

AMSC Faculty Team Examination of Critical Thinking Skills and Online Course Environments Selected for New Research Anthology



Photo – circa 2019 | Pre-COVID-19 Pandemic

The manuscript, “Cultivating Critical Thinking Skills in Online Course Environments: Instructional Techniques and Strategies” penned by Drs. Curtis L. Todd, Kokila Ravi, and Kenja McCray, has been selected for the 2021 IGI Global Research Anthology titled *Research Anthology on Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Students*. The book chapter is the result of the authors’ shared interest in best practice standards for online course design and delivery methods to improve both teaching and learning.

Their research transitions beyond theoretical constructs regarding best practices and standards for distance education. In doing so, the authors provide practical applications through the use of case studies in demonstrating a “how to” student engagement framework and online instructional model. This model fosters a practical online course environment and useful strategies for developing critical thinking skills.

Further, as noted by the publisher, “Learning strategies for critical thinking are a vital part of today’s curriculum as students have few additional opportunities to learn these skills outside of school environments. Therefore, it is essential that educators be given practical strategies for improving their critical thinking skills as well as methods to effectively provide critical thinking skills to their students.”

Dr. Todd is Professor of Social Work and provides instruction in criminal justice. He also leads student retention, progression and graduation special initiatives. Dr. Ravi is Director of Distance Education and Specialized Programs. She also serves as the Prior Learning Assessment Director and Institutional Representative for Quality Matters. Dr. McCray is an Associate Professor of History and Program Coordinator of the College's environmental justice initiatives. The original manuscript was published in the *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (2019, volume 9, issue 1).

Chapter 43

Cultivating Critical Thinking Skills in Online Course Environments: Instructional Techniques and Strategies

Curtis L Todd

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Atlanta, Georgia

Kokila Ravi

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Atlanta, Georgia

Kenja McCray

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Atlanta, Georgia

ABSTRACT

The development and demonstration of students’ critical thinking skills is one hallmark of effective teaching and learning. A promising scholarly literature has emerged in addition to webinars, conferences, and workshops to assist in this endeavor. Further, publishers offer cleverly marketed bundle packages with enhanced supplemental materials and instructors contribute instructional strategies and techniques. Nevertheless, gaps still exist in the scholarship related to effective student engagement. The development of higher order thinking skills in online educational settings is one such area requiring additional inquiry. This article transitions beyond mere theoretical constructs regarding best practices and standards for distance education. In doing so, it provides practical applications through the use of case studies in demonstrating a “how to” student engagement model and framework, which fosters the type of online course environment and useful strategies for developing critical thinking skills.