Capstone Project Precis
Engaging Community College Students to Think Like Historians

My capstone project, *Engaging Community College Students to Think Like Historians,* involves designing curriculum for an online survey of American history, covering the period of 1877 through the present for community college students.

When one considers the conventional understanding of the study of history, a passive approach is usually imagined. This approach involves students sitting in a classroom and listening to a teacher lecture. Teachers check for understanding by giving multiple choice or sometimes short answer or essay question quizzes and tests. Memorization of facts, dates, names of people and places are required. Students, generally, are not engaging in historical thinking. They are expected to sit, listen, memorize, learn, then regurgitate what they have learned in order to earn a grade on a test. As soon as the test is over, all that was learned is forgotten.

This course design is designed to help students learn to view the world through the lens of others instead of judging historical events and people only by their own experiences and values. It includes three main themes; (1) an examination and analysis of the formation and development of institutions that we have come to take for granted, (2) a focus on race and ethnicity and especially how immigrants, African Americans, and women, in particular, have been affected by and have affected the formation of our nation, (3) emphasis will be placed on religious, political and social movements, discrimination and the development of an American identity.

Special attention will be employed to; (1) create opportunities for interaction between students and with the professor using tools like VoiceThread; (2) develop and apply critical thinking skills to develop "historical thinking" techniques as identified by Mandall & Malone in their book, "*Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction;*" and, (3) make the course engaging and interesting using multiple intelligence principles through the use of primary sources such as, political cartoons, photographs, art, audio files, films clips, etc.