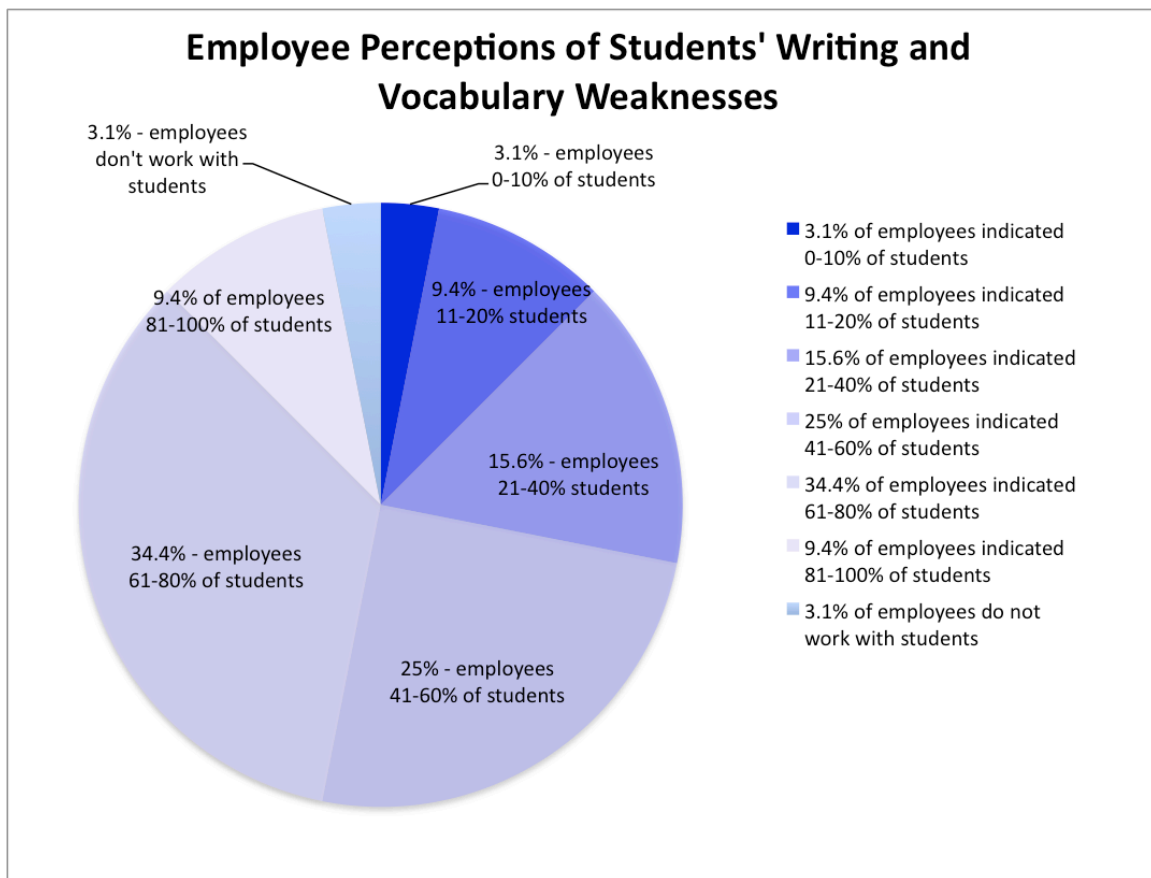
Figure 7



The following chart illustrates that NTCC employees also observed weaknesses in the vocabulary usage and writing skills of NTCC students. In fact, twenty-two of the thirty-two respondents (68%) believed more than 60% of NTCC students demonstrated significant vocabulary and writing weaknesses.

Chart for Employee Survey Question #7: Based on your interactions with students, what percentage of students demonstrated significant vocabulary and writing weaknesses?

Figure 8



In summary, the NTCC faculty survey demonstrated that there was an overwhelming consensus that NTCC students are underprepared to exhibit standard writing skills and college level vocabulary usage. In fact, a large percentage of faculty do not consider their courses to be writing intensive, assign a limited number of writing assignments, and do not utilize grades from writing to determine students' final grades for the course. The results of the NTCC Employee Survey indicated that NTCC students are under-prepared for college level writing and are deficient in vocabulary skills.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes

The goal of the NTCC QEP *Write Smart* is to improve the writing and vocabulary skills of NTCC students. The *Write Smart* Implementation Director and committee will focus on developing strategies and establishing services to accomplish the *Write Smart* goal. To accomplish the *Write Smart* goal, specific *Write Smart* student learning outcomes will be embedded in the student learning outcomes of the *Write Smart* courses. The NTCC QEP student learning outcomes reflect the knowledge, skills and behaviors students are required to acquire in order to:

4. Illustrate effective college writing using standard writing processes and mechanics.
5. Compose original college writing that utilizes critical thinking to analyze and reflect on readings, contemporary ideas, personal experiences, and multiple viewpoints.
6. Integrate college level and discipline specific vocabulary into writing assignments such as compositions, lab reports, research papers, and essays.

Student Learning Outcome One will be assessed using a pre- and post-test (Appendix V). The *Write Smart* proposed benchmark is 75% of students who complete the *Write Smart* Program will improve in writing and vocabulary skills and improve their grade by 10% on the post-test. Student Learning Outcome Two and Three will be assessed utilizing the *Write Smart* Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric (Appendix VI) to grade writing assignments. The *Write Smart* proposed benchmark is 75% of students who complete the *Write Smart* Program will improve in writing and vocabulary skills and average a C or better on writing assignments in *Write Smart* courses. A comprehensive evaluation plan for the assessment of the *Write Smart* goal, student learning outcomes, and program success is described in the assessment section of this document.

V. Review of the Literature and Best Practices

The NTCC mission statement, “Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities,” provided the focus for the NTCC QEP, *Write Smart*, and influenced the following review of current literature. The QEP Committee conducted a thorough review of research associated with the decline of writing and vocabulary skills; faculty and students’ perceptions of writing skills; the importance and value placed on writing; the importance of vocabulary to writing; the utilization of writing across/within the curriculum, writing intensive courses, and writing centers; critical thinking as applied to writing; the utilization of faculty professional development; and pedagogical methods of instruction and assessment. This review examined the problems and issues related to college students’ writing and vocabulary skills and evaluated best practices for improvement from other institutions of higher education. In particular, the committee researched best practices and available research from two-year community colleges.

Students Unprepared for College

Within this review of the literature, several scholars discussed the declining writing skills of college students and the fact that numerous college students are entering college unprepared. Perkins-Gough (2008) reported that many students entering into college are “woefully” unprepared and need remediation. Perkins-Gough (2008) cited the 2004 Department of Education data on college enrollment and completion rates revealing that 43% of students attending two-year institutions are required to enroll in a remedial course. Additionally, students enrolled in remedial courses are less likely to graduate and are more likely to drop out. A Strong American Schools report and opinion poll cited by Perkins-Gough (2008) titled “Diploma to Nowhere,” revealed that even the

most motivated high school students need remedial courses based on the following opinion poll examples:

- Ninety-five percent of the students in remedial courses reported that they did all or most of the work that was asked of them in high school.
- Eighty percent of the students surveyed said they would have worked harder if their high school had set higher expectations.
- Sixty percent of the students indicated their high school classes were easy.
- Nearly 80% thought that they were ready for college when they graduated from high school.

The “Diploma to Nowhere” report found that most of the students who responded to the opinion poll had earned As and Bs in high school, listed a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher, had taken the most challenging courses offered by their high schools, and wished their high schools had challenged them more. In an article titled “Not All Freshmen are Ready for College Writing,” Steinway (2008) concurred that authorities often point toward the nation’s high schools for not providing a strong enough writing-based curriculum and not devoting enough time to teaching writing skills.

Perceptions of Writing Abilities

Another issue contributing to the lack of writing skills of college students is the variance of perceptions among high school teachers, college professors, and students regarding students’ preparation levels. For example, a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article titled “A Perception Gap Over Students' Preparation” included findings from a *Chronicle of Higher Education* study identifying a gap in perceptions between high school teachers and college professors. This article included statistics that revealed 44% of college professors believe their students are poorly prepared for college-level writing and only 6% believe their entering students are well prepared for college writing. In

contrast, 36% of high school teachers believed their students were well prepared for college level writing (Sanoff, 2006).

In addition, Harley (1991) presented a strong contrast between faculty perceptions and student perceptions regarding the writing abilities of students. Mostly, student and faculty perceptions differ on students' writing abilities and what is required to produce successful college writing. Students attribute their passing grades and their professors' lack of constructive feedback to their perceived successful writing abilities. Harley suggested several ways to close the gaps between student and faculty perceptions of students' writing abilities including training non-English faculty to assess entry level writing abilities and providing students with detailed writing assessments across the curriculum.

Students' Writing Abilities

Numerous reasons for the lack of students' writing skills are provided in the available literature. For instance, Fulwiler (1984) reported that students write poorly for a variety of reasons including poor motivation, immaturity, and inadequate rhetorical skills. Madden and Laurence (1994) conducted a study to review and compare writing samples from upper level undergraduate or first year graduate courses from 1965, 1978, and 1993. The authors determined that students' abilities in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and style had declined over this time period. Many reasons for the deterioration were cited including the use of word processors, the lack of grammar being "taught" at all levels, the perception that grammar is boring, inadequate teaching methods, larger class sizes, and the decreased value placed on writing from instructors outside of the English department. Shaughnessy and Eastham (1996) concurred and added that poor writing skills can also be blamed on the excessive utilization of multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank tests; the lack of actual writing classes; students' attitudes; and a lack of consensus among educators as to the importance of writing and

the methods used to enhance writing. Finally, Jablon (2004), an English Professor at University of Maryland, expressed frustration regarding the skills of freshman students. Jablon (2004) noted that students should learn fundamental writing skills in grade school and reserve college class time to teach rhetoric, communication skills, and research development.

Writing Intensive Courses

One method used to enhance students' writing skills is the utilization of writing intensive courses. Farris and Smith (2000) defined writing intensive courses as courses that have 25 students or less, are taught by faculty, include a specified number of papers or words, require multiple revisions, provide guidelines on how writing will affect the final grade, include various types of assignments, and provide guidelines for evaluation. In an article in the January 28, 2011 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* titled "At a Loss: When Student's Don't Learn to Write," Glenn, Rae, and Wieder (2011) discussed the *Chronicle's* analysis of writing-intensive courses at 7 Texas public four-year universities including: Texas A&M at College Station and Commerce; Texas State University at San Marcos; Texas Tech University; University of Texas at Austin, San Antonio, and Tyler. The *Chronicle* Study, based on hundreds of syllabi published online, revealed that business and education majors are "typically exposed to only a handful of writing-intensive courses," as few as five for business and eight for education. In the *Chronicle* article, Glenn, et al. (2011) cited numerous scholars who determined that student enrollments in multiple writing intensive courses are not as important to writing skills improvement as the utilization of multiple drafts, revision, and careful feedback. To support the data from the *Chronicle* study, Glenn, et al. (2011) also compared the *Chronicle* analysis to a new book entitled "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses" by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa. The authors of "Academically Adrift" studied 2,000 students enrolled in four-year colleges and found that over a third of

graduating seniors in the study “were no better at crucial writing and reasoning tasks than they had been in their first semester at college.” Arum and Roksa’s results were based on the scores from the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), which was administered to the students when they entered college, after their sophomore year and the semester they graduated.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Farris and Smith (2000) observed that utilization of Writing Intensive Courses (WI) often complements Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs. The WAC movement actually began around 1974 with the first faculty development workshops designed to encourage college-wide responsibility for writing in all disciplines (Ambron, 1991). According to Ambron (1991), the Writing Across the Curriculum movement was a direct reaction to the decrease in writing on college campuses after traditional writing was replaced with mechanical writing and machine-scored objective tests in the 1960’s. Community colleges traditionally attract underprepared and non-traditional students who respond successfully to WAC programs designed to teach effective communication skills and the ability to think critically. WAC programs promote the idea of finding meaning through writing.

A decade after WAC began, Fulwiler (1984) reviewed data from a six-year Writing Across the Curriculum program and believed that WAC programs do work. Fulwiler (1984) determined the best way to introduce WAC programs to university faculty is by providing interdisciplinary writing workshops. The faculty had to realize the importance of teaching writing in the learning process and the relationship between writing and other communication skills such as reading, speaking, and listening. Numerous problems emerged including faculty resistance, disciplines not willing to participate, large class sizes, lack of faculty commitment, and sustainability. Dobler (1988) added that WAC programs work best in public schools or small community colleges where faculty have

high teaching loads and minimal research and publication requirements. The WAC program interdisciplinary writing workshops produced unexpected benefits such as increased collegiality, improved faculty writing skills, improved teaching skills, increased faculty publications, and an increased value for writing in the college community. The benefits emerged from a desire to improve students' writing skills.

Most WAC programs are designed to: (1) reinforce students' writing abilities with practice, and (2) ensure students' writing in their major disciplines. Some administrative intervention is needed to make these programs a reality. Faculty must be trained in the teaching of writing in their discipline or greater demands be placed on the English department. The faculty typically maintain WAC programs and WI courses but require administrative support in the form of stipends and teaching support (Farris and Smith, 2000).

Writing in the Disciplines

According to Zimmerman and Rodriguez (1992) in "Research and Writing in the Disciplines," in addition to whatever generic writing opportunities students engage in to learn the basics of writing, writing needs to be assigned within specific disciplines by faculty members in those disciplines. Only by working with members of the discipline do students come to understand how and why the discipline-specific writing conventions are manifested in the organization, format, vocabulary, and citation systems of the discipline's written work. Carter (2007) addressed the issue of faculty resistance to writing instruction within disciplines based on faculty concerns of sacrificing content. In fact, faculty are resistant to becoming "writing teachers" within their disciplines until they realize that writing is essential to their disciplines. Most faculty must be encouraged to identify methods that connect knowing and writing in the disciplines. One example of connecting "doing to writing" is to utilize embedded student learning outcomes that incorporate writing as a means of both teaching and evaluating the outcomes.

Writing Instruction

Instructional methods of writing were thoroughly reviewed to determine “best practices” for the NTCC QEP, *Write Smart*. Research indicated that effective writing is a complex process requiring practice in creating, shaping, drafting, revising, and editing. Colby (1986) reviewed thirteen published volumes of “Inside English” to determine recommendations from English faculty on how to improve students’ writing skills in two-year colleges. The instructors from “Inside English” agreed that writing assignments should be tailored to the skill levels of their students, emphasize ideas and mechanical skills, and pique students’ interests. A few techniques were suggested to aid students in the pre-writing stage including: clustering, modeling, brainstorming, controlled writing, free writing, and journal writing. More advanced students were assigned summaries of essays, practice writing, practice of essay exams, and computer assisted writing. The “Inside English” instructors developed methods of evaluation to build student confidence by utilizing peer critiquing, positive feedback, and holistic scoring.

Saddler (2004) agreed and suggested numerous ways to help students improve their writing skills including the following student activities: spending time writing, modeling writing, integrating content and writing, reading to enhance writing, communicating ideas, sharing writing tasks, improving basic writing skills, integrating reflective pause, and improving vocabulary. In addition, faculty should teach sentence structure, state expectations, promote independence, create a community of support, give students a choice, teach structural levels of revision, encourage collaboration, facilitate peer conferencing and tutoring, suggest multiple writing avenues, and teach differences between editing and revising.

In addition, Kellogg (2007) suggested a highly effective way to improve students’ writing skills is with deliberate practice. Writing and other planning intensive tasks take many years to attain proficiency and knowledge of basic writing mechanics is not

enough to produce effective writing. College students must be trained in writing across disciplines and write on subjects they are interested in. Problems associated with deliberate practice in writing are spacing of deliberate practice and the amount of time required for instructors to provide feedback. For instance, students should have writing assignments “spaced” throughout their college education and not limited to two semesters of English instruction. Also, in addition to instructor evaluations and feedback the utilization of automated essay scoring could provide immediate results on students’ first drafts and increase their motivation to improve.

Fallahi, Wood, and Austad (2006) used another approach to improve the basic writing skills of psychology students. The authors realized that professors in most disciplines other than English often accept poor writing due to the labor intensive nature of grading writing, their lack of writing instruction proficiency, and their need to focus on content. The authors concluded that students needed more writing instruction than a single composition course could provide. Therefore, they studied the writing improvement of psychology students during a single course using only five writing assignments. The methods used to improve psychology students’ writing skills included: in-class writing instruction, peer editing, extensive timely feedback on each paper, a class website providing other materials for writing instruction, instructor availability and tutoring. The instruction provided focuses on four major skills: grammar, writing style, writing mechanics and referencing. English faculty graded the students’ papers to determine compliance with the four basic writing skills. The results indicated that students who received instruction in basic writing skills did improve in writing. The authors believed the basic skills improvement would increase over time if instructors incorporated exercises in grammar, writing style, mechanics, and referencing into their coursework. Fallahi, et al. (2006) made the following recommendations: (1) obtain a baseline writing sample; (2) teach lessons based on mistakes made by students in the

class; (3) use published rubrics to outline grading criteria; (4) utilize APA style manual for writing papers; (5) and provide outside learning opportunities such as websites, writing labs, and individual help from the instructors.

Another instructional practice reported by Shaw (2002) utilized a six-member peer-review panel to motivate students to write in an academic and professional format. First, Shaw trained his students to write well by assigning writing exercises including essays, journals, abstracts, journal article summaries, book reviews, research project reports, and term papers. Shaw (2002) observed that his students waited until the end of the semester to turn in their writing assignments, lacked confidence in their writing, and didn't seem concerned about their final grade. He initiated a positive change by implementing a peer-review panel. The six-member panel graded all of the class assignments and gave feedback in a class discussion forum. Shaw noticed that students became better informed of assignment expectations and criteria, cared how their work appeared to classmates, and gained the ability to concentrate on their major assignments.

In addition, Hennessy and Evans (2006) determined that small group learning encourages the creation of new ideas and improves student performance. Methods used to initiate small group learning and foster critical thinking skills included the following: circles of learning, the group investigation method, the jigsaw approach, the learning cell, and student teams. Kuriloff (2004) added that the use of technology in writing instruction promoted collaboration and student interaction.

Finally, Sweeny (2010) reported that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are changing the way students read, write and communicate. In other words, the writing used in instant messaging, text messaging, tweeting, and emails doesn't use traditional conventions and faculty are concerned that this will affect academic writing. Faculty need to adapt to a rapidly changing digital age of communication. Students use

social networking and texting as a form of communication but don't recognize this as a form of writing. Faculty can integrate social networks into peer tutoring to create a sense of belonging in the educational community and integrate digital technologies into writing instruction to engage students and improve students' writing skills.

Vocabulary and Successful Writing

Research revealed that multiple instructional practices are utilized to improve students' writing skills. Additionally, the research supported the importance of vocabulary on students' abilities to produce effective writing. Phillips, Foote, and Harper (2008) observed that instructors fail to stimulate and engage their students with vocabulary concepts. In fact, instructors often utilize the method of copying definitions as a form of vocabulary instruction. The instructors rely on this method to save time for actual course content. Phillips, et al. (2008) outlined five instructional vocabulary strategies designed to replace the widely accepted methods of copying definitions and context clues (guessing the meaning of words). The five strategies outlined are: selecting words that build upon prior knowledge and connect to student understanding, utilizing graphic organizers to facilitate higher level thinking, asking students to predict the meaning of words and use logic to examine word origins, identifying synonyms and/or antonyms to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts, and grouping or sorting words to build additional connections. These strategies may result in improved students' writing skills.

Shaughnessy, Seevers, and Thomas (1999) discovered vocabulary skills might show improvement with the use of vocabulary tests when administered weekly. The authors noted that students lacked motivation to study the vocabulary words unless the tests were graded.

Brynildssen (2000) described using a rich vocabulary as a critical element of reading ability. She outlined the connection between vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing ability. In fact, the breadth and depth of a students' vocabulary will directly

influence the descriptiveness, accuracy, and quality of their writing. To improve vocabulary, instructors must create and implement a comprehensive vocabulary development program including the following key principles:

- instruction of techniques or procedures for developing a strong vocabulary
- connection of vocabulary terms to students' previous knowledge
- contextualization of vocabulary terms used in society
- practice and repetition of the same words
- instructor enthusiasm and curiosity about new words
- commitment to vocabulary development over the long term

Brynildssen (2000) reiterated that vocabulary development can enhance students' writing ability but does not guarantee an improvement. To improve writing skills, the instructor must create a classroom environment that demonstrates a strong value for writing. Brynildssen (2000) suggested the following vocabulary development methods to improve writing:

- sharing vocabulary rich literature
- encouraging students to become aware of and look for interesting words
- offering a variety of writing opportunities
- providing ample time for the writing process
- allowing students to conference with teachers and other students

Another area of research related to the NTCC QEP, *Write Smart*, included discipline specific vocabulary usage. The literature revealed that little research has been conducted regarding the vocabulary of specific academic disciplines. Hopper (1981) reported that California State University initiated developmental vocabulary courses that required students to identify discipline related vocabulary words used in academic courses. The lists are distributed to faculty, students, and academic departments to be utilized for instruction and relevant student study. In addition, the identified words

provide directional input for future textbooks. In *Wading Across the Curriculum: A Look at Writing in Hydrobiology*, Dobler (1988) indicated that “writing faculty generally do not know enough about the assumptions, methods, and vocabulary in other disciplines to be able to judge accurately the writing in that discipline.” Dobler (1988) suggested that faculty teach writing processes in their own classrooms within content specific writing assignments that are shorter in length and more manageable.

Importance and Value of Writing

Kuriloff (2004) stressed the importance of producing students who have mastered the ability to write well and the ability to think clearly. Kuriloff (2004) noted that writing and thinking are interconnected and central to the mission of higher education. Moreover, good writing is essential to effective communication and the process of writing promotes learning. Kellogg (2007) agreed that effective writing skills are central to higher education and careers that follow. Buding (2006) concurred and added there are growing concerns among business leaders and a lack of confidence concerning the writing skills of graduating high school students. In fact, students are less likely to be hired and less likely to maintain a job if they can't write and communicate adequately. Writing is a necessary tool for students to achieve professional success and advancement.

Musgrove (2006) explained that part of the problem is that students do not really know how to write. Therefore, instructors should teach students to learn to value and care about what they are writing. Musgrove (2006) offered a solution by proposing that all institutions of higher learning adopt policies requiring faculty to challenge their students' writing proficiency. In addition, all faculty should take writing across the curriculum more seriously; come to agreement regarding minimum standards of proficiency; and develop more consistent ways of assigning, responding, and evaluating writing.

Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* (2011) added that colleges and universities are partly to blame because they have made it easy for students to get a degree without taking difficult courses. In fact, academic rigor is lacking and the number of students “just getting by” is increasing. In a 2009 study conducted by Professor Richard Arum of New York University (available at higheredsrsrc.org) and cited by Herbert, 45% of the students evaluated made no significant improvement in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and communication skills during their college career. The problem of college students lacking in writing skills is generally agreed upon in academia (Shaughnessy, 1996). Madden and Laurence (1994) questioned if this trend can be reversed in the future if no one has sufficient knowledge of the English language to provide the necessary instruction in writing skills.

Professional Development

Faculty professional development emerged from this review of the literature as a key component to engaging faculty in the challenge to improve students’ writing skills. Hampson (2009), Assistant to the Executive Vice President of Special Projects at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, outlined the successful professional development program established as part of their Quality Enhancement Plan. Their program consisted of two semesters of professional development that provided faculty with training based on incorporating writing into the courses they teach. The goal of the training was to increase the number of process-based writing assignments and to initiate a change in faculty attitudes. Faculty were exposed to the following topics:

- write to learn
- the differences between writing to learn, writing to communicate and writing to be assessed
- writing and the issue of audience

- writing as process
- designing a variety of writing assignments
- responding to student writing
- basics of English grammar

As a result of this professional development, faculty at Caldwell Community College have learned to work collaboratively with their colleagues, created innovative writing assignments across the disciplines, improved the quality of instruction, and revitalized an interest in using technology as an instructional tool. Faculty participated on a voluntary basis and were provided stipends for facilitating at conferences, completing two semesters of training, and incorporating writing-to-learn activities into their courses.

Writing Center

While a writing center is not a specific part of the NTCC QEP, *Write Smart*, the current literature revealed that writing centers serve as a valuable tool to enhance and improve writing skills, to increase the perception of the value of writing campus-wide, and to build and reinforce a strong college writing community. Current plans to utilize the NTCC Academic Skills Center, peer tutoring, and faculty mentoring warrants a review of best practices regarding college writing centers. In fact, the literature revealed that writing laboratories or centers are a standard service facility on most college campuses where students, faculty, and staff are provided with free assistance on projects from papers and research to reports and multimodal documents.

Nelson-Burns and Wilson (2007) observed that students often visit the writing center to request help with writing in areas that differ from the skills and weaknesses faculty have identified as problem areas. In fact, students most often ask for help in content, language and expression, and dealing with instructors' assignments. In contrast, faculty identified eight areas in which their students needed specific help including: proofreading, draft revision, editing assistance, organization and development

recommendations, response development, grammar, citations, and research. This contrast between student and faculty expectations reflects the need to place a different emphasis on the components of a writing assignment that need improvement.

Some institutions also offer an OWL, an Online Writing Lab, which generally attempts to follow the model of writing center tutoring in an online environment. Moberg (2010) stated that the online writing centers are typically outgrowths of the brick and mortar facilities on campus. Colleges and universities are taking advantage of the decreased costs and convenience for students. Moberg (2010) added that online technology should be seen as a tool and not a “magic wand.” Online writing centers are usually successful when the following practices and methods are utilized: well-trained tutors, effective leadership and organization, and adequate online resources.

Additionally, some students only visit the writing center because an instructor required them to as part of the assignment. Or, they do not visit because they are not sure how the writing center would help them improve their writing. Writing center personnel must educate faculty on writing center goals and purposes aimed at aiding students in the process of generating ideas, organizing thoughts, developing a first draft, proofreading, revising, and editing (Nelson-Burns & Wilson, 2007).

Writing Assessment

Brand (1992) stated that the writing skills of college freshmen should be assessed upon entering college with a placement test. The essay placement test is then compared to an end-of-course evaluation to determine the value and improvement in skills experienced by the students.

Another form of assessment gaining in popularity is the use of the portfolio. Rhodes (2011) stated that 40% of all college campuses reported using student e-portfolios. This method allows the assessment of several examples of the student’s writing skills and illustrates the process as well as the end product (Brand, 1992). Click and Magruder

(2004) agreed and noted that electronic portfolios exhibit an organized and purposeful collection of completed work. This collection of work, completed over a period of time, provides a “perfect tool” for assessing learning. However, good electronic portfolios require good development. Click and Magruder (2004) described four essential practices for meaningful assessment, good tutorial practice, and effective electronic portfolio development including: (a) stressing collaboration, revision, and reflection, (b) emphasizing improvement of student learning rather than penalizing students for weak papers, temporarily putting aside the paralyzing effect of grades, (c) promoting and valuing formative (process-oriented) work, and (d) providing flexibility in handling different skill and interest levels of students.

In addition, Rhodes (2011) revealed that 35% of employers indicated they would like to review students’ work in e-portfolios. The increased interest in the use of e-portfolios stems from the increased interest and accountability requirements for measuring students’ outcomes from regional and professional accrediting organizations. In addition, faculty acknowledged the use of e-portfolios provides additional information that existing tests do not address including: personal and social responsibility, teamwork, intercultural knowledge and competence, and integrative learning. Also, e-portfolios provide a means to collect assignments and showcase students’ accomplishments in non-classroom settings. Rhodes (2011) noted that e-portfolios also require students to reflect on their own learning providing an essential way for students to speak in their own voices, increase their capacity for critical thinking, and participate in self-assessment.

Another method of assessment commonly used by faculty to evaluate writing is the common rubric. Flateby (2005) developed the Cognitive Level and Quality of Writing Assessment (CLAQWA) rubric to provide a more consistent approach to writing assessments. The CLAQWA provides faculty with a method of assessment of students’ papers based on 17 important skills typically associated with effective writing. The

CLAQWA encourages faculty to “consciously consider the cognitive level expected for an assignment, provides a tool for students’ self and peer review and for understanding faculty feedback, and facilitates a multidisciplinary approach to writing assessment.” The 17 skills are divided into five categories: assignment parameters, structured integrity, reasoning and focus, language, and grammar and mechanics. Flateby (2005) suggested the use of the CLAQWA along with the Lee Knefelkamp, Carol Widick, and William Moore’s Measure of Intellectual Development (MID) revealed two areas needing improvement in students’ writing skills: (a) students’ written ideas were underdeveloped and (b) the details they supply are not consistent with the main idea of the essay. Faculty using these assessment methods reported a change in practice including the use of the CLAQWA in their class assessments, an increased consideration for cognitive levels in students’ writing, and an improvement in their own writing skills.

Conclusion

This review of the literature confirmed the anecdotal evidence that college students’ writing abilities have declined over the past 20 years. The literature revealed that students and faculty have conflicting ideas on the value of writing, different perceptions of what constitutes college level writing, and the “best methods” to enhance or improve writing instruction and students’ writing and vocabulary skills. Many ideas are outlined in the literature as methods to improve writing and vocabulary skills including: faculty professional development, writing assessment from non-English faculty, writing across the disciplines/curriculum, writing labs, electronic portfolio assessment, standardized rubric assessments, and “teaching” the value of writing.

The current literature focuses on assessment strategies as the means to solve the problems associated with the declining writing and vocabulary skills prevalent in higher education. Administrators, regional accrediting bodies, and faculty will continue to review the problems associated with college preparedness, writing and vocabulary skills, and

instructional and assessment methods far into the future. The NTCC QEP Committee will carefully consider the best practices reviewed in the literature to specifically plan the actions to be implemented in the *Write Smart* QEP.

VI. *Write Smart* Implementation Actions

The actions selected for the implementation of NTCC's QEP *Write Smart* are intended to promote student success in the areas of standard writing skills improvement and vocabulary development. These actions will accomplish the goal of the *Write Smart* QEP including: professional development, student success initiatives to improve writing; and the assessment of the *Write Smart* program and student learning outcomes. The implementation of *Write Smart* will begin with a year of planning in 2013/2014. A *Write Smart* pilot program will be initiated during 2014/2015. After assessment of the pilot program, the pilot program course will continue to use successful components of the *Write Smart* methods to improve the writing and vocabulary skills of students. The implementation team will select two additional courses to participate in the *Write Smart* program during 2015/2016. All three courses will continue to be included in the program and data collection process during 2016/2017. Ongoing evaluation and assessment will be utilized to improve the program during the five-year implementation period. The fifth year will involve assessment, reflection, and writing the Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report.

Write Smart will achieve its goal by implementing the following actions:

Action 1: *Write Smart* Faculty Professional Development:

- Recruitment and selection of NTCC *Write Smart* Implementation Director, *Write Smart* Implementation Committee, *Write Smart* faculty facilitators, and *Write Smart* faculty mentors to implement program and conduct activities. These individuals will be responsible for the implementation phase of all *Write Smart* activities.

- Faculty and staff orientation will be provided during in-service to create *Write Smart* awareness, encourage broad based involvement, and to present *Write Smart* program activities to the NTCC college community.
- *Write Smart* workshops will be provided to train *Write Smart* faculty to incorporate writing assignments and discipline specific writing assignments into their courses for the purpose of improving the writing skills' of NTCC students. In addition, faculty will receive training and encouragement to incorporate discipline specific vocabulary into their courses to promote vocabulary development.
- *Write Smart* faculty mentors will attend professional development activities designed to introduce faculty to mentoring strategies for writing improvement, vocabulary development activities, and to increase student/faculty communications. Faculty office hours will be used for this activity to encourage student interactions.
- The *Write Smart* Faculty and Implementation Team will attend professional development activities including 4-C's (Conference on College Composition and Communication) and the SACSCOC Annual Conference.

Action 2: Implement *Write Smart* student success initiatives to improve students' writing skills and vocabulary development including the following activities:

- The *Write Smart* Implementation Director and Committee will select the first class to participate in the *Write Smart* pilot program during the planning year of the implementation phase. The course selection will be based on specific criteria defined by the implementation team including the following: a course that is TSI (Texas Success Initiative) compliant, a course that isn't typically writing intensive but does include some writing in the curriculum, a course with multiple sections for data comparison, the availability and willingness of the faculty member, and a course whose students would benefit from the *Write Smart* program.

- The faculty member who is teaching the *Write Smart* pilot program courses will re-design the course curriculum as needed to incorporate writing skills improvement strategies and to increase discipline specific usage in writing assignments. The faculty member will also utilize digital modes of instruction, tutoring, and assessment including the use of a class website, automated essay scoring, Learning Express (an online tutoring resource), and Blackboard discussions.
- Students enrolled in the *Write Smart* pilot program course will be given a pre- test at the beginning of the Fall semester during the second year of implementation. The NTCC English faculty will provide a rubric for this assessment. Each writing and vocabulary sample will be read by at least two volunteer faculty members to assess the students' level of writing ability and vocabulary usage. The students will be given a post-test at the end of the semester to determine their level of improvement, the success of the program, and to collect data for comparison to other *Write Smart* courses.
- All students in the *Write Smart* pilot program will be assigned a faculty mentor and required to interact with their faculty mentor 2 -3 hours per week. Students who are identified as deficient in writing skills and vocabulary depth will also be required to utilize the NTCC Academic Skills Center for faculty and/or student tutoring, to access online tutoring resources, and to participate in small group learning as assigned. The NTCC English faculty will participate in the tutoring activities during their office hours. Paid student tutors will be trained to work in the Academic Skills Center to provide tutoring in writing and vocabulary to *Write Smart* students.
- Marketing activities will be implemented to recruit faculty and students to volunteer as faculty or student tutors. Faculty will receive a one-course release

- from their teaching load for participation in the *Write Smart* program. Students will be trained and paid for their tutoring services.
- Broad based involvement of the NTCC college community is necessary to ensure the success of the *Write Smart* program. Continuous updates and presentations will be given to NTCC faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees during meetings, orientations, and in-service activities. Marketing strategies will be utilized to ensure the college community is well informed about the *Write Smart* program and the improvement of NTCC students' writing and vocabulary skills. Surveys will be administered to faculty, staff, and students to collect data regarding suggestions and ideas for improving the program.
 - The NTCC Administration and Board of Trustees will provide adequate resources to sustain the implementation of the *Write Smart* program including the following budgeted requests: professional development for faculty, staff, and students; faculty release time for participating in *Write Smart* program; release time for the *Write Smart* implementation director; student tutoring services; online tutoring contracts similar to Learning Express (currently available at NTCC); software for automated essay scoring; and other operational costs.

Action 3: Assessment of student learning outcomes and program

- "*Write Smart*" students' writing skills and vocabulary usage will be assessed upon enrollment in *Write Smart* courses. The *Write Smart* faculty will utilize a pre- and post-testing rubric designed by the English faculty. The rubric will be designed to embed the *Write Smart* student learning outcomes in the assessment.
- In addition, *Write Smart* students will be assessed by utilizing faculty mentor reports, Academic Skills Center tutors' evaluations, instructor grades and evaluations, student peer reviews, and automated essay scoring. The assessments will be used to provide better advising; to assign faculty mentors; to

document the success of the student learning outcomes; to improve the *Write Smart* program; and evaluate improvement in writing and vocabulary skills.

- Results of all assessments will be used to plan for the second phase of implementation and the selection of the next courses to participate in the program

VII. Implementation Timeline

The implementation of the NTCC QEP will start during the fall of 2013 after SACSCOC determines the NTCC QEP is acceptable. The first year will include planning activities and training for key personnel including the implementation director, faculty mentors, student tutors, and the *Write Smart* program faculty. During the fall of 2014, the pilot program will be implemented. The following 2015 spring semester, the assessment data from the fall will be evaluated and contribute to the selection of the courses and potential methodology for participation in the third year of the program. The three courses selected for the pilot and the first year of implementation will continue to participate in the program through 2016/2017. The fifth year of the implementation phase will consist of evaluation and writing the Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report for SACSCOC. Annual evaluations and modifications to the plan will ensure sustainability and success of the program.

**Table 3
QEP Implementation Timeline**

2013-2014- Activities	
Fall 2013	Spring 2014
Faculty and staff orientation will be provided during in-service to create <i>Write Smart</i> awareness, encourage broad based involvement, and to present <i>Write Smart</i> program activities to the NTCC college community.	Continue broad based involvement of the college community by providing presentations at college in-service, faculty meetings, Board of Trustees meetings, and professional development activities.
Recruitment and selection of key personnel to implement the <i>Write Smart</i> program. Personnel will be identified and named. This will include an Implementation Director, the Implementation Committee, faculty mentors, and the faculty member to teach the pilot course.	Train personnel to plan the implementation process with planning, data review, professional development, actions for implementation, and assessment plan. Identify course for pilot program. Pilot program instructor receives training and professional development.
Key personnel and student tutors will attend workshops, receive training, attend conferences and participate in professional development activities as needed.	Key personnel and student tutors will attend workshops, receive training, attend conferences and participate in professional development activities as needed.
The <i>Write Smart</i> implementation team will	Continue assessment and modification of

assess and modify implementation plan and timeline as needed.	implementation plan and timeline as needed.
The Implementation Director will secure online tutoring contracts, automated essay scoring software, and other software as needed.	NTCC English faculty will develop rubric, assist in re-designing curriculum, and train faculty member selected for pilot program. Select and recruit faculty to assist in faculty mentoring.
Planning phase of online component: Train faculty and student tutors to use automated essay scoring, Learning Express, Blackboard, and develop the implementation website.	Continue planning phase of online component: Train faculty and student tutors to use automated essay scoring, Learning Express, Blackboard, and develop the Implementation website.
2014-2015- Activities	
Fall 2014	Spring 2015
Begin pilot program with identified course. Pre- and post- diagnostic testing of all students enrolled in identified course. Students will be assigned a faculty mentor, specialized adviser, student peer group, and scheduled time in Academic Skills Center for tutoring from faculty and students.	Analyze, compile, and assess data from Fall 2014. Use results to identify problems and make improvements in course curriculum, student learning outcomes, faculty training, student tutoring, Academic Skills Center, and electronic resources
Pilot program instructor delivers a re-designed course that includes writing intensive and discipline specific vocabulary assignments. <i>Write Smart</i> student learning outcomes will be embedded into curriculum. Student results are compared to mirror course.	Identify two additional disciplines to be included in the <i>Write Smart</i> program for Fall 2015 based on <i>Write Smart</i> program data, student evaluations, faculty mentor reports, and Academic Skills Center evaluations.
Technology: Students will be trained to use Learning Express for tutoring, to access digital modes of instruction including Blackboard, automated essay scoring, and class websites.	Evaluation of usage and effectiveness of Learning Express, automated essay scoring, Blackboard, and class websites. Use the results to plan for Fall 2015.
Faculty mentors work one-on-one with students enrolled in pilot program. Faculty utilize office hours for faculty mentoring.	Professional development. Train faculty from two additional disciplines or courses selected to participate in the <i>Write Smart</i> program during the Fall of 2015.
Assessment of students in pilot program at the end of the semester to determine level of improvement. Use assessment to modify <i>Write Smart</i> in the next phase of implementation.	Continuation of instructional strategies utilized in pilot course. Continue documentation of results.
Students and faculty participating in the program will be surveyed to evaluate program.	Ongoing assessment of program.
2015-2016- Activities	
Fall 2015	Spring 2016
Identify two new courses to participate in the <i>Write Smart</i> program. Pre- and post-diagnostic testing of all students enrolled in identified courses. Students will be assigned	Analyze, compile, and assess data from Fall 2015. Use results to identify problems and make improvements in course design, curriculum, student learning outcomes, faculty training,

a faculty mentor, specialized adviser, student peer group, and scheduled time in Academic Skills Center for tutoring from faculty and students. Pilot program course continues instructional methods of <i>Write Smart</i> program.	student tutoring, Academic Skills Center, and electronic resources
<i>Write Smart</i> program instructors deliver re-designed courses that include writing intensive and discipline specific vocabulary assignments. <i>Write Smart</i> student learning outcomes will be embedded into curriculum. Student results are compared to other <i>Write Smart</i> courses.	Continue application of <i>Write Smart</i> program to courses identified for Fall 2015. Continue analysis and tracking of <i>Write Smart</i> program data, student evaluations, faculty mentor reports, and Academic Skills Center evaluations.
Technology: Students will be trained to use Learning Express for tutoring, to access digital modes of instruction including Blackboard, automated essay scoring, and class websites.	Continue evaluation of usage and effectiveness of Learning Express, automated essay scoring, Blackboard, and class websites. Use the results to plan for Fall 2016. Make changes and improvements as necessary.
Faculty mentors work one-on-one with students enrolled in pilot program. Faculty utilize office hours for faculty mentoring.	Professional development. Continue to train faculty designated to teach courses selected to participate in the <i>Write Smart</i> program during the Fall of 2016.
Assessment of students enrolled in <i>Write Smart</i> program at the end of the semester to determine level of improvement. Use assessment to modify <i>Write Smart</i> in the Spring 2016 semester.	Review and analysis of instructional strategies utilized in pilot course. Continue documentation of results.
2016-2017- Activities	
Fall 2016	Spring 2017
Continue application of <i>Write Smart</i> program to 3 courses identified in pilot program and first year of implementation. Pre- and post-diagnostic testing of all students enrolled in identified courses. Students will be assigned a faculty mentor, specialized adviser, student peer group, and scheduled time in Academic Skills Center for tutoring from faculty and students. Pilot program course continues instructional methods of <i>Write Smart</i> program.	Analyze, compile, and assess data from Fall 2016. Use results to identify problems and make improvements in course design, curriculum, student learning outcomes, faculty training, student tutoring, Academic Skills Center, and electronic resources. Prepare to write SACSCOC Impact Report.
<i>Write Smart</i> program instructors deliver re-designed courses that include writing intensive and discipline specific vocabulary assignments. <i>Write Smart</i> student learning outcomes will be embedded into curriculum. Student results are compared to other <i>Write Smart</i> courses.	Continue application of <i>Write Smart</i> program to courses identified for Fall 2016. Continue analysis and tracking of <i>Write Smart</i> program data, student evaluations, faculty mentor reports, and Academic Skills Center evaluations.
Technology: Students will be trained to use Learning Express for tutoring, to access	Continue evaluation of usage and effectiveness of Learning Express, automated essay scoring,

digital modes of instruction including Blackboard, automated essay scoring, and class websites.	Blackboard, and class websites. Make changes and improvements as necessary. Use the results to write SACSCOC QEP Impact Report during the last year of implementation.
Faculty mentors work one-on-one with students enrolled in pilot program. Faculty mentors will make office hours available for <i>Write Smart</i> student interactions.	Professional development. Continue to train faculty designated to teach courses selected to participate in the <i>Write Smart</i> program to make a positive impact on students' success in writing and vocabulary improvement.
Assessment of students enrolled in <i>Write Smart</i> program at the end of the semester to determine level of improvement. Use assessment to modify <i>Write Smart</i> in the Spring 2017 semester and prepare to write the SACSCOC Impact Report.	Continuation of instructional strategies utilized in <i>Write Smart</i> program. Continue documentation of results.
2017-2018- Activities	
Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Continue the <i>Write Smart</i> program to make a positive impact on the improvement of students' writing and vocabulary skills.	Continue the <i>Write Smart</i> program to make a positive impact on the improvement of students' writing and vocabulary skills.
Collect, analyze, and assess data collected from courses selected for the <i>Write Smart</i> program. Data will be use to begin writing the Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report.	Continue writing The Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report. The report will be due to SACSCOC during the Fall 2018 semester.

VIII. Organizational Structure

To implement the *Write Smart* Program, the NTCC Administration will select a *Write Smart* Implementation Director. The Implementation Director will be responsible for the oversight, planning, administration, implementation, assessment, and revision of the *Write Smart* QEP. This individual will be compensated with a two-course release in teaching load. The *Write Smart* Implementation Director is considered a half-time position. The position will include the following responsibilities:

- Provide administrative leadership for the planning, implementation, assessment, and revision of the *Write Smart* QEP
- Chair the *Write Smart* Implementation Committee and coordinate meetings and activities of the committee
- Submit an annual budget request for equipment, software, personnel, and supplies as needed
- Manage the *Write Smart* budget
- Recruit and provide training for faculty mentors, *Write Smart* faculty, and student tutors
- Coordinate, plan, and oversee *Write Smart* professional development activities
- Design, conduct and evaluate faculty and student surveys
- Utilize assessment to evaluate and improve the *Write Smart* program goal and achievement of the *Write Smart* student learning outcomes
- Follow SACSCOC guidelines, policies, and standards for compliance
- Design a process, report progress, and submit an annual program evaluation report to the office of the Executive Vice-President for Instruction
- Maintain records and complete five year impact report

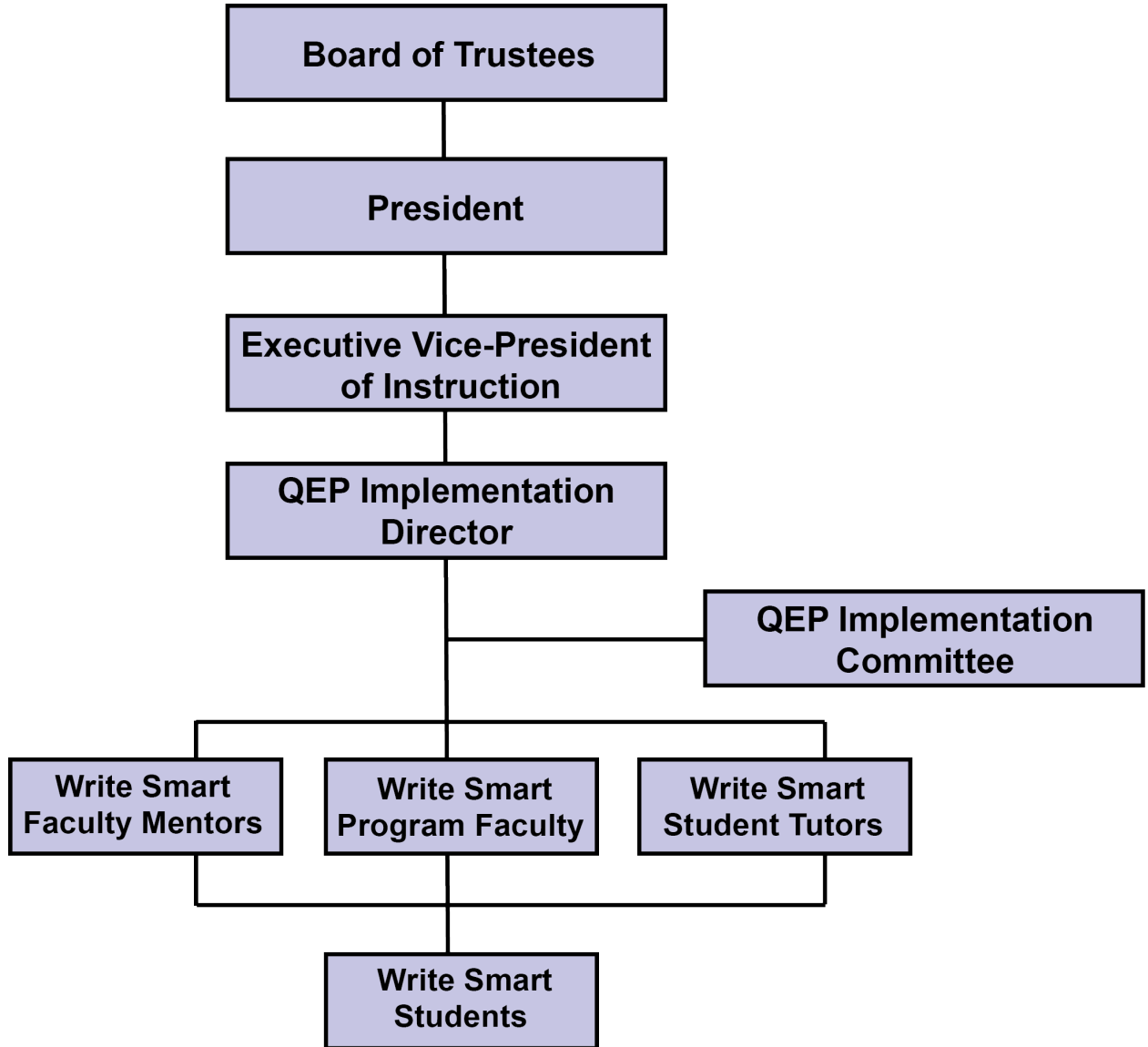
In addition, a *Write Smart* Implementation Committee will serve as a support team for the *Write Smart* Director. The Committee will be chaired by the Director and will include representatives from academic departments, English faculty, *Write Smart* program faculty, academic services, and Institutional Effectiveness. The committee will be charged with the following tasks:

- Assist and support the *Write Smart* Implementation Director with the planning, implementation, assessment, and revision of the *Write Smart* QEP including the following components:
 - Faculty professional development
 - Faculty mentors and student tutors
 - Faculty and student surveys
 - Program evaluation and reporting
 - Budget planning, submission, and management
 - *Write Smart* Five Year Impact Report
- Attend committee meetings and *Write Smart* professional development activities
- Follow SACSCOC guidelines, policies, and standards for compliance

The *Write Smart* Implementation Director and *Write Smart* Committee will select the *Write Smart* program faculty who will teach the *Write Smart* courses. The program faculty will receive a one-course release in teaching load for teaching *Write Smart* courses. The faculty participating in the program will attend professional development activities and re-design course curriculum to include discipline specific writing and vocabulary assignments.

Write Smart Organizational Chart:

Figure 9



IX. Resources

NTCC is committed to improving NTCC students’ success through the enhancement of writing skills and vocabulary usage. The following resources will be allocated to meet the goals of the NTCC QEP and to provide a quality writing initiative for NTCC students. The NTCC Administration has communicated their full support for the implementation of the NTCC QEP and providing adequate resources to implement and sustain the initiative.

**Table 4
Write Smart Five-Year Budget Proposal**

Professional Development	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
3 attendees SACSCOC Conference	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
Training, workshops, conferences	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
Personnel	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
QEP Implementation Director- release time	6,400.00	6,400.00	6,400.00	6,400.00	6,400.00
Faculty Release Time Pilot Course		1,600.00 Fall semester			
Faculty Release Time 3 faculty members – one course each.			4,800.00 Fall semester	4,800.00 Fall semester	
Student Tutors- 20-40 hrs week @10.00 per hr x 15 weeks.		20 hrs x 10.00 ph x 15 weeks= 3,000.00	40 hrs x 10.00 ph x 15 weeks= 6,000.00	40 hrs x 10.00 ph x 15 weeks= 6,000.00	

Northeast Texas Community College

Faculty Mentors- release time – one course each Fall semesters		3 faculty members – 1 course each – fall semester 4,800.00	9 faculty members fall semester 14,400.00	9 faculty members fall semester 14,400.00	
Other	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Instructional Supplies	500.00	1000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Online Tutoring Contract 100 hours x 30.00 per hr.	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	
Printing	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Postage	200.00	200.00	200.00	200.00	200.00
Photocopying	750.00	750.00	750.00	750.00	750.00
Office Supplies	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Computer Software- Learning Express, Turnitin.com	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Totals	\$26,350.00	\$36,250.00	\$52,050.00	\$52,050.00	\$22,650.00
Adjusted Totals	\$26,350.00	\$37,337.50	\$55,219.85	\$56,876.44	\$25,492.77

* Totals adjusted for 3% inflation per year

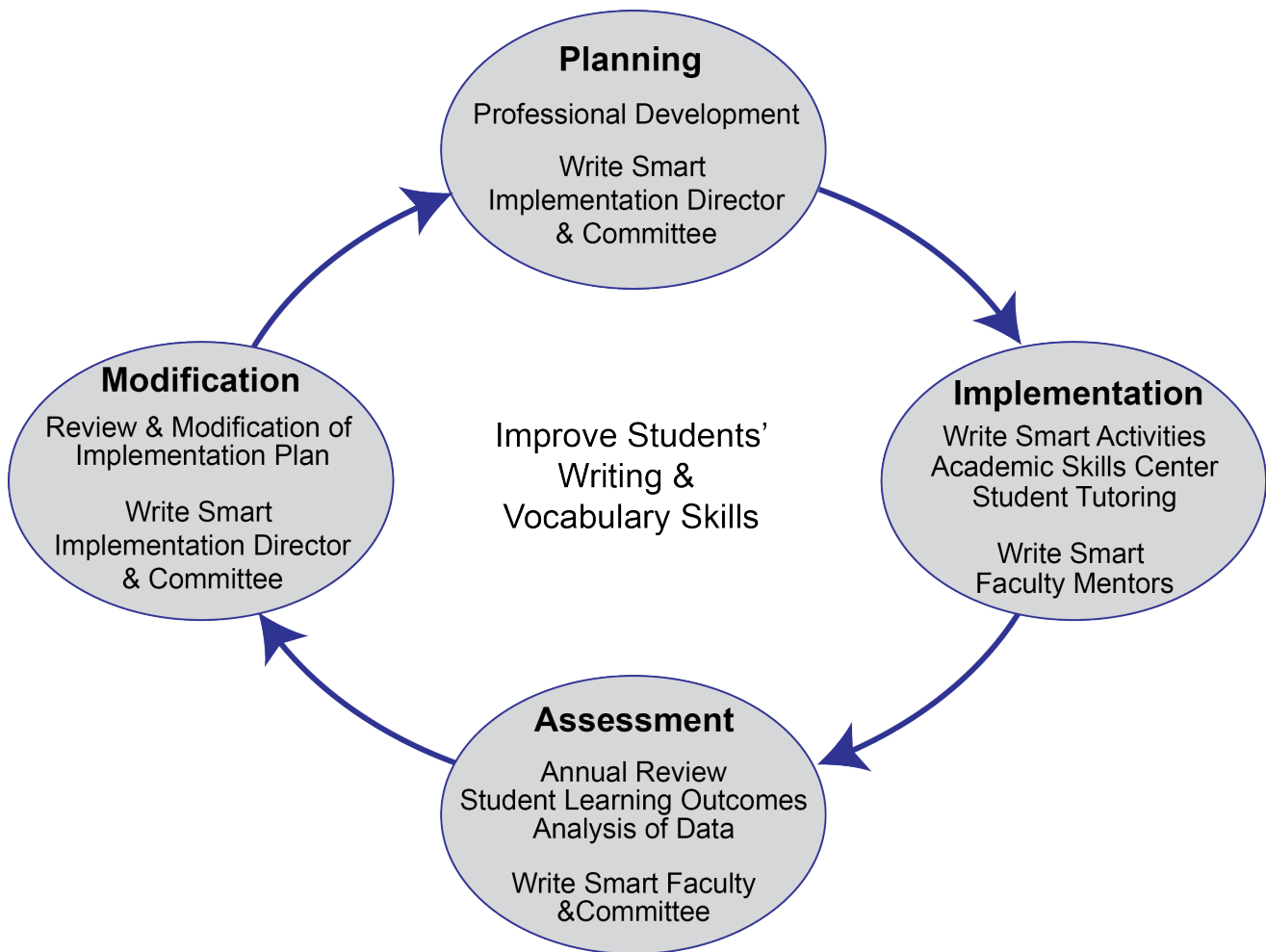
X. *Write Smart* Assessment Plan

NTCC recognizes the importance of utilizing both formative and summative assessment methods in determining the success of the *Write Smart* Program. The *Write Smart* Implementation Director and committee will begin the implementation plan the first year of the program and assess all areas including meeting the *Write Smart* goal of enhancing students' writing and vocabulary skills, the effectiveness of the implemented actions and strategies, the level of achievement of the student learning outcomes, and the success of the overall program. The review process supports the emphasis on evaluation as outlined in the NTCC Strategic Plan and results will be reported to the office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. Annual review, analysis, and modifications in the assessment plan will determine if the *Write Smart* Program is effectively improving students' writing and vocabulary skills. Adjustments to the program will be made annually and documented in the Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report. Additionally, the Executive Vice-President for Instruction and the President's Cabinet will receive annual reports of the planning, implementation, review, and modification process of the implementation plan.

The *Write Smart* faculty will begin implementation by integrating the *Write Smart* student learning outcomes into *Write Smart* courses and curriculum. The faculty participating in *Write Smart* will participate in professional development related to the assessment of the *Write Smart* student learning outcomes. *Write Smart* faculty will report results of students' improvement in writing and vocabulary skills to the *Write Smart* Implementation Director and the results will be included in the annual *Write Smart* program evaluation. The *Write Smart* Implementation Director and committee will supervise revisions to the *Write Smart* student learning outcomes and modifications to the assessment plan.

The *Write Smart* assessment plan provides a process for the *Write Smart* Implementation Director, the *Write Smart* committee, the office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, the *Write Smart* faculty, and the administration of the college to determine the success of the *Write Smart* program. The assessment process will identify any areas that need improvement and provide continuous planning, implementation, assessment, and modification. The assessment process is illustrated in Figure 10 below:

Figure 10



Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The NTCC QEP Student Learning Outcomes were written to assess what students should know, do, or believe to produce effective college writing. The following reflects how the *Write Smart* Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed.

1. ***Write Smart* Student Learning Outcome One:** Illustrate effective college writing using standard writing processes and mechanics.

The *Write Smart* Program requires that all students enrolled in *Write Smart* courses be assessed to determine students' proficiencies in standard writing skills and vocabulary usage.

Assessment One - Writing skills and vocabulary usage pre-test

(Appendix V)

A pre-test will be utilized to determine *Write Smart* students' entry-level writing and vocabulary skills. The pre-test will be administered at the beginning of the semester to all students enrolled in *Write Smart* courses.

Assessment Two - Writing skills and vocabulary usage post-test

(Appendix V)

Students enrolled in *Write Smart* courses will be given a post-test at the end of the semester. The pre- and post-test will be compared and analyzed to determine the level of improvement in writing and vocabulary skills since the beginning of the semester.

Intended Results: Students who complete *Write Smart* Courses will show improvement in standard writing and vocabulary skills.

***Write Smart* Benchmark: *Write Smart* students will improve their score on the post-test by 10% above their score of the pre- test.**

2. **Write Smart Student Learning Outcome Two:** Compose original college writing that utilizes critical thinking to analyze and reflect on readings, contemporary ideas, personal experiences, and multiple viewpoints.

**Assessment One – Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric
(Appendix VI)**

Assessment of writing assignments will be completed using the *Write Smart* Writing and Vocabulary Rubric designed to measure the utilization of critical thinking to analyze and reflect on readings, contemporary ideas, personal experiences, originality, and multiple viewpoints. The *Write Smart* Rubric will be standardized and used in all *Write Smart* courses.

Intended Results: Students who complete *Write Smart* Courses will demonstrate improvement in composing original college writing that utilizes critical thinking to analyze and reflect on readings, contemporary ideas, personal experiences, and multiple viewpoints.

***Write Smart* Benchmark: 75% of *Write Smart* students will earn an average of C or better on their writing assignments in *Write Smart* courses.**

3. **Write Smart Student Learning Outcome Three:** Integrate college level and discipline specific vocabulary into assignments such as writing compositions, lab reports, research papers, and essays.

**Assessment One – Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric
(Appendix VI)**

Assessment of vocabulary usage will be completed using the *Write Smart* Writing and Vocabulary Rubric designed to measure the level of discipline specific vocabulary used in all *Write Smart* writing assignments. The *Write Smart* Writing and Vocabulary Grading Rubric will be standardized and used in all *Write Smart* courses.

**Assessment Two - Writing skills and vocabulary usage pre- and post-test
(Appendix V)**

Students enrolled in *Write Smart* courses will be given a post-test at the end of the semester. The pre- and post-test will be compared and analyzed to determine the level of improvement in vocabulary usage since the beginning of the semester.

Intended Results: Students who complete *Write Smart* Courses will show improvement in vocabulary skills.

***Write Smart* Benchmark: All *Write Smart* Students will demonstrate a 10% improvement in their grade from the pre-test to the -post test in vocabulary usage skills, college level vocabulary usage, and discipline specific vocabulary use. In addition, 75% of *Write Smart* students will earn an average of C or better on their writing assignments in *Write Smart* courses. Evidence of this achievement will be documented by collecting data from the Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric.**

Additional Strategies aimed at achieving *Write Smart* student learning outcomes

Course Level:

1. Integrate writing and vocabulary skills into course development
2. Faculty training and professional development
3. Student self-assessment surveys (Appendix VII)
4. Utilization of the Academic Skills Center including tutoring by the English faculty, peer tutoring, and small group learning.
5. Faculty emphasis on evaluation of critical thinking in writing assignments
6. Student tutor evaluations, faculty mentor evaluations, and student self evaluations to assess level of student improvement

7. Utilization of technologies including online tutoring resources, automated essay scoring, classroom websites, and blackboard discussions.
8. *Write Smart* faculty will assess student learning outcomes by completing an assessment grid after completion of each course to record the percentage of students who scored a C or better on *Write Smart* writing and vocabulary assignments. This data will be compared to a control group and subsequent students enrolled in the *Write Smart* program.

Institutional Level:

1. Institutional support for the value of good writing and enhanced vocabulary usage
2. Administrative support by providing personnel and adequate budget

Assessment of Overall *Write Smart* Program

The *Write Smart* Program strives to increase students' writing and vocabulary skills by applying focused writing opportunities for students in selected disciplines and expanding their vocabulary in the process. NTCC will have met this goal when the evaluation of student learning outcomes reveals that 75% of students who complete the *Write Smart* course will score a C or better on *Write Smart* assignments. In addition, the *Write Smart* Program will undergo an annual evaluation and review process. The review process will include an evaluation and analysis of all *Write Smart* components including program goals, student learning outcomes and achievement, *Write Smart* courses and faculty, faculty mentors, student tutors, and students' writing and vocabulary improvement. The program evaluations will provide data to aid administrators, the *Write Smart* Program Director, and The *Write Smart* Implementation Committee to make changes in the program as needed. Also, *Write Smart* program evaluations will be complemented by data collected from faculty and student surveys. The annual program evaluation data will

be used in the Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the Fifth Year Interim Report.

Conclusion

The NTCC QEP *Write Smart* program will enhance student learning by improving the writing and vocabulary skills of NTCC students enrolled in *Write Smart* program courses. The *Write Smart* program will specifically focus on improving students' writing and vocabulary skills by providing enhanced writing instruction, practice, and evaluation in disciplines other than English and developmental courses. In addition, students will participate in external learning opportunities including faculty mentoring, student and faculty tutoring, and technology resources. This collaborative effort to improve the writing and vocabulary skills of NTCC students will contribute to cultivating a college-wide value and culture for writing. The *Write Smart* program will have a positive impact on NTCC including the following possibilities:

1. Enhance the educational experience of NTCC students by improving their writing skills and vocabulary usage
2. Provide professional development for faculty and staff to improve student success in writing and vocabulary skills
3. Increase collegiality and faculty collaboration in teaching writing and discipline specific vocabulary across the disciplines
4. Improve student learning by increasing student/faculty interactions
5. Create a college-wide value for the importance of writing and vocabulary enhancement
6. Enhance the *NTCC Experience*

XI. Bibliography

- Ambron, J. (1991). History of WAC and its Role in Community Colleges. (L. C. Stanley, & J. Ambron, Eds.) *New Directions for Community Colleges* , 73.
- Brand, A. G. (1992). *Writing Assessment at the College Level*. ERIC Digest.
- Buding, G. A. (2006 May). Writing: A Necessary Tool. *Phi Delta Kappan* , 87 (9), p. 663.
- Colby, A. Y. (1986). Writing Instruction in the Two Year College. *ED272258*.
- Dobler, J. M. (1988). *Wading Across the Curriculum: A Look at Writing in Hydrobiology*. EDRS.
- Fallahi, C., Austad, R. M., Austad, C. S., & Fallahi, H. (2006). A Program for Improving Undergraduate Psychology Students' Basic Writing Skills. *Teaching of Psychology* , 33 (3), pp. 171-175.
- Farris, C., & Smith, R. (1992). Writing-Intensive Courses: Tools for Curricular Change. In S. H. McLeod, & M. Soven (Eds.), *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs* (pp. 71-86). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Flateby, T. L. (2005). Maximizing Campus Responsibility for the Writing Assessment Process. *About Campus* (Assessment Matters), pp. 22-25.
- Fulwiler, T. (1984). How Well Does Writing across the Curriculum Work? . *College English* , 46 (2), 113-125.
- Glenn, D., Rae, T., & Wieder, B. (2011). At a Loss: When Students Don't Learn to Write. *Chronicle of Higher Education* , 57 (21).
- Hampson, M. P. (2009). Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute QEP: Writing Across the Curriculum Professional Development Program. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* , 33, 618-621.
- Harley, K. (1991). Contrasts in Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Writing

- Ability. *Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication*, (pp. 2-12). Boston.
- Hennessy, D., & Evans, R. (2005). Reforming Writing Among Students in Community Colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* , 29 (4), pp. 262-275.
- Hennessy, D., & Evans, R. (2006). *Small-Group Learning in the Community College Classroom*. From Red Orbit:
http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/530350/smallgroup_learning_in_the_community_college_classroom/
- Herbert, B. (2011, March 4). College the Easy Way. *The New York Times* .
- Hopper, J., & Wells, J. C. (1981). The Specific Vocabulary Needs of Academic Disciplines. *Annual Meeting of the Western College Reading Association* (pp. 1-10). Dallas: Western College Reading Association.
- Jablon, R. L. (2004). *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* , 84 (4), pp. 57-58.
- Kellogg, R. T., & Raulerson, B. A. (2007). Improving the Writing Skills of College Students. *Psychonomic Bulletin Review* , 14 (2), pp. 237-242.
- Kuriloff, P. c. (2004). Rescuing Writing Instruction: How to Save Time and Money with Technology. *Liberal Education* , pp. 36-41.
- Laurence, D., & Madden, D. (1994). An Examination of College Writing Skills: Have they Deteriorated? Eric Documentation Reproduction Services.
- Moberg, E. (2010 7-March). *The College Writing Center: Best Practices, Best Technologies*. From EBSCO: .eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED508644.pdf
- Musgrove, L. (2006). *The Real Reasons Students Can't Write*. From Inside Higher Ed: www.insidehighered.com/views/2006/04/28/musgrove
- Nelson-Burns, C., & Wilson, J. (2007). What Writing Center Conference Summaries

- Reveal About Writing Center Practices and Principles at Work. *Learning Assistance Review* , 12 (1), 29-37.
- Perkins-Gough, D. (2008). Unprepared for College. *Educational Leadership*, 66 (3), 88-89.
- Phillips, D. C., Foote, C. J., & Harper, L. J. (2008). Strategies for Effective Vocabulary Instruction. *Reading Improvement* , 45 (2).
- Rhodes, T. L. (2011). Making Learning Visible and Meaningful through Electronic Portfolios. *Chane*, pp. 6-13.
- Sanoff, A. P. (2006 10-March). A Perception Gap Over Students' Preparation. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 52 (27), pp. B9-B14, 40, 30.
- Shaughnessy, M. F., & Eastham, N. (1996). "Righting" the Writing Problem. Opinion Paper, Eastern New Mexico University.
- Shaughnessy, M. F., Seevers, R., & Thomas, J. (1999). *Forced Processing Tactics to Increase Reading Rates, Comprehension and Vocabulary Skills with College Students*. Eastern New Mexico University. European Conference on Education Reserach.
- Shaw, V. N. (2002). Peer Review as a Motivating Device in the Training of Writing Skills for College Students. *Journal of College Reading and Learning* , 33 (1), 68-76.
- Zimmerman, D., & Rodrigues, D. (1992). *Research and Writing in the Disciplines*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Appendix I: CCSSE Data Summary

Community College Survey of Student Engagement

2011 Means Summary Report - Northeast Texas Community College

All Students

Item	Variable	N	Mean
4. In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?			
1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often			
c . Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in (STUEFF)	REWR OPAP	461	2.4
d . Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources (STUEFF)	INTEG RAT	463	2.7
6. During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done at this college?			
1 = None, 2 = Between 1 and 4, 3 = Between 5 and 10, 4 = Between 11 and 20, 5 = More than 20			
b . Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment (STUEFF)	READ OWN	466	2.0
c . Number of written papers or reports of any length (ACCHALL)	WRITE ANY	464	2.7
10. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?			
0 = None, 1 = 1-5 hours, 2 = 6-10 hours, 3 = 11-20 hours, 4 = 21-30 hours, 5 = More than 30 hours			
a . Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program) (STUEFF)	ACADP R01	465	1.8

Appendix II: Preliminary Writing and Vocabulary Assignment and Assessment Rubric

Preliminary Writing And Vocabulary Assessment

General Directions: Please answer the following on this sheet and return it to your teacher.

Vocabulary: For the following 10 words, circle the correct definition.

1. **Obnoxious:** A) unpleasant B) poisonous C) a long night
2. **Esoteric:** A) sexual in nature B) after the Jurassic C) specialized knowledge
3. **Principle:** A) future king B) leader of a school C) guiding rule
4. **Alimentary:** A) digestive system B) a grade school C) illness
5. **There:** A) place B) conjunction C) possessive
6. **Ubiquitous:** A) silence please B) omnipresent C) relinquished
7. **Prolific:** A) specialized B) producing many C) focused
8. **Personnel:** A) individual B) employees C) private
9. **Tangent:** A) dark man B) two in a row C) diverging
10. **Amazing:** A) stupendous B) labyrinth C) a river in South America

Writing:

On what remains of this page and the back of the page, compose a brief essay in response to the following:

Your cultural heritage affects who you are today. Tell us something about your personal heritage that will help us know you and in what ways your cultural heritage has affected your life. You might consider one or more of these questions about who you are as your guide:

1. What are the different roles you play in your life? Student, parent, occupation, *et cetera*?
2. Who are your ancestors?
3. Where did they (or you) come from before they came to America?
4. What does your family tell you is important about your heritage?
5. What did you learn from your cultural heritage about religion, education, language, traditions, food, music, family, beliefs about other ethnic groups?

Basic Holistic Grading for Essays

Grade	Points	Characteristics
A	5	<p>Demonstrates a clear and consistent competence in response to the assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the writing task with insight and effectiveness • Is well-organized and coherently developed • Demonstrates syntactic variety • Displays facility in the use of language • Has clear explanations and illustrations • Is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure
B	4	<p>Demonstrates clear, reasonably consistent competence in response to the assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively addresses the writing task • Is generally well-organized • Is adequately developed, using appropriate examples to support ideas • Has some syntactic variety • Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating a range of vocabulary • Is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure
C	3	<p>Demonstrates adequate competence in response to the assignment with occasional errors and lapses in quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses the writing task • Is organized and somewhat developed • Has examples to support ideas • Has minimal sentence variety • Is adequate but inconsistent in facility with language, presenting some errors in grammar or diction, but not a pattern of such errors.
D	2	<p>Demonstrates developing competence, but is clearly flawed. It may demonstrate one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not effectively addresses the writing task • Inadequate organization or development • Inappropriate or insufficient details to support ideas • A pattern or accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure • Limited or inappropriate word choice
F	1	<p>Demonstrates only limited competence. It will be seriously flawed in one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization • Development • Frequent or serious errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, or word choice

Appendix III: NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey

NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey

1. How many courses do you teach in a semester that are writing intensive (3 or more writing assignments)?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

2. What type of writing do YOU do related to your job? Check all that apply.

- Reports
- Assignments
- Emails
- Surveys
- Exams/tests
- Presentations
- Handouts
- Letters
- Resumes
- Lectures
- Other

3. In an academic semester, how many papers or writing assignments do you require?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- More than 6

NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey

4. What type of writing assignments do you require each semester? Mark all that apply.

- Essays
- Medical reports
- Technical/business writing
- Short answers on tests/exams
- Short essay questions on tests/exams
- Creative writing
- Resumes
- Research papers
- Letters
- Lab reports
- Other

5. What percentage of your students' grades are based on writing assignments?

- 0-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- over 50%

6. How well prepared are your students for college level writing?

- Poorly prepared
- Slightly prepared
- Adequately prepared
- Well prepared
- No assessment

NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey

7. What percentage of your students demonstrate significant writing and/or vocabulary weaknesses?

- 0-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

8. In the last five years, the quality of your students' writing skills has:

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Declined
- Don't know

9. Mechanics: Select all areas that you feel your students need improvement.

- Penmanship/neatness
- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Verb usage
- Pronoun usage
- Noun usage
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Capitalization
- Vocabulary usage
- Audience sensitivity

NTCC Writing/Vocabulary Skills Faculty Survey

10. How can you improve or enhance your students' writing skills and vocabulary usage?

Select all that apply.

- Increase number of writing assignments
- Increase number of test/exam questions that require writing
- Writing tutors
- Vocabulary training
- Writing lab
- Faculty interaction
- Campus wide value for good writing

11. How would you rate your students' vocabulary usage in writing and communication?

- Superior
- College level
- Average
- Poor
- Don't know

12. Please provide additional comments related to your students' writing skills and vocabulary usage.

Appendix IV: Employee Writing Skills Survey

Employee Writing Skills Survey

1. How important are good writing and vocabulary skills to your job performance?

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Fairly important
- Quite important
- Very important

2. Does your supervisor evaluate your writing and vocabulary skills?

- Yes
- No

If yes, explain what type of evaluations and how they are used to improve your vocabulary and writing skills.

3. Are you provided with education or professional development to improve your writing and vocabulary skills?

- Yes
- No

If yes, describe learning opportunities you have participated in. If no, do you feel additional education or professional development would be beneficial to improving your vocabulary and writing skills?:

Employee Writing Skills Survey

4. What type of writing do YOU do related to your job? Check all that apply.

- Reports
- Assignments
- Emails
- Meeting minutes
- Surveys
- Exams/tests
- Presentations
- Handouts
- Letters
- Resumes
- Lectures
- Other

List other:

5. Mechanics: Select all areas that you feel you need improvement to complete tasks required by your job.

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Verb usage
- Pronoun usage
- Noun usage
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Capitalization
- Vocabulary usage
- Proofreading
- General report organization/structure
- Letter/email/minutes formatting and/or style
- Audience sensitivity

Employee Writing Skills Survey

6. Based on your interactions with students, how well prepared are NTCC students for college level writing?

- Poorly prepared
- Slightly prepared
- Adequately prepared
- Well prepared
- No assessment

7. Based on your interactions with students, what percentage of students demonstrate significant vocabulary and writing weaknesses?

- 0-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%
- NA- I don't work with students

***8. What can NTCC do to improve or enhance vocabulary and writing skills of our students, faculty, and staff?**

Appendix V: Write Smart Writing and Vocabulary Pre- and Post-Test

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

General Directions: Please answer the following on this sheet and return it to your teacher.

Vocabulary: For the following 10 words, circle the correct definition.

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Communicable: | A) pleasant | B) infectious | C) capable |
| 2. Orientation: | A) singular | B) Oriental descent | C) physical position |
| 3. Futuristic: | A) movement | B) ultramodern | C) historical |
| 4. Actuary: | A) statistical analyst | B) accountant | C) actual |
| 5. Merit: | A) simple | B) married | C) worthy |
| 6. Vocational: | A) vacation spot | B) occupation | C) inspirational |
| 7. Prolific: | A) specialized | B) producing many | C) focused |
| 8. Personnel: | A) individual | B) employees | C) private |
| 9. Technique: | A) execution of task | B) definition | C) television |
| 10. Verbal: | A) related to words | B) verge | C) stylistic |

QEP PRE-TEST Essay

Compose a brief essay in response to the following:

Each of the college classes you participate in will play a vital role as you work toward achieving your academic objectives. Tell us why you chose to take this particular course and how you think it will help with the educational and professional goals you have set for yourself.

You might consider some of the following questions as you write your essay:

1. What importance do I place on learning the material that will be covered in this course?
2. How do I envision this course benefiting me in the future?
3. What do I plan to do once I finish college, and how will academic courses like this one help me attain a career in that profession?

QEP POST-TEST Essay

Compose a brief essay in response to the following:

Each of the college classes you participate in will play a vital role as you work toward achieving your academic objectives. Tell us what you have learned in this course that you think will help with your educational and professional goals.

You might consider some of the following questions as you write your essay:

1. What importance do I place on learning the material that was covered in this course?
2. How do I envision this course benefiting me in the future?
3. What do I plan to do once I finish college, and how will academic courses like this one help me attain a career in that profession?

Appendix VI: Write Smart Writing and Vocabulary Assessment Rubric

Write Smart Rubric for Grading Writing Assignments

Student's Name _____ Date: _____ Course: _____ Assignment: _____

A = 90-100 B = 80-90 C = 70-80 D = 60-70 F = 0-59

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Comments or Suggestions	Score 0-100 points
Assignment	Addresses the writing task with insight and effectiveness	Effectively addresses the writing task	Addresses the writing task	Does not effectively address the writing task		
Organization	Is well-organized and coherently developed	Is generally well-organized and beginning to manipulate accepted patterns for the writer's own usage	Has a rudimentary organization pattern	Inadequate organization		
Development	Demonstrates critical thinking, and is consistently developed through explanations and illustrations	Adequate evidence of critical thinking and uses appropriate examples to support ideas	Has examples to support ideas and is beginning to demonstrate critical thinking skills	Inappropriate or insufficient expression of critical thinking		
Mechanics	Demonstrates syntactic variety and is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure	Has some syntactic variety and is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure	Has minimal sentence variety, inconsistent facility with language, errors in grammar or diction, but not a pattern of such errors	A pattern or accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure		
Vocabulary	Displays facility in the use of language and uses discipline specific vocabulary as appropriate for this assignment	Demonstrates a range of vocabulary and is beginning to understand terms specific to the discipline	Demonstrates rudimentary competence with subject vocabulary, but often relies on repetitive or simplistic wordage	Limited or inappropriate word choice		
Grade	Average scores from all rubric areas for final grade.					
Additional Comments:						

Appendix VII: Write Smart Student Assessment Survey Example

1. Did participating in this Write Smart course help you improve your writing and vocabulary skills?

- Yes
- No

2. Were you adequately advised before enrolling in this enhanced writing class?

- Yes
- No

3. Did you use the Academic Skills Center to help you with your writing and vocabulary assignments?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how often?

4. Do you feel the writing and vocabulary instruction and practice from this class will help you with other college classes or your career?

- Yes
- No

5. How satisfied are you with the help you received from student tutors?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Did not use tutors

6. How helpful was the increased interaction with tutors and faculty mentors to your writing and vocabulary improvement?

- Extremely helpful
- Helpful
- Not helpful
- Didn't interact with faculty or tutors

7. Which online tutoring or technology resources did you use to enhance your writing and/or vocabulary during this course?

- Blackboard
- Class website
- Learning Express
- Turn-it-in
- Other technology resources

Other (please specify)

8. Would you recommend Write Smart courses for other students who need help with writing and vocabulary enhancement?

- Yes
- No