

**Writing to Form the Critical Thinking Habit**

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

**East Georgia College**

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## Executive Summary

Through a multi-tiered research, review, and discussion process, EGC stakeholders determined that the significance of the topic, critical thinking (CT), was vital to quality enhancement of its students' education. Assisting students in developing the competence to think critically will become a priority for the College as it implements its QEP.

As a unit of the University System of Georgia (USG), East Georgia College supports the USG commitment to encourage the development of critical thinking in the System's revised general education core curriculum. As a two-year college in the System, EGC is scheduled to implement its revised core curriculum during the Fall Semester 2012. By choosing to focus its QEP on critical thinking skill development through writing in three freshman courses, the College expects to develop a critical thinking template applicable to the general education core curriculum.

The first year of the QEP's implementation will be devoted to faculty training. Beginning in the second year of the College's QEP, a critical thinking component will be introduced in selected sections of ENGL 1101 – English Composition. In the third year, a critical thinking component will be added to POLS 1101 – American Government and in the fourth year, a CT component will be added to MATH 1111 – College Algebra. These courses were chosen because they draw faculty from each of the College's three academic divisions and because they are all first year required courses.

The *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)* developed by Tennessee Technological University will be used as a pre and post test to measure development of student critical thinking skills. The *CAT* was selected for this purpose because it uses a short answer/essay format. The *CAT* will be initially administered in the fall semester of the first year of the QEP's implementation as a pre-test in selected sections of EGAC 1100 – Student Success. Once students have successfully completed ENGL 1101, MATH 1111, and POLS 1101, they will be invited to retake the *CAT* as a post-test.

Although TTU's *CAT* will serve as the primary external method of assessment throughout the College's implementation of its QEP, other externally developed assessments may also be used, such as the *International Critical Thinking Reading and Writing Test* available through the Foundation for Critical Thinking (FCT). In addition, as faculty become trained in critical thinking, they will develop assessments customized for their disciplines.

During the first year of the QEP, English faculty will receive CT training and work collaboratively to improve their critical thinking component. Starting in the second year, the CT component will be introduced in selected sections of ENGL 1101 and political science faculty will receive training. In the third year, CT components will be introduced in POLS 1101 and math faculty will receive training. Beginning in the fourth year, MATH 1111 will be added to the list of courses that include a critical thinking component. Along the way, the College hopes to develop a critical thinking template that will eventually become applicable to the variety of disciplines that constitute its general education core curriculum.

## Chapter I. Process Used to Develop the QEP

### A. College History and Mission

Founded in 1973 and located on a 226-acre campus in Swainsboro, East Georgia College, formerly known as Emanuel County Junior College, is a fully accredited associate degree granting, liberal arts institution of the University System of Georgia, providing a wide range of academically transferable programs of study and collaborative programs in occupation related fields. As noted in its mission statement, the College prepares traditional and nontraditional students for success in the global 21<sup>st</sup> century through a technologically advanced teaching and learning environment that fosters personal growth.

East Georgia College is an open enrollment point of access to higher education for students possessing a wide range of academic abilities and preparation levels and provides all of the intellectual and physical resources necessary to attain a high quality general education. Although most students commute to the campus, the college extends its mission through distance education technologies including on-line classes. The College's environment supports cultural and ethnic diversity.

East Georgia College is a member of the consortium which administers and offers courses at the Statesboro Center in Statesboro, Georgia. The College also has a cooperative nursing program with Darton College and facilitates access to an online BBA in Management degree through Georgia Southwestern State University. In addition, the College has a cooperative Associate in Applied Science degree program with the Heart of Georgia Technical College, Ogeechee Technical College, Sandersville Regional Technological College, and Southeastern Technical College.

### B. Selecting the QEP Topic

The selection process for the QEP topic began during the Fall 2008 faculty workshops conducted at the beginning of August prior to the beginning of the Fall 2008 Semester. At a meeting held on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 and attended by the College's president, vice president of academic affairs, vice president for legal and external affairs, and accreditation liaison, agreement was reached to begin discussion of potential QEP topics. A plan was made to add this item to EGC's Fall Workshop Agenda for Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. The VP for academic affairs volunteered to visit the SACS website and locate past approved QEP topics and to make a list of those topics relevant to two year colleges. The topics were distributed to eight group leaders for review and discussion during group breakout sessions on Wednesday. One page QEP summaries available on the SACSCOC website were distributed to the groups. Each group was asked to identify three to five topics they would like further explored. Each group's suggested topics were refined for further review and offered for comment by faculty and staff.

Six QEP topics that were developed based on consensus during the Fall 2008 faculty workshop sessions are presented below.

1. Turning math anxiety into math confidence
2. Teaching students to become intellectually engaged (material drawn from Foundation for Critical Thinking – [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org))
3. Linking civic participation to student success
4. Introducing a two-semester freshman experience course that provides students with a full array of learning skills
5. Enhancing classroom instruction to promote effective communication, reflective thinking and ethical responsibility
6. Using technology to promote more effective teaching and learning in a culturally diverse college environment

Based on further discussions among faculty and staff, four potential QEP topics were selected to be included in the Fall 2008 Quality Enhancement Survey (QES). Participants in the Fall 2008 QES included students, faculty, and staff. The four QEP topics included in the Fall 2008 QES are listed below:

1. Turning math anxiety into math confidence (Math Anxiety)
2. Enhancing classroom instruction to promote effective communication, reflective thinking and ethical responsibility (Thinking and Communicating)
3. Promoting college success by providing new students with a full array of learning skills beginning with two-semester freshman experience that is integrated into selected core curriculum courses and reinforced with active learning opportunities throughout the curriculum. (College Success)
4. Using technology to promote more effective teaching and learning in a diverse college environment (Diverse College Environment)

Shown in Table 1 below are the number of QES respondents in each group and subgroup. The table indicates that 1,453 students, 56 faculty and 27 staff and administrators responded to the survey. The questions posed varied depending on the composition of each group or subgroup.

**Table 1: Summary of Fall Semester 2008 QES Respondents**

<b>Groups/Sub-groups</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Faculty – Math	9
Faculty – Non-math	47
Students – Swainsboro	549
Students – Statesboro	904
Staff/Administrators	27

Each group of respondents was asked at the end of the survey to rank the four topics presented and any fifth topic they suggested.

Among faculty, Topic 2 – Thinking and Communicating was given the highest priority by 36 percent of respondents. Topic 1 – Math Anxiety was given the highest priority by 20 percent of respondents. Topic 3 – College Success was given the highest priority by 11 percent of the faculty and the second highest priority by 34 percent of the faculty. Among the four named topics, Topic 4 – Diverse College Environment, was the least popular topic among faculty, with 38 percent giving this topic a fourth level priority.

Both students in Swainsboro and at EGCS gave the highest priority to Topic 3 – College Success, with 37 percent of Swainsboro students and 41 percent of EGCS students giving this topic the highest priority. For both student populations, Topic 1 – Math Anxiety was the next most popular topic, with 33 percent of Swainsboro students and 28 percent of EGCS students giving this topic the highest priority. Topic 2 – Thinking and Communicating was regarded as the second highest priority by 36 percent of Swainsboro students and 35 percent of EGCS students. Topic 4 – Diverse College Environment received roughly even second through fourth priority ratings in the 21 to 25 percent range from both student populations.

Among staff and administrators, topics 1, 2 and 3 received similar highest priority and second highest priority ratings. Topic 1 – Math Anxiety was given the highest priority by 26 percent of the respondents. Topic 4 – Diverse College Environment scored the lowest rating, with 44 percent of staff and administrative respondents giving this topic fourth priority.

Fall 2008 QES results indicated both agreement and disagreement between groups concerning the four proposed QEP topics. Among the faculty, Topic 2 was clearly the most popular, with Topic 1 coming in a distant second. For students, Topic 3 was given the highest priority by the largest percentage of students, but Topic 1 had considerable support also. In addition, more than one-third of students at both locations gave Topic 2 the second highest priority.

To further build consensus around a single QEP topic, four *charrettes* or discussions were organized and conducted during April 2009 in two rounds in both Swainsboro and Statesboro. The Swainsboro charrettes were conducted on April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>, while the charrettes conducted at the EGC offices in Statesboro took place on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and

April 6<sup>th</sup>. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and EGC Foundation members were invited to participate in the charrettes. The charrettes were facilitated by Mr. David Gribbin, the EGC accreditation liaison and Dr. Bob Brown, the chair of the Math/Science Division. During the charrette sessions, critical thinking was brought up time and again by faculty as a key skill that our students must develop to succeed. It was cited as a skill that has application across the curriculum and is crucial both to improving reading comprehension and recognizing how knowledge developed in one discipline can be applied in other disciplines. Many of our faculty had both formal and informal assessments that indicated a need to greatly strengthen the critical thinking skills of our students.

Based upon this consensus the Reaffirmation Leadership Team selected critical thinking as the College's QEP topic during a meeting on April 14th, 2009. The Leadership Team approved the membership of the College's QEP Committee at its April 22nd meeting (see Appendix I for meeting minutes). The rosters for the Reaffirmation Leadership Team and QEP Committee are presented in Appendix II.

Dr. Bob Brown, Chair of the QEP Committee and a member of the Reaffirmation Leadership Team, developed a website to post links to a variety of critical thinking resources, including published critical thinking QEPs and websites devoted to the promotion of critical thinking (<http://www.ega.edu/facweb/bbrown/EGC-QEP-Committee-Start.htm>).

The QEP Committee met regularly during the summer and fall of 2009 and members began working on chapter assignments to produce a QEP document. On January 22, 2010, following a meeting with SACSCOC liaison Dr. Rudy Jackson on January 8, the committee decided to initially focus on critical thinking in the ENGL 1101—English Composition I course. An English Subcommittee was then formed to develop a more detailed implementation plan. The English Subcommittee was led by the chair of the Humanities division and included English faculty who taught ENGL 1101 regularly. (See Appendix II for the roster of the English Subcommittee.)

One task the English Subcommittee took up from the work of the QEP Committee was the determination of what externally developed assessment instrument, if any, should be adopted. On May 27, 2010, members of the English Subcommittee, along with the QEP Committee chair and EGC's accreditation liaison, held a teleconference with Dr. Barry Stein, the lead investigator for Tennessee Technological University's *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)*. During the discussion, Dr. Stein indicated that the results from the *CAT* instrument would be more useful if the teaching of critical thinking skills were not restricted to one course.

Subsequently, the English Subcommittee considered what other courses might be appropriate for inclusion in the College's QEP. It was determined that one first year course required for all or almost all students from each of the other two academic divisions should be included in the College's QEP. MATH 1111 – College Algebra was

selected from the Math/Science Division and POLS 1101 – American Government was selected from the Social Science Division for inclusion in the QEP.

### C. Introduction of Critical Thinking in USG Core Curriculum

In October 2009, the University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents approved a revised general education core curriculum. In revising the core curriculum, the Regents adopted three new learning goals. The following table presents the revised core curriculum consisting of 60 semester hours and is taken from *BoR Policy 3.3.1 Core Curriculum*.

Area	Name	Hours
Area A1	Communication Skills	At least 6 semester hours
Area A2	Quantitative Skills	At least 3 semester hours
Area B	Institutional Options	At least 3 semester hours
Area C	Humanities/Fine Arts, and Ethics	At least 6 semester hours
Area D	Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Technology At least 4 of these hours must be in a lab science course.	At least 7 semester hours
Area E	Social Sciences	At least 6 semester hours
Area F	Lower Division Major Requirements	18 semester hours

One of these goals is to assure that every student who completes the revised core curriculum will acquire “foundational” critical thinking skills. East Georgia College intends to use what it learns from the implementation of its QEP to incorporate the teaching of foundational critical thinking skills into each of the areas of the Regents revised core curriculum. However, the College’s QEP is limited in its focus to the integration of critical thinking writing skills into English Composition (Area A1), MATH 1111 – College Algebra (Area A2) and POLS 1101 – American Government courses (Area E).

## Chapter II. Literature Review and Best Practices

In determining its definition of critical thinking, EGC's QEP team has chosen to focus on the scholarly research of critical thinking that we term "active" rather than passive – the research and philosophies that stress thinking and reasoning activities involved when one thinks critically. We further focus on literature that provides insights concerning critical thinking concepts and strategies pertaining both to faculty and students.

Moving from general definitions of critical thinking to its more specific applications on college campuses, this literature review is divided into the following sections:

**Section A)** We note various scholarly definitions of critical thinking as well as definitions of critical thinking from other institutions' QEP's. **Section B)** We explore various characteristics of the "ideal critical thinker" described in scholarly literature. **Section C)** We review concepts and principles used to foster, teach, and assess critical thinking skills in the classroom setting. **Section D)** We review critical thinking QEP best practices in order to analyze how other institutions have integrated critical thinking strategies and instruction in their classrooms.

### A. Definitions of Critical Thinking

We begin with scholarly definitions, many of which emphasize or include analysis and questioning, key components of EGC's definition.

#### Scholarly Definitions of Critical Thinking

- **Paul and Elder**, internationally renowned scholars in the field of critical thinking, provide a plethora of both scholarly and practical materials on critical thinking through their Foundation for Critical Thinking. Paul and Elder (2008) assert "Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it" (p. 2). Paul and Elder also emphasize that "[critical thinking] entails effective communication and problem solving abilities. . ." (p.2).
- **Kurfiss** (1988) defines critical thinking as "an investigation whose purpose is to explore a situation, phenomenon, question, or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it that integrates all available information and that can therefore be convincingly justified" (p.2).
- **Maiorana** (1991) posits that "Critical thinking is the questioning or inquiry we engage in when seeking to understand, evaluate, or resolve" (para.2).
- What **Norris and Ennis** (1989) term as "good thinking" meets our definition of critical thinking, for it "does not lead to just *any* conclusions, but in general to the *best* conclusions" (p.3).

#### Collegiate Definitions of Critical Thinking

A sample of definitions of critical thinking used by other institutions is presented below. Some definitions are short, while others are quite detailed. As will be seen in Chapter III

below, EGC's definition of critical thinking is formulated to be both concise and measurable.

- **Cape Fear Community College** defines critical thinking “as the deliberate process of questioning, evaluating, and responding to problems, scenarios, and arguments in order to reach sound solutions, decisions, and positions.” (p. 15).
- **Georgia State University** uses a definition of critical thinking presented in *Critical thinking: A student's introduction* by Bassham, et al., who define critical thinking as a “wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome personal prejudices; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do.” (GSU QEP p. 4)
- **St. Petersburg College:** “Critical thinking is the active and systematic process of communication, problem-solving, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, and reflection, both individually and in community, to foster understanding, support sound decision-making, and guide action.”
- **South Georgia College** bases their definition of critical thinking on the five subscales of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test: “Critical thinking is the process of drawing conclusions and solving problems through evaluating, analyzing, making inferences, and using deductive and inductive reasoning.”
- **Angelina College:** “Basically, critical thinking is learning to think well”
- **Western Texas College:** “Critical Thinking is the intentional process of questioning and evaluating problems, scenarios, and arguments in order to reach decisions that can be defended and explained.”

## B. Characteristics of an Ideal Critical Thinker

Paul and Elder (2008) define a well-cultivated critical thinker as one who

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively;
- comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks openmindedly [sic] within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

A seminal work in the promotion of critical thinking is *The Complete American Philosophical Association Delphi Research Report* (available as ERIC Doc. No.: ED 315 423). Section I of the “Executive Summary of the Delphi Report” (1990) notes that “forty-six persons, widely recognized by their professional colleagues to have special experience and expertise in CT instruction, assessment or theory, made the commitment

to participate in this Delphi project” (p.3). Using the Delphi Research Method, these forty-six experts agreed on a definition of the “ideal critical thinker” that includes the following:

The ideal critical thinker is

- habitually inquisitive,
- well-informed,
- trustful of reason,
- open-minded,
- flexible,
- fair-minded in evaluation,
- honest in facing personal biases,
- prudent in making judgments,
- willing to reconsider,
- clear about issues,
- orderly in complex matters,
- diligent in seeking relevant information,
- reasonable in the selection of criteria,
- focused in inquiry, and
- persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. (Facione p. 3)

This widely-used definition remains a foundation of critical thinking theories and practices, illustrated by Facione’s *Critical Thinking: What It is and Why it Counts, 2010 Update* where he presents the aforementioned expert consensus statement regarding critical thinking and the ideal critical thinker and argues why it still counts.

In the “Executive Summary of the Delphi Report: Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction,” Facione reports: “The consensus (83%) [of the forty-six experts] is that good critical thinkers can be characterized as exhibiting these [affective] dispositions [shown in Table 5 of their report]:

Approaches to Life and Living in General:

- Inquisitiveness with regard to a wide range of issues,
- Concern to become and remain generally well-informed,
- Alertness to opportunities to use CT,
- Trust in the processes of reasoned inquiry,
- Self-confidence in one's own ability to reason,
- Open-mindedness regarding divergent world views,
- Flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions,
- Understanding of the opinions of other people,
- Fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning,
- Honesty in facing one's own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, egocentric or sociocentric tendencies,

- Prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments,
- Willingness to reconsider and revise views where honest reflection suggests that change is warranted.

Approaches to Specific Issues, Questions, or Problems:

- Clarity in stating the question or concern,
- Orderliness in working with complexity,
- Diligence in seeking relevant information,
- Reasonableness in selecting and applying criteria,
- Care in focusing attention on the concern at hand,
- Persistence though difficulties are encountered,
- Precision to the degree permitted by the subject and the circumstance. (p. 13)

The Delphi Report not only defines and characterizes critical thinkers; it gives recommendations on fostering, teaching, and assessing students' critical thinking skills.

### C. Critical Thinking Pedagogy

The Delphi Report's Executive Summary (Facione and The California Academic Press 1999) provides both theory and practical advice about teaching and assessing students' critical thinking skills. EGC's QEP team finds it helpful to begin with this report's consensus statement on teaching and assessing critical thinking skills (Table 6 of the Executive Summary). We cite some sections of this report completely, for we wish to remain focused on this critical statement as we implement our QEP in the coming years.

#### Delphi Report Consensus Statement on Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking Skills

- A CT *skill*, like any skill, is the ability to engage in an activity, process or procedure.
- In general, having a *skill* includes being able to do the right thing at the right time. So, being skilled at CT involves knowing, perhaps implicitly or without the ability to articulate this knowledge, both a set of procedures and when to apply those procedures. Being skilled also involves having some degree of proficiency in executing those procedures and being willing to do so when appropriate. Reflecting on and improving one's CT skills involves judging when one is or is not performing well, or as well as possible, and considering ways of improving one's performance.
- *Learning* CT involves acquiring the ability to make such self-reflective judgments. Skills, particularly CT cognitive skills, can be taught in a variety of ways, such as by making the procedures explicit, describing how they are to be applied and executed, explaining and modeling their correct use, and justifying their application.
- *Teaching* cognitive skills also involves exposing learners to situations where there are good reasons to exercise the desired procedures, judging their

performance, and providing the learners with constructive feedback regarding both their proficiency and ways to improve it. Instruction might start with situations that are artificially simple, but should culminate in situations that are realistically complex. Particularly in the case of CT, the learners must contribute a solid measure of personal effort, attention, practice, desire, and, as they learn how, self-monitoring. Teaching skills involves motivating learners to achieve higher levels of proficiency and, particularly in the case of CT, independence. It also involves coaching learners on how they can achieve those goals.

- In theory there are several ways persons can be *judged* to be *more or less proficient* in a given CT skill or at the integrated use of related CT skills. One way is to observe a person over time performing those activities, processes or procedures generally regarded as presupposing that skill for proper execution. One then makes a judgment regarding the degree to which the person possesses the general skill in question. A second way is to compare the outcomes (if any) that result from executing a given skill against some set of criteria. A third way is to query persons and receive their descriptions of the procedures and judgments they are using as they exercise that skill, would use if they were to perform that skill, or did use when they performed that skill. A fourth way is to compare the outcomes (if any) that result from performing another task against some set of criteria, where the performance of that other task has been shown to correlate strongly with exercising the skill of interest. However, that such correlations exist between any other task and CT, or any of its sub- skills, has yet to be established in the research literature. Each of the four ways of CT assessment has limitations as well as strengths.
- No matter which ways are used, it is important to ensure that the *assessment conditions* foster an attitude in which the subjects are disposed to use their skills as well as they can, and are not constrained or inhibited from doing so. In our view it is highly advantageous to gather evidence regarding CT performance in many situations, using *several assessment methods*, so as to compile a composite picture of the subject and to cross check the results of any one way of assessment. (p. 15)

We also find important the Delphi Report's Recommendation 14 regarding critical thinking instructors and their classroom instruction:

Teaching CT is most effective if the instructor models CT dispositions and the proper use of CT skills in the very process of instruction. Regardless of the subject area, students should be encouraged to be curious, to raise objections, ask questions, point out difficulties in the instructor's position. These objections and questions should be clarified, interpreted, and examined objectively. Students should be given reasons for doing things a certain way, rather than being dogmatically told how to do them. Instruction should bridge the gap between the subject and the student's own experience. In the case of CT instruction, the topics of discussion

should not be restricted to factual matters or academic subjects, but should include issues which have normative, moral, ethical or public policy dimensions. (p. 17).

EGC's QEP team has looked for specific and active concepts and classroom principles to guide us as we begin to develop and implement our critical thinking Quality Enhancement Program. We find Kurfiss' points applicable as we consider classroom implementation. In *Critical thinking: theory, research, practice, and possibilities (1988)* J.G. Kurfiss identifies eight principles to foster students' critical thinking skills:

1. Critical thinking is a learnable skill; the instructor and peers are resources in developing critical thinking skills.
  2. Problems, questions, or issues are the point of entry into the subject and a source of motivation for sustained inquiry.
  3. Successful courses balance challenges to think critically with support tailored to students' developmental needs.
  4. Courses are assignment centered rather than text and lecture centered. Goals, methods, and evaluation emphasize using content rather than simply acquiring it.
  5. Students are required to formulate and justify their ideas in writing or other appropriate modes.
  6. Students collaborate to learn and to search their thinking, for example, in pair problem solving and small group work.
  7. Several courses, particularly those that teach problem-solving skills, nurture students' metacognitive abilities.
  8. The developmental needs of students are acknowledged and used as information in the design of the course. Teachers in these courses make standards explicit and then help students learn how to achieve them.
- (pp.88-89)

#### **D. Best Practices Integrating Critical Thinking into College Curricula**

QEP plans from other institutions share common guidelines such as broad-based involvement, professional development for faculty, dedicated financial resources, and plans for assessment. This review of best practices considers various institutions' development of specific strategies concerning classroom implementation of critical thinking QEPs and includes profiles of two plans that focus on developing CT skills through writing.

**Surry Community College (SCC)** has implemented a quality enhancement plan that concentrates on enhancing life-long learning through the exercise of critical thinking skills. Drawing on the work of Paul and Elder at the Foundation for Critical Thinking (FCT), SCC teaches for critical thinking in a way that is

- all-pervasive in classes,
- systematic within a discipline, and
- focused always on what is central and most transferable.

SCC's fundamental rubric is the Foundation's Critical Thinking Grid. The CT grid provides a four-level performance measure ranging from Unsatisfactory to Exemplary to assess student abilities to engage in the elements of reasoning to achieve the CT intellectual standards identified by the FCT. (The Critical Thinking Grid may be accessed at the following address: [http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/Critical Thinking Grid.doc](http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/Critical_Thinking_Grid.doc).)

**South Georgia College (SGC)** QEP is entitled, "Critical Thinking through the WRITE Plan: Writing and Reasoning to Improve Thinking Effectiveness" (p. 1). South Georgia College also has planned to implement a "developmental [writing] portfolio" to assess students' critical thinking skills and their achievement of defined student learning outcomes. According to the SGC QEP, new students will be required to initiate and maintain developmental portfolios of their writing. A completed portfolio must contain writing samples from four courses incorporated into the QEP. Starting in the second year of the QEP's implementation, a selection of completed portfolios will be assessed using the QEP critical thinking rubric each spring semester. Approximately 10 percent of the portfolios will be assessed anonymously by a panel of faculty from various disciplines. A student will achieve competence in critical thinking if he or she scores as competent in at least three of the five critical thinking skills listed on the QEP critical thinking rubric, with a 70 percent assessment target of students scoring as "competent."

**Georgia State University (GSU)** also is implementing a QEP that seeks to develop critical thinking skills through writing. To enhance the critical thinking of their baccalaureate students, GSU is requiring that students complete two critical thinking through writing (CTW) courses in their majors. Each course incorporates multiple writing to learn activities and assignments that address major specific issues. The plan is being broadly applied and includes undergraduates in five of GSU's six colleges. GSU is using its institutional experts in critical thinking to provide faculty training. As discussed below in Chapter V, GSU staff will be contributing to the training of EGC faculty in critical thinking.

**St. Petersburg College** outlines in its QEP Executive Summary a three-pronged approach to integrating critical thinking into the mission of the college. Cited below are the three initiatives of this plan.

1. Professional Development Initiative - This initiative concentrates on training of faculty and staff at the college. It will include outside experts, travel to conferences as well as training in learning communities. . . . Every constituent at the college will receive some level of training and professional development.

2. Critical Thinking Resource Initiative - This initiative will create an array of electronic resources, many of which will be available from a single gateway website. . . . In partnership with other SACS institutions, SPC will collect, create and house a library of electronic critical thinking tools that can be used in online or blended classrooms. Lastly, physical resources will be collected for our campus libraries through this effort.
3. Student Success Initiative - This initiative will include classroom activities, club activities and student e-portfolios. Students will be exposed to critical thinking throughout the college and they will be trained to create and collect their own artifacts within their e-portfolios. A college-wide assessment rubric will be used by faculty to evaluate the students' critical thinking artifacts.

St. Petersburg College specifies that the third initiative constitutes the primary focus of its QEP. This initiative will begin with pilot programs in "The Ethics department, Early Childhood Education department, College of Education (COE), and Student Life Skills (SLS) program. . . . Faculty from these departments will attend the Critical Thinking Institute and participate in Academic Roundtables (ARTs) in the first year. Additionally, one faculty member from each of the pilot disciplines will serve as a QEP faculty champion (25).

After the first year faculty from other disciplines will also receive training and begin incorporating CT into their courses. A crucial part of this process will be the development of a "Collegewide assessment rubric template to evaluate the students' critical thinking artifacts" (25). These artifacts are contained in electronic portfolios, which the students will keep in certain designated courses.

Finally, student organizations such as Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa "will participate in fostering an environment of critical thinking through activities and initiatives. The QEC will work with Student Activities Coordinators and Faculty advisors for these student groups to develop and create these activities, which will be designed to complement and support classroom activity" (25).

**Cape Fear Community College** also lists three initiatives in its critical thinking QEP: the Professional Development Initiative, the Student Success Initiative, and the General Education Initiative.

The first of these, the Professional Development component includes "College Learning Communities (CLCs) and Self-paced Online Courses (SPOCs)" (24). The CLC consists of approximately ten faculty members from various disciplines, and the SPOCs include training for faculty in areas such as

- Advanced Strategies for Facilitating and Assessing Critical Thinking Skills,
- Using Class Discussion and Socratic Seminars to Encourage Critical Thinking,
- Facilitating and Assessing Critical Thinking through Distance Learning,
- Facilitating and Assessing Critical Thinking through Service Learning, and
- Using Technology to Facilitate and Assess Critical Thinking (24)

The Student Success Initiative focuses on the first-year College Student Success course, student success workshops, and campus activities. Three objectives of this initiative are given:

1. The first objective of this initiative is to encourage students to think critically about their strategies for college and professional success. . . . with an emphasis on personal responsibility, time management, and setting goals.
2. The second objective of this initiative is to enable students to maximize their learning potential using critical reading, effective communication, and information literacy skills. . . It will improve students' abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate college-level texts and research sources.
3. The third objective of this initiative is to introduce students to applied critical thinking in a variety of learning contexts. This will improve students' abilities to consider and choose the reasoning strategies most appropriate for a given assignment, course, or program of study (35).

The third and final component, the General Education Initiative, is designed to introduce critical thinking skills, activities, and techniques across the general education core curriculum, which consists of "six college-level competencies [of] written communication, oral communication, basic computer usage, problem solving, understanding scientific concepts and applications, and understanding social structure" (42). The first two "gateway" courses referred to are a first-year composition course in expository writing and a humanities course in critical thinking. As with other institutions, a college-wide assessment rubric is to be developed, and "[b]y the third year of the Quality Enhancement Plan's implementation, all general education courses will describe specific critical thinking learning outcomes in course descriptions "(44).

**Tennessee Technological University (TTU)** has implemented a QEP that focuses on improving student critical thinking and real world problem solving skills using active learning strategies that contribute to lifelong success in communicating, working in teams, and thinking creatively. TTU is using as one mode of assessment its *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)*. The *CAT* instrument uses a short answer/essay format to assess critical thinking across a variety of disciplines. TTU has received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support the dissemination of the *CAT* instrument through workshops. Faculty at participating institutions attend the workshops to learn how to score the *CAT*. As discussed below in Section V, East Georgia College plans to use TTU *Critical Thinking Assessment Test* as a means of formal assessment.

Other Institutions also include in their critical thinking QEPs various programs of professional development for faculty and staff. These include workshops, conferences, guest speakers and presenters and/or creating faculty champions to serve as mentors or trainers for their colleagues. Most plans also feature the establishment of a critical thinking library or collection of resources, both electronic and physical in nature. Finally, integrating critical thinking into the curriculum or selected parts of the curriculum

constitutes the main thrust of the five-year process. Usually this instruction is phased in through pilot courses, often the first-year experience and/or study skills course, but the ultimate goal is to integrate critical thinking across the curriculum. Angelina College features a freshman study skills/success course with a PSYC prefix, which is titled “Student Development I” (Preface). Western Texas College states that its goal “is to facilitate, assess, and enhance critical thinking as a general education core competency” (39). The Western Texas QEP also captures what seems to be the essence of all the QEPs: “The last objective (to sustain the critical thinking initiative) focuses on making permanent changes in the College” (41).

In conclusion, we believe that to effect these permanent changes, we must recognize that the changes begin with us—the faculty, administrators and staff of East Georgia College. Linda Elder captures this sentiment in her recent article, “I think critically, therefore I am,” (2009) in which she discusses her own experiences with studying the field of critical thinking:

Once introduced to critical thinking, my perspective broadened dramatically, as tools for developing the mind became much more vivid, accessible and concrete. By studying the theory of critical thinking and tenaciously applying it to classroom practice, I began to see more clearly how to approach content as a mode of thought, rather than as fragmented bits of information. I began to see the intimate connection between thinking and learning, to see how to intervene in thinking deliberately and constructively to deepen one understanding, and to interface the content of my subject with the values and motivations of students.

Elder’s approach to subject content as a “mode of thought, rather than as fragmented bits of information” provides a basis for East Georgia College’s Quality Enhancement Plan as we move forward with implementation. Elder offers a realistic view of the challenges of developing students’ critical thinking skills. She notes “the difficulties in cultivating the intellect – both my [her] own and that of students.... There are copious effective strategies for fostering critical thinking, but developing the human intellect is a messy process. It is often confusing, both for teacher and student. It isn’t procedural. It can’t be taught through formulas. It isn’t neat and tidy. But it is deeply rewarding when we grasp its significance and begin to work it out for ourselves” (1).

### Chapter III. Introducing CT Student Learning Outcomes into the Curriculum

According to Winn, most teachers shy away from the discussion of controversial issues in the classroom. If students are not given the guidance and opportunity to actively engage in critical thinking and live debate in the classroom, they will not be capable of carrying out their responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society. What good is learning if students do not possess critical thinking abilities that would enable them to apply what they learn outside the classroom?

Elder and Paul point out that one of the most important goals in instruction is to teach in such a way that students take ownership of the most basic principles and concepts of the subject. Therefore, it is important to design instruction so that students learn to think their way through content. This means that instructors need daily structures and strategies that engage the intellect of the student.

#### A. East Georgia College's Definition of Critical Thinking

East Georgia College recognizes the importance of students possessing critical thinking skills that allow them to effectively integrate the content of their courses and apply what they learn to the challenges and opportunities that await them outside the classroom. Presented below is the general definition of critical thinking the College will use to guide its QEP.

Critical thinking involves questioning, analyzing, discussing, debating, and critiquing data to develop sound conclusions.

Individual components of the College's definition of critical thinking are further defined

- Questioning is the process of identifying problems and determining related tasks and issues.
- Analyzing is the process of investigating data to determine the structure, validity, and relevance of the data.
- Discussing is a method for multiple parties to engage in a productive, verbal exchange leading to sound conclusions.
- Debating is the ability to use supporting facts and arguments to persuasively present a case in a forum of competing perspectives to reach rational conclusions and effective compromises.
- Critiquing is the process of evaluating arguments using logic and inference.

#### B. Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty at East Georgia College has long recognized the ability to think critically as an important component of an effective general education curriculum. Critical thinking is included among the College's general education student learning outcomes as SLO No. 3:

Students will demonstrate skill in logic and critical thinking.

The concept of critical thinking is not new to EGC; many classes include the idea of assessing data and thinking critically. However, there has not been a formalized plan on the campus that would give weight to all stakeholders becoming involved in thinking critically, modeling the behavior for students, and consciously incorporating the concept in the presentation of course content to students. Our plan involves the commitment of faculty, staff, and community members in providing students with the tools and skills needed to think critically both in their academic studies and in real life after college. Our QEP also will provide a blueprint for imbedding critical thinking into the College's revised core curriculum to be implemented starting in the Fall 2012 Semester.

The measurement of specific critical thinking skills will be facilitated through the assessment of the following student learning outcomes based on the College's definition of critical thinking:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to question.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to discuss.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to debate.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to critique.

In their booklet, *A Guide for Educators to Critical Thinking Competency Standards*, Paul and Elder assert that critical thinking competencies take two forms, general competencies that are applicable across disciplines and discipline-specific competencies. Thus, the five general skill-oriented student learning outcomes listed above can serve as the basis for developing discipline and course specific outcomes.

### **C. Focus on Writing to Develop Critical Thinking Skills**

A critical thinking perspective will be formally incorporated as a component into selected sections of ENGL 1101 each semester, and the ways critical thinking is addressed in the other sections of ENGL 1101 will remain unchanged. As discussed in Chapter IV below, English 1101 classes featuring a critical thinking component will be compared to English classes which do not feature a critical thinking component.

As applied to ENGL 1101, the development of critical thinking skills will focus on measureable critical thinking activities and assignments in argumentative writing, such as analyzing, summarizing, organizing, the pros and cons of debate, refutation, and logic.

The five student learning outcomes in critical thinking to be assessed in argumentative writing in ENGL 1101 are as listed below. While it is writing assignments that are to be assessed, reading ability is included because most of the assignments require some reading and research before the writing itself.

With the decision of the QEP Committee to focus initially on ENGL 1101 – English Composition, the operational definition of critical thinking was refined and is presented below.

Critical thinking (in reading and writing OR in argumentative writing OR in academic writing) is a process of questioning, analyzing, discussing, debating, and critiquing information in order to achieve sound conclusions.

Students will develop the ability to:

- Question a writer or speaker's motives and techniques;
- Analyze the construction of an essay based on the principles of logic;
- Discuss the merits of an argument;
- Debate the pros and cons of an issue; and
- Critique multiple aspects of discourse in the composition of academic essays.

Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst, in their book *They Say/I Say with Readings: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (2009), 1st edition (W.W. Norton, 2009) have given us a text that will serve as the “outline” for the critical thinking ENGL 1101 course. A sample syllabus in Appendix III is based on this text. There is also a leaner version of the book without the readings, so that instructors may use the same approach but with different essays as reading sources if they wish. A second edition has just been published and it includes two new chapters aimed at writing for other disciplines. The goal of the book is to teach writing that is academic, logical, and argumentative in nature. See Appendix V for a list of the rhetorical contents of *They Say, I Say*. In addition, Appendix VI provides an example of a CT test developed by an English faculty member. Finally, Appendix VII contains a critical thinking rubric developed by North Shore Community College that is under review by the English faculty.

Following the introduction of critical thinking in ENGL 1101, the same procedure of selecting POLS 1101 and MATH 1111 sections with and without critical thinking components will be used. This will allow faculty to compare the development student CT skills between the two course formats. In each case, the CT components will focus on writing assignments. As detailed below in Section B of Chapter V, student progress in these three courses will be tracked. By the fourth and fifth years of the College's QEP implementation, profiles of student performance in completing critical thinking tasks will be drawn based on whether students have taken one, two, or all three of the courses containing a critical thinking component.

### Chapter IV. Assessing CT Student Learning Outcomes

According to the *East Georgia College Academic Assessment Plan for AY 2007-08 through 2009-10*, the College's general education student learning outcome for logic and critical thinking is associated with most academic courses as a primary outcome and with most physical education courses as a secondary outcome. Primary outcomes are those outcomes that a course is designed to directly enhance, while secondary outcomes are those that are not directly addressed by a course, but whose demonstration affects student performance in the course. Thus, critical thinking is addressed at both the general education program and individual course levels.

East Georgia College has been a member of *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* continuously since 2005, so a longitudinal profile can be drawn from this form of indirect assessment. Presented in the table below is a summary of student responses to selected items that appear on the annually administered CCSSE. All of the items are included in Category 4: Educational and Personal Growth. The occurrence of an "A" in the table cells indicates where EGC student responses were significantly above the average response of students at other two-year colleges. A review of the table indicates that EGC students think that an emphasis is already being placed on critical thinking and related applications and traits.

Survey Question	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
12c. Writing clearly and effectively	A	A	A	A	A
12d. Speaking clearly and effectively		A	A	A	A
12e. Thinking critically and analytically			A	A	
12f. Solving numerical problems			A	A	A
12j. Understanding yourself			A	A	A
12k. Understanding people of other racial & ethnic backgrounds	A	A	A	A	A
12l. Developing a personal code of values and ethics		A	A	A	A

However, the development of critical thinking skills in specific disciplines and courses has not been addressed systematically by the College. The purpose of the EGC's QEP is to provide this systematic focus in the context of ENGL 1101, POLS 1101, and MATH 1111 to assure that critical thinking skills are being taught and that progress in the development of these skills is continuously assessed and used to identify opportunities for improvement. The institutional experience gained from the College's implementation of its QEP will guide it as critical thinking is incorporated in other core curriculum courses.

Several formal assessment instruments of critical thinking skills are currently available. These included:

- Foundation for Critical Thinking – *The International Critical Thinking Reading and Writing Test* (essay format) and *Critical Thinking Basic Concepts and Understanding Online Test* (true/false and multiple choice format)  
<http://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/assessment/index.cfm>
- Insight Assessment – *The California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)* and *The Test of Everyday Reasoning (TER)* (both use multiple choice format)  
<http://www.insightassessment.com/Community%20College.html>
- Tennessee Technological University – *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)* (essay format) – A grant from the National Science Foundation supports educational partnerships with TTU. <http://www.tntech.edu/cat/home>

Assessment of critical thinking skill development at East Georgia College will include both locally developed instruments and instruments offered by outside sources. Because the College's QEP focuses on developing critical thinking skills through writing, faculty will develop their own assessments to guide their teaching of critical thinking skills. As discussed in Chapter V below, an external source that will be drawn on for both faculty training and assessment resources is the Foundation for Critical Thinking. One resource that is particularly relevant in the context of the College's QEP is FCT's *International Critical Thinking Reading and Writing Test*, given its essay format.

In addition, the College will partner with Tennessee Technological University in the use of its *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)*. The *CAT* is an attractive choice for two reasons.

1. The short answer essay format of the instrument parallels the focus of the College's QEP on developing critical thinking skills through writing.
2. TTU offers in-depth two-day training sessions on the process of scoring its 15 question instrument. These sessions take a train-the-trainer approach, so that faculty who attend these sessions will have the capability in their roles as champions to train other faculty.

The *CAT* will be administered at East Georgia College as a pretest to randomly selected sections of EGAC 1100 – Student Success at the beginning of Fall Semester 2012 and be given again as a post-test in the same EGAC 1100 sections at the end of the fall semester. The *CAT* will also be given in the same format to randomly selected sections of EGAC 1100 beginning in Spring 2013. The *CAT* will continue to be administered in this format to sections of EGAC 1100 during the three remaining years covered by the College's QEP. The course was selected because all new freshmen have to take the course in their first semester. This would allow the *CAT* to be administered without being identified with any college course that included a critical thinking component.

Starting in Fall Semester 2012, English faculty who have received training in critical thinking will introduce a critical thinking component in randomly selected sections of ENGL 1101 – Composition I. Both course sections containing a critical thinking component and sections without a CT component will be identified each semester. Starting in Fall Semester 2013, political science faculty who have received CT training will introduce a CT component in POLS 1101 – American Government. Finally, starting in Fall Semester 2014, math faculty trained in critical thinking will introduce a CT component in MATH 1111 – College Algebra.

The progress of students under study will be tracked in Banner, the College's primary student information system, through the assignment of attributes as detailed in Table 3 below. Based on the attributes applied in Banner, students who took the CAT and also took one or more courses containing a critical thinking component in the same semester they took EGAC 1100 Student Success will be tracked.

**Table 3: Student Tracking for Assessment in Banner**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Description</b>
PRECAT	Identifies student as having taken TTU CAT as a pre-test
ENGLCTW	Identifies student as having taken section of ENGL 1101 with a CT component
ENGLNCT	Identifies student as having taken section of ENGL 1101 without a CT component
MATHCTW	Identifies student as having taken section of MATH 1111 with a CT component
MATHNCT	Identifies student as having taken section of MATH 1111 without a CT component
POLSCTW	Identifies student as having taken section of POLS 1101 with a CT component
POLSNCT	Identifies student as having taken section of POLS 1101 without a CT component
POSTCAT	Identifies student as having taken TTU CAT as a post-test

Since the CAT instrument includes a demographic sheet where student ID numbers will be recorded, matched pairs of pre-tests and post-tests will be identified. Based on the student attributes listed in Table 4, student profiles will be developed and include CAT pre-test and post test scores as well as a listing of any courses containing a critical thinking component that were taken concurrently with EGAC 1100 – Student Success. CAT results will provide a formative assessment of the impact the critical thinking components are having on students within the context of a single semester.

In addition, a second *CAT* post-test will be given in subsequent semesters as a form of summative assessment to those students who intend to graduate from East Georgia College with an associate degree. This second administration of the *CAT* as a post-test will be given during the last semester the graduating students take courses at EGC. Results of this second post-test would be of particular interest for those students who will have taken two or three of the courses identified as having a critical thinking component. In all cases, aggregate results only will be reported. (Information about Tennessee Technological University's *CAT* Instrument may be found below in Appendix VIII.)

## Chapter V. Actions to be Implemented

The implementation of East Georgia College's QEP will consist of three initiatives designed to improve student learning. The three initiatives are Professional Development, Student Success, and Critical Thinking Resources.

### A. Professional Development Initiative

The Professional Development Initiative will provide training opportunities, resources, and support to faculty and staff that will allow them to create, enhance, or adapt instruction aimed at improving students' critical thinking skills. Implementing this initiative includes the following:

1. Attending professional development workshops and conferences that focus on critical thinking and its measurement. Initially, the College plans to send its faculty to training opportunities provided by Tennessee Technological University (TTU) and the Foundation for Critical Thinking (FCT). These include TTU training workshops for scoring the *CAT* instrument, the FCT spring workshop, and FCT summer conference on critical thinking. Other development opportunities may be identified by the faculty.
2. Consulting with institutions that possess critical thinking and/or are conducting a CT QEP that focuses on writing. Georgia State University's QEP focuses on developing CT skills through writing. Two GSU staff members involved in its implementation are working with the EGC English faculty and one addressed the EGC faculty during the College's pre-fall workshop on August 2, 2010.
3. Holding professional roundtable discussions between QEP champions and other colleagues to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration to develop ideas for development, delivery, and assessment of critical thinking and to align goals and expected student learning outcomes;
4. Developing course design workshops for training of faculty; and
5. Providing in-house professional development opportunities, presented by faculty and staff who have demonstrated expertise in improving students' critical thinking skills, to members of the college community.

**B. Student Success Initiative**

The Student Success Initiative constitutes the main thrust of the College's QEP and emphasizes the value of critical thinking in college and in life. Implementing this initiative includes the following:

1. Implementing critical thinking writing activities/lessons in threshold courses ENGL 1101, MATH 1111, and POLS 1101;
2. Enabling students to measurably improve their learning potential using critical thinking skills;
3. Implementing the use of tools, such as *student portfolios*, that support and assess students' critical thinking skills; and
4. Developing assessment rubrics to evaluate students' critical thinking skills.

**C. Critical Thinking Resources Initiative**

The Critical Thinking Resources Initiative will provide an array of resources to support the Professional Development and Student Success initiatives. Implementing this initiative includes the following:

1. Collecting and housing an array of both electronic and hard-copy materials for use of faculty and students in developing and using critical thinking skills;
2. Developing teaching/learning units, mini-lessons, and/or components that can be used and be reused in both the professional development of staff and in classes with students;
3. Making available in classrooms and online various materials to reinforce critical thinking ideas and skills in academic writing;
4. Developing, designing, and making available to faculty and students e-Portfolio options on the EGC website; and
5. Developing and maintaining a Critical Thinking Resource Center at both locations of EGC.

### Chapter VI. QEP Timeline

Presented below is a timetable for incorporating critical thinking into the ENGL 1101 – English Composition I, POLS 1101 – American Government, and MATH 1111 – College Algebra courses. At the end of this abstract is a sample, tentative ENGL 1101 syllabus that incorporates critical thinking essay assignments.

**Table 4: QEP Timeline**

Academic Years	Actions
<b>Year 1:</b> August 2011 to April 2012	Kickoff of QEP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENGL 1101 faculty champions receive training and develop activities and assessment instruments.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2:</b> August 2012 to April 2013	Begin CT instruction and assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking is integrated in selected ENGL 1101 sections</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Fall 2012</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Spring 2013</li> <li>• ENGL1101 faculty champions assess pre and post <i>CAT</i> results and course essay assignments.</li> <li>• POLS 1101 faculty champions receive training and develop assessment instruments.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3:</b> August 2013 to April 2014	Extend CT instruction and assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking is integrated in selected ENGL 1101 and POLS 1101 sections</li> <li>• ENGL 1101 faculty champions mentor POLS 1101 faculty champions</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Fall 2013</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Spring 2014</li> <li>• Faculty champions continue to assess pre and post <i>CAT</i> results and course essay assignments</li> <li>• MATH 1111 faculty champions receive training and develop assessment instruments.</li> </ul>

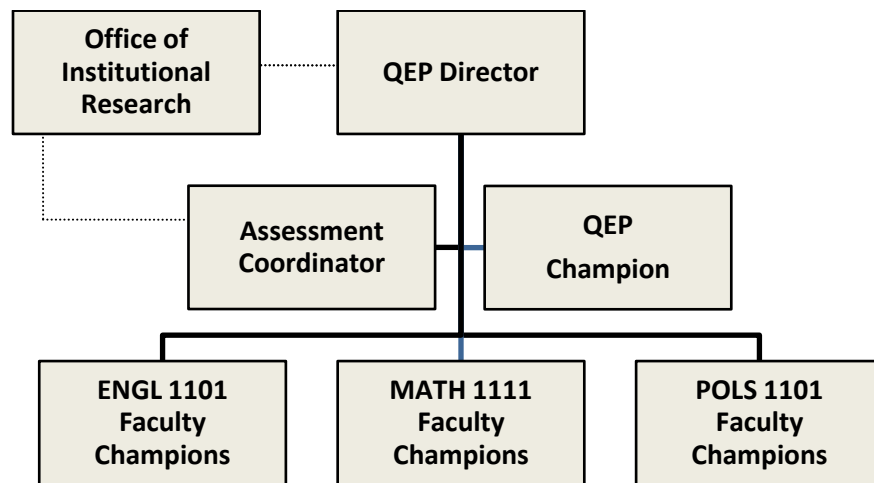
Table 4: QEP Timeline (concluded)

Academic Years	Actions
<p><b>Year 4:</b> August 2014 to April 2015</p>	<p>Extend CT instruction and assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking is integrated in selected ENGL 1101, MATH 1111, and POLS 1101 sections</li> <li>• Veteran faculty champions mentor new faculty champions within their academic disciplines</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Fall 2014</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Spring 2015</li> <li>• Faculty champions continue to assess pre and post <i>CAT</i> results and course essay assignments.</li> <li>• Additional faculty champions receive training and develop assessment instruments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 5:</b> August 2015 to April 2016</p>	<p>Continue CT instruction and assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking is integrated in selected ENGL 1101, MATH 1111, and POLS 1101 sections</li> <li>• Veteran faculty champions mentor new faculty champions within their academic disciplines</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Fall 2015</li> <li>• TTU's <i>CAT</i> is administered as a pre-test and post-test in EGAC 1100 sections in Spring 2016</li> <li>• Faculty champions continue to assess pre and post <i>CAT</i> results and course essay assignments.</li> <li>• Additional faculty champions receive training and develop assessment instruments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Year Reporting</b> July 2016 August 2016</p>	<p>Reporting activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete longitudinal QEP Assessment</li> <li>• Submit QEP Impact Report as part of Five-Year Interim Report to COC</li> </ul>

## Chapter VII. Organizational Structure

Presented below is an organizational chart for the implementation of East Georgia College's quality enhancement plan. Because the College's QEP focuses on improving student learning, the QEP Director will report directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who in turn reports directly to the President of the College.

**Figure 1: QEP Organizational Structure**



Listed below are descriptions of responsibilities for each position diagrammed.

QEP director is responsible for the overall implementation of the QEP. Duties include identifying and pursuing faculty development opportunities, working with the assessment coordinator to prepare annual progress reports, working with the QEP champion to promote the QEP to stakeholders and supporting the work of the faculty champions.

Assessment coordinator is responsible for facilitating assessments, gathering and analyzing assessment data, and preparing assessment reports. The assessment coordinator will assist the QEP director in preparation of annual progress reports.

QEP champion is responsible for promoting the QEP to all of the College's stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, college foundation members, alumni and the communities within the College's service area. The QEP champion will communicate through a centrally organized website to these audiences using a variety of means, including newsletters, emails, surveys, presentations, and promotional materials.

Faculty champions are responsible for the teaching and/or assessing the development of critical thinking skills within their respective academic disciplines. Faculty champions also will serve as mentors for other faculty wishing to incorporate critical thinking into their courses.

Office of Institutional Research is responsible for providing data and analytic support to the QEP Director and Assessment Coordinator.

### Chapter VIII. Budgeted Resources

The tentative QEP budget for East Georgia College is presented below in Table 5. The budget is divided into two sections, Release Time and Expenditures. Included in the Release time category are the services of the QEP core administrative team led by the QEP Director, and include members responsible for the assessment and promotion of the QEP. The Expenditure portion of the budgets include a variety of costs associated with the implementation of the QEP, including outside testing services and consultation, faculty training, compensation for faculty champions and critical thinking materials.

<b>Line Items</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>Totals</b>
QEP Director (1/2 time)	\$30,000	\$30,900	\$31,827	\$32,782	\$33,766	\$159,275
QEP Assessment Coordinator (1/2 time)	25,000	25,750	26,523	27,318	28,138	\$132,729
QEP Champion (1/3 time)	16,667	17,167	17,682	18,212	18,759	\$88,486
<b>Release Time Subtotals</b>	<b>71,667</b>	<b>73,817</b>	<b>76,032</b>	<b>78,312</b>	<b>80,662</b>	<b>380,490</b>
QEP faculty champions	0	17,160	34,320	51,480	51,480	\$154,440
Faculty/Staff Development Funds	17,500	17,500	17,500	8,750	8,750	\$70,000
QEP Testing (TTU CAT Instrument)	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800	\$29,000
Critical Thinking Materials	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	\$25,000
Critical Thinking Consultation	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	\$15,000
QEP Office	3,500	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	\$11,500
QEP Promotion	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	\$10,000
Miscellaneous Expenditures	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	\$10,000
<b>Expenditure Subtotals</b>	<b>38,800</b>	<b>54,460</b>	<b>71,620</b>	<b>80,030</b>	<b>80,030</b>	<b>\$324,940</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$110,467</b>	<b>\$128,277</b>	<b>\$147,652</b>	<b>\$158,342</b>	<b>\$160,692</b>	<b>\$705,430</b>

The training of faculty champions will be staggered by discipline over the first three years of the College's QEP implementation.

- Four English faculty will be trained in FY 2011-12 and become champions in FY 2012-13.
- Four political science faculty will be trained in FY 2012-13 and become champions in FY 2013-14.
- Four math faculty will be trained in FY 2013-14 and become champions in FY 2014-15.

Presented in table 6 below is a tentative breakdown for faculty champion compensation based on an average per semester our compensation of \$715 and assuming that faculty champions would be teaching classes with critical thinking components in both the fall and spring semesters.

<b>Table 6: Faculty Champions Compensation</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Total Annual Compensation	17,160	34,320	51,480	51,480
Number of Champions	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
English	4	4	4	4
Political Science	-	4	4	4
Mathematics	-	-	4	4

Tennessee Technological University's (TTU) *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)* will cost \$7 per copy. The budget includes \$5,600 per year for test copies, enough for 800 copies. In addition, a \$200 annual participation fee includes an institutional report prepared by TTU. Train the Trainer workshops for faculty are offered each fall and spring semester and cost \$350. Funding for these workshops are included in the budget's Faculty/Staff Development Funds. More details about TTU's *CAT* program are provided in Appendix VI.

The budget line for faculty development funds in Table 5 includes TTU training workshops for scoring the *CAT* instrument, the FCT spring workshop, and FCT summer conference on critical thinking. Other development opportunities may be identified by the faculty. Listed in Table 7 below is a breakdown of the faculty development cost summarized in the QEP budget, which assumes that four faculty members will be sent to the TTU workshops and two faculty members will be sent to Foundation for Critical Thinking (FCT) workshops and conferences identified below in each of the first three years of the QEP and that half those numbers of faculty members will be sent to the same opportunities in each of the last two years.

**Table 7: Critical Thinking Faculty Development Cost Estimates**

<b>CT Faculty Development</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Travel</b>	<b>Food Daily</b>	<b>Lodging Daily</b>	<b>Reg. Fee</b>	<b>Trip Cost</b>	<b>No. Faculty</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
TTU CAT Workshop	2 Days	600	36	160	350	1,942	4	\$7,768
FCT Spring Workshop	2 Days	600	36	160	410	2,002	2	\$4,004
FCT Summer Conference	3.5 Days	600	36	160	480	2,868	2	\$5,736
<b>QEP Budget for each of the first three years of implementation</b>								<b>\$17,508</b>

## Bibliography

### Quality Enhancement Plans

Cape Fear Community College – Critical Thinking: Lighting the Path to Lifelong Learning  
– Website: <http://cfcc.edu/SACS/QEP/>

Georgia State University – Critical Thinking through Writing – Website:  
[http://www.gsu.edu/sacs/files/GSU\\_QEP\\_CTW.pdf](http://www.gsu.edu/sacs/files/GSU_QEP_CTW.pdf)

South Georgia College – Website: <http://www.sgc.edu/QEP/>

Surry Community College – Website: [http://www.surry.edu/about/critical\\_thinking/](http://www.surry.edu/about/critical_thinking/)

Tennessee Technical University – Website: <http://www2.tntech.edu/qep/Background.htm>

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## Appendix I: Committee and Team Rosters

### Quality Enhancement Plan Committee:

Dr. Bob Brown, Chair (Math/Science Division Chair)  
Mr. John Blackburn (Math/Science Division Math Professor)  
Dr. Carolyn Broucek (Math/Science Division Biology Professor)  
Dr. Tom Caiazzo (Social Science Division Political Science Professor)  
Lindsey Cone (Student Government Association)  
Mr. Mark Dallas (Learning Support Director and Reading Professor)  
Raven Hall (Student Government Association)  
Ms. Leontine Leader (Academic Instructional Resource Center Coordinator)  
Dr. Walt Mason (Social Science Division Physical Education Professor)  
Dr. Dana Nevil (Humanities Division English Professor)  
Ms. Anna Marie Reich (Student Counselor)

To allow Dr. Caiazzo to concentrate his efforts as a co-leader of the College's Institutional Effectiveness Compliance Certification Team, he was replaced on the QEP Committee by Mr. Jermaine Whirl (Social Science Division Economics Instructor) during Summer 2009. Mr. David Gribbin, the EGC accreditation liaison, was appointed to serve the QEP Committee and ENGL 1101 Subcommittees as a resource person.

### QEP ENGL 1101 Implementation Subcommittee

Dr. Carmine Palumbo (Chair of Humanities Division)  
Dr. Alan Brasher (Humanities Division English Professor)  
Mr. Mark Dallas (Learning Support Director and Reading Professor)  
Mr. Kenneth Homer (Humanities Division English/Reading Professor)  
Dr. Dana Nevil (Humanities Division English Professor)  
Ms. Linda Sue VonBergen (Humanities Division English Professor)

### Reaffirmation Leadership Team

John Black (President of the College)  
Donald Avery (Vice President of Student and Enrollment Services)  
Tim Goodman (Vice President of Academic Affairs)  
Mary Smith (Vice President of Legal and External Affairs)  
Susan Wagner-Craven (Vice President of Fiscal Affairs)  
Bob Brown (Math/Science Division Chair and QEP Chair)  
David Gribbin (Institutional Research Director/Accreditation Liaison)  
Caroline McMillan (EGC – Statesboro Director)  
Mike Rountree (Chief Information Officer)

## Appendix II: Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

### Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2009

The Reaffirmation Team met on Tuesday April 14<sup>th</sup> at 4PM in the PCR. Present were: David Gribbin, Dr. Bob Brown, Donald Avery, Susan Wagner Craven, Dr. Goodman and Mary Smith. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

David Gribbin then presented the results of the QEP charrettes. The following four topics were identified at the Fall 2008 Faculty Workshop:

Topic 1: Turning math anxiety into math confidence (Math Anxiety)

Topic 2: Enhancing classroom instruction to promote effective communication, reflective thinking and ethical responsibility (Thinking and Communicating)

Topic 3: Promoting college success by providing new students with a full array of learning skills beginning with two-semester freshman experience that is integrated into selected core curriculum courses and reinforced with active learning opportunities throughout the curriculum. (College Success)

Topic 4: Using technology to promote more effective teaching and learning in a diverse college environment (Diverse College Environment)

In addition to the above 4 topics, the QEP charrettes opened up the possibility of combined topics, one focusing on an Honor's Program. After much discussion on the merits of the Honors Program as a QEP topic, the group agreed that an Honor's Program was a great idea, but not suitable for a QEP.

By process of elimination of the topics, the group decided upon a broad topic: critical thinking. Discussion ensued about a definition for "critical thinking." Dr. Goodman relayed his experience as a SACS reviewer for a college whose QEP topic was critical thinking across the curriculum. In that instance, the definition of critical thinking was decided upon by the group with the consultant's assistance, and courses selected for concentration.

The Reaffirmation Team decided that "Critical Thinking, Communicating and Ethical Behavior in Class," was a possible topic. This would include skills transference among courses and disciplines, applying critical thinking to reading comprehension (both skills transference and reading comprehension were areas of concern expressed charrette participants) Dr. Goodman will present this topic at Friday's Academic Staff Meeting and ask Division Chairs to nominate 2 -3 faculty to serve on QEP committee. Dr. Brown will contact each to begin work on narrowing the topic.

Dr. Goodman will present the QEP topic and QEP committee at the May faculty meeting. QEP Committee will do research over the summer to refine the topic and present the final topic at the Fall Workshop in August. Faculty will have the opportunity to comment on the topic.

**Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2009 (concluded)**

David Gribbin then reviewed the timeline for QEP draft formulation: October 2009- April 2010.

Meeting adjourned at 5 PM.

Submitted by: Mary Smith

**Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting Minutes – April 22, 2009**

## Reaffirmation Team Meeting Minutes

The Reaffirmation Team met on Wednesday April 22 at 2PM in the President's Conference Room. The following were present: David Gribbin, Caroline McMillan, Dr. Bob Brown, Mike Rountree, Dr. Tim Goodman, Mary Smith, and Dr. John Black. The team approved the minutes of the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

David Gribbin presented a review of the broad QEP topic: Critical Thinking, Communicating, and Ethical Behavior in Class. This topic would include skills transference, applying critical thinking to reading comprehension, and applying critical thinking across the curriculum. The QEP committee will need to narrow it down.

Dr. Goodman distributed a handout of Academic Affairs Recommendations for QEP committee service:

Chair; Bob Brown; Faculty: John Blackburn and Carolyn Broucek, Paul Cerpovicz and Keith Barrs from Math/Science; Alan Brasher and Dana Nevil from Humanities; and Tom Caiazzo and Walt Mason from Social Sciences; and David Gribbin, SACS Liaison and IR Director, as resource person. The team agreed with the committee selection. Dr. Black will contact each proposed QEP committee member and ask them to serve. AT the May 1<sup>st</sup> Faculty meeting the topic and committee will be announced. The committee will begin work over the summer and submit a report at the Fall Faculty Workshop in August. Each committee member will be responsible for keeping his or her respective division apprised of the progress of the committee.

Dr. Goodman reminded the team that we will need to hire a QEP consultant and that we will need to recommend a QEP representative to serve on our visiting SACS team. Dr. Goodman will research this and look for a consultant and reviewer with expertise in critical thinking. Dr. Goodman noted that the SACS website has good resources for critical thinking literature review. And that we need to do a preliminary assessment of critical thinking to be sure this topic will work. He also noted that he thought this was a good topic because it was relevant for both Swainsboro and Statesboro student, in applies across in the curriculum and is an area of need for EGC, and this topic came up multiple times during the first discussions and later in the charettes.

Dr. Goodman also relayed that the committee must also come up with a QEP budget.

Dr. Black noted that we need to get a news story out that we are doing this study in preparation for our upcoming SACS reaffirmation, include the timeline, and also that the President of the Commission, Belle Whelan was on our campus as graduation speaker in December 2008. Mary Smith will follow up.

SACS COC Summer Institute is July 19 – 22 in Houston, Texas. Due to financial constraints we will not participate. The team decided to focus on the Atlanta SACS COC Meeting December 5 – 9<sup>th</sup>. The cost is approximately \$400 per person. Team agreed we will send the same 5 people who attended the Orientation in January plus at least one member of QEP committee; more if schedule and budget allow.

David Gribbin then reviewed the updated Reaffirmation Center on the EGC webpage.

David will present an assessment update to the team at the next meeting.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup> at 2PM in the PCR.

Submitted by Mary Smith

### **Minutes of EGC Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting – July 6, 2010**

The EGC SACS COC Reaffirmation Team met July 6, at 2PM in the President's Conference Room. Present were Dr. John Black, Dr. Bob Brown, David Gribbin, and Dr. Goodman. Dr. Carmine Palumbo, Chair of the Humanities Division, attended the meeting at the invitation of Mr. Gribbin.

The topic of the meeting was the College's quality enhancement plan (QEP), which is focused on developing critical thinking skills through writing assignments in ENGL 1101 – Composition I. As chair of a QEP Subcommittee charged with developing a critical thinking component for ENGL 1101, Dr. Palumbo reported that he could arrange a guest presentation to be given during the upcoming August faculty workshop by two colleagues from Georgia State University, who's QEP also focuses on developing critical thinking skills through writing.

Mr. Gribbin then provided an overview of the June draft of the College's QEP. The group discussion generated from the overview concentrated on two considerations. The first was whether, as described in the June draft, the courses to be included in the QEP should be expanded to include two additional required first-year courses, MATH 1111 – College Algebra and POLS 1101 – American Government. Since the College is required to promote critical thinking as part of a revised core curriculum starting in Fall 2012, it was pointed out that the QEP could serve as a more useful template for teaching critical thinking skills if the plan were not limited to a single academic discipline.

The second consideration was how to assess student learning within the context of the College's QEP. As outlined in the June QEP draft, the College was to use both an externally developed critical thinking instrument, as well as to encourage faculty members to develop their own assessment measures. The external instrument identified

for adoption in the June draft was the *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)* developed by Tennessee Technological University (TTU). Dr. Brown stated that he was very impressed with the *CAT* based on a workshop he and Mr. Gribbin attended prior to the 2009 SACSCOC Annual Meeting. The concern was raised that in order to provide unambiguous assessment results, perhaps the *CAT* be used as the exclusive assessment method. Mr. Gribbin pointed out that in its QEP on critical thinking, TTU describes several assessment methods that it intends to use in addition to the *CAT*.

The discussion concluded with a consensus that Dr. Palumbo's subcommittee should examine the extension of the QEP implementation to include MATH 1111 and POLS 1101 and that other methods of assessment in addition to the *CAT* are to be explored.

Submitted by: David Gribbin, EGC Accreditation Liaison

### Appendix III. QEP Committee Meeting Minutes

#### Minutes of QEP Information Session and Focus Groups at Fall Workshop August 6, 2008

On August 6, 2008 Dr. Tim Goodman, Vice President for Academic Affairs and SACS Evaluator, introduced the SACS Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) concept to the faculty and staff at East Georgia College. He stated that it is paramount that EGC have broad based participation in the selection of the QEP topic.

He then distributed a list of 42 successful QEP topics to 8 pre-selected group leaders and divided the remaining faculty and staff into 8 focus groups. Group leaders were: Tom Caiazzo, Sandra Sharman, Walt Mason, Alan Brasher, Dee McKinney, John Blackburn, Karen Jones and Selena Bedgood. Each group leader was given a list of the QEP topics pertaining to two year colleges as currently posted on the SACS website and one page summaries of the topics, as available. QEP topics were divided into Math Themes, Writing Themes, Student Engagement Themes, Freshman Year Experience (student Success) Themes, and Other Themes. Each group discussed the topics and reported back to the entire faculty and staff body. David Gribbin, SACS Liaison, Dr. Tim Goodman and Mary Smith, VP Legal and External Affairs, floated between the groups to answer questions and keep the groups on task.

The groups returned with the topics set forth on the attached *QEP Topics Faculty Workshop Summary*. Some discussion followed noting the emergence of common themes centering on student skills necessary for academic, work and life success. Dr. Goodman closed the session by indicating the topics would be further refined into 5-6 topics and set forth on Ga View Vista and on student forums for comment.

Submitted 8-8-08

Mary C. Smith, VP Legal and External Affairs

#### Minutes of August 8, 2008 Meeting/ Follow up to QEP Discussions at Fall Workshop

Present: Dr. Tim Goodman, David Gribbin, Mary Smith

The above parties met and discussed the QEP topics received from the faculty and staff Fall Workshop focus groups. (See attached list) After much discussion it was decided that 6 broad topics emerged:

- (1) Increasing Math Skills
- (2) Improving Critical Thinking Skills
- (3) Civic participation and student success
- (4) Expand Student Success class into 2 semester Freshman Experience class
- (5) Classroom instruction resulting in effective communication, reflective thinking and ethical responsibility

**Minutes of August 8, 2008 Meeting (concluded)**

(6) Cultural Diversity: using technology for more effective teaching and to bridge the generation gap

David Gribbin, SACS liaison, will flesh out the above topics using the notes from each group leader. The topics will be placed on a discussion board in Georgia View Vista. Dr. Goodman will visit Student Success classes August 21 and week of August 25 – 29 and distribute the topics to new students. Returning students will have input to topics selection via the on-line student forum where they can review and comment. David Gribbin will meet with Vicki Sherrod, Director of Student Life, and ask that he speak with SGA about representation on the SACS team. The SGA will also be used as a vehicle for getting the word out about the QEP to all students.

David Gribbin is working on a SACS website where meeting minutes, a SACS newsletter and QEP updates will be located.

The committee set mid October 2008 as the deadline for narrowed topics. Based on the comments received from faculty, staff and students, selected topics will be researched and presented again for comment to faculty, staff and students. David Gribbin will present to the Senior Staff and Dr. Goodman will present to his staff the narrowed topics in late October.

Submitted 8-11-08

Mary Smith, VP Legal and External Affairs

**QEP Committee Meeting Actions  
June 17, 2009**

To QEP Committee,

Below is a list of the major action items and conclusions that came out of our QEP meeting on June 17.

1. Be ready to solidify our definition of Critical Thinking by our next meeting. We will present it to the faculty for comment at the Fall Work Conference. Please put your thoughts together on our discussion group on GA View VISTA.
2. We will get the art department and our students involved in creating a logo for our Critical Thinking QEP.
3. Our reports on our review of QEPs from other colleges led us to the following conclusions
  - a. St. Petersburg College's QEP seems to be by far the best written and most comprehensive. Everyone should examine this QEP closely
  - b. Other colleges with useful information on Critical Thinking include:
    - i. Cape Fear Community College
    - ii. Nashville State
    - iii. Wilkes Community College
    - iv. Kentucky Wesleyan
    - v. Angelina Community College
4. Per Tom's suggestion we will plan a QEP Breakout Session at the Fall Work Conference and discuss how to incorporate Critical Thinking into the curriculum.
5. Dr. Goodman will explore bringing in a QEP expert for consultation

Please send me any corrections or comments. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday July 13 at 4:30 pm in the President's Conference Room.

Bob Brown, Jr.

**QEP Committee Meeting – October 2, 2009 – Revised October 5**  
**Brief Summary of Discussion and Actions**  
**Next Meeting October 16, 2009 – 10 am in PCR**

1. We discussed our draft of the QEP and briefly considered the PowerPoint on QEP objectives.
2. We agreed that a title for our QEP would be appropriate. The suggested title in the PowerPoint was shortened to “**Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Multiple Disciplines.**” We believe the title reflects our objective of integrating critical thinking skills throughout the curriculum.
3. We agreed that the SACS COC guidelines on the QEP content defined the items that the QEP must contain and that the chapter order was not dictated. **Also, the editing subcommittee will assign a chapter number to the section on school history.**
4. We next discussed the individual chapters. Overall, we feel we have a good start with the essential QEP plan spelled out pretty well. We agreed that an editing subcommittee should be appointed to pull the document together and to harmonize the contents of the chapters. **Bob appointed Mark, Carolyn, and Dana to the committee with an objective of editing the QEP and provide a more harmonized version by our next meeting on October 16.**
5. Comments on the individual QEP chapters are provided below:

**Chapter I. Executive Summary - Later**

**Chapter II. Process used to develop the QEP**

The chapter looks very good. **We thought it would be good to reference both the literature review and discuss our study of best practices in critical thinking.**

**Chapter III. Identification of the topic**

This section will probably be expanded some as we progress. **Teenie and Anna Marie will be considering modifications to make to the editing subcommittee.**

**Chapter IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes**

It was noted that we should emphasize that we will be assessing the QEP both qualitatively and quantitatively.

**Chapter V Literature Review and Best Practices**

**QEP Committee Meeting – October 2, 2009 – Revised October 5 (concluded)**

We thought the content was very good. **Mark and Dana will merge their two sections together for the next draft.**

Chapter VI. Actions to be implemented – The Plan

A very good section.

Chapter VII. Timeline

Presently, this section is just an incomplete outline of what courses to include in our CT rollout. **Dr. Goodman volunteered to rewrite and expand on the timeline with emphasis on referring to Phase I and Phase II courses.**

Chapter VIII. Organizational Structure to come later

Chapter IX Resources – A placeholder which will be completed as the plan is completed.

Chapter X – Assessment – **David Gribbin will do first draft by October 16**

David reported on his visit as an observer to Central Mississippi Community College and their unique QEP.

David also distributed quite a number of excellent articles and booklets on various aspects of our topic.

Bob Brown, Jr.

**QEP English Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
President's Conference Room  
8 April 2010**

- Meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. Those in attendance: Carmine Palumbo, David Gribbin, Alan Brasher, Dana Nevil (call in).
- Discussion of formation and membership of subcommittee: Carmine agreed to serve as chair as long as there were no objections. David Gribbin agreed to serve as an *ex officio* member. Alan Brasher, Mark Dallas, and Dana Nevil all agreed to serve.
- Discussion of inviting new members who are hard working, experienced, dedicated to student learning, and who routinely teach Comp I: subcommittee agreed to invite Linda Sue Von Bergen and Ken Homer. Chair agreed to send invitation to Linda Sue and Ken to join subcommittee.
- Discussion of "QEP Definition": subcommittee agreed to propose to general QEP committee to eliminate the words "discussing and debating" from the current QEP definition, as now that the QEP has focused toward Composition these are areas that are not practical to measure in Composition, especially given that there are many other areas that can / will be measured in the Composition QEP. Subcommittee agreed to propose this change to larger committee.
- Discussion of including a Standardized Critical Thinking test (e.g. California CT test, Tennessee CT test) in our project planning. Support of using one of these tests is mixed among subcommittee members. David Gribbin asked to put off decision until May. Offered to provide subcommittee with additional information regarding standardized CT tests. Discussion was tabled until May.
- Discussion of "tracking" students who are subject of QEP Composition Study: subcommittee agreed that tracking students beyond the specific "championed" Composition I course would be beneficial. Subcommittee agreed to include this component in our plan.
- Discussion of use of student portfolios as part of Composition QEP plan: several possible plans were discussed. The subcommittee generally supports using electronic portfolios and discussed several methods of implementing their use, including requiring students to submit to an electronic portfolio site—two subcommittee members have worked closely with Ron Balthazar at UGA who developed the EMMA system which is used to electronically grade Regents' essays and suggested that he would be a good resource to develop a system--where students would then not be able to re-access the work, and the essays could be held as a database that could be sorted in various ways and mined for CT assessment. Subcommittee generally support the idea that professors from across the college (i.e. other disciplines) should help to measure CT using a simple rubric that could be embedded into electronic portfolio system. These professors would need training, incentive, and rewards for doing so. Subcommittee generally agreed that students could include written work from other courses they are taking as they are taking Comp I and submit to electronic portfolio. Subcommittee generally agreed that the first phases of QEP implementation would include training and collection of small number of essays, with inclusion of additional essays in later phases. There is much agreement in this area, but also much to be determined.

**QEP English Subcommittee Meeting Minutes April 8, 2010 (concluded)**

- Subcommittee member initiated discussion of “QEP TOC” document: although no one could remember what TOC meant, subcommittee considered this document. Given the new focus of the QEP toward Composition, several areas were identified as needing revision, while other areas seemed to be near completion. Chair was unfamiliar with document and asked that discussion be tabled until he could make himself familiar with contents. Subcommittee agreed.
- Discussion of release time: subcommittee stresses that all participating faculty will require training, incentives and rewards and requests that the question of release time for subcommittee members and chair be resolved as soon possible.
- Next meeting will be held in the Humanities Conference Room (extension 2081) on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April at 2 p.m.
- Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.

**QEP English Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
Humanities Conference Room  
22 April 2010**

- Meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. Members in attendance: Carmine Palumbo, David Gribbin, Alan Brasher, Mark Dallas, Dana Nevil, Linda Von Bergen. Members unable to attend: Mark Dallas, Ken Homer.
- Committee votes to approve minutes of last meeting. (Correction later noted that Mark Dallas was in attendance.)
- Welcome new members: Ken Homer and Linda Von Bergen.
- Chair suggests members write a paragraph before next meeting on how to implement CT in their classes.
- David Gribbin gives an introduction to national, standardized CT assessments: The Foundation for Critical Thinking, the White Paper of the Foundation for CT, “The Test of Everyday Reasoning,” which is a multiple choice test, suggests members consult the Delphi Report (“The Delphi Report” or “Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment of Instruction,” Peter Facione, 1990), the Tennessee Tech Critical Thinking Assessment Test, also known as *CAT*.
- Discussion: Committee is interested in the *CAT* and would like to have more information: appealing aspects of *CAT* include the use of short writing assignments that would fit well into Comp I, the low cost of roughly \$5 per test and \$200 Participation Fee, the regional training sessions which faculty could attend during our year of training. David says he will pursue this further and try to get additional information.
- Further Discussion: committee discusses “group grading” and what this would entail, committee is interested in the “college wide” aspect of the QEP, how to get faculty members from other disciplines involved, committee wants to establish that the first component will be “reading” with the second component as “writing.”
- Committee returns to the Tennessee Tech *CAT*: committee considers *CAT* as a good place to start, a way not to reinvent the wheel, a possibility of building our own assessments onto the *CAT* once we have been trained, used it, and considered the assessments.
- Committee is reminded that a draft of QEP is due on roughly the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, that the “drop dead” date for QEP is 30 September, and that the onsite visit from SACS will be 18-20 October.
- Next meeting will be held in May, once committee members survive end of semester and various engagements elsewhere.
- Meeting adjourned at about 3 p.m.

**QEP English Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
President's Conference Room  
27 May 2010**

- Meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. Members in attendance: Carmine Palumbo, David Gribbin, Alan Brasher, Ken Homer, Dana Nevil, Linda Von Bergen. Member unable to attend: Mark Dallas.
- Committee votes to approve minutes of last meeting.
- The purpose of the meeting was to determine if the Tennessee Tech University “Critical Thinking Assessment Test” (*CAT*) would serve the needs of the EGC QEP. To that end, Barry Stein, Principle Investigator, Tennessee Tech, joined us on the phone.
- Some details regarding the *CAT* that were shared with the subcommittee: 46 institutions use the *CAT*; it is a short answer essay test; faculty who are using the *CAT* also do the scoring, in an effort to improve CT; the test measures a cross-section of skills that are common across disciplines, and during the scoring process the responses are broken down by discipline; the test is divided into a series of questions about scenarios; real world problem solving is gauged using 8 different readings, where half are relevant to the scenario but the other half are not; this culminates in the question: How would changes to the problem affect your solution to the problem?
- The scenarios involve things like advertising claims or scientific claims (e.g. an ingredient in bread is causing criminal activity—ironically, 40% say yes to this). Questions to students: 1. Do data support this claim? 2. Dynamic assessment (?) 3. Are there other reasons why the data would show this? 4. What kind of data would support the theory?
- Two-year colleges in the USG that use *CAT* include GPC.
- Assessment Model—suggestions: General (track senior-level students to develop innovative courses with a 5% improvement target). What percentage of courses show some improvement? *CAT* can be used for pre-test / post-test.
- Two Day Training Workshop: purpose is to duplicate what we would be doing in our scoring sessions. Day 1: answering questions about scoring ambiguous responses. Day 2: parallel learning activities, assessment models, sampling issues.
- The EGC Assessment model with *CAT* would likely involve tracking students outside Comp classes who have not been exposed to *CAT*.
- Using multiple disciplines with *CAT* is advantageous.
- Committee votes on whether or not to use *CAT* as part of QEP: 5 members in favor, 1 member opposed, 1 member absent. *CAT* will be used as part of EGC QEP.

Meeting adjourned about 3 p.m.

**Appendix IV: Sample Syllabus for the QEP ENGL 1101 – Composition Class**

ENGLISH 1101

Alan Brasher

Office: C-111, Office Hours:

Phone: 289-2050 (o); 237-4785 (h)

week 1	Introduction to Course Practice Regents' Writing Test Assessment Instrument
week 2	Reading, summarizing, interpreting "They Say"—17-47; Thoreau assignment
week 3	Summarizing Thoreau on Reading THOREAU SUMMARY DUE Picking a Side Final Fee Payment Deadline
week 4	Taking a Stand, Refutation "I Say"—51-87 Labor Day—No Class
week 5	IN-CLASS ESSAY "Tying It All Together"—101-132 Assignment of Essay on Reading
week 6	Workshop Peer Review; Select Issue
week 7	READING ESSAY DUE Discuss Essays

**Sample QEP ENGL 1101 – Composition Syllabus (continued)**

week 8	Select Topics Workshop
week 9	Peer Review/ Select Issue ESSAY DUE Midterm—Last Day to Withdraw Without Academic Penalty
week 10	Discuss Essays Early Registration Begins, Spring Semester
week 11	Select Topics Workshop
Week 12	Peer Review ESSAY DUE Novel Graduation Application Deadline, Spring Semester
week 13	Novel
week 14	Further Discussion Select Topics Early Registration Ends, Spring Semester
week 15	Thanksgiving Break—No Class
week 16	Loose Ends Regents' Exam Results Reported Final Exam

While this is a writing class, the primary format will be discussion—students will be called on by name. Participation will constitute at least 10% of the final grade; students will be penalized for behavior that has a chilling effect on class discussion.

This syllabus is subject to change.

## Appendix V. Rhetorical Contents of *They Say, I Say*

### I. “They Say”

1. “They Say”—Starting With What Others Are Saying
2. “Her Point Is”—The Art of Summarizing
3. “As He He Puts It”—The Art of Quoting

### II. “I Say”

4. “Yes/No/Okay, But”—Three Ways to Respond
5. “And Yet”—Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say
6. “Skeptics May Object”—A Naysayer in Your Text
7. “So What? Who Cares?”—Saying Why It Matters

### III. Tying It All Together

8. “As a Result”—Connecting the Parts
9. “Ain’t So/ Is Not”—Academic Writing Doesn’t Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice
10. “In Other Words”—The Art of Metacommentary

### IV. Entering the Conversation

11. Entering Class Discussions
12. Reading for the Conversation

The first edition “with readings” includes a collection of 33 essays, arranged thematically. The second edition, which is not yet available “with readings,” has an alternate section

### V. In Specific Academic Settings

11. “I Take Your Point”—Entering Class Discussions
12. “What’s Motivating This Writer?”—Reading for the Conversation
13. “The Data Suggest”—Writing in the Sciences
14. “Analyze This”—Writing in the Social Sciences

**Appendix VI. English Critical Thinking Test**

Developed by Kenneth Homer

Decide whether each statement **itself** is valid or invalid. Evaluate each statement on its merits alone.

1. The most obvious explanation is usually the best explanation.  
A. Valid      B. invalid
2. People who chant, "Drill, Baby, drill," are gullible and weak-minded.  
A. valid      B. invalid
3. Three out of four economists support educational testing. Therefore, we need to test.  
A. valid      B. invalid
4. If we do not stop terrorists abroad, terrorism will spread to the US.  
A. valid      B. invalid
5. Eat Cheerios, the most popular cereal.  
A. Valid      B. invalid
6. Al Gore wastes energy himself, so how can anyone believe him about climate change?  
A. valid      B. invalid
7. Anyone who works hard in America will be successful.  
A. valid      B. invalid
8. Vote for me for US senator. I am a small business owner, so I know how the economy works.  
A. valid      B. invalid
9. Brett Favre eats Get Up and Go energy bars and you should too.  
A. valid      B. invalid
10. My survey indicates that 65% of the American people support my policy.  
A. valid      B. invalid
11. Finding that miracle cure in the jungle is farfetched because 90% of the species on earth have already been discovered.  
A. valid      B. invalid

**Appendix VI. English Critical Thinking Test (continued)**

12. My policies support common sense, patriotism and the American flag. How could anyone not support me?

- A. valid      B. invalid

13. I worked hard on this project, so I should get a good grade.

- A. valid      B. invalid

14. 75% of the students failed this class, so Dr. X must not be a good teacher.

- A. valid      B. invalid

15. After years of study and many attempts, we have never been able to prove that there is life on other planets. Therefore, life on other planets does not exist.

- A. valid      B. invalid

16. I've been playing this slot machine all day, so I'm sure to win something soon.

- A. valid      B. invalid

17. We must drill offshore to lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

- A. valid      B. invalid

18. Vote for me. I grew up in a middle class home, so I know what to do to help the middle class.

- A. valid      B. invalid

19. How can you say school funding is inadequate? We spend more money on the schools than ever before.

- A. valid      B. invalid

20. When I look at the newspaper, I see pages and pages of employment opportunities, so how can you tell me there are not enough jobs?

- A. valid      B. invalid

21. If you vote for this policy, you must accept the consequences.

- A. valid      B. invalid

22. My policy is sound because the same policy has worked well in the past.

- A. valid      B. invalid

22. That marriage counselor has been married twice. How can she possibly help you?

- A. valid      B. invalid

**Appendix VI. English Critical Thinking Test (concluded)**

23. How can you call me an alien? Am I from another planet?

- A. valid      B. invalid

24. Everyone knows that liberals spend liberally.

- A. valid      B. invalid

25. If you are interested in **conserving** our traditions, vote conservative!

- A. valid      B. invalid

26. Since the Great Depression began during the Hoover administration, Herbert Hoover must be held blameworthy.

- A. Valid      B. invalid

27. More than three fourths of the Founding Fathers would have supported prayer in schools.

- A. valid                      B. invalid

28. Assessments are valuable because they assess student performance.

- A. valid                      B. invalid

29. The best principals have business experience since businessmen know how to get the job done!

- A. valid                      B. invalid

30. Use your head. Are you going to take the word of a child?

- A. valid                      B. invalid

31. Senator Flack supports gun control legislation. All fascist regimes of the twentieth century have supported gun legislation. Senator Flack is a fascist.

- A. valid      B. invalid

## Appendix VII: North Shore Community College Critical Thinking Rubric (March 2007)

Criteria	Emerging		Developing		Integrating	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<p><b>Analysis:</b> To dissect arguments and points of view</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify or expresses confusion about problems, arguments, or points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply basic concepts involved <input type="checkbox"/> Does not recognize biases or multiple points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Does not acknowledge uncertainties		<input type="checkbox"/> Partially identifies problems, arguments, or points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Partially applies basic concepts involved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially recognizes biases or multiple points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Partially acknowledges uncertainties		<input type="checkbox"/> Accurately and thoroughly identifies all problems, arguments, and points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Accurately and thoroughly applies basic concepts involved <input type="checkbox"/> Fully recognizes biases and multiple points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges uncertainties	
<p><b>Evaluation:</b> To decide on the strength of an argument and the validity of a given statement</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not evaluate based on logic and context <input type="checkbox"/> Does not assess quality of evidence or distinguish between facts, opinions, and assumptions <input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify the weak and strong points of a problem, argument, or point of view <input type="checkbox"/> Does not recognize counterpoints or arguments		<input type="checkbox"/> Partially evaluates based on logic and context <input type="checkbox"/> Partially assesses quality of evidence and distinguishes between facts, opinions, and assumptions <input type="checkbox"/> Partially identifies the weak and strong parts of a problem, argument, or point of view <input type="checkbox"/> Partially recognizes counterpoints or arguments		<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates based on logic and context <input type="checkbox"/> Thoroughly assesses quality of evidence and distinguishes between facts, opinions, and assumptions <input type="checkbox"/> Thoroughly identifies the weak and strong parts of a problem, argument, or point of view <input type="checkbox"/> Fully recognizes counterpoints or arguments	
<p><b>Inference:</b> To hypothesize and develop conclusions based upon facts, reasons, observations, and evidence</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes only one "correct" answer instead of a variety of possible conclusions or outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Does not develop a reasonable hypothesis or conclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Does not draw a hypothesis or conclusion based on evidence and reasoning		<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes some possible conclusions or outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Develops a hypothesis or conclusion that cannot be fully supported <input type="checkbox"/> Draws a hypothesis or conclusion based on partial evidence or incomplete reasoning		<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes multiple conclusions or outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Develops a reasonable hypothesis or conclusion that can be fully supported <input type="checkbox"/> Draws a hypothesis or conclusion fully based on evidence and reasoning	
<p><b>Deduction:</b> To use generalizations In order to draw conclusions in a specific situation</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not draw conclusions that can be supported by evidence and reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify the appropriate general premises <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply basic concepts involved		<input type="checkbox"/> Draws conclusions that can be partially supported by evidence and reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies some general premises <input type="checkbox"/> Partially applies basic concepts involved		<input type="checkbox"/> Accurately develops conclusions based on evidence and reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies applicable general premises <input type="checkbox"/> Accurately and thoroughly applies basic concepts involved	

### Appendix VIII: Tennessee Tech University CAT Instrument

The current prices are \$5/ CAT test, \$200 Annual Participation Fee, and \$350/person for the Train-the-Trainer Workshop. You will also need to figure in how you will get 10-15 faculty scorers for scoring the CAT at your institution. Some institutions have volunteers, others pay, and some require their faculty to participate.

The \$200 annual fee will cover your reports and scoring material. CAT institutional reports provide information about your students' scores on the CAT instrument with descriptive information about sample demographics, mean score, minimum and maximum score, standard deviation, concept analysis, and distribution of test scores. In addition, the report provides a detailed breakdown of the distribution of answers (point values) for each question together with a general description of what the question is measuring. Current information about national norms is also provided. A data disk in Excel format will be provided of the tests returned to the Center. Incomplete tests are marked in red and not included in the general report.

The data cd also contains a copy of the general report and CAT material order forms. More in-depth analyses can be performed by request.

At various times during the year, we also conduct analyses of scoring accuracy and provide feedback about the accuracy of scoring and if necessary, specific recommendations for improving the accuracy of scoring on a question-by-question basis. This is done by sampling your institutions CAT instruments and having our team of scorers rescore them. The results are then compared to your faculties scores and results reported.

The next Train-the Trainer-workshop will be in early November. The cost is \$350 per person and we recommend sending 2-3 faculty. They can then go back to your institution and lead a scoring session with your faculty. We also cover a variety of additional information such as recruiting local faculty for the scoring session, assessment models, effective practices and how to use them to improve critical thinking at your institution.

Please contact me with any additional questions.

Best Regards,

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