



Executive Summary

Columbia State Community College has selected critical thinking as the topic of its Quality Enhancement Plan, “Thinking Critically, Growing Purposefully.” The QEP corresponds with both the college’s mission statement and the first goal of the Strategic Plan. The mission statement is as follows: “Columbia State Community College nurtures success and positively changes lives through teaching, learning and service.” The first goal of the college’s Strategic Plan is Student Success.

The QEP has two goals: (1) to increase students’ critical thinking skills within the context of specific courses and overall; (2) to provide professional development opportunities for faculty targeting teaching and implementation of critical thinking assignments into their courses.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will identify relevant points of view to establish a clear position.
- Students will gather credible and relevant evidence.
- Students will identify and explain key concepts in their specific disciplines.
- Students will identify significant assumptions of both their own as well as others’ reasoning.
- Students will analyze and interpret evidence to obtain purposeful and logical conclusions.

In addition, the college will monitor program success outcomes including (1) the number of students enrolled in critical thinking courses; (2) student attitudes towards critical thinking implementation at the college, as assessed by CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) and internal surveys; (3) student performance on the critical thinking score of the ETS Proficiency Exam (administered as the college’s exit exam); and (4) faculty adoption of critical thinking courses and professional development resources.

Columbia State Community College has established the administrative structure to guide the “Thinking Critically, Growing Purposefully” initiative. An interdisciplinary Steering Committee will oversee the implementation of the QEP timeline, strategies, and professional development initiatives.

Implementation Strategies:

- Introduce a critical thinking module and the ETS (Educational Testing Service) Proficiency Profile Exam into COLS 101 – College Success 101 - the college’s first year experience course.
- Target gateway courses to be piloted as critical thinking classes with subsequent implementation at each campus and via distance education.
- Implement interdisciplinary critical thinking rubric into all critical thinking courses.
- Analyze Pre-Post Summative Assessments targeting subskills of the formative assessment rubric.
- Analyze Student Survey (CCSSE/Internal Survey) and Faculty Survey (Internal Survey) Data.
- Compare entry ETS exam scores with the ETS college exit exam to assess students’ growth.
- Offer pedagogical workshops for faculty via an annual “Critical Thinking Development Day.”
- Develop web-repository of critical thinking resources for faculty, employees, and students.

Columbia State’s QEP is committed to enhancing students’ critical thinking and providing faculty with the resources and training to support the college’s culture of learning and success.

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