Palm Beach State College

Quality Enhancement Plan Initial Report

Reporting year: August 2011-July 2012

11/13/2012

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Purpose of the annual QEP report

An annual Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) report serves a three-fold purpose: it maximizes the potential for continuous improvement as it relates to QEP initiatives; it allows for transparent communication to College constituents; it ensures the availability of appropriate documentation required for continued accreditation status.

Such a report provides the means for the College to document progress on both student learning and processes, and just as importantly, this information can in turn be used to evaluate the success and challenges of the QEP at regular intervals.

- The report will include not only progress updates but also recommendations for improvement as needed.
- The report will be drafted each summer and made available at various times to different groups during the fall semester, allowing for feedback and comment.
- Revisions can be implemented during the fall semester during the review period, or in the spring semester.

Fall revisions will be documented in the annual report, and the final report for each academic year will be made available online by the end of the fall semester in the subsequent academic year. In this way, constituents will always have access to tracked QEP progress and improvement measures.

Finally, by documenting annual progress, the College will have readily available the data and narrative that will be necessary for the Fifth-year QEP Impact Report, a document that will be required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in 2017 for continued accreditation.

Overview of QEP and initial activity

Quality Enhancement Plan defined

A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a requirement of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for any regional institution applying for reaffirmation of accreditation. Colleges and universities must submit a QEP about six weeks prior to an onsite visit. The plan undergoes a peer review process which culminates with an onsite review by members of the SACSCOC Visiting Committee.

In general, a college's QEP must
- be found acceptable by the SACSCOC committee before it is implemented;
- be designed to improve student learning or the student learning environment as demonstrated by the assessment of measureable student learning outcomes;
- be faculty-driven;
- be broad enough to maximize impact while clearly defining a focus topic.

The Palm Beach State College QEP

The Palm Beach State College QEP focuses on critical thinking. The plan is intended to position faculty and staff to help students improve their abilities to interpret and analyze, to draw sound and relevant conclusions using a reasoning process, to evaluate and explain information, and to become more willing to think critically. The QEP is formally in effect from the fall of 2012 until the spring of 2017.

The original QEP was deemed acceptable in October 2011 by the SACSCOC onsite evaluation team, but changes were made after the site visit to streamline implementation and assessment. The original plan required multiple strategies that would offer events and activities for all faculty, staff, and students; the revised plan calls for a focus on professional development and on critical thinking learning outcomes in all career programs and educational support areas. Changes were discussed with the onsite committee during their visit so that pilot efforts could begin in the spring 2012 semester. The February 2012 QEP revision was subsequently accepted with no recommendations by the SACSCOC Compliance and Review Committee in June 2012.

The QEP includes the following critical thinking definitions, goal, and outcomes.
- 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 goal of the QEP is: Students will develop and apply critical thinking skills.
- The QEP has four student learning 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.

Accomplishments

The three expectations for the pilot semester (spring 2012) are listed here. Each was met successfully as demonstrated on pages 4-10.

- Complete baseline data collection.
- Pilot two levels of professional development initiatives.
- Identify appropriate critical thinking conferences.

Additionally, program outcomes were reviewed and aligned slightly ahead of schedule in the fall 2012 semester, in time to be included in this report.

Baseline data successfully collected and documented

The reporting years for baseline data are different than the original plan. Initially, results for the 2007 *Community College Survey of Student Engagement*, 2009 *Graduating Student Survey,* and 2010 *ETS Proficiency Profile* were to be reported, but the 2011 results for each instrument became available during the revision of the QEP and were therefore used for the QEP baseline.

In 2011, QEP implementation had not yet started, so results from that year are acceptable as a baseline. However, the critical thinking topic had been selected and thus the awareness of the QEP was becoming wide-spread. As an extra measure to capture student performance prior to any College-wide emphasis on critical thinking, scenario responses were sampled from 2009 and 2010, before critical thinking had been selected as the QEP focus topic. Collection information and results are outlined in Tables 1-6.

Table 1: Description of measures and data collection *(Tables 2-6 include results for each instrument)*

Instrument	Description	Baseline Data collection
California Critical Thinking Skills Test (see Table 2, pg.6)	Multiple-choice test with reporting scales that directly measure the three skills-based outcomes (page 2): analysis and interpretation; inference; evaluation and explanation	175 students in eight randomly selected sections of ENC1101; administered during the first week of classes in the spring semester 2012
Scenarios (see Table 3, pg.6; and Table 4, pg.7)	Faculty-developed situation to which students are asked to provide a written response – scores directly measure the three skills-based outcomes (page 2): analysis and interpretation; inference; evaluation and explanation	89 student artifacts randomly selected from 2009 and 2010 responses; administered during the general education assessment; re-scored with analytic rubric developed to measure the QEP student learning outcomes
ETS Proficiency Profile (see Table 5, pg.8)	Multiple-choice test that includes total score for student proficiency in critical thinking ; global measure of outcomes	326 students in randomly selected sections administered during 2011 general education assessment
Community College Survey of Student Engagement (see Table 5, pg.8)	National survey given to two-year college students; indirect measure of outcomes	1598 students in 95 randomly selected sections (92 sections selected by CCSSE, 3 by the College) administered spring semester 2011
Graduating Student Survey (see Table 5, pg.8)	Palm Beach State College internal survey; indirect measure of outcomes	736 students responded; collected December 2010 and May 2011
California Critical Thinking Disposition Skills Inventory (see Table 6, pg.8)	Survey on which students respond to statements designed to measure willingness to think critically; directly measures QEP Outcome 4 (page 2)	171 students in seven classes taught by faculty who were randomly selected from those on QEP committees; administered during the first week of classes in the spring semester 2012

Table 2: California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)

QEP outcomes and total score*	Mean score (moderate in all cases)	Target for 2012-2013 improvement	Target for 5-year improvement
(1) Analysis and interpretation	2.89	Exceed 2.89	At least 3.18 to meet goal of 10% improvement
(2) Drawing conclusions	6.25	Exceed 6.25	At least 6.88 to meet goal of 10% improvement
(3) Evaluation and explanation	3.19	Exceed 3.19	At least 3.51 to meet goal of 10% improvement
Total score	12.33	Exceed 12.33	At least 13.56 to meet goal of 10% improvement

The average score among students at Palm Beach State College was between the 28th and 36th percentile compared to test takers in an aggregated sample of students in two-year colleges.

CCTST recommended categorical cut scores for demonstration of skills[1]
- *Analysis and interpretation: 0-2 = not manifested; 3-4 = moderate; 5-7 = strong*
- *Inference (drawing conclusions): 0-5 = not manifested; 6-11 = moderate; 12-16 = strong*
- *Evaluation and explanation: 0-3 = not manifested; 4-7 = moderate; 8-11 = strong*
- *Total score: 0-7=not manifested; 8-12=weak; 13-18=moderate; 19-24=strong; 25-34=superior*

Table 3: Scenarios (5-point scale; a score of 5 is high)

QEP outcomes	Mean score	Target for 2012-2013 improvement	Target for 5-year improvement
(1) Analysis and interpretation	3.03	Exceed 3.03	At least 3.33 to meet goal of 10% improvement
(2) Drawing conclusions	3.08	Exceed 3.08	At least 3.39 to meet goal of 10% improvement
(3) Evaluation and explanation	3.00	Exceed 3.00	At least 3.30 to meet goal of 10% improvement
Total (average of all scores)	3.04	Exceed 3.04	At least 3.34 to meet goal of 10% improvement

When the sample was previously scored holistically, the total score averaged 2.84 compared to 3.04 when scored analytically. IRE analysis revealed a moderate and significant correlation between the two sets of scores (r=.459, p<.01). The difference between the means is significant (p < .01).

[1] Source: CCTST Test Manual, Insight Assessment / The California Academic Press 2012

It is important to report the value of both developing the analytic rubric and using it to rescore student artifacts from previous years because these processes need to be validated and refined over time. As a means to accomplish this, the scoring session for scenarios was itself evaluated.

Table 4: Summary of scenario scoring session

Each of the 89 scenarios was initially read by two readers; each reader scored the scenario with separate scores for each QEP outcome for a total of 267 separate scores. If readers scored within one point, the average of the two scores was reported. If readers were apart by more than one point, a third reader also scored the scenario for the outcome(s) and the average of the three scores was reported.		
Result	**Occurrences**	**Percent of total**
Two readers gave same score	150	56.2%
Two readers gave scores that were one point apart	112	41.9%
Two readers gave scores that were more than one point apart	5	01.9%

- Those who participated in the process better understood that an assessment instrument should measure what is intended to be measured, and that students must be given assignments that allow them to demonstrate what will be measured. Through the process of developing and using the rubric, participants realized these elements are necessary to make assessment meaningful, and because of this experience, participants suggested similar grading sessions be replicated in workshops and offered to colleagues.

- Additionally, when scoring was completed, participants reviewed a personal score analysis of the inter-rater reliability that occurred within their group. Conversations followed regarding the benefit of the common grading experience and the possible need to create similar opportunities for faculty to discuss grading practices. It was suggested that doing so will increase grading consistency among faculty who teach the same courses.

These comments led to suggestions for revising the critical thinking rubric and scenario, as well as for future workshop topics (see Recommendations for improvement in 2012-2013, page 11).

Comment from reader who gave higher scores than another reader about 60% of the time

"It would be helpful to spend time talking about WHY she scored lower than I did. It makes me wonder how I compare to other instructors who teach the same courses I teach. Do we all grade the same? We should pay attention to this!"

Table 5: ETS Proficiency Profile, CCSSE, Graduating Student Survey

Measurement	Mean score	Target for 2012-2013 improvement	Target for 5-year improvement
[2]ETS Proficiency Profile (2011)	110: 50th percentile	Mean score will meet or exceed 50th percentile	Mean score will meet or exceed 55th percentile to meet goal of 10% improvement
[3]CCSSE (2011), Average scores on questions 4d, 4n, 4r, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 12e	2.68 (4 pt. scale)	n/a (CCSSE next administered in 2014)	Average results in 2014 will meet or exceed national benchmark for similar institutions and will exceed 2.68
[4]Graduating Student Survey (2010-2011), Question 16, Part 3	4.14 (5 pt. scale)	Exceed 4.14	Annual improvement

Table 6: California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) – Results

CCTDI dispositions and QEP outcome	Mean score and characteristic*	Undergraduate test-takers who score <40[5]	Target for 2012-2013 improvement	Target for 5-year improvement
Truth-seeking	36.041 – ambivalent	60%		
Open-mindedness	41.029 – positive	15%		
Analyticity	44.836 – positive	23%		
Systematicity	43.205 – positive	44%		
Confidence in reasoning	45.216 – positive	25%	Exceed baseline score	Annual improvement
Inquisitive	48.860 – positive	14%		
Maturity in judgment	43.111 – positive	17%		
Total score on CCTDI (used to measure the 4th QEP outcome: "Students will exhibit affective dispositions known to characterize critical thinkers.")	302.30	n/a		

* score ranges from 0-29.99=low; 30-39.99=ambivalent; 40-49.99=positive; 50-60=high[6]

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[2] Data obtained from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, January 2012

[3] CCSSE reports and data available online at http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x21411.xml

[4] Survey results available online at http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/Documents/Institutional_Research/reports/Graduating_Students_Survey_2010-2011.pdf

[5] Source: CCTDI Instrument User's Manual, Insight Assessment / The California Academic Press 2010.

[6] Source: CCTDI Instrument User's Manual, Insight Assessment / The California Academic Press 2010.

Professional development initiatives successfully piloted

- Level 1 Training – workshops, round-tables, interactive presentations, or other forms of brief, single session opportunities
  - Content and interactive format were developed and delivered by and for faculty and staff (see Tables 7 and 8 for results).
  - 92 participants in faculty/staff workshops; 75 participants in tutor workshops
  - Presentation of critical thinking webinar and discussion on Lake Worth and Palm Beach Gardens campuses in April 2012
  - Four breakout sessions on Development Day (March 2012) focused on integrating critical thinking in the classroom. All were facilitated by faculty members.
- Level 2 Training – ongoing study with colleagues throughout at least one semester to develop workshops and materials for use College-wide; to begin in fall 2012
  - pilot cohort met throughout the spring term 2012
  - 26 faculty and staff volunteered; 23 completed pilot effort (see Table 9 for results)

Table 7: Faculty and staff workshop survey results

Surveys were presented at the end of every workshop to assess the quality of the pilot workshops. Questions and results are included here.		
Questions	Strongly agree	Agree
1. The information presented on the slides and handouts helped me gain cursory knowledge of why and when we should teach critical thinking.	67.65%	30.88%
2. I am leaving today with a better understanding of what critical thinking is as defined by the College community.	70.51%	28.21%
3. I am leaving today with at least one idea I can use to promote critical thinking in my classes or interactions with students.	71.43%	24.68%
4. The workshop and handouts helped me understand the QEP learning outcomes and how they are assessed.	60.26%	37.18%
5. I am leaving today with a better understanding of the obstacles that might prevent students from thinking critically.	64.86%	35.14%

SAMPLE FEEDBACK FROM WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
- *"Sharing thoughts and ideas and the handouts were most useful!"*
- *"Great learning opportunity!"*
- *"[The least useful part was] too much emphasis on terminology."*
- *"I really enjoyed the workshop. We should have plenty more."*
- *"Everything was very useful. Great workshop ☺"*
- *"[The most useful part was] interacting with fellow instructors."*
- *"I found the 'obstacles' info very helpful."*
- *"Awesome! I found everything to be useful. Great job!"*
- *"I would like more social/discussion about best practices."*
- *"I will use the handouts and info in my EDF courses. Thank you!"*

Table 8: Workshop attendance

Workshop attendance – pre-registration was required; 92 full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and administrators participated (facilitators not included in count). More than half of participants were classroom instructors (faculty and adjuncts).						
	BG	BR	LW	PBG	Total	% of total
Faculty attended	2	4	14	4	24	26.1%
Adjuncts attended	0	2	17	6	25	27.2%
Staff and administrators	2	10	25	6	43	46.7%
Total per campus and overall	4	16	56	16	92	100%

Table 9: Level 2 Training / Pilot cohort results

Cohort met face to face three times during the semester. An online venue was also used for discussion. Participation varied and suggestions were made for the fall 2012 cohort.	
Suggestions for next cohort (fall 2012)	• Create monthly modules in Blackboard that are removed when the month concludes • Train cohort participants to use rubric and to teach others • Make an initial orientation mandatory on the first Friday of the semester • Don't rush the collection of strategies; choose quality over quantity • Create participant binders with divider tabs and include resources to keep everyone organized
Contributions	• Collectively, 23 participants contributed more than 300 volunteer hours during the semester. Time was spent reading and reporting, discussing how to best develop an in-house training program, and finding resources that are meaningful to participants. • 7 participants either submitted or will submit deliverables (strategies or assessments that will ultimately be posted online in a repository) • 1 participant is developing a student resource that will help a reader understand what critical thinking is and why it is important. The end-product will likely be a brochure for distribution in the learning labs.

Successfully began integration of Level 1 Training into new faculty and staff orientation

- Information regarding QEP initiatives and College-wide focus on critical thinking were included in orientations for new faculty and adjuncts in the fall of 2012 and will increase by fall 2013.
- On track to develop an online product with workshop content to be required of all new instructors beginning fall 2013.
- Information will also be included in monthly orientations for all newly hired non-instructional staff beginning the fall semester 2012.
- On track for online product with workshop content that can be offered to all new employees by fall 2013.

Successfully identified possible conferences

The QEP calls for sending four faculty or staff to conferences annually beginning 2012-2013. Four options were discussed and it was determined that the in-state St. Petersburg Critical Thinking Institute (http://www.spcollege.edu/criticalthinking/professionals/cti.htm) would be the choice for this year. The QEP manager, two faculty members, and a program instructor attended the institute in October 2012. Conferences not selected included the following:

- International Conference on Critical Thinking: offered by the Foundation for Critical Thinking in California. Summer opportunity for significant training. $430 per person (4-person minimum with early registration) plus travel.
  http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/32nd-international-conference/1070#Rates
- Seminar we could bring here: offered by critical thinking trainer, Ernie Boone. Full day seminars are $750 plus travel (from California) plus $6 per person
  http://criticalthinkingseminars.com/pages/seminars.html
- Customized Critical Thinking Workshops, here or Colorado: offered by HeadScratchers onsite cost is about $5000 plus travel for speaker, maximum 10 people; $350 plus travel per person for 2-day workshops in Colorado. http://www.headscratchers.com/index.html

Critical thinking learning outcomes in programs successfully identified and documented

The goal was to identify, and develop if needed, program learning outcomes (PLOs) and document alignment to QEP learning outcomes in the fall 2012 semester. This was completed in October.

- Eighty-six active career programs were reviewed by the QEP manager during summer 2012. Documents were created for each program to identify the program learning outcomes (PLOs) that support critical thinking as a general education outcome and further support at least one of the QEP learning outcomes.
- Outcomes that support critical thinking, and specifically the skills identified in *at least one* QEP learning outcome, were found in 100 percent of the programs.
- Additionally, 57 programs have PLOs that support *all three* of the QEP student learning outcomes that are skills-based, i.e., interpret and analyze, draw conclusions, and evaluate and explain.
- Directors of all programs have confirmed the accuracy of outcomes alignment.
- Benchmarks, assessments, and assessment results will be documented beginning 2013 and a summary will be included in the annual QEP report thereafter.

Recommendations for improvement in 2012-2013

The baseline assessment results and accomplishments of the pilot semester (spring 2013) were reviewed by the QEP manager with staff from the Office of Research and Effectiveness (IRE). The overall recommendation is for the QEP to continue into the first full year of implementation in 2012-2013 with all elements as planned. Additional recommendations for improvement are suggested based upon review by the QEP committee and Advisory Council.

Recommendation for improvement	Comments or updates during fall 2012
1. Scenarios: Develop additional scenarios to measure the QEP learning outcomes, paying particular attention to whether or not new scenarios give students the opportunity to demonstrate the skills that are intended to be measured by the rubric.	**Implemented in fall 2012.** First revised scenario was developed in a joint effort between faculty on the QEP and assessment committees and integrated into the general education learning outcomes assessment process (Sept-Oct, 2012).
2. Workshops: Allow committee members to develop workshop content in critical thinking topics of interest while integrating the QEP outcomes into that content. Also develop one workshop on using and adapting the QEP critical thinking rubric and include the topic of "inter-rater reliability" in that workshop.	Implementation team will follow through and offer at least one workshop related to using the QEP rubric. The workshop will be offered as part of the spring 2013 QEP workshop series that will include multiple topics of interest that are related to critical thinking instruction and assessment.
3. Attend the St. Petersburg College's (SPC) Critical Thinking Institute for Teaching and Learning and/or to bring speaker to Palm Beach State to conduct critical thinking seminars onsite.	**Implemented in October 2012**. The QEP manager, two faculty members from Lake Worth campus and one PSAV instructor from Boca campus attended the SPC Institute in October, 2012. Subsequent recommendation (#4) made with comment.
4. Send at least four faculty and/or staff to the 2013 International Conference on Critical Thinking offered by the Foundation for Critical Thinking, July 2013.	The quality of the SPC institute was directly related to the fact that St. Petersburg College faculty and staff first attended the International Conference on Critical Thinking offered by the Foundation for Critical Thinking in California.

Palm Beach State has talent that is consistent with SPC, and if a few faculty members and staff were selected to attend the California conference, the College could easily develop and offer a similar and very high-quality institute at minimal cost, yielding a positive return on the conference investment. |
| 5. Consider standardizing PSAV program rubrics for critical thinking assessment so that the same scale is used by all PSAV programs and in general education assessment. | Will be discussed with IRE and program directors in spring 2013 for possible implementation during the 2013-2014 year. |