



# CRITICAL SKILLS PROGRAMME Newsletter

## Welcome to Issue 7 of the CSP Newsletter



It's the end of a tense day 4 and Jim Morris persuades me to play 9 holes of golf as a way of 'chillaxing'. This is my first game of golf on a real course. There are lots of people playing who know what they are doing. Jim hands me a 'driver' at the first tee. I swing and earth flies. The ball remains. Jim calmly imparts timely wisdom. He hands me the clubs he thinks best for each new shot. I begin to learn their names and purpose. I start striking the ball with greater accuracy. I hit two trees, lose the ball in a pond, and cross three fairways with a single drive! Sadly, there are no points for any of this. Jim remains patient and encouraging. We meet up with Maggie Clark at the '19th Hole' and get back to work. I've had a great time. Why? I took a risk and tried something new, accepting that my learning would be 'messy'. I also had a great 'guide on the side'! Cheers Jim!

Andrew

STOP PRESS

5 Institutes  
In  
Mountain Ash,  
South Wales!

**'TIDY!'**

### "PUPILS TAKE THE LEAD..."

Whenever the P.5 teachers at West End Primary School in Elgin are a bit slow in coming up with a new challenge, the pupils initiate projects themselves.

This happened recently again, after their teacher returned from visiting another school in their area to establish a formal inter-school link with an international focus. The idea was for pupils to initiate contact with pen-pal letters, which would then lead onto a school visit during which they would take a whole school assembly. The postage and fee for the bus (£75) to take them there and back would have been covered by their school.

The pupils immediately came up with ideas to fundraise and pay for this 'extra trip' themselves. As they could not find one idea suitable for everyone to participate in, they suggested forming groups with likeminded entrepreneurs and began to plan enthusiastically by chunking their challenge and brainstorming ideas. Task roles followed naturally according to skills best suited. 'Action Plans' were drawn up. Marketing included leaflets, posters, class visits and entries on the school's day sheet.

Projects ranged from dog walking, gardening, crafts and home baking. The total raised came to £237.66.

walking, gardening, crafts and home baking. The total raised came to £237.66. This self initiated class challenge lasted 2 weeks and included many cross curricular areas.

The pupils are now planning the content of the link assembly which will include information about their international pen pals in their South African link school, socio-economic background, feeding initiatives, the school and class libraries they have helped to establish and a performance of a traditional African song with drums.

The ethos of ownership, 'we can have a go', 'we are not scared to make mistakes' and 'everyone has a voice' allowed the pupils to work in collaborate teams where several Critical Skills such as effective communication, creative thinking, problem solving, leadership and critical thinking were all used and developed.

CSP has become a natural way of learning for these students and is equipping them as strong confident and curious lifelong learners.

Leanne Kilian and her P5 Class  
West End Primary School, Elgin



Some 'businesses' required start up money and received £1 upon producing a detailed costing plan.

Projects ranged from dog





## JUNE OFFER

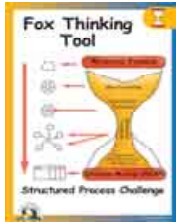


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## CHALLENGE REMINDER

### TOWER OF POWER

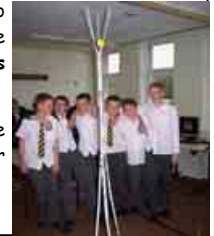
Your challenge is to construct a tower of the materials available that will elevate your "beacon" for enough above the forest floor so that the searchers will be able to hone in on it and find your location.

Previous attempts to communicate from beneath the forest canopy have been problematic. You know that the beacon must be located in a very stable position (it will "stand alone" without human assistance for a full minute) at least seven or eight feet above the forest floor in a relatively open area. Your best guess is that if you can place the beacon at a height that just surpasses the outstretched reach of your tallest crew member, you will probably be OK.

Your materials for construction are very limited. Indeed, the only resources you seem to have that are still dry and usable are sections of newspaper that some of your crew have had stashed away, a number of plastic drinking straws, and a five foot piece of masking tape! Chairs and scissors have NOT been supplied! What complicates the matter is that all the supplies are the personal property of different members of your team. **NO RESOURCE SUPPLY MAY BE USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TOWER WITHOUT THE EXPRESSED CONSENT OF ITS OWNER!**

Since you have neither the time nor the materials to make a mistake, your tower must be successful the first time. **A high quality problem-solving process is crucial to your success!**

One of your crew thinks they hear a plane in the distance. You have \_\_\_ minutes to construct your tower and place the beacon. Good luck!



*"Prior to coming on this course I couldn't see how Critical Skills would be relevant to my class as I teach very young children with severe/complex special needs. Critical Skills has shown me how I can improve the all round learning environment for my little ones....it has also helped my class to be more a part of the school".*

Carol Hanbury  
Caradog Primary School, Aberdare

*"I have thoroughly enjoyed this course. It has captured my imagination 100%. I have taken a wealth of new skills and used them successfully within my classroom, and when they have not worked that well, I have been given the confidence/knowledge with what to do to solve. I have shared/pinched/adapted practice from other teachers/schools. Everyday has made me want to get back into the classroom to try something new out. So far Critical Skills has revolutionised my teaching".*

Natasha Yeo  
Haylands Primary School



**One of the many fantastic things about Critical Skills training is that it can be tailored and adapted to any school or organisation. Here are just a few of the many comments we receive about Critical Skills Training from Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Further Education, Special Needs and Learning Centres.**

*"Thank you for this programme!  
I am using Critical Skills and want to transform my school completely. I think it suits me because I am a people/ideas person and it's easy to relate to it. More, it encourages INDEPENDENCE which I highly value".*

Daniela Thacker  
St Albans CE, Birmingham  
Specialist Engineering College,

*"I found the 3 days very informative, useful, fun, enjoyable and challenging. It was really great to feel part of a whole, and small group, working team.*

*The tools, materials and delivery were excellent and helped the team to think outside the box, try out new ideas and be creative.*

*I feel sure that Critical Skills will be fully used in all of our curriculum areas and our learners will all benefit from this".*

Sue Field  
Skills for Growth, Bexleyheath

*"This has been an outstanding course delivered and managed to 'the' highest standard. Apart from being a thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring course, it has reaffirmed my faith in what we do. This process has opened my eyes to the potential the human spirit can have when it is given the right tools and inspiration to flourish and thrive".*

Parkview School, Barrow in Furness  
11-16 Comprehensive Community School

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