



# CRITICAL SKILLS PROGRAMME Newsletter

## Welcome to Issue 1 of the CSP Newsletter



Welcome to the new CSP Newsletter, which hopefully builds on the sterling work of Colin Weatherly, who authored the newsletter in the early years of CSP. This will appear monthly and it will be edited by our four CSP Programme

Managers. The aim of the newsletter is to share successes, new ideas and address any issues that may arise. We therefore welcome your comments and contributions, and I am pleased to welcome Marie Matty from our Leicester Office, who will be collating all the contributions, so please email them to her at [marie@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:marie@criticalskills.co.uk).

**Jim Houghton** (Managing Director)

### Quote of the Week

*“Seven months ago I was utterly fed up with this job and if I had known what else I wanted to do I would have left the profession. My attitude changed the day I started Critical Skills Training.”*

*Simon Groves - St Francis Primary School, North Somerset*

**Congratulations and well done to Birdwell Primary School, North Somerset, whose Year 5 class was featured in the Guardian Newspaper on the 7 October 2008**

*Please let us know if your school has been featured in a local or national newspaper using Critical Skills Training.*

### **HOW TRINITY ACADEMY (EDINBURGH) SUCCESSFULLY PUT STUDENTS THROUGH A TWO YEAR COURSE IN ONE YEAR USING CRITICAL SKILLS!**

Having been inspired, re-energised and enthused by Critical Skills Level 1 training I returned to school to begin to conquer the world. I had long believed that some subjects (including standard grade history and modern studies) were content heavy but were “padded” out for two years in the middle school. If there was a way to develop skills and deliver content, I really believed the course could be delivered in one year. The extra time saved could be used to enrich and deepen learning and prepare for the more demanding (and time poor) higher courses in the senior school. The answer was the Critical Skills Programme. I embarked on a “fast track” pilot with an S3 class of 20 pupils. My Senior Management Team allowed me to trial this idea with one class and if successful could be rolled out further.

My aim was to deliver standard grade modern studies in S3 and we could start the higher course in S4.

I built and maintained community, delivered and debriefed challenges - we made a White House gift shop, we created movie pitches, we wrote books, we made board games and we got through a two-year course in one year. I also taught exam skills required to pass the summative test at the end of the year - often through challenges too. Compelling evidence to support the fact that formative and summative assessment can happily co-exist. Motivation and enjoyment were apparent throughout the year and I felt

fairly confident that things would work out (and faintly terrified that they might not). At this stage I didn't have enough experience of the model to know if it would be totally successful in this way. It was. All 20 pupils passed their exam with passes at credit level (all achieved a grade one or two). Senior Management were convinced and we rolled the model out further. We now put almost all pupils through standard grade in one year using CSP strategies and tools. S4 is now used to further develop skills for higher in S5 and the course is also delivered through collaborative group work and challenges. Results continue to improve. This evidence perhaps goes a long way to show that investment in building community and working collaboratively is time well invested - and in fact time saved.

**Juliet Presly** (Principal Teacher of History and Modern Studies)



# New Community Builder



## If.....Then.....

Time Needed (Inc Debrief): 10 Minutes

## Why Play It?

To encourage reflective and creative thinking.  
To release tension.  
To encourage quick thinking and decision making.

## How 2 Play:

Sit in a circle with a pen/pencil.  
Give out a pack of about 6 prepared cards to each participant in the same order.  
Time 20 seconds or so on each card and then say next!  
After everyone has had the chance to fill in each card, sweep around the circle and share responses.

## Possible Debrief:

What did you have to know/do/be like to succeed at that?  
Did you feel under pressure? How and why?  
What other questions could we have asked?  
Did you notice anything about other people's responses?  
IP3 links?

## Notes:

Sentence structures such as 'If .....then.....' work well: e.g. 'If pigs could fly, then.....', 'If money grew on trees, then.....', 'If we could stop time still, then.....', 'If flowers could talk, then.....', 'If we changed colours with our emotions (green with envy), then.....', 'If I could go back and do it again, then.....' etc!

Emphasis FVC – it is 'OK' not to fill in a card and pass, if nothing comes to mind.

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY!



We would love you to send us any pictures (with permissions) you have of Critical Skills in action at your school, so that we could use them for future newsletters or the website. Please send photos to:  
[marie@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:marie@criticalskills.co.uk)

## New Website!

The new website will be launched next month and will be an exciting development for the Community, with a number of advanced features, allowing a substantial amount of interaction. One of the first benefits is that the newsletter will be able to highlight longer and more substantial articles, too long to include in the newsletter itself by providing hotlinks back to relevant parts of the website. This will include new design ideas for specific situations developed by Programme Managers and our resident Consultants.

## POSTERS AND BOOKS FOR SALE!

Personal orders can be made online or by telephone with a credit or debit card via our distributors, Troubador Publishing Ltd, [www.troubador.co.uk/shop](http://www.troubador.co.uk/shop), 0116 255 9312. Institutional orders should be made, with a purchase order, to Troubador Publishing Ltd, 9 De Montfort Mews, Leicester, LE1 7FW.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Price</b>
Level 1 Posters (full set of 15 up to date brand new posters)	£24.95 (inc VAT)
Towards Successful Learning (written by Di Pardoe)	£19.95
Critical Skills in the Early Years (written by Vicki Charlesworth)	£19.95
Leading the Learning School (written by Colin Weatherly)	£16.95
Transforming Teaching and Learning (written by Colin Weatherly with Bruce Bonney, John Kerr and Jo Morrison)	£16.95
Level 1 Coaching Kit (original USA version)	£19.95
Level 2 Coaching Kit (original USA Version)	£19.95
K-3 Coaching Kit (original USA version)	£15.95
Tools for CSP Classroom (original USA version)	£15.95

Prices are exclusive of Postage and Packing

**Community Builder Pack (ready in January)**  
**Advanced orders only £10.00**

## STOP PRESS

### Open Level 2 Institutes

**Kings Manor Hotel**  
**Edinburgh**  
**17 - 19 November 2008**

**Birmingham**  
**1 - 3 December 2008**

Level 2 is a 3 day training session in which Critical Skills Programme practitioners learn how to make effective links among individual Challenges that promote long term learning goals. The focus is on designing Challenges that promote the essential knowledge central to a well-designed curriculum. Special emphasis in the course is placed on the use of developmental continua as a powerful formative assessment tool which enables teachers and students to monitor the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

If you would like further information or booking forms for the above institute please contact:

**Alison Garner (England and Wales) on 01455 840066 or email [alison@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:alison@criticalskills.co.uk) or Maria Hybszer (Scotland) on 01506 846770 or email [maria@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:maria@criticalskills.co.uk)**

If yourself or any of your colleagues are interested in future training with us please contact either Alison Garner (England) or Maria Hybszer (Scotland).

## CSP PROGRAMME MANAGERS - CONTACT INFORMATION

Pippa Leslie (England & Channel Islands) - [pippa@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:pippa@criticalskills.co.uk)  
Andrew Pearce (Wales) - [andrew@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:andrew@criticalskills.co.uk)

Jo Morrison (England) - [jo@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:jo@criticalskills.co.uk)  
Maggie Clark (Scotland) - [maggie@criticalskills.co.uk](mailto:maggie@criticalskills.co.uk)

**DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: [www.criticalskills.co.uk](http://www.criticalskills.co.uk)**