

Oakwood University Quality Enhancement Plan
The Right to Write: Critical Thinking Development through Writing

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Oakwood University's QEP topic, *The Right to Write: Critical Thinking Development through Writing*, emerged from the involvement of a wide spectrum of university constituents whose participation significantly shaped the goals, initiatives, and outcomes of the University's QEP. Critical thinking was identified as most likely to enhance student learning, support development of the whole person, and promote academic excellence—objectives that are all central to the University mission. Convinced that students with strong critical thinking skills, attitudes, and dispositions will produce better writing, faculty selected writing as the vehicle through which students would demonstrate critical thinking skills. The ability of students to express their thoughts coherently in writing was deemed essential for both educational and career success.

This conviction led to the selection of the QEP goal: "To equip Oakwood University students with critical thinking skills that will enhance their educational experience." To accomplish this goal, the course curricula is being redesigned to incorporate critical thinking competencies in four general education courses: Freshman Orientation Seminar (OU101), Freshman Composition (EN 111 and EN 112), and Fundamentals of Christian Education (ED 250). By focusing on general education courses, the University anticipates that students will experience the benefit of the QEP in completing their education at Oakwood and beyond, as well as in other future endeavors.

Oakwood University identified three student learning outcomes that explicate the goal and reflect successful implementation of the QEP. First, (1) students will demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills through the writing process. For this outcome, students will (a) develop well supported inquiry statements that demonstrate clear purpose; (b) evaluate the quality and credibility of information; and (c) make connections and informed conclusions. Second, (2) students will demonstrate the ability to apply elements of thought to written information. This outcome requires students to read the work of another and be able to: (a) identify well supported inquiry statements that demonstrate clear purpose; (b) evaluate the quality and credibility of information in written information; and (c) identify connections and informed conclusions in the written information. The third (3) student learning outcome requires the student to demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills to their Christian beliefs, faith system, and personal goals. Several writing samples will be collected in the four courses to document students' progress. Additionally, the California Critical Thinking Skills Test and a student survey of critical thinking skills application will provide pre-test and post-test assessments.

Extensive and ongoing faculty development will be conducted to ensure that the instructional and learning objectives are adequately understood, properly implemented, and appropriately assessed. An online course has been identified to provide the initial thrust in the faculty development portion of the QEP, and follow-up workshops are also scheduled. In addition to the faculty teaching the courses identified as part of the QEP, other faculty are encouraged to take advantage of the faculty development opportunities in critical thinking and to implement the strategies in their classroom to extend the benefits of the QEP.

An office has been established to oversee the implementation of the QEP. It is located in the offices of Faculty Development and includes a director and a data coordinator.