

SACS Facts, October 2009

“We Shall Achieve”: Critical Thinking Goals for the UTC QEP

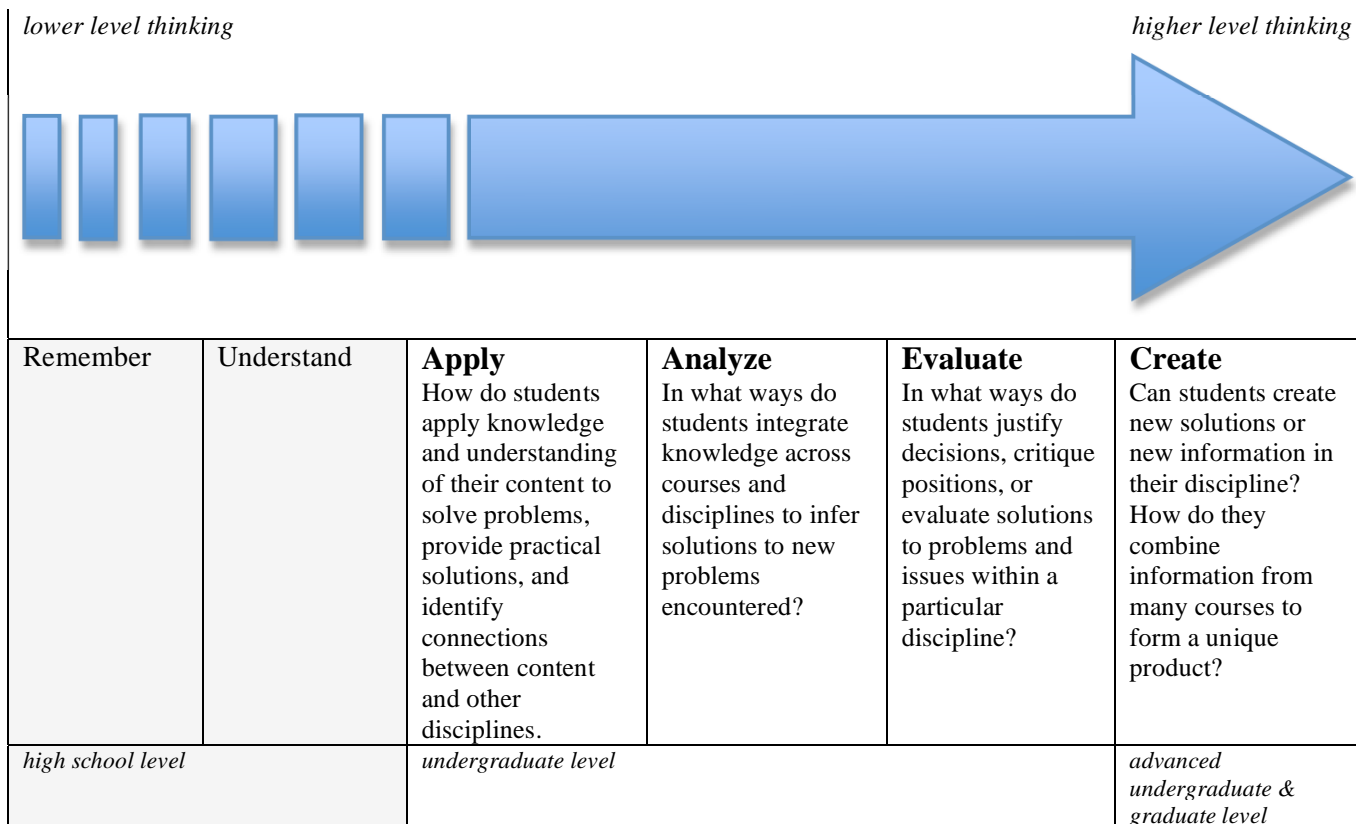
*We will **APPLY** knowledge, **ANALYZE** information, **EVALUATE** new situations using previous/new knowledge, and **CREATE** new knowledge to guide our student learning in and out of the classroom.*

Over the past year the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee has published much about the QEP for the SACS reaccreditation visit that will occur in spring 2011. Faculty, staff and students have engaged in reviewing data and having an opportunity for input during various scheduled forums. Many questions are now being asked throughout the campus and still the main question arises from time to time “What is the QEP”?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires institutions to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as a part of the reaccreditation process. The goal of the QEP, a five-year plan unique and specific to each institution, revolves around improving learning outcomes and student engagement to accomplish the mission of the institution.

Based on empirical data reviewed during the past year as well as the input forums, the QEP topic for UTC will focus on “critical thinking.” Improving critical thinking aligns with UTC’s strategic plan and mission as an engaged, metropolitan university. Two of the core values within the strategic plan are education and engagement. Critical thinkers create stronger bonds within the campus community and create new ties between the university and surrounding communities.

Highly sought after in society and the workforce, critical thinking is generally defined as the ability to apply knowledge, use information in new ways, analyze situations and concepts, evaluate decisions through justification and create new solutions. Thus, UTC’s definition of critical thinking is based on our students achieving the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy -- **application, analysis, evaluation, and creation** (http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm).



What can YOU do to help the institution develop the QEP on critical thinking?

- Post comments to the blog (<http://blog.utc.edu/SACS/>)
- Attend a QEP brainstorming forum (<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/SACS/QEPindex.php>)
- Or talk with someone on the QEP committee (<http://www.utc.edu/Administration/SACS/QEPGroup.php>).

Begin to think about how students can best integrate content from across the curriculum to apply, analyze, evaluate and create knowledge and skills. We need your input!