



NEWSLETTER

Foundation for Critical Thinking
www.criticalthinking.org

June 2011

Critical Thinking in the News...

Critical Thinking at Surry Community College, NC

Surry Community College recently received recognition as one of 120 community colleges nationwide to be declared eligible for the new Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. It comes with a one million dollar award. Surry CC made it to this first round of 120 schools for their completion rates and outstanding academic and workforce outcomes. The college was one of three NC community colleges in the field of 120.

Surry CC is currently completing the round two application--the Aspen Institute will select 10 colleges for round two. Surry is stressing in their materials the crucial role that the learning philosophy and critical thinking have played and continue to play in their students' success. Their overall point is that they succeed by holding students to rigorous standards that require them to think critically--while at the same time they balance that rigor with student services that provide academic support focused on helping students think through the material.

Congratulations to Surry for their commitment to infusing critical thinking across the curriculum, as is evidenced in recognition by the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

Surry Community College is listed as one of the Institutions Using Our Approach to Critical Thinking.
[Click here to view the complete list.](#)

Online Course Registration is Open!

CT 700: Introduction to Critical Thinking for Instruction & Learning

CT 700 introduces the theory and application of critical thinking to classroom instruction. It fosters understanding of how to teach critical thinking skills to students through any subject, discipline, or grade level

**Register Now
for the**

31st International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform

**Early Registration Rates and
Special Hotel Room Block
will expire soon!**

July 25-28, 2011
Preconference July 23-24
[Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, CA*](#)

**Register by July 4th for the
Early Registration Rates.**
We offer group rate discounts for 2 or more.

[Click here for registration and rate information.](#)

****Book your room at the Claremont by July 1st to
receive our special rate of \$159/ night, \$5 parking,
restaurant discounts and complimentary use of the spa
facilities.***

(while working within given curricula). In this course, you will be introduced to the Elements of Reasoning, the Universal Intellectual Standards, and the Intellectual Traits through readings, discussions and practical application activities. Designing critical thinking lessons and remodeling already existing lessons to infuse critical thinking are skills that will be covered in depth. Learning and practicing specific strategies for concept attainment, Socratic discussions, and ethical reasoning are also a focus of this course. Emphasis in lesson planning will be on having students consciously use critical thinking concepts and strategies. You will teach lessons you develop in your own classes and receive credit for doing so.

As an outcome of this course you will acquire knowledge of and develop skill in:

[Click here to read more](#)

- Utilizing the Elements of Reasoning and the Universal Intellectual Standards to create critical thinking lessons in your subject area or grade level.
- Designing critical thinking lessons in such a way that your students are aware of the critical thinking strategies you are using and can articulate how they are thinking critically.
- Utilizing the Elements of Reasoning and Universal Intellectual Standards to think through intellectual, academic, personal, social or political problems, as well as fostering these skills in instruction.
- Providing your students with the intellectual tools to engage in fair-minded reasoning when reasoning through ethical issues and dilemmas.
- Designing and conducting Socratic discussions using the concepts and principals of critical thinking.
- Helping students learn how to engage in conceptual analysis and think within the key concepts in subjects and disciplines.
- Participating in discussions related to important issues in education.

[Click here to read more](#)



This is what people say about our conferences and workshops...

-The level of expertise and knowledge of the presenters are excellent. In addition, I appreciate their positive attitudes, willingness to explain concepts...and opportunities to ask questions.

-The workshops are intensive work in doing critical thinking, not just reading about it.

-I'm glad my General Education director insisted on my attendance to this Critical Thinking Conference. I've learned a great deal for application in both my teaching and my life in general.

-The insights I have gained from this one conference far exceed any other conference I have attended to date.

-Wonderful, insightful, well presented!

-Great suggestions on how to focus on students' strengths, not weaknesses, and how to apply the tools to empower them as critical thinkers.

-The workshop taught me the practicality of implementing critical thinking. I can't wait to bring what I've learned back to my school.

[click here to read more!](#)

For a conference brochure [click here](#).

For complete information on sessions, presenters, early registration rates and the workshop hotel, please [click here](#).

Fostering Critical Thinking in the Classroom...

Teach students how to assess their listening.

Since students spend a good deal of their time listening, and since developing critical listening skills are difficult to achieve, instructors should design instruction that fosters critical listening. This is best done by holding students responsible for their "listening" in the classroom. Here are some structures that help students develop critical listening abilities:

- First Strategy. Call on students regularly and unpredictably, holding them responsible either to ask questions they are formulating as they think through the content or give a summary, elaboration, or example of what others have said.
- Second Strategy. Ask every student to write down the most basic question they need answered in order to understand the issue or topic under discussion. Then collect the questions (to see what they understand or don't understand about the topic). Or you might: (a) call on some of them to read their questions aloud, or (b) put them in groups of two with each person trying to answer the question of the other.

Through activities such as these students learn to monitor their listening, determining when they are and when they are not following what is being said. This should lead to their asking pointed questions. Reward students for asking questions when they do not understand what is being said.

Critical Thinking Quotes...

In his book, *Portraits from Memory*, "Reflections on My Eightieth Birthday," Russell (1956) comments on the long term nature of change and the importance of moving ever closer toward the creation of critical societies:

"...beneath all this load of failure I am still conscious of something that I feel to be victory. I may have conceived theoretical truth wrongly, but I was not wrong in thinking that there is such a thing, and that it deserves our allegiance. I may have thought the road to a world of free and happy human beings shorter than it is proving to be, but I was not wrong in thinking that such a world is possible, and that it is worth while to live with a view to bringing it nearer. I have lived in the pursuit of a vision, both personal and social.

Personal: to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle; to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times. Social: to see in imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them.

These things I believe, and the world, for all its horrors, has left me unshaken."