



NEWSLETTER

Foundation for Critical Thinking
www.criticalthinking.org

July 2010

There is still time to register!

Conference July 19-22; Preconference July 17-18

World's Longest Running Annual Conference on Critical Thinking

at the Claremont Hotel and Resort, Berkeley, CA

Register now- click here for the 30th International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform

30th

**International Conference
on Critical Thinking**

**2010 Conference Theme:
How to Teach Students to
Master Content by Developing
a Questioning Mind**

The conference will consist in approximately 40 conference sessions offered over four days. Note that this year a number of advanced sessions (including two preconference sessions) are offered for returning registrants and those who have participated in our professional development programs onsite.

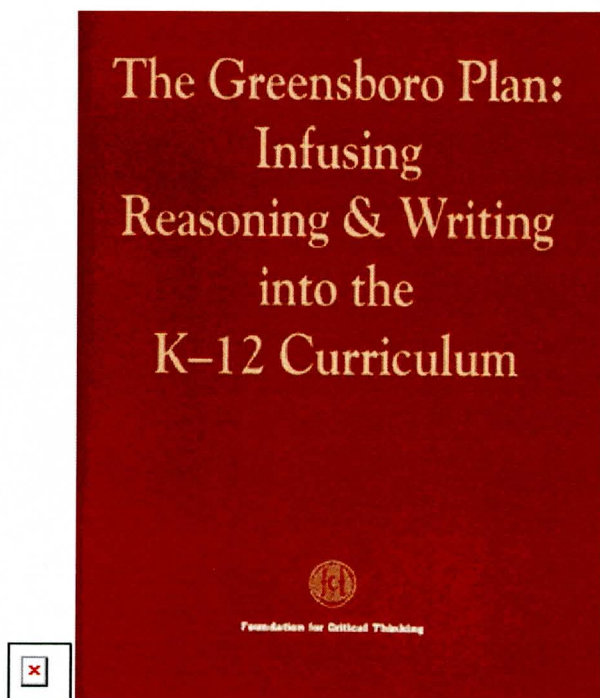
Please join us!

[Click here for information on sessions, schedules and presenters.](#)

News from the Archives...by Linda Elder

In 1991 the first critical thinking long-term institutional plan was developed in connection with the Center for Critical Thinking. It was designed for the Greensboro City schools, entitled *The Greensboro Plan: Infusing Reasoning and Writing in the K-12 curriculum* and written by Janet Williamson. In an opening comment in the plan, James P. David, the Chairman of the Greensboro City Board of Education is quoted as saying:

"There is nothing more important than teaching our children to think...The quality of our children's thinking will govern decisions that they will make which, in turn, will determine the future of our world....The Greensboro City Board of Education is committed to the best possible education for all children; that education must include the teaching of critical thinking. Our school district has given high priority... to the teaching of critical thinking skills. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to see that this effort continues to flourish."



Unfortunately, as is usually the case, this plan for long-term commitment to critical thinking went largely unrealized. Still it includes some helpful ideas for those interested in professional development in critical thinking. For instance, in it Richard Paul offers the following underpinnings of any good critical thinking professional development program:

1. **Formulate a comprehensive philosophy of education focused on critical thinking**, one that makes clear that knowledge can be achieved only through thinking.
2. **Make critical thinking the essential mode of instruction** for all subjects, all students, all grade levels.
3. **Systematically cultivate the critical thinking of teachers.** Do not assume that all teachers are automatically good critical thinkers.
4. **Don't use a canned** or algorithmic approach.
5. **Make a long-term, system-wide, open-ended commitment to critical thinking** that provides for

the different rates of growth of different teachers.

6. **Create multiple incentives for teachers.**
7. **Allocate special resources** on a permanent basis.
8. **Find at least one committed driving force, one passionate critical thinking enthusiast**, to head the effort.
9. **Adopt a broad and rich concept of critical thinking** that is consistent not only with a variety of subject matter areas and disciplines but with individual teachers as well.
10. **Provide for on-going, site based follow up.**

Paul commented further:

"Both instruction and learning are highly fragmented today with virtually everybody focused on some part of it rather than on the whole of it. Crucial global notions like critical thinking are then reduced to platitudes and approached superficially as one more add-on to an already dense curriculum filled with hundreds of disjointed objectives."

The Greensboro Plan, though no longer alive as far as we can tell in the Greensboro schools, still stands as a useful reference for schools interested in long-term staff development in critical thinking. You may find it at this link:

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/store-page.cfm?P=products&ItemID=154&catalogID=214&catelD=132>

...there is such a thing as a spirit of the times, an attitude of mind characteristic of a particular generation, which is passed on from individual to individual and gives its distinctive mark to a society. Each of us has to do his little bit toward transforming this spirit of the times...Let every man judge by himself, by what he has himself read, not by what others tell him.

~ Albert Einstein 1954
