

Executive Summary

In 2010-11, Palm Beach State College's faculty and staff wrote the QEP on critical thinking. Constituents developed an operational definition of critical thinking: *critical thinking is using the skills needed to explore, evaluate, express, and engage in purposeful reasoning in order to reach sound conclusions, decisions, positions, and/or solutions.*

The QEP's primary action is a focused initiative for professional development to help faculty and staff enhance their skills to teach and assess critical thinking. The plan provides a framework to unite faculty, instructors, staff, and administrators in a venture to create a learning environment that includes a common understanding of critical thinking and of the skills and characteristics that are associated with it. It is in such a learning environment that students will develop and apply necessary critical thinking skills, which is the goal of the QEP.

The QEP has the following four student learning outcomes. The plan's success will be measured by student improvement on these outcomes.

1. Students will analyze and interpret relevant information.
2. Students will reach sound conclusions based on a demonstrated reasoning process.
3. Students will evaluate and explain relevant information.
4. Students will exhibit affective dispositions known to characterize critical thinkers.

Multiple assessment instruments will be administered annually from 2012-2017:

- The *California Critical Thinking Skills Test* and "scenarios" will be used to measure the degree to which students accomplish the first three outcomes. Scenarios are developed internally by faculty and require a written response from students.
- The *ETS Proficiency Profile* will provide a total critical thinking score.
- The *California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory* will be administered annually to measure the degree to which students accomplish the fourth QEP learning outcome.
- The *Graduating Student Survey* will provide an indirect measure of how students perceive their critical thinking instruction.

Additionally, selected questions from the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement* in 2011 and 2014 will be used as an indirect measure of how students perceive their critical thinking instruction.

QEP implementation began formally in the spring semester of 2012.

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