

QEP Title: Building Critical Thinkers Responsible for Life-Long Learning

Institution: Nashville State Technical Community College

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Mission of the QEP: Nashville State Technical Community College seeks to enhance the critical thinking skills of its students campus-wide so students are better able to make confident, sound decisions in the classroom, about their education, and throughout their lives.

Objectives and Projects:

Objective 1: The **Campus Environment** objective will emphasize the four broad categories of critical thinking most fundamental to sound decisions: analysis, evaluation, inference, and deduction. Projects will include shared vocabulary training, student design competitions, student handbook information, Critical Thinking Day, a Student Support/Resource Site, a Practice test for the California test, ongoing Student critical thinking competitions, and an ongoing library display.

Objective 2: **Faculty Professional Development** will help faculty improve their teaching and assessment skills in teaching analysis, evaluation, inference, and deduction. It will enable faculty sharing of coursework strategies, and reward faculty for developing successful approaches to the overt inclusion of critical thinking in their courses. Training will include critical thinking activities and assessment, a critical thinking rubric, critical thinking in-services and conference support, a critical thinking semester-long course, an annual faculty competition, a classroom activity module repository, a faculty resource site, and reflective practice for faculty.

Objective 3: The **Critical Thinking in the Curriculum** objective aims to make critical thinking explicit and assessed components campus-wide. It will increase student knowledge and understanding about critical thinking, require students to exhibit critical thinking, and increase student responsibility for sound thought processes/decisions. Phase I pilot courses began in spring 2008. Additional pilot courses from every division will be approved each fall semester, implemented during spring, and assessed the following fall. By 2011, Critical Thinking learning objectives and teaching strategies will be embedded in all degree and certificate programs.

Objective 4: The **Education and Career Matrix** objective aims to make critical thinking an overt element of campus life outside of courses, particularly the registration and advising processes, so that students are better able to make sound decisions about their education and careers. The development of an Education and Career Matrix for students is the centerpiece of this objective.

Assessments include both campus-wide and course/program-specific measures of students' abilities and of faculty effectiveness. The campus-wide assessments include Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) objectives, the Academic Challenge benchmark on CCSSE, the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), CAT, and major field exit exam questions.