

Quality Enhancement Plan: Forming the Critical Thinking Habit

Institution: East Georgia College

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Through a multi-tiered research, review, and discussion process, East Georgia College (EGC) stakeholders determined that critical thinking (CT) is vital to the quality enhancement of its students' education. Assisting students in developing the habits of mind to think critically about the problems that face them 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. EGC is scheduled to incorporate critical thinking into selected classes as part of its revised core curriculum during the Fall Semester 2012 and to develop a critical thinking template as a part of that revision.

The *Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)* developed by Tennessee Technological University (TTU) 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 first year of the QEP's implementation as a pre-test in selected sections of Student Success, the College's first year experience course. In subsequent years, the *CAT* will be administered as a pre/post test in course sections that contain a critical thinking component.

A holistic critical thinking rubric will be adopted by the college to guide the QEP assessment process. As faculty members become trained in critical thinking, they will develop assessments customized for their disciplines. The holistic CT rubric will serve as the basis for developing course specific CT rubrics. In turn, the course specific rubrics will guide the assessment of the critical thinking in the courses selected.

During the first year of the QEP, selected faculty will receive CT training and work collaboratively to disseminate the best practices in the fostering of critical thinking. Training opportunities will include TTU's *CAT* workshops and programs conducted by the Foundation for Critical Thinking. Starting in the second year, the CT component will be introduced in selected sections of English Composition, American Government, American History to 1865 and 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. In subsequent years, additional faculty will be trained and critical thinking components will be added to more subjects. Along the way, the College will develop a critical thinking template that will eventually become applicable to the variety of disciplines that constitute its general education core curriculum.