

Concurrent Sessions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

28th International Conference on Critical Thinking

Choose one concurrent session to attend for each time slot.

Concurrent Sessions I

(8:30 am – 9:30 am)

Infusing Critical Thinking at a Community College: Year Two

Dr. Joel Levine, Dean of Languages and Humanities

Sylvia Gracia Navarette, Reading/ ESL Faculty

Eileen Zamora, Professional Development Coordinator

Adrian Del Rio, Associated Student Organization- President

Chris Debauche, Associated Student Organization- Senator

Southwestern College (CA)

Room: Angel Ball Room

This concurrent session will focus on efforts to infuse critical thinking at Southwestern College (Chula Vista, California in close proximity to Tijuana). Participants will be engaged in hands-on activities in which they will examine, reflect upon, and discuss efforts that are taking place across the Southwestern College campus.

Clinical Reasoning Course-New England College of Optometry

Dr. Aurora Denial, Associate Professor

Dr. Bridgett Perry-Galvin

New England College of Optometry (MA)

Room: Mariposa Room

The Clinical Reasoning course at the New England College of Optometry is dedicated to teaching the thinking skills needed for patient care. The course is a year long, core course for first year optometry students. The first semester is dedicated to teaching the tools and strategies for clinical reasoning. Additionally, the first semester is dedicated to developing critical thought process as it relates to evidence-based medicine, patient care and study skills. The subsequent semester of Clinical Reasoning utilizes and expands on the skills presented in the first semester and emphasizes the integration of basic and clinical science for use in novel clinical scenarios.

Solving Problems Using Critical Thinking

Dr. Ted Thomas, Director Department of Command and Leadership
 Ted Ihrke, Instructor and Module Author for Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 Command and General Staff College (KS)
Room: Belvedere Room

Solving problems and making decisions are core leadership responsibilities, as well as necessary life skills. Leaders may be able to motivate, inspire, influence, and provide vision, but if they make bad decisions, they will be a failure. In this session, we will explore how to make better decisions using critical thinking. All 1,200 plus students at the Command and General Staff College go through a block of instruction on how to solve problems using critical thinking skills. The course is twelve hours long and is taught as a foundational block at the beginning of the school year. We use a case study methodology which provides a context for student learning and retention of the concepts taught. During this session, we will examine the strategies and methods used in this class to provide a basis for other institutions or instructors to teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Creating a Culture of Critical Thinking at Mt. Vista High School

Ginny Owen - Director of Schools
 Rich Thomas – Building Resource Teacher
 Lisa Meyer – Building Resource Teacher
 Mountain Vista High School (CO)
Room: Treasure Ball Room

For the past three years, Mountain Vista High School has been implementing and embedding the Paul/Elder critical thinking framework into classroom work. Our desired outcome has been to create and nurture a culture that views reason and thoughtfulness as norms throughout our school community. In our session we will walk through our process to date, share successes and challenges, our professional development, and future implementation goals. Bring your questions; they will challenge us to continue to refine our work.

Thinking in Science – Do you have a clue?

Heather Hattori, AP Environmental Science Teacher
 Paula Robinson, AP Chemistry Teacher
 Guyer High School (TX)
Room: California Room

Critical thinking in science exemplifies a high standard of intellectual engagement. Overcoming intellectual laziness and arrogance in the high school classroom is often challenging for the teacher and the students. Instilling positive intellectual traits in place of these bad habits requires careful planning, perseverance, and practice.

This presentation will focus on how one school district is engaging teachers in the infusion of critical thinking in the secondary classroom. Two experienced science teachers will describe the process and share examples used in their classrooms. Questioning techniques will be demonstrated and discussed. Scientific reasoning as it applies to the different disciplines will be explored. Specific examples from the disciplines of chemistry, physics, and environmental science will be used. Future activities for use in the classroom will also be shared.

Critical Thinking in a Title 1 Fifth Grade Classroom

Natalie Baird – Lead Humanities Teacher

Berkley Maynard Academy (CA)

Room: Yerba Buena Ball Room

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate some ways to implement elements of critical thinking skills in the context of a Title 1 fifth grade classroom. The key point in the implementation process has to do with the skill of both written and oral paraphrasing of texts for deeper understanding in mathematics, reading, and writing and the use of graphic organizers to support young thinkers and to expose them to abstract concepts. In addition, using critical thinking to reflect on our classroom behavior will be addressed. The critical thinking elements are based on Dr. Elder and Dr. Paul's Thinker Series guides amongst other manuals and books from the Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Concurrent Sessions II

(9:40 am – 10:40 am)

Creating Assignments to Engage Students in Critical Thinking

Dr. Melvin Manson, Professor of Sociology and Psychology

Endicott College (MA)

Room: Yerba Buena Ball Room

Only when a student takes the initiative to think through, not about, a question does real learning take place. In order to help the student discipline his or her thinking, the elements of reasoning and the intellectual standards need to become integrated into class assignments. Once students internalize these components in all of their reasoning, intellectual engagement becomes a habit of the mind. This session will introduce examples of assignments that engage students in this process of thinking critically as they become involved in the concepts and issues posed by the discipline of sociology. Participants will also be asked to share their suggestions for actively engaging students in thinking through the major questions posed in their courses and disciplines.

Developing Diversity Understandings in Collegians Preparing for Healthcare Professions Utilizing Critical Worldview Analysis

Dr. Joseph C. Moravec, Professor

Mercy College of Health Sciences (IA)

Room: Belvedere Ball Room

How can we live fair-minded, ethical lives as individuals and professionals in our ever-increasingly diverse world? In particular, how can we effectively educate professionals who are prepared to provide compassionate and competent healthcare to vulnerable and diverse patients? Based on the critical thinking foundations of the philosophy of Drs. Paul and Elder, the presenter will share his perspectives, instructional plans and professional experiences as a professor of critical thinking at a four-year college. Specific curricular strategies and methodologies will be presented for engaging students in identifying, analyzing and assessing their own life and worldviews based on the strategic implementation of the elements of reasoning, intellectual standards and the intellectual traits. In particular, a worldview understandings schemata (developed and utilized by the presenter in the three different critical thinking courses he teaches) will be given and explained to participants as a practical demonstration of how students are challenged and engaged in critically articulating their individual points of view.

Implementing Critical Thinking into High School Professional Development

Ginny Owen - Director of Schools
Karen Gray – Assistant Principal
Pam Jacobsen – Building Resource Teacher
Bear Canyon Elementary (CO)
Room: Treasure Ball Room

A snapshot look at critical thinking in action in the elementary classroom. This session will take a look at the highlights and hurdles through our second year of implementation at BCE. Teachers routinely seek to identify key structural components (purposes, question at issue, information and data, concepts and theories, implications and consequences, assumptions, and points of view) in their thinking and while lesson planning. This session is a look at where we started as a school, where we are today and where we will go from here.

Infusing Critical Thinking into the ESL Classroom

Dr. Joel Levine, Dean of Languages and Humanities
Ms. Yuki Yamamoto, ESL Faculty
Southwestern College (CA)
Room: Angel Ball Room

This concurrent session will focus on how to infuse the intellectual tools for critical thinking into the ESL classroom as a means of helping English language learners develop understanding of concepts, vocabulary, and linguistic structures for the purpose of effective communication. The session will feature hands-on activities so participants can gain a working understanding of how to use critical thinking in the ESL classroom to balance form and context/meaning in using the communicative approach to build students' English language skills. The session co-presenters, Ms. Yuki Yamamoto (ESL faculty) and Dr. Joel Levine (Dean, School of Languages and Humanities), will share ideas, materials, and experiences they have had in carrying out their joint ESL/Critical Thinking Project.

Addressing Barriers to Fostering Substantive Critical Thinking in Elementary Education

Carmen Polka, Critical Thinking Teacher on Special Assignment
Dr. Paul Bankes, Director of Assessment and District Critical Thinking Coordinator
Thompson School District (CO)
Room: Mariposa Room

Building a pervasive culture of thinking in an elementary school is challenging. Based on six years of work within elementary schools using a substantive conception of critical thinking we will identify and break down the barriers layer by layer, brick by brick, that resist the infusion of critical thinking into the classroom. Potential cultural barriers such as: physical environment, routines and structures, language, expectations for students' thinking, opportunities for learning and understanding, teacher modeling, teacher attitudes, and the interactions between the teacher and students can be transformed with Paulian critical thinking to create opportunities for success.

The Function of Ignorance, Question, and Curiosity in Teaching for Intellectual Engagement

Rev. Bob Schlim, Instructor
Community College of Spokane (WA)
Room: California Room

A person must LOOK and not just SEE! If to look is a deliberate and purposeful engagement in the act of seeing, what is a deliberate and purposeful engagement in the act of learning? What is involved in intellectual engagement? Is it recognizable by an outsider? What would it look like? Can it be taught? Can it be fostered, developed, measured? The answers to these questions will be considered and discussed, with not only their implications for and relevance to the classroom, but also to other areas of daily life.

Concurrent Sessions III (10:50 am – 11:50 am)

Briefing in a World of Accelerating Change and Intensified Complexity

Dr. Donovan Ropp, Director of Business Research & Education Center
California State University Bakersfield (CA)
Room: California Room

The purpose of this paper is to introduce a comprehensive “critical thinking” teaching model for briefing business law cases that features qualitative processes of identifying, analyzing, synthesizing, and assessing relevant commercial factors within the life cycle of business transactions. The intent of this reflective process is to expand student competencies in developing problem solving and decision making techniques and in application of findings within the framework of the eight “elements of reasoning” and eight-plus “standards of critical thinking.” The core components of the “elements” and “standards” are interconnected within a dynamic systematic approach that is integrative, interactive, and flexible, and are interdependent to each other.

Using Critical Thinking in Intelligence Sensemaking

David T. Moore
National Security Agency (DC)
Room: Belvedere Ball Room

Creating the unique knowledge that is intelligence for policymakers requires disaggregating and synthesizing relevant data and information. It demands that the resulting evidence be interpreted. Moreover, it necessitates an overarching approach. Critical thinking is one such approach. So, how does it all work? How can intelligence professionals use critical thinking in their sensemaking? Come and find out! In this one-hour session we will briefly explore what intelligence sensemaking is and how critical thinking supports it. Then, we will use critical thinking to guide our consideration of an historical intelligence case study.

Fostering Critical Thinking System-Wide

Ginny Owen - Director of Schools

Mt. Vista High School (CO)

Room: Treasure Ball Room

The Mt. Vista feeder system, part of a large K-12 public education system in Denver, has been fostering critical thinking across the curriculum (using the elements, standards and traits) for three years. This presentation will review the steps taken for implementation and professional staff development during this time. We will also provide examples of changes that have occurred in classrooms with teacher lessons and with student learning.

Critical Thinking through Applied Theatre: Curriculum for Recent High School Graduates in Academic Enrichment Programs

Dr. Edward J. Schauer

Vivian J. Dorsett, M.S.

Prairie View A&M University (TX)

Room: Angel Ball Room

An interactive demonstration and explanation of applied theatre techniques used in teaching the essential intellectual virtues to high school graduates in a summer academic enrichment program. Stepping beyond their unwillingness to read, poor study skills, and short attention spans, applied theatre gives the action oriented/entertainment focused millennial students opportunity to teach themselves critical thinking skills through the performance of dedicated sketches and plays, with afterwards of reflection.

Critical Reading for College Freshmen

Dr. Vicki Vernon Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Lane College (TN)

Room: Mariposa Room

According to an ACT report, "Reading Between the Lines," most college freshmen are not ready for college-level reading because they lack experience reading and understanding complex texts. The problem is compounded by the increased quality and quantity of required college-level reading as compared with high school, and the fact that many students do not like to read at all. Engaging the mind of these under-prepared college freshmen as they transition from high school to college is the focus of this session. Using the elements of thought as a basis, participants will explore practical ways to guide the development freshmen's comprehensive reading and critical thinking skills. By breaking down structural and tactical aspects of this approach to reading comprehension for college freshmen, the participants will leave with applicable tips regarding Teaching for Intellectual Engagement.

Enhancing Critical Thinking for Students with Learning Disabilities – The QEP

Dr. Shane Runyon, Associate Professor & Chair of Liberal Studies

Dr. Shelly Chandler, Associate Professor & Chair of Human Services

Beacon College (FL)

Room: Berkeley Room

Beacon College is the nation's only accredited four-year college exclusively for students with learning disabilities. In 2006, Beacon College chose Critical Thinking as the focus of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), an essential component of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaffirmation accreditation process. Research shows that students with learning disabilities can perform as well or better than their non-disabled peer group following instructional interventions in critical thinking skills. Beacon College chose the Paul-Elder model of critical thinking for their QEP due to its relevancy with the College's unique mission. The presentation will follow the process of selecting, implementing, and assessing a "Thinking across the Curriculum" initiative. We will explain how the College, using the Paul-Elder model, transformed itself from a Teaching College to a Learning Institution. We will explore some of the challenges in writing and implementing the QEP and share what we learned as we first proposed our Quality Enhancement Plan and later received commendations from SACS for our project. Finally, we will discuss how using critical thinking in the classroom has helped develop more mature and engaged thinkers, all of whom have a learning disability.