

Title: Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum (CTAC)

Institution: Fisk University

Contact: Dr. Sheila Peters, Chair of the Quality Enhancement Plan, speters@fisk.edu

Executive Summary

The Fisk Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on the infusion model of critical thinking and innovation across the institution's curriculum over a five-year period using the Paul and Elder model. Strategies to promote critical thinking will be introduced to, reinforced among, and mastered by faculty members and students through professional development initiatives, including the creation of faculty learning communities and student engagement programs. The Fisk QEP intentionally targets the University's general education sequence – the foundational liberal arts course offerings of mathematics, history, literature, science, and the arts – in order to scaffold critical thinking behaviors throughout the academic program. The first year courses (Core 100: University Seminar and Core 120: Critical Thinking) are designed to promote cooperative learning and self-assessment for incoming students, as well as to provide the initial skills sets that must be developed to demonstrate proficiency in the senior capstone courses across academic disciplines.

The class of 2013 will be the first cohort of students to complete the full QEP cycle and benefit from the program's enhanced learning experiences both within and outside of the classroom. Notwithstanding, the entire Fisk student population stands to benefit from the infusion of critical thinking strategies in their current courses of study from faculty who have participated in the QEP faculty learning communities and programming provided by the Office of Student Engagement. Members of the faculty learning communities will also be introduced to the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) and receive training in the creation of instructional analogs derived from this instrument. As Fisk faculty transform their course syllabi, teaching strategies, and hierarchy of content delivery within the classroom, students will have improved opportunities to utilize problem-solving techniques applicable to personal issues and professional challenges, to evidence both quantitative and qualitative reasoning skills, and to demonstrate information literacy.