

Calhoun Community College, Decatur, Alabama

POC: Symmetris Gohanna, QEP Director
Symmetris.gohanna@calhoun.edu
QEP Title: “Why is My Pizza Burning?”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Calhoun Community College QEP titled “Why is My Pizza Burning?” was developed through ongoing institutional review and planning processes, with broad-based stakeholder input of institutional data to include the evaluation of Institutional General Education Learning Outcomes, observations of student challenges by faculty, staff, students, and community representatives, and review of annual ETS Proficiency Profile assessment results. Each source indicated a need to address the critical thinking (CT) skills of our students.

Further, improving students’ CT is in alignment with the following: (1) Institutional Mission: Promote student success and community development through quality education, cultural enrichment, and workforce training; (2) the Vision of the College: Success for every student, the community, and the College; (3) the Institutional General Education Outcome #1: Ability to think critically; and (4) Career-Technical Advisory Boards Necessary Workplace Skills.

A literature review of best practices in teaching and assessing CT skills was conducted which clarified the need for students to develop both cognitive skills and the disposition/motivation required to apply CT techniques. To effectively incorporate these strategies for both academic and career- technical students, a commitment to faculty professional development was deemed necessary.

The topic identification process led to the following QEP Goal, measurable Learning Outcomes, with an annual average of \$101,117 (\$606,700 total) in support of the necessary human and financial resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

QEP GOAL: Students will be able to implement critical thinking techniques that are necessary to reach reasoned conclusions.

The following outcomes will be utilized to measure the impact of the College’s QEP:

- **OUTCOME 1:** Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills appropriate to their academic discipline.
- **OUTCOME 2:** Students will be able to demonstrate “competency level” knowledge of critical thinking concepts and strategies.
- **OUTCOME 3:** Students will be able to recognize the value of critical thinking skills.
- **OUTCOME 4:** Instructors will participate in and understand the value of professional development training related to instructional methods that promote the strengthening of students’ critical thinking skills.

Greater academic success should lead to improved retention and progression rates and ultimately to higher graduation rates of students at the college—truly “Success for every student, the community, and the College” (Calhoun Community College, 2021c).