Foreword

Our development as informed and professionally effective educators is actually about self-development. We develop what and how we think from our experiences and readings, and that changes what we do; it changes our teaching strategies and behaviors. So, thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking . . . is good. This is the mantra I tell to the EdD students in the Educational Leadership program in the Lindenwood University School of Education, Missouri’s largest EdD program.

Thinking from multiple perspectives, which is just one of the great ideas in the *Handbook of Research on Advancing Critical Thinking in Higher Education*, is an important quality of an expert educator. In fact, advancing critical thinking truly requires the educator to be an expert.

Funny thing about the concept of an ‘expert educator.’ Those of us who work in the educational environment are very hesitant to refer to ourselves as an expert. We do not refer to ourselves as an expert teacher, principal, or an expert professor. Yet, all of us believe in professional expertise. Actually, we expect and rely on others to be experts in their field; just not on ourselves in the profession of education.

There are all kinds of examples where we believe and expect others to be experts. When we get on an airplane, we expect the pilot and the crew to be experts; not only do we expect to arrive safely but we expect to enjoy the flight. The same could be said for physicians, tax accountants, and so on. We expect our car to be repaired by an expert mechanic. I go to the gym almost every day. The fitness trainers there are not called trainers. On the back of their shirt is the term ‘Fitness Expert.’ We see experts in many other fields; but not in ourselves.

As Assistant Commissioner for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, I frequently represented the Department of Education, the state of Missouri, and the broader educational community in state and federal courts. I spent a great deal of time defending what we do in our schools. When it came my time to testify, the state’s attorney would always offer me as an expert witness on matters of education. Sometimes the opposing attorney would object, although I never understood this objection. It really made no difference; in each court every judge said about the same thing. They said they would decide if Dr. Stewart was an expert witness.

All of us in the profession of education have judges; some of us have many judges in our classes and in our university. Our judges will decide whether or not we think and act as an expert educator. Our judges will decide if we are informed, principled, and professionally effective in our global community.

In the *Handbook of Research on Advancing Critical Thinking in Higher Education* Dr. Sherrie Wisdom and Dr. Lynda Leavitt have approached advancing critical thinking in higher education by assembling different perspectives from 25 educators from around the world. That diversity alone guarantees multiple perspectives. Further, some of the contributors are K-12 educators while others are from higher education. Their chapters address advancing critical thinking in EdD students, in college classrooms, in
team teaching, and in virtual learning environments, to name just a few of the chapter approaches. As you read each chapter in this book you will judge the author to be an expert in the field of advancing critical thinking.

Just as important, as you read and internalize the lessons from each chapter, and as you add to your professional understanding and behaviors about advancing critical thinking, those students in your classes and your colleagues in your university will judge you to be an expert in advancing critical thinking in higher education.

Terry Stewart
Lindenwood University, USA

Terry Stewart joined the Lindenwood University faculty full time in June, 2007 and is currently Assistant Dean for Educational Leadership (the EdD program). In addition to his duties as Assistant Dean, Dr. Stewart hosts the Lindenwood University TV show “Eye on Education” which focuses on topics that are important and relevant to teachers, administrators, students and parents. Prior to Lindenwood, he served eleven years as Superintendent of Schools for the School District of Jennings, and nineteen years overall as a Superintendent of Schools. While Superintendent in Jennings, the school district became Missouri’s only “high at risk” school district that was fully accredited; the district received a Smithsonian award for its effective use of instructional technology; the district was also recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the nation’s top 25 school districts in the use of instructional technology. Prior to going to Jennings he served five years as Assistant Commissioner, Division of Administration, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary education (DESE). He continues to serve as a consultant to numerous groups and organizations and speaks on educational topics around the country. He earned an Ed. D. from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1979.