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## QEP PREVIEW: WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT THIS YEAR?

Karen Pain, QEP Manager

As we begin our second full year of implementation, we are finally moving beyond what we “must do for SACS” to also engage in initiatives that are potentially more meaningful as we strive to improve student learning.

More faculty and staff members are becoming involved with the Implementation Team and Advisory Council as we press forward.

We’re building resources online and in campus PTLCs and libraries. Faculty and adjuncts are receiving a copy of Paul and Elder’s (2007) *Guide for Educators to Critical*

*Thinking Competency Standards* as a teaching resource. As we continue to add to a critical thinking resource inventory, your suggestions are welcome. If there are books, journals, or links you are interested in or believe would be helpful to faculty and staff, please let us know!

Team members are building better workshops. We are continually improving our practice and learning more about how to get students to think critically, and we want to share what we’re learning with you. Workshops have already been delivered this semester, but most will be repeated again in the spring. See our list of titles on page three

and following the link to learn more!

As solutions to some of the challenges you face this semester, many workshops count as professional development, and contributions to our online resources in POLO are documented.

Expect to hear more from faculty and staff in coming months as members of both the QEP Implementation Team and the Assessment Committee together begin to document and share their work in *GASP!*

Thanks for all you do to help students develop and apply critical thinking skills!



View POLO by clicking  
the link below.

<http://cdm16073.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/>

### Formally introducing POLO!

Panther Online Learning Objects, POLO, now contains three digital collections of multimedia educational learning tools.

The first, POLO for Learning, was created to aid students by graphically presenting lessons, clarifying concepts previously discussed in class, or providing additional practice for skill-building.

POLO for Teaching was established to include a collection of assessments, assignments, and explanations of teaching strategies created by Palm Beach State College faculty and staff to share with

colleagues.

The latest collection, POLO for Support, is in development. It will include Student Services’ videos which explain processes and procedures which impact student success at Palm Beach State College.

All resources are catalogued so users can easily identify the objects they need, such as an assessment that supports the College’s QEP with a critical thinking focus, or a learning object related to solving algebraic equations.

Contact Susan Setterlund for information:  
[setterls@palmbeachstate.edu](mailto:setterls@palmbeachstate.edu)



[Click here](#) for  
assessment resources!



## WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON WITH GENERAL EDUCATION?

Helen Shub, Assessment Director

While change can often bring great things, it can sometimes get a little confusing. I hope to explain here the recent changes that have been made to the College's general education program and the reasoning behind those decisions.

As you have all probably heard by now, the State of Florida convened a committee consisting of faculty from all of the Florida State Colleges to develop what they refer to as the General Education Core Courses. This set of courses, when finalized, will represent the selection of courses from which students will be required to choose 15 of their 36 hours of general education credits (one three-credit course from each of the five areas of general education – Communications, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences). The distribution of the remaining 21 credit hours of the general education program will be up to each individual institution to allocate. In the case of Palm Beach State College, most of the courses listed in the Core are already included in the College's general education curriculum and there is no requirement to add the few that we do not currently offer. Incorporating the Core will therefore have no impact on the content of the College's general education program. Any changes that may be made to the content of the general education program will be as a result of the College's regular general education review process which is scheduled to take place during the spring 2014 semester.

Concurrent to the development of the General Education Core Courses, the College undertook its own revision of its general education learning outcomes. In an effort to provide more of a sense of ownership for the assessment of general education, the faculty revised the outcomes to map onto the five areas of general education, which are the same as those defined by the State – Communications, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. The College's general education learning outcomes now read as follows:

- Communications: Demonstrate effective communication skills for a variety of audiences.
- Humanities: Demonstrate an awareness of and an ability to effectively analyze creative works.
- Mathematics: Demonstrate an understanding of mathematical concepts to solve real-world problems.
- Natural Sciences: Demonstrate comprehension of fundamental concepts, principles or processes about the natural world.
- Social Sciences: Understand and apply sociological, cultural, political, psychological, historical and economic principles to a global environment.

In addition to the general education learning outcomes, the College has identified specific competencies expected of all students who receive an AA degree as well as many other degrees and certificates offered at the College. These "Institutional Learning Outcomes" are as follows:

- Critical Thinking: Engage in purposeful reasoning to reach sound conclusions.
- Ethics: Demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions based on ethical principles and reasoning.
- Global Awareness: Exhibit a sense of social, cultural and global responsibility.
- Information Literacy: Demonstrate the ability to find, evaluate, organize and use information.

It is expected that all of the above changes will help the College better articulate its expectations for student learning and to ultimately result in improvements in student success.

THE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE –  
WE ARE HERE TO HELP! **Helen Shub**

Are you unsure of what is expected of you with regard to assessment? Do all the rules and regulations seem overwhelming? And what does this all have to do with teaching, anyway? If any of these questions echo any of your thoughts, you are not alone. Times are changing and so are the expectations of our accreditors, the legislature and the tax paying public. How do we balance these edicts and calls for accountability with what we know to be sound teaching? Does it have to mean an endless drudgery of paperwork or measuring ourselves in artificially contrived ways that have no relationship to what we do in the classroom? How do we as professional educators respond to the expectation of accountability without losing sight of the reasons we entered this field to begin with?

The members of the General Education Committee are here to help you answer these questions. During Fall Development Day, Professors Patrick Tierney and Dr. Ana Porro will lead a breakout session for representatives from clusters that teach general education courses where they will help tie together all these seemingly disparate pieces – new laws, assessment and student learning. They will demonstrate how to blend all these activities into something meaningful and useful for teaching. But that’s only the beginning! Starting this spring, the members of the General Education Committee will offer a variety of workshops on topics designed to help you use assessment tools to improve student learning, to improve the quality of information you receive and to answer the demands of accountability. These workshops will provide you with immediately useful information on a wide variety of subjects, such as:

- Developing and using rubrics
- Creating effective assignments
- Designing multiple-choice test items that work
- Setting appropriate benchmarks or standards
- Employing strategies to reduce plagiarism
- Utilizing assessment results to make improvements

But wait, there’s more! In addition to the workshops, the General Education Committee will be offering a personally-tailored service where we will come to you. In the privacy of your own office, we will offer any assistance you need to make improvements in your assessments and to make those assessments work for you. We are looking forward to working with each of you and exploring new ways of making assessment purposeful and meaningful.



QEP WORKSHOPS: FALL 2013

Engage! Coaching  
Metacognition Lost Art  
of Visualization

Bringing Emotion Back into the Classroom

Stewart Award Do’s and Don’ts

And the Horse You Rode in On

Role of Critical Thinking: Decision Making

A Flipping Brainstorm

Socratic Questioning

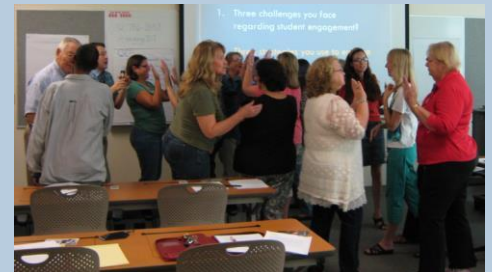
Web 2.0 Tools that Foster Critical Thinking

Clarity

**Interested but missed the workshop?**  
[Click here](#) to contact the presenter for  
**information.**

*“...can’t wait to come to your next seminar. I have been motivated to ‘try and figure it out’...enjoyed every minute!”*

*“Engage!” participant, 9/27/13*



*“Engage!” workshop with Professor Manuel Larenas*

*9/27/13*

## ABOUT GASP!

The idea behind *GASP!* is pretty simple: we all want students to think! As faculty and staff, we appreciate ideas that will make it easier for us get students thinking, and we want to better understand how assessment can help us know we're on the right track. *GASP!* may come in the form of a single fact sheet, a newsletter, or sometimes perhaps, something more journalistic.

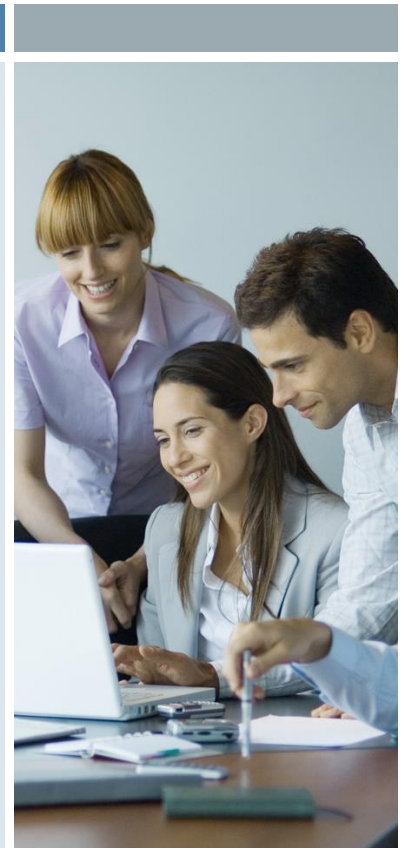
### The QEP and General Education Committees want to use *GASP!* as a platform to

- ✓ feature faculty and staff who have or are using strategies that help students demonstrate achievement of any of our general education learning outcomes, including critical thinking;
- ✓ update readers on important issues related to assessment, accreditation, or the QEP;
- ✓ promote College events related to critical thinking, assessment, or professional learning opportunities for faculty or staff that will lead to improved student learning.

If you have ideas you would like to have featured in *GASP!*, please contact us!

Karen Pain: [paink@palmbeachstate.edu](mailto:paink@palmbeachstate.edu)

Helen Shub: [shubh@palmbeachstate.edu](mailto:shubh@palmbeachstate.edu)



## CLICK IN A BOX TO VISIT THE WEB PAGE!

QEP Campus  
Workshops

Online QEP  
Workshop

POLO Panther  
Online Learning  
Objects

Resources for  
Critical  
Thinking

Resources for  
Assessment

## Who's who?

### General Education Committee

Dr. Jennifer Campbell  
Emma Chow  
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Karen Pain  
Dr. Ginger Pedersen  
Dr. David Pena  
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### QEP Implementation Team

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