



**QEP Title:** *QUEST: Critical Thinking in the First Year Experience*  
**Institution:** Motlow State Community College, Lynchburg, TN  
**Contact:** Meagan McManus, QEP Director, [mmcmanus@mscc.edu](mailto:mmcmanus@mscc.edu)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Motlow State Community College (MSCC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *QUEST: Critical Thinking in the First Year Experience*, is designed to improve students' critical thinking skills within the learning environment of the First Year Experience (FYE) course. The QUEST acronym stands for "Question, Use, Evaluate, Solve, Test" to identify important skills for critical thinking. This emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills aligns with MSCC's mission to "encourage student success through critical thinking, clear communication, ethical behavior, respect for others, civic responsibility, [and] problem solving." The QEP objective to "prepare students to utilize critical thinking skills in college-level coursework" and the QEP assessment measures were designed to support the college's mission statement, as well as elements of MSCC's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan: "The institution will annually exceed the comparative or college peer group scores for academic success measures."

### **The QUEST student learning outcomes are as follows:**

- Students will be able to analyze claims and supporting evidence of arguments.
- Students will be able to reflect and make connections between their educational and personal experiences.
- Students will be able to ask pertinent questions to solve authentic problems.

### **Strategies for achieving the goals of QUEST are:**

- Expanding the MSCC 1300: First Year Experience course requirements to any student who has one or more Learning Support requirements
- Enhancing the critical thinking curriculum in MSCC 1300 to include critical thinking activities, written reflections, and concept mapping
- Integrating mandatory, yearly training for all MSCC 1300 instructors
- Assessing student learning through multiple measures that include eportfolios, perception surveys, and nationally recognized critical thinking assessments.

Through the focus on critical thinking in MSCC's FYE course and the expansion of the FYE course requirement to any student who needs Learning Support courses, *QUEST* provides educational opportunities for students to develop knowledge, abilities, and skills that promote academic success in numerous disciplines.