The basic idea behind lesson plan remodelling as a strategy for staff development in critical thinking is simple. Every practicing teacher works daily with lesson plans of one kind or another. To remodel lesson plans is to critique one or more lesson plans and formulate one or more new lesson plans based on that critical process. It is well done when the remodeler understands the strategies and principles used in producing the critique and remodel, when the strategies are well-thought-out, when the remodel clearly follows from the critique, and when the remodel teaches critical thought better than the original. The idea behind our particular approach to staff development of lesson plan remodelling is also simple. A group of teachers or a staff development leader who has a reasonable number of exemplary remods with accompanying explanatory principles can design practice sessions that enable teachers to begin to develop new teaching skills as a result of experience in lesson remodelling.

When teachers are provided with clearly contrasting "befores" and "afters," lucid and specific critiques, a set of principles clearly explained and illustrated, and a coherent unifying concept, they can increase their own skills in this process. One learns how to remodel lesson plans to incorporate critical thinking only through practice. The more one does it the better one gets, especially when one has examples of the process to serve as models.

Of course, a lesson remodelling strategy for critical thinking in-service is not tied to any particular handbook of examples, but it is easy to indicate the advantages of having such a handbook, assuming it is well-executed. Some teachers do not have a clear concept of critical thinking. Some think of it as negative, judgmental thinking, which is a stereotype. Some have only vague notions, such as "good thinking," or "logical thinking," with little sense of how such ideals are achieved. Others think of it simply in terms of a laundry list of atomistic skills and so lack a clear sense of how these skills need to be orchestrated or integrated, or of how they can be misused. Rarely do teachers have a clear sense of the relationship between the component micro-skills, the basic, general concept of critical thinking, and the obstacles to using it fully.
It is theoretically possible but, practically speaking, unlikely that teachers will sort this out for themselves as a task in abstract theorizing. In the first place, most teachers have very little patience with abstract theory and little experience in developing it. In the second place, few school districts could give them the time to take on this task, even if they were qualified and motivated enough themselves. But getting the basic concept sorted out is not the only problem. There is also the problem of translating that concept into “principles,” linking the “principles” to applications, and implementing them in specific lessons.

On the other hand, if we simply present teachers with prepackaged finished lesson plans designed by the critical thinking of someone else, by a process unclear to them, then we have lost a major opportunity for the teachers to develop their own critical thinking skills, insights, and motivations. Furthermore, teachers who cannot use basic critical thinking principles to critique and remodel some of their own lesson plans probably won’t be able to implement someone else’s effectively. Providing teachers with the scaffolding for carrying out the process for themselves and examples of its use opens the door for continuing development of critical thinking skills and insights. It begins a process which gives the teacher more and more expertise and more and more success in critiquing and remodelling the day-to-day practice of teaching.

Lesson plan remodelling can become a powerful tool in critical thinking staff development for other reasons as well. It is action-oriented and puts an immediate emphasis on close examination and critical assessment of what is taught on a day-to-day basis. It makes the problem of critical thinking infusion more manageable by paring it down to the critique of particular lesson plans and the progressive infusion of particular principles. It is developmental in that, over time, more and more lesson plans are remodelled, and what has been remodelled can be remodelled again; more strategies can be systematically infused as they become clear to the teacher. It provides a means of cooperative learning for teachers. Its results can be collected and shared, both at the site and district levels, so that teachers can learn from and be encouraged by what other teachers do. The dissemination of plausible remodels provides recognition for motivated teachers. It forges a unity between staff development, curriculum development, and student development. It avoids recipe solutions to critical thinking instruction. And, finally, properly conceptualized and implemented, it unites cognitive and affective goals and integrates the curriculum.

Of course, it is no panacea. It will not work for those who are deeply complacent or cynical or for those who do not put a high value on students’ learning to think for themselves. It will not work for those who have a low command of critical thinking skills coupled with low self-esteem. It will not work for those who are “burned out” or have given up on change. Finally, it will not work for those who want a quick and easy solution based on recipes and formulas. It is a long-term solution that transforms teaching by degrees as the critical thinking insights and skills of the teachers develop and mature. If teachers can develop the art of critiquing the lesson plans they use and learn how to use that critique to remodel those lesson plans more and more effectively, they will progressively 1) refine and develop their own critical thinking skills and insights, 2) re-shape the actual or “living” curriculum (what is in fact taught), and 3) develop their teaching skills. (See diagram #2.)

The approach to lesson remodelling developed by the Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique is based on the publication of handbooks, such as this one, which illustrate the remodelling process, unifying well-thought-out critical thinking theory with practical application. The goal is to explain critical thinking by translating general theory into specific teaching.
strategies. The strategies are multiple, allowing teachers to infuse more strategies as they clarify more dimensions of critical thought. This is especially important since the skill at and insight into critical thought vary.

This approach, it should be noted, respects the autonomy and professionalism of teachers. They choose which strategies to use in a particular situation, and control the rate and style of integration. It is a flexible approach, maximizing the creativity and insight of the teacher. The teacher can apply the strategies to any kind of material: text lesson, lessons or units the teacher has created, discussion outside of formal lessons, discussion of movies, etc.

In teaching for critical thinking in the strong sense, we are committed to teaching in such a way that children, as soon as and as completely as possible, learn to become responsible for their own thinking. This requires that they learn how to take command of their thinking, which in turn requires that they learn how to notice and think about their own thinking, as well as the thinking of others. Consequently, we teach so as to help children to talk about their thinking in order to be mindful and directive in it. We want them to study their own minds and how they operate. We want them to gain tools by which they can probe deeply into and take command of their own mental processes. Finally, we want them to gain this mentally skilled self-control with a view to becoming more honest with themselves and more fair to others, not only to "do better" in school. We want them to develop mental skills and processes in an ethically responsible context. This is not a "good-boy/bad-boy" approach to thinking, for people must think their own way to the ethical insights that underlie becoming fairminded. We are careful not to judge the content of the student's thinking. Rather, we facilitate a process whereby the student's own insights can be developed.

The global objectives of critical thinking-based instruction are intimately linked to specific objectives. It is precisely because we want students to learn how to think for themselves in an ethically responsible way that we use the strategies we do; why we help them to gain insight into their tendency to think in narrowly self-serving ways (egocentricity); why we stimulate them to empathize with the perspectives of others; to suspend or withhold judgment when they do not have the evidence to justify making a judgment; to clarify issues and concepts, to evaluate sources, solutions, and actions; to notice when they make assumptions, how they make inferences and where they use, or ought to use, evidence; to consider the implications of their ideas; to identify the possible contradictions or inconsistencies in their thinking; to consider the qualifications or lack of qualifications in their generalizations; and why we do all of these things in encouraging, supportive, non-judgmental ways. The same principles of education hold for staff development.

To help teachers generalize from specific remodelling moves, and so facilitate their grasp of strong sense critical thinking and how it can be taught, we have devised a list of teaching strategies. Each strategy highlights an aspect of critical thought. Each use illustrates how that aspect can be encouraged in students. In the chapter, "Strategies," we explain the thirty-five strategies illustrated in the remodels. Each is linked to the idea of strong sense critical thinking, in the "principle." And for each we explain some ways the aspect of critical thought can be encouraged, in the "application." When a strategy is used in a remodel, we have drawn attention to it by putting its strategy symbol in the remodel, e.g., "S-13."

To make the list more manageable, we have divided the strategies into three types: those which emphasize the affective side of critical thought, Affective Strategies, promoting intellectual virtues, empathy, and understanding of obstacles to critical thought; those which generally require extended use of cognitive skills, Cognitive-Macro-abilities, emphasizing extended exploration of ideas, perspectives, and basic issues; and those which highlight a specific, usually brief,
critical move, Cognitive-Micro-skills. These divisions are not absolute, however. Critical thought requires integration of the affective and cognitive dimensions of thinking. Macro-abilities usually require use of micro-skills. And micro-skills are pointless unless used to some end.

Strategies for Infusing Critical Thinking

Let us now consider how we can incorporate these general understandings into in-service design. There are five basic goals or tasks teachers need to aim for to learn the art of lesson remodelling. Each can be the focus of some stage of in-service activity:

1) **Clarifying the global concept** — How is the fairminded critical thinker unlike the self-serving critical thinker and the uncritical thinker? What is it to think critically?

2) **Understanding component teacher strategies** that parallel the component critical thinking values, processes, and skills — What are the basic values that (strong sense) critical thinking presupposes? What are the micro-skills of critical thinking? What are the macro-processes? What do critical thinkers do? Why? What do they avoid doing? Why?

3) **Seeing a variety of ways in which the various component strategies can be used in classroom settings** — When can each aspect of critical thought be fostered? When are they most needed? What contexts most require each dimension? What questions or activities foster it?

4) **Getting experience in lesson plan critique** — What are the strengths and weaknesses of this lesson? What critical principles, concepts, or strategies apply to it? What important concepts, insights, and issues underlie this lesson? Are they adequately emphasized and explained? Of what use will the well-educated person make of this material? Will that usefulness be apparent to the students?

5) **Getting experience in lesson plan remodelling** — How can I take full advantage of the strengths of this lesson? How can this material best be used to foster critical insights? Which questions or activities should I drop, use, alter or expand upon? What should I add to it? How can I best promote genuine and deep understanding of this material?

Let us emphasize at the outset that these goals or understandings are interrelated and that the achievement of any or all of them is a matter of degree. We therefore warn against trying to achieve "complete" understanding of any one of these in some absolute sense, before proceeding to the others. Furthermore, we emphasize that understanding in each case should be viewed practically or pragmatically. One does not learn about what critical thinking is by memorizing a definition or a set of distinctions. The teacher’s mind must be actively engaged at each point in the process — concepts, principles, applications, critiques, and remodels. At all of these levels, “hands-on” activities should immediately follow any introduction of explanatory or illustrative material. If, for example, teachers are shown a handbook formulation of one of the principles, they should then have an opportunity to brainstorm applications of the principle, or an opportunity to try out their own formulations of another principle. When they are shown the critique of one lesson plan, they should be given an opportunity to remodel it or critique another. If they are shown a complete remodel — original lesson plan, critique, and remodel — they should be given an opportunity to do a full critique of their own, individually or in groups. This back-and-forth movement between example and practice should characterize the staff development process overall. These practice sessions should not be rushed, and the products of that practice should be collected and shared in some form with the group as a whole. Teachers need to see that they are fruitfully engaged in this process; dis-
Remodelling: A Foundation for Staff Development

Semination of the products of the process demonstrates this fruitfulness. Of course, it ought to be a common understanding of staff development participants that initial practice is not the same as final product, that what is remodelled today by critical thought can be re-remodelled tomorrow and improved progressively thereafter as experience, skills, and insights grow.

Teachers should be asked early on to formulate what critical thinking means to them. You can examine some teacher formulations in the section “What Critical Thinking Means to Me.” However, be careful not to spend too much time on the general formulations of what critical thinking is before moving to the level of particular principles and strategies. The reason for this is simple. People tend to have trouble assimilating general concepts unless they are clarified through concrete examples. Furthermore, we want teachers to develop an operational view of critical thinking, to understand it as particular intellectual behaviors derivative of basic insights, commitments, and principles. Critical thinking is not a set of high-sounding platitudes, but a very real and practical way to think things out and to act upon that thought. Therefore, we want teachers to make realistic translations from the general to the specific as soon as possible, and periodically revise their formulations of the global concept in light of their work on the details. Aim at a process whereby teachers move back and forth from general formulations of what critical thinking means to them to specific strategies in specific lessons. We want teachers to see how acceptance of the general concept of critical thinking translates into clear and practical critical thinking teaching and learning strategies, and use those strategies to help students develop into rational and fair thinkers.

For this reason, all the various strategies explained in the handbook are couched in terms of behaviors. The principles express and describe a variety of behaviors of the “ideal” critical thinker; they become applications to lessons when teachers canvass their lesson plans to find appropriate places where those behaviors can be fostered. The practice we recommend helps guard against teachers using these strategies as recipes or formulas, since in each case good judgment is required in the application process.

Some Staff Development Design Possibilities

1) Clarifying the global concept

After a brief exposition or explanation of the global concept of critical thinking, teachers might be asked to reflect individually (for, say, 10 minutes) on people they have known who are basically uncritical thinkers, those who are basically selfish critical thinkers, and those who are basically fairminded critical thinkers. After they have had time to think up meaningful personal examples, divide them up into groups of twos to share and discuss their reflections with another teacher.

An alternative focus might be to have them think of dimensions of their own lives in which they are most uncritical, selfishly critical, and fairminded.

2) Understanding component teaching strategies that parallel the component critical thinking values, processes, and skills

Each teacher could be asked to choose one of the strategies to read and think about for approximately 10 minutes. Their task following this period is to explain the strategy to another teacher, without reading from the handbook. The role of the other teacher is to ask questions about the strategy. Once one has finished explaining his or her strategy, they trade roles. Following this, pairs could link up with other pairs and explain their strategies to each other. At the end, each teacher should have a basic understanding of four strategies.
3) **Seeing a variety of ways in which the various component strategies can be used in classroom settings**

Teachers could be asked to reflect for about 10 minutes on how the strategies that they choose might be used in a number of classroom activities or assignments. Following this, they could share their examples with other teachers.

4) **Getting experience in lesson plan critique**

Teachers can be asked to bring one lesson, activity, or assignment to the inservice session. This lesson, or one provided by the inservice leader, can be used to practice critique. Critiques can then be shared, evaluated, and improved.

5) **Getting experience in lesson plan remodelling**

Teachers can then remodel the lessons which they have critiqued and share, evaluate, and improve the results.

- Copy a remodel, eliminating strategy references. Groups of teachers could mark strategies on it, share, discuss, and defend their versions, etc. Remember, ours is not "the right answer." In cases where participants disagree with, or don't understand why we cited the strategies we did, they could try to figure out why we cited those strategies.
- Over the course of a year, the whole group can work on at least one remodel for each participant.
- Participants could each choose several strategies and explain their interrelationships, mention cases in which they are equivalent, or when one could be used as part of another, etc.

The processes we have described thus far presupposes motivation on the part of the teacher to implement changes. Unfortunately, we cannot presuppose this motivation. We must address it directly. This can be done by focusing attention on the insights that underlie the strategies in each case. We need to foster discussion of them so that it becomes clear to teachers not only that critical thinking requires this or that kind of activity but why, that is, what desirable consequences it brings about. If, for example, teachers do not see why thinking for themselves is of high importance for the well-being and success of their students, they will not take the trouble to implement activities that foster it, even if they know what these activities are.

To meet this motivational need, we have formulated "principles" so as to suggest important insights. For example, consider the brief introduction which is provided in the strategy chapter for the strategy "exercising fairmindedness":

**Principle:**

To think critically about issues, we must be able to consider the strengths and weaknesses of opposing points of view; to imaginatively put ourselves in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them; to overcome our egocentric tendency to identify truth with our immediate perceptions or long-standing thought or belief. This trait correlates with the ability to reconstruct accurately the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own. This trait also correlates with the willingness to remember occasions when we were wrong in the past despite an intense conviction that we were right, as well as the ability to imagine our being similarly deceived in a case at hand. Critical thinkers realize the unfairness of judging unfamiliar ideas until they fully understand them.

The world consists of many societies and peoples with many different points of view and ways of thinking. In order to develop as reasonable persons we need to enter into and think within the frameworks and ideas of different peoples and societies. We cannot truly understand the world if we think about it only from one viewpoint, as Americans, as Italians, or as Russians.
Furthermore, critical thinkers recognize that their behavior affects others, and so consider their behavior from the perspective of those others.

If teachers reflect on this principle in the light of their own experience, they should be able to come up with their own reasons why fairmindedness is important. They might reflect upon the personal problems and frustrations they faced when others — spouses or friends, for example — did not or would not empathically enter their point of view. Or they might reflect on their frustration as children when their parents, siblings, or schoolmates did not take their point of view seriously. Through examples of this sort, constructed by the teachers themselves, insight into the need for an intellectual sense of justice can be developed.

Once the insight is in place, we are ready to put the emphasis on discussing the variety of ways that students can practice thinking fairmindedly. As always, we want to be quite specific here, so that teachers understand the kinds of behaviors they are fostering. The handbook, in each case, provides a start in the application section following the principle. For more of our examples, one can look up one or more remodelled lesson plans in which the strategy was used, referenced under each. Remember, it is more important for teachers to think up their own examples and applications than to rely on the handbook examples, which are intended as illustrative only.

Lesson plan remodelling as a strategy for staff and curriculum development is not a simple, one-shot approach. It requires patience and commitment. But it genuinely develops the critical thinking of teachers and puts them in a position to understand and help structure the inner workings of the curriculum. While doing so, it builds confidence, self-respect, and professionalism. With such an approach, enthusiasm for critical thinking strategies will grow over time. It is an approach worth serious consideration as the fundamental thrust of a staff development program. If a staff becomes proficient at critiquing and remodelling lesson plans, it can, by redirecting the focus of its energy, critique and "remodel" any other aspect of school life and activity. In this way, the staff can become increasingly less dependent on direction or supervision from above and increasingly more activated by self-direction from within. Responsible, constructive critical thinking, developed through lesson plan remodelling, is a vehicle for this transformation.

In addition to devising in-service days that facilitate teachers developing skills in remodelling their lessons, it is important to orchestrate a process that facilitates critical thinking infusion on a long-term, evolutionary basis. As you consider the "big picture," remember the following principles:

- **Involve the widest possible spectrum of people** in discussing, articulating, and implementing the effort to infuse critical thinking. This includes teachers, administrators, board members, and parents.

- **Provide incentives to those who move forward in the implementation process.** Focus attention on those who do make special efforts. Do not embarrass or draw attention to those who do not.

- **Recognize that many small changes are often necessary before larger changes can take place.**

- **Do not rush implementation.** A slow but steady progress with continual monitoring and adjusting of efforts is best. Provide for refocusing on the long-term goal and ways of making the progress visible and explicit.

- **Work continually to institutionalize the changes made** as the understanding of critical thinking grows, making sure that the goals and strategies being used are deeply embedded in
school-wide and district-wide statements and articulations. Foster discussion on the question of how progress in critical thinking instruction can be made permanent and continuous.

☑ Honor individual differences among teachers. Maximize the opportunities for teachers to pursue critical thinking strategies in keeping with their own educational philosophy. Enforcing conformity is incompatible with the spirit of critical thinking.

For an outstanding model of long-term critical thinking development, review “The Greensboro Plan.”

Teachers who don’t learn how to use basic critical thinking principles to critique and remodel their own lesson plans probably won’t be able to implement someone else’s effectively. Providing teachers with the scaffolding for carrying out the process for themselves, and examples of its application, opens the door for continuing development of critical thinking skills and insights.