

BEACON COLLEGE
Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary
Enhancing Critical Thinking for Students with Learning Disabilities

The goal of the Beacon College Quality Enhancement Plan is to improve student learning through the development of critical thinking skills by using the standards and elements of the Paul/Elder Model. The initial phase of the QEP was directed to implementing a comprehensive faculty professional development program. Professional development activities focused on educating faculty in the use of the elements and standards of the Paul/Elder Model.

The mission of Beacon College is to provide educational opportunities for college-able students with learning disabilities and to assist them in achieving their academic potential. Engaging students in critical thinking and fostering concept development is vital in addressing the characteristics that many students with learning disabilities bring to the classroom environment.

The student learning outcomes for the Beacon College QEP are to:

1. Improve student disposition toward critical thinking.
2. Employ the elements of critical thinking to academic disciplines.
3. Employ the standards of critical thinking to academic disciplines.
4. Develop an understanding of the fundamental and powerful concepts of an academic discipline.

Several benefits of implementation of the Beacon College QEP have already been realized. The College has strengthened as a community with a common goal and a shared language for improving the quality of the educational experiences of our students. Not only has the faculty embraced changes in which the Institution approaches instruction, but the participation of all the units and departments has helped the College emerge as a learning community. Beacon College has established an Institute of Critical Thinking acting as a critical thinking resource center not only for the campus community, but also as a professional development resource for other institutions.

It is anticipated that implementation of the QEP will result in improved student disposition for using critical thinking skills in every aspect of their lives. Outcomes of the QEP will not only enhance the quality of education provided our students, but will also contribute to research in the field of learning disabilities. Opportunity exists for the College to conduct a longitudinal study investigating five-year outcomes, as measured by the California Critical Thinking Disposition Instrument (CCTDI), between students with learning disabilities and their non-learning disabled peers. This study will use the databank of colleges and universities that have completed the outcomes of their QEPs measuring disposition toward critical thinking.

For more information about the development or implementation of the plan please contact:
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