

Title of Proposal “Encouraging Critical Enquiry: The Role of the Instructor”

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ABSTRACT

At the tertiary level, lecturers expect a deep approach to learning but often teach in a way that promotes surface learning. Research indicates that deeper approaches to learning decline as students progress through their university careers (Johnston, 2004). This suggests that university education may not be fostering critical thinking and that we need to make a concerted effort to ensure that steps are taken to deliberately build these skills.

This paper seeks to explore the extent to which lecturers at the University of the West Indies deem critical thinking skills to be important and the ways in which they attempt to encourage their students to engage in deep thought. It will examine the nature of the learning tasks in which students and instructors are engaged as well as the types of assignments that students are given. These will be analyzed to determine the extent to which they encourage surface/deep learning and recommendations will be made for alternative approaches/strategies that would increase the likelihood of students engaging in critical enquiry.